

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2021

The Mayor welcomed members to the Zoom meeting and read a statement to assist those that were viewing the meeting via Facebook.

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Jones
The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Rushton
Councillor Baddeley
Councillor Barlow
Councillor Brady
Councillor Davies
Councillor Garvey
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Jackson
Councillor McLoughlin
Councillor Perkins
Councillor Redfern
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Smith
Councillor Yates

PC Hepburn (Staffordshire Police) and Councillor Keith Flunder (Staffordshire County Council) were also in attendance.

No attendees wished their names to be excluded from the minutes.

The Mayor read a tribute to Sir Tom Moore and to local resident Craig Pickering who died last week. A minute's silence was observed.

60. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive verbal or written representations from a Staffordshire County Council representative(s) and Staffordshire Police

Councillor Flunder gave the following update from Staffordshire Council:

Regarding Covid-19, Councillor Flunder stated that a pop-up vaccination centre had started in East Staffordshire. Over 500 identified over asymptomatic cases have been detected countywide as part of the pop up testing and Councillor Flunder reminded people who are working to get tested regularly. The infection rates in Staffordshire Moorlands are reducing. The biggest test centres are increasing their opening times to include some evening and weekend hours.

Councillor Flunder advised people to look at the local resilience forum. A letter to thank local government for their responses during the coronavirus has been issued from by the Health Secretary, Matt Hancock.

E-vouchers are available for emergency family help with food. Emergency COVID-19 winter support is also available to help with bill payments. A 'let's get tested' campaign is running for hotspots. 'Talk suicide' and 'feeling happier and healthier' campaigns are running.

Councillor Smith asked for clarification regarding the asymptomatic testing figures and also regarding the e-voucher scheme.

Councillor Salt asked about the cycle route scheme, which covers national route 55. Councillor Flunder stated a consultation is starting on 12 Feb for cycle routes for 6 major towns, which doesn't involve the Moorlands. £31 million were allocated for improving cycle routes from 6 major conurbations, but this did not include Biddulph Valley Way. Councillor Flunder hopes that funding can be expanded to include Staffordshire Moorlands.

Councillor Salt said that funding became available very recently as due to Covid people were commuting differently. She stated that £1.8 million was provided to Staffordshire. There was a commitment to green infrastructure and to repair the area between Brown Lees and Brindley Ford. Councillor Salt asked for reassurance regarding funding and asked what Councillor Flunder has done so far to lobby for funding for Biddulph.

Councillor Flunder said that this scheme had been aimed at the six major conurbations and he hadn't seen any suggestion that money has been allocated for the Moorlands so far, but will continue to look in to this. Councillor Flunder was not sure of the ownership of the part of National Cycle Route 55 in question. Councillor Flunder felt it would be difficult to get funding

reallocated from the areas it is already designated to, but hoped that funding can be obtained via the Green Infrastructure Plan.

Councillor Yates stated that he wanted this item on the agenda as a matter of urgent business, and was concerned that no money has been allocated to the Staffordshire Moorlands area. Councillor Yates said that the A527 could not be a cycling route, and Biddulph Valley Way connects Stoke-on-Trent to Biddulph to Congleton. Councillor Yates asked what is being done to bring the Valley Way up to cycling standard.

Councillor Flunder said that he agreed it is unfair that Staffordshire Moorlands has been excluded from the funding allocated by central government.

Councillor Hart clarified that Biddulph Valley Way is under multiple ownership. Even areas owned by the County Council are leased or managed by Staffordshire Moorlands. Staffordshire Moorlands is doing a lot of work in the Whitemoor area due to issues related to drainage.

Councillor Davies invited Councillor Flunder to the Environment and Climate Change Working Group on 4 March.

Councillor Flunder informed Councillors that Staffordshire County Council's Climate Change Action Plan funding has been extended to 26 February. The 'unsung heroes' awards is underway and there is a programme of support for care leavers

With regard to the Divisional Highways Plan, Councillor Flunder said that roundabout warning signs are now in place, and footways are back in order on Park Lane. There is outstanding work for Conway Road Green space and Mill Hayes Road. Additional flooding information has been provided to the Council.

Councillor Yates brought up the issue of potholes on Tunstall Road near Brindley Ford. Councillor Flunder stated he had visited Friday and understood there is a boundary issue between Stoke-on-Trent unitary authority and the District Council. The water running off from the old quarry side does appear to be damaging the road. Councillor Flunder was trying to organise a temporary repair; the culvert is privately owned so permission would be needed.

Councillor Redfern thanked Councillor Flunder for his work on the Park Lane roundabout.

Councillor Jones shared concerns about a drain that blocks and floods and freezes on Rudyard Road.

Councillor Barlow thanked Councillor Flunder for his work on Mill Hayes Road

Councillor Yates asked if Biddulph Town Council could issue a letter in response to the consultation on cycleways. As this was not on the agenda for the Town Council it was agreed to put this on the Town and Community Agenda on 16 February 2021.

PC Hepburn provided the following update from Staffordshire Police

Overall crime figures are down 23%, Crime is down 9% over last 12 months, residential burglaries have reduced by 35%. Theft of motor vehicles is up 8% and there has been an increase in violence and malicious communications. Covid-19 is thought to be a significant reason for this as well as an increase in domestic violence and mental health problems. In relation to Covid-19, the Police are issuing tickets, but the majority of the community are adhering to law and guidelines. Police have secured a closure notice on a problem property in Biddulph and are compiling evidence of two other problem properties. Police have assisted with some parking issues.

Councillor Jones thanked the Police for their work.

61. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Adams, Councillor Harper and for part of the meeting, Councillor Salt

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations –
Councillor Sheldon declared interest in any matter related to Biddulph in Bloom.

Councillor Rogers declared an interest in some of the organisations awarded a councillor grant.

b) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests
None declared

63. MINUTES

- a) The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 12 January 2021 were **approved**. Minutes will be signed when social distancing measures are relaxed
- b) The Minutes of the Recreation and Amenities committee held on 12 January 2021 were **received**
- c) The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 19 January 2021 were **received**
- d) The Minutes of the Town and Committee held on 19 January 2021 were **received**, with a Correction to section 29.
- e) The Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 26 January 2021 were **approved**

64. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Councillor Jones gave an update on Councillor Harper who has been unwell, the Town Council wished him well.

A Carparking Working Group will be starting with in the next couple of weeks and Councillor Jones will be attending with another councillor, yet to be confirmed.

Councillor Jones is looking for nominations for the Civic Awards and advised that forms can be obtained from the Chief Officer.

Due to Covid, it is unlikely that a Civic Ball can take place within the Mayor's term, but Councillor Jones hopes that it can take place at a later date.

Councillor Jones is undertaking a sponsored zip wire.

Biddulph Town Councillor Grants applications can still be made as the deadline has been extended. Applications should be made ASAP.

65. STANDING AGENDA ITEM- COVID RESPONSE UPDATE

The Chief Officer stated that the vaccinations are due to re-start at the Town Hall this Saturday. No volunteers are needed at present.

The Chief Officer has been invited to take part in the Loneliness Campaign for the County and identify any possible role of the Town Council.

Councillor Yates said he had given his name as a future volunteer via the GP, and was keen to volunteer more, so wished to check. The Chief Officer stated that she would confirm with the GP surgeries whether the councillors who have volunteers are needed.

66. STANDING AGENDA ITEM- TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF BIDDULPH TOWN HALL

The Chief Officer is awaiting a response from the District Council about how much they will allocate towards the running of the building. The Chief Officer asked if the Town Hall management should remain as a standing agenda item. It was agreed to keep the agenda item in place, but with a view to removing in the future.

Councillor Rogers asked for the new Town Council contact details to be updated following a change in IT systems.

The Chief Officer confirmed the new contact information as follows:

- Telephone Number 01782 49840
- Email: office@biddulph-tc.gov.uk

67. STANDING AGENDA ITEM- UPDATE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Chief Officer stated that an arson risk assessment has been undertaken for the Biddulph Country Park Visitor Centre, and the risk is deemed to be low.

The health and safety adviser has stated that the legislation that allows local government meetings to take place remotely is due to expire in May so it is strongly recommended that preparations are made, should the legislation not be extended. Councillor Jackson suggested that some representation is made to MPs to allow hybrid meetings which allow a mix of remote and in-person attendance. Councillor Jones and Councillor Yates agreed and noted the improved public engagement since the meetings have been broadcast on social media. Councillor Yates suggested putting the Biddulph Town Council meetings on YouTube for people who are not on Facebook.

68. TO APPROVE THE TOWN COUNCIL'S INSURANCE PROVISION FROM 28 FEBRUARY 2021 FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR (TO BE SENT BY EMAIL)

Please note that the Town Council's Risk Assessment Overview supports this decision-making process and has been sent to Councillors by email.

Cllr Salt had a couple of queries regarding the risk assessment, and wondered if DSE assessments need to be completed for staff. The Chief Officer confirmed that these are taking place now that IT is in place and the office move has taken place; these are undertaken regularly. Councillor Salt asked that this be noted on the risk assessment for insurance.

Councillor Salt also asked how the risk level is determined and if the reasoning could be included on the risk assessment provided. The Chief Officer stated that the individual risk assessments denote this detail but this is an overview of the higher risk and medium risk items. Councillor Salt was happy with the process undertaken.

The risk assessment overview was received. The Chief Officer suggested staying with the current insurance provider as a result of a well-established relationship. There was negligible difference between this quotation and another similar quotation. Councillor Hawley moved to accept the Zurich quote; Councillor Hart seconded. All in favour.

69. TO AGREE A PRECEPT REQUIREMENT FOR 2021-22 OF £370,365.00

Councillor Jackson confirmed that the precept would equal an increase of £1.47 annually for each household in Biddulph, and this was done in the context of fees for burials and allotments not being increased for next year. Councillor Yates highlighted a formatting issue with the press release.

Proposed by Councillor Hall; seconded by Councillor Hart. All in favour.

70. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

Councillor Davies queried the £365 cost for a lock repair for the Visitor Centre. The Chief Officer confirmed that this was for a maglock unit that needed replacement, explaining the cost.

a) The following accounts were approved.

Expenditure above £5000

RGS	£9075.00
Pocket Park, Final Installment	
Biddulph in Bloom	£6250.00
Grant Award, third quarterly payment	
SMDC	£3899.00
Town Hall Busines Rates January 2021	

Expenditure above £500 and below £5000

SESHAA, Approved at Finance and Strategy Management Committee Nov 2020	£661.47
Reissue of Mayors Charity Cheque	

Expenditure below £500

RGS	£458.00
Lengthsman Tasks	
B Webster Plumbing and Heating	£420.00
Water Heater and PRV repalcement, Visitor Centre	
Derbyshire County Council	£385.02
Repair to access control	
Ash Waste Services	£372.24
Town Burial Ground Bins February 2021	

Biddulph Youth and Community Zone Town Councillor Grants	£350.00
SMDC Bus Hub Business Rates January 2021	£320.00
Chartered Insitute of Housing Membership S Haydon 2021	£313.00
Brian Carter Woodhouse Burial Ground Volunteer Costs (February 2021 & back payment)	£280.00
Prism Office IT December 2020	£189.77
Myers and Co Employer Assist Membership, February – March 2021	£150.00
Derbyshire County Council Repair Visitor Centre locking doors	£138.00
Christ Church Biddulph Moor Councillor Grants	£125.00
The Green Tree House Charity Town Councillor Grants	£100.00
The Green Tree House Charity Town Councillor Grants	£100.00
1st Gillow Heath Brownie Unit Town Councillor Grants	£100.00
Biddulph U3A Town Councillor Grants	£100.00
Alan Richardson Reimbursement, MDF for boxing-in in room 2	£99.67

Katelyn Ball Bus Hub Volunteer Costs February 2021	£80.00
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Extra Funds	£75.00
Countrywide Grounds Maintenance Grass Cutting Springfield Road February 2021	£61.40
Michael Peers Reimbursement – Path Repair Materials, Park Lane Allotment	£48.00
Moorland Contract Janitorial Soap Dispensers	£45.00
SPCA Staff Training	£30.00
Sarah Haydon Basic Maintenance Supplies	£29.17
SPCA Staff Training	£25.00
Tidysite Woodhouse Burial Ground Bins January 2021	£23.10
Eon Electricity Town Hall	£20.33
Business Products Photocopier Usage Dec 2020	£18.52

b) The following supplementary accounts, received after the agenda was published, were approved.

Staff Salaries	£11463.69
Staffordshire County Pension Fund Staff Pensions February 2021	£4584.10

D&G Bus		£3014.48
93 Bus Service January 2021		
HMRC		£2904.84
Moorland Contract Cleaning		£1246.38
Bus Hub Cleaning January 2021		
Moorland Contract Cleaning		£1117.08
Biddulph Country Park Visitor Centre Cleaning		
Derbyshire County Council		£745.87
Fire System Works 28/09/2020		
Hanley Print Services		£396.00
Prints with new contact details		
Derbyshire County Council		£365.70
Replace broken lock at Country Park Visitor Centre		
B Webster Plumbing and Heating		£160.00
Plumbing Repairs Town Hall		
Business Products		£52.49
Photocopier Usage January 2021		
Petty Cash		£37.69
Tidy Site		£23.10
Woodhouse Burial Ground Bins February 2021		
Susan Booth		£4.86
Mileage		
Credit Card		£866.33
Facebook	Advert Cost	£1.00
Amazon	Whiteboard	£38.99
Reece Safety	Grit Bins and Scoop	£139.80
Argos	Staff Mobile	£79.95

GiffGaff	Mobile Phone Costs	£8.00
The Insulation Shop	Lagging for Room 2	£60.08
Amazon	Chalk Spray	£5.76
Amazon	Social Distancing Signs	£15.99
C.E.F.	Lightbulbs	£13.68
Allsigns	Caution Signage	£31.75
Amazon	Card, Memory Stick	£33.90
Shaw & Sons Limited	Minute Binder	£97.20
UK Safety Store	Safety Signage	£26.35
Shutterstock	Subscription Cost	£19.00
Amazon	Stationery	£6.99
Amazon	Noticeboards	£66.00
Aosom UK	Office Chairs x 2	£118.89
GiffGaff	Mobile Phone Costs	£8.00
Ikea	Office Storage	£95.00

The meeting closed at 19:22

Signed Date.....