

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL  
TUESDAY 28 MAY 2024, 5.30PM  
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

**PRESENT:**

- **Mayor:**  
Councillor N R Yates
- **Deputy Mayor:**  
Councillor A C Lawton
- Councillor M A Hopkins
- Councillor A H Hart
- Councillor C Wood
- Councillor W Rogers (Chair)
- Councillor A K Harper
- Councillor N Eardley
- Councillor D J Hawley
- Councillor J T Salt

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Mrs Margaret Warman - Compliance and Governance Officer
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnerships Officer
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administrator Officer

*Councillor Yates recited the disclaimer regarding the recording of the meeting.*

**1. ELECTION OF A CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR**

Councillor Yates requested nominations for the Chair of the Committee.  
Councillor Hawley nominated Councillor Rogers; seconded by Councillor Hart.  
There were no other nominations; **agreed**.

Councillor Rogers requested nominations for Deputy Chair.  
Councillor Hart nominated Councillor Wood; seconded by Councillor Harper.  
There were no other nominations; **agreed**.

**2. APOLOGIES**

- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor K J Jackson
- Councillor C Smith
- Councillor J T Jones

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None.
- ii. Other Interests: Councillors Hart, Harper and Yates declared an interest in Moorland Partnership Board.

Councillor Salt declared an interest in Biddulph Works Together, having completed a research project.

Councillor Rogers declared an interest in Item 15: f.

### 4. MINUTES

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 23 April (approved at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council meeting on 14 May 2024)

The minutes were **confirmed**.

### 5. ACCOUNTS MATTERS

- a) To **approve** the bank reconciliation for March 2024- all accounts (attached).

Proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

- b) To **receive** the income and expenditure account for 2023-24

Councillor Yates questioned the breakdown of energy costs in relation to the Visitor Centre.

Proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

### 6. AUDIT

- a) To **receive** the final internal control report for 2023-24

Councillor Hawley gave a brief outline of the internal control review. He reported that there were no problems found within the annual and quarterly review.

Councillor Hawley noted that an easier way to cross reference the statement and online payments could be looked into but stated that this is a new system and process for banking; he expected this process to evolve.

The report was **received**.

**b) To confirm** the outcome of the internal audit completed on 23 May 2024.

The Chief Officer stated that this had been previously circulated and recited the recommendations from the auditor:

*“My only recommendation to the council (and this doesn't affect your internal audit) is that periodically when Councillors check the bank reconciliations to bank statements, they either sign both documents or it is recorded in the minutes.”*

The outcome was **confirmed**.

**c) To receive** the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)- Annual Governance Statement containing draft figures for 2023-24

The Chief Officer gave a brief description of the document. This year's draft figures have been included. The Chief Officer stated that the 5-year analysis of the AGAR figures requested had also been included.

The report was **received**.

**d) To consider** the Accounting Statements 2023-24, which will be presented to Town Council on 11 June 2024.

The Chief Officer explained that during the Town Council meeting in June, the document will be considered and approved; Councillors must satisfy themselves that they are confident in relation to the internal controls in place.

## **7. BIDDULPH WORKS TOGETHER**

To **confirm** that the Earmarked Reserves Budget for the Biddulph Works Together project is £10,000 for 2024-25, and to **agree** when this can be re-opened for applications from partners and support of residents.

The Chief Officer explained that the remit of the Biddulph Works Together group had changed slightly; some groups are looking for support year-round, and she questioned whether the opening date should be brought forward.

There was a discussion around social isolation issues within the community, and whether to run the scheme all year round.

The Chief Officer requested assistance with the applications, to determine which projects to fund.

Councillor Wood proposed that the Biddulph Works Together budget be available after the Town Council meeting in June. This Committee's Chair and Deputy would provide support to determine applications; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

Councillor Yates stated that there are funds available from County Council to support similar activities.

## **8. STANDING ORDERS**

### **a) ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR HAWLEY**

(Referred from Town Council)

*Town Council meetings have been increasing in length. We need to bring Council meetings in line with Standing Orders to reduce meeting times, especially in relation to 10 and 1p, 3f and 3g.*

To **agree** potential changes to procedures and/or changes to the Standing Orders.

Councillor Hawley felt that following points needed to be discussed: the structure of the public participation section, a report from the Police and reports from County Councillors.

Councillor Yates stated that in relation to the County Council report, both himself and Councillor Flunder are available prior to the meeting to answer questions. Councillor Yates agreed that speakers should only be able to speak once, except for points of clarification.

Councillor Wood stated that the County Councillors should not be required to give a verbal report during the Town Council meeting; if any Councillors require answers they can attend the prior meeting. He stated that the public participation should continue as part of the Town Council meeting.

Councillor Hart expressed his concern at rushing through agenda items, particularly for meetings that follow.

Councillor Salt agreed with the above statements and suggested that the Police are invited to Town and Community Committee meetings instead with any questions being sent in advance. Public participation should be for community members

The above points were discussed, and it was proposed by Councillor Hawley that the County Councillors continue with their informal meeting prior to the Town Council meeting, and no longer report during the main Town Council meeting; the Police should report to the Town and Community Committee, and keep the public participation the same- limited to 20 minutes; seconded by Councillor Hart. **Agreed. One against; one abstention.**

Councillor Hawley stated that speakers should only speak once. In addition, when raising a point of order, it should be declared which standing order it is set against. Chairman should be on top of this.

There was a discussion in relation to the above raised points. The Chief Officer noted that there are a lot of 'points of clarification (and such)'; there is a 'right of reply' in the Standing Orders, but this should not be used as an opportunity to speak again. Unfortunately, very few Councillors have attended training sessions.

It was agreed to organise in-house training for all councillors to enable standing orders to be followed correctly. All **agreed.**

#### **b) ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILOR SALT**

(Referred from the Annual Meeting of the Town Council)

To **consider** a process for delegating membership of Committees, should a Councillor be unable to attend.

Councillor Rogers noted that in the Standing Orders Section 4, it states that there must be 3 days' notice and clearly state who is standing in.

Councillor Hawley proposed that the standing orders be changed so that 1 working days' notice must be given; on receipt of a formal apology, a substitute can be provided for that Committee; seconded by Councillor Salt. At present, apologies for meetings are not always given in a timely manner, which would prevent the use of a substitute. All **agreed.**

## **9. TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON THE GARDEN FESTIVAL AND TO CONFIRM COSTS**

The Chief Officer had circulated the feedback from members of the community in relation to the Garden Festival event.

The Chief Officer stated that this was the first Garden Festival event, where speakers were in attendance and the Town Council had targeted people from out of town.

The Chief Officer tabled the income and expenditure, noting the grant received from the shared prosperity fund.

Councillor Salt wondered about measuring the impact of the event.

Councillor Hart stated that the speakers were a great idea and would like to see future speakers for upcoming events. The report was **received**.

## **10. TO CONFIRM RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING WORKING GROUPS:**

### **a) Mining Lanterns Working Group**

The Chief Officer reported that Councillor Jackson was nominated as the Chair and Councillor Rogers as Deputy Chair.

Councillor Rogers reported that there will be three mining lamps, which will look more like a Davey lamp. There will be a plaque on each lamp.

Key points to note were:

- Three plaques to be added to each lantern (embossed if possible):

‘The installation of replacement mining lamps was commissioned by Biddulph Town Council (inc. logo) Year.’

‘Partners in this project were Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Moorlands Partnership Board (inc. logos)’

‘These lamps are dedicated to the mining community.’

- The plaques will be round and displayed on the outside of the lamps, so that they can be viewed by those passing.
- The lanterns will have a brass effect at the bottom and on the plaque, and a stainless-steel effect at the top.
- Blue solar lighting will be included.

- The aim will be to have an event in September 2024.

**b) Town Hall Mining Memorial Working Group**

The recommendations were:

- The application for memorial bricks will be available w/c 3 June.
- The Town Council will pay for a slip for George Humphries.
- It would be a good idea to name the town square.
- This Working Group should become the project management group and advise on the day-to-day management of the project.

The proposals for both Working Groups were moved on-block by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

## **11. POLICIES (attached)**

**a) To approve the reviewed Asset Management Policy**

Proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Smith All **agreed**.

**b) To approve the reviewed Mayoral Handbook**

Proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Hart. All **agreed**.

**c) To approve the reviewed Reserves Policy (including revised figures)**

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Hart. All **agreed**.

**d) To approve the reviewed Civic Allowance Policy**

Councillor Salt requested that references to 'him' be removed; this is part of the reference to the legislation.

There was a discussion around the donation from the Mayors Civic Allowance to the Mayor's Charity Account; this would be approved each year by this Committee.

Proposed by Councillor Eardley; seconded by Yates. All **agreed**.

## **STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

### **12.**

**a) To consider disposal of any assets, in line with the Asset Management Policy and Financial Regulations**

Councillor Rogers confirmed that the trailer previously discussed had been sold and removed from the Asset Register.

- b)** To **confirm** approved suppliers as part of the Procurement Policy

Two new suppliers were **confirmed**.

*In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, the Council is to determine which items, if any, should be taken with the public excluded.*

## **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

### **13. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE OVERTON ROAD TROUGHS HERITAGE PROJECT**

The project would be split into two stages to ensure the work could be completed in a timely way, in line with the Moorlands Partnership Board requirements.

### **14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING**

The Chief Officer provided an update on new funding streams.

*Councillor Hart left the meeting at 7.20pm.*

### **15. QUOTATIONS**

- a)** To **approve** Wi-Fi enhancements to the Town Hall entrance

The quote received by Fifteen was agreed.

Proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

- b)** To **approve** revised Town Hall Wi-Fi and mobile phone costs

The quote received by Fifteen was proposed by Councillor Wood; seconded by Councillor Salt. All **agreed**.

- c)** To **approve** passenger lift repairs/ improvements

The quote received from Concept was proposed by Councillor Yates; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.



**d) To approve** blending valves servicing quotations for Biddulph Town Hall and the Visitor Centre

The quote received from Ignite was proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

**e) To approve** a fire extinguisher servicing quotation

The quote received from NWFE Limited was proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

**f) To approve** potential costs for the Classic Vehicle Show

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

**g) To approve** quotations for emergency lighting testing

Deferred to next meeting due to an insufficient number of quotes received.

**h) To approve** a quotation for the removal of lime trees at the churchyard

The quote received from N&J services was proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Salt. All **agreed**.

**i) To approve** a quotation for a tree survey at the burial grounds

The quote received from N&J services was proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

**j) To confirm** new photocopier costs

The quote received from Euro Digital was proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

**k) To approve** a fee proposal for the development of the Town Hall frontage; this work will be overseen by the Town Hall Frontage Working Group, reporting into this Committee.

Further information was be required.

**l) Additional item for Legionella Remedial works.**

The quote received from was Ignite proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

**16. STAFFING**

**a)** To **confirm** caretaking arrangements

The Chief Officer advised that due to holiday requirements, alternative arrangements would be made.

**b)** To **confirm** the recommendations from staff appraisals (to be tabled).

Scales for 2024-25 were approved. Thanks were offered to all the staff for their hard work.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.

Signed..... Date.....