

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 4 MAY 2021

PRESENT

- The Mayor - Councillor Jones
- Deputy Mayor - Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Baddeley
- Councillor Barlow
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Davies
- Councillor Garvey
- Councillor Hall
- Councillor Harper
- Councillor Hart
- Councillor Hawley
- Councillor Jackson
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor Redfern
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Salt
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Smith
- Councillor Swift
- Councillor Yates

Councillor Jones read a statement for the benefit of those viewing the meeting via Facebook regarding etiquette for online meetings.

Councillor Jones also read out the following statement regarding the upcoming legislative changes in relation to Council meetings:

Councillors we are meeting a week early this year due to the fact that after May 6th the emergency legislation to allow us to meet on Zoom expires, and Covid rules mean that we cannot meet in person.

An application to the High Court to extend the emergency legislation to allow virtual meetings to continue after May 6th was dismissed.

The court concluding that:

"... the Secretary of State was correct in November 2016 and July 2019 to say that primary legislation would be required to allow local authority "meetings"

under the 1972 Act to take place remotely. In our view, once the Flexibility Regulations cease to apply, such meetings must take place at a single, specified geographical location; attending a meeting at such a location means physically going to it; and being "present" at such a meeting involves physical presence at that location.

Which means Councillors, that after Thursday this week, if we wish to "officially" meet (i.e. as a Council or Council Committee) it must be physically in the same room.

Given that the rules regarding indoor gatherings at the moment will not allow us to do that at all and, even after May17th, will not allow more than six to gather indoors, this does present problems. We are also mindful that there are some Councillors and the public still shielding so that also has to be considered.

However, we have to work within the rules and, be assured that our officers are investigating options going forward to ensure that the business of this council can continue to be done without interruption.

Can I just conclude by saying that we have very much appreciated the public interest and their input via social media, and we feel very strongly that a virtual element should be included in all future meetings to bring local democracy to the people.

We've had more interaction than ever before and that has been really valuable and, if we could carry on virtually until restrictions are lifted we would. However, to do that under the current regulations would render any decisions made illegal and open to challenge.

Finally, to the public watching, please rest assured that, as we agree dates for meetings, we will publicise them and we hope you will continue your attendance going forward.

1. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR & MAYOR MAKING CEREMONY

I. Nomination, election and signature of Declaration of Acceptance of Office (to be conducted in line with social distancing guidance).

Councillor Jackson nominated Councillor Rushton as Mayor of Biddulph Town Council. He said Councillor Rushton had a long history of working tirelessly for the people of Biddulph and knows that she will be out meeting the people of Biddulph as soon as Covid restrictions allow. Councillor Smith seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations and all Councillors voted in favour to elect Councillor Rushton as Mayor of Biddulph.

II. Presentation of Chains of Office to Mayor and Mayoress/ Consort (to be carried out at an appropriate occasion).

In anticipation of the Mayoral election, the Mayoral Chain had been received by Councillor Rushton. This was presented to the new Mayor by the Consort, Ms Sharon Allman.

III. Speech of Acceptance by Mayor.

Councillor Rushton thanked Councillor Jackson for the nomination and all the Councillors for their support. She said she very much appreciated being elected Mayor of Biddulph and would do all she could to support the people of Biddulph. She also said she would be supporting the Staffordshire Blind, the Foodbanks in Biddulph and also a 'box' to help charities in need.

IV. Confirmation of Amanuenses (if required).

Councillor Rushton confirmed that the Mayor's Consort, Ms Sharon Allman would be supporting her under the Amanuenses Policy during her mayoral term.

V. Speech by outgoing Mayor

Councillor Jones said it had been a great honour to serve as Mayor of Biddulph, despite the restrictions that Covid placed upon the role and the community. Councillor Jones thanked Councillor Rushton, the Chief Officer and the staff of the Biddulph Town Council as well as the Town Crier for their support.

Councillor Jones also thanked the volunteers of Biddulph and said he looked forward to recognising their achievements and contributions at the Mayoral Civic Awards.

Councillor Jones offered further thanks to his wife, the Mayoress, Mrs Anne Jones.

Councillor Jones believed he had raised over £5000 for CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) and thanked all donators for their support. He wished Councillor Rushton the best of luck in the role and offered his support to her during the year.

VI. Vote of thanks

Councillor Hall congratulated Councillor Rushton on her appointment as Mayor.

He stated that it had been an eventful year for both the Town and Town Council during Councillor Jones' year as Mayor. Despite the pandemic, there had been significant changes within Council the management of the Town Hall, Visitor Centre and Bus Hub coming under the Council. He said that Councillor Jones had met challenges head-on, in a straight-talking manner and with persistence. Councillor Hall said that Biddulph had moved forward under Councillor Jones' leadership and thanked Councillor Jones for his, and the Mayoress' hard work.

Councillor Jackson thanked Councillor Jones for his work during his Mayor term. He said that although meetings had sometimes been challenging, he appreciated the friendships and camaraderie that existed beyond the Town Council meetings. Councillor Jackson acknowledged that Councillor Jones hadn't been able to complete the amount of work he wanted to due to the pandemic and it had been a very difficult year, but congratulated Councillor Jones on being able to raise such a significant sum for CRY despite such restrictions.

VII. Presentations to outgoing Mayor

Presentations to the outgoing Mayor will take place when social distancing permits.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Adams.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

a) Disclosable pecuniary interests and dispensations.

Councillor Sheldon declared in an interest in any matter relating to Biddulph in Bloom.

b) Other interests.

None declared.

4. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL TUESDAY 16 JUNE 2020.

The Minutes of the Meeting of 16 June 2020 (signed at the Ordinary Town Council meeting on 14 July 2020) were confirmed. Moved by Councillor Hall seconded by Councillor Hart.

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

a) Nomination, election and signature of Declaration of Acceptance of Office (to be conducted in line with social distancing guidance)

Councillor Hall nominated Councillor Garvey to the position of Deputy Mayor. Councillor Hall noted Councillor Garvey's contribution to the Council and the community. Councillor Jones seconded the nomination. All in favour.

Councillor Garvey thanked Councillors for their support and said he would support Councillor Rushton as much as possible.

b) Presentation of Chains of Office to Deputy Mayor and Mayoress/ Consort(to be carried out at an appropriate occasion)

The presentation of the Chains of Office of the Deputy Mayor will be carried out at a time when social distancing permits.

6. TO CONFIRM THAT THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WILL BE DEFERRED AND WILL BE HELD FACE-TO-FACE IN THE SUMMER, FOLLOWING REMOVAL OF FURTHER LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS

Councillor Hall moved to confirm; Councillor Hart seconded. All in favour.

7. CONSTITUTION

a) APPROVAL OF STANDING ORDERS -To approve Standing Orders (enclosed).

Councillor Hall moved; Councillor Hart seconded. All in favour.

b) APPROVAL OF MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEES –

- i.** To approve the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation document (enclosed)
- ii.** Committee membership to be distributed separately; to **approve** membership for 2021/22:

- a) **Finance Strategy and Management** – Mayor, Deputy Mayor plus twelve members.
- b) **Town and Community** – Mayor, Deputy Mayor plus twelve members.
- c) **Recreation and Amenities** – Mayor, Deputy Mayor plus twelve members.
- d) **Planning**– Mayor, Deputy Mayor plus twelve members.

Councillor Hall moved to accept; Councillor Hart seconded. All in favour.

b. APPROVAL OF MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

~ To **note** that there are no established Sub-Committees in May 2021.

Working Groups exist to cover the following business:

- * Neighbourhood Plan development (Planning Committee)
- * Young People (Town and Community Committee)
- * Christmas Lights (Town and Community Committee)
- * Transport (Recreation and Amenities Committee)
- * Environment and Climate Change (Town and Community Committee)
- * Asset Transfer (directly to Town Council)
- * Biddulph Network (Town and Community Committee)

All Councillors are welcome to attend Working Groups, as voting members.

All councillors agreed.

c. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

To **receive** the Town Council's Financial Regulations, which were approved at the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting on 27 April 2021 (enclosed).

Councillor Hall moved to accept; Councillor Hart seconded. All in favour.

d. CODE OF CONDUCT

To **approve** the Code of Conduct (enclosed).

Councillor Hall moved to accept; Councillor Hart seconded. All in favour.

c) FINANCIAL MANDATE

i.

- a) **Signatories:** Current signatories for the current account being: The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance Committee plus the Chief Officer and Finance and Administration Officer. **(Two members plus one officer to sign)**
- b) **Mayor's Charity Account:** To give authority to the Chief Officer, Finance and Administration Officer and Events and Partnerships Officer to be the signatories for the Mayor's Charity Account **(two to sign)**. The Finance Strategy and Management Committee will receive an annual review of this account.
- c) **Bank Mandate:**

To **resolve** that a banking relationship will be maintained with National Westminster Bank Plc (the Bank), in accordance with the Mandate and that:

- ✓ The individuals identified as Authorised Signatories may, in accordance with the Signing Rules, sign cheques and give instructions for Standing Orders, Direct Debits, electronic payments, banker's drafts and other payments on the Accounts even if it causes an Account to be overdrawn or exceed any limit;
- ✓ Any authorised Signatory may give other instructions or requests for information to the Bank in relation to the Accounts; opening accounts with the same Signing Rules and Authorised Signatories; closing accounts; or other banking services or products;
- ✓ The Bank may accept instructions that do not have an original written signature provided the Bank is satisfied that the instruction is genuine and subject to any other agreement the Bank may require for those instructions;
- ✓ The Customer will provide to the Bank a copy of its constitution and any amendment to the constitution, certified as correct by the Chief Officer.

This Mandate will continue until the Organisation gives the Bank a replacement mandate or the Organisation passes a resolution changing the Signing Rules and/or adding or removing an Authorised Signatory by completing and returning the Change of Signing Authority form in which case this Mandate will continue as amended.

Proposed by Councillor Jones; Councillor Hawley seconded. All in favour.

ii. INTERNAL AUDITOR & MONITORING COUNCILLOR

Appointment of independent Internal Auditor (currently Elizabeth Thompson) plus two Councillors (currently Councillor D Hawley and Councillor C Perkin), to fulfil audit requirements.

Councillor Hall moved to approve; Councillor Hart seconded. All in favour.

ADDITIONAL TOWN COUNCIL ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

d) MINUTES

- a)** Minutes of the meeting the Town Council held on 13 April 2021 were **approved**.

Moved by Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Hart. All in favour.

- b)** The Minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting held on 13 April 2021 were **received**.

Councillor Garvey moved to accept, Councillor Jones seconded. All in favour.

- c)** The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 22 April 2021 were **received**.

Proposed by Councillor Hart, Councillor Garvey seconded. All in favour.

- d)** The Minutes of the Town and Community Committee meeting held on 22 April 2021 were **received**.

Proposed by Councillor McLoughlin, seconded by Councillor Jones. All in favour.

- e)** The Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 27 April 2021 were **approved**

Proposed by Councillor Hall. Seconded by Councillor Perkin. All in favour.

Councillor Jackson asked for an update regarding item 15, a confidential item from this meeting, the Chief Officer will provide this by email.

Councillor Smith asked for a correction to a typing error in section 23. This correction will be made.

e) TO APPROVE THAT WHILST THE PLANNING COMMITTEE CAN NOT MEET VIRTUALLY TO AGREE RECOMMENDATIONS, CONSENSUS WILL BE SOUGHT AMONGST COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT RESPONSES CAN BE PROVIDED TO THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

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

f) TO APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STAFF APPRAISALS HELD IN APRIL 2021 (confidential document to be sent separately)

Councillor Perkin said he fully endorsed the appraisals undertaken.

Proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Perkin. All in favour.

g) ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

a) Accounts received for payment in May 2021

Councillor Hall moved to accept the following accounts received for payment in May 2021. Councillor Perkin seconded. All voted in favour.

Expenditure over £500 and under £5000

The Mayor (name as confirmed on 4 May)	£2535.00
Civic Allowance 2021/22	
Spectra Security	£1560.00
Installation of door entry system	

The Deputy Mayor (name as confirmed on 4 May) £1020.00
Civic Allowance

Evolve IT Support £654.00
Website, Hosting and Support

John Robinson £610.00
Town Crier Honararium 2021/22

Prism £534.37
IT Support 30/04 - 29/05/21

Expenditure under £500

Biddulph Gladiators £225.00
Councillor Grant, Cllr McLoughlin & Councillor Harper.
NOTE: Only to be paid on receipt of a valid grant application form.

Biddulph Cannons £225.00
Councillor Grant, Cllr McLoughlin & Councillor Harper.
NOTE: Only to be paid on receipt of a valid grant application form.

Derbyshire County Council £176.64
Fire System Works carried out 08/02/2021

Katelyn Ball £100.00
Volunteer Expenses May 2021

ICCM £95.00
Corporate Membership 2021/22

Brian Carter	£80.00
Volunteer Expenses May 2021	

Friends of Biddulph Valley Way	£50.00
Councillor Grant, Councillor McLoughlin	

Cleaning and Hygeine Distributors Ltd	£41.02
Cleaning Products	

b) Supplementary accounts received since the agenda was published.

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

Expenditure Greater than £5000

Staff Salaries	£11427.51
May 2021	

Expenditure Between £500 and £5000

Staffordshire Pension Fund	£4681.92
Pension Contributions May 2021	

HMRC	£3241.18
Staff PAYE May 2021	

Expenditure under £500

Ash Waste Services	£454.04
Bins - Town Burial Ground April 2021	

B Webster Plumbing and Heating £300.00

Replace 4 Mixer taps with push buttons, BGCP

Biddulph Predators £225.00

Councillor Grant, Cllr McLoughlin Cllr Harper.

(replaces item on the main agenda for Biddulph Gladiators)

Only to be paid on receipt of a valid grant application form.

Business Products £77.16

Photocopier Usage April 2021

B Webster Plumbing and Heating £60.00

Repairs to toilets at Biddulph Bus Hub

Tidysite £23.10

26/04/2021 Bin Empty, Woodhouse Burial Ground

Matthew Hall £18.76

Reimbursement, Door repair items

Petty Cash £37.67

Expenditure as detailed below

Post Office £13.77

Stamps

Post Office £23.90

Postage

Councillor John Jones Mayors Civic Expenditure, 2020-21 £355.83

Mayors Civic Expenditure, 2020-21, as detailed below

Foodbank Donation in Lieu of Buffet: Sugar, Condiments, Cleaning Items	£80.54
Foodbank Donation in Lieu of Buffet: Toilet Rolls : Disposable Razors	£17.10
Mayors Christmas Cards	£24.69
Council Logos for Christmas Cards	£8.50
Christmas Chocolates for Gunn Street Sorting Office	£7.50
100 Birthday. Flowers and Card	£17.50
100 Birthday. Flowers and Card	£35.00
Zip Wire Fund Raiser	£130.00
100 Birthday Flowers and Card	£35.00

Note that these Civic Expenditure payments will be made from the Mayor's Charity Account. The full Civic Allowance entitlement for 2020-21 was transferred to the Charity Account in March 2021. Please refer to Item 79 (Town Council meeting held 9 March 2021) and Item 12 (Town Council Meeting held 13 April 2021).

Supplementary anticipated expenditure for May / June 2021. Actual payments will be confirmed in the next Town Council meeting.

Business Products	£80.00
Photocopier Usage May 2021	

c) To note a correction to accounts presented to Town Council in April 2021

Biddulph in Bloom were paid £6250 the final instalment of the 2020 grant.

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hall, all in favour.

d) To authorise the payment of the following anticipated expenditure to be received in May and June 2021. Actual payments will be confirmed in the next Town Council meeting, as legislation permits.

Proposed by Councillor Hall; seconded by Councillor Perkin.

Expenditure over £5000

Staff Salaries £12500.00

June 2021

Staff Pension £5000.00

June 2021

Expenditure between £5000 and £500

HMRC £3850.00

Staff PAYE June 2021

D&G Bus Ltd £3550.00

93 Bus May 2021

D&G Bus Ltd £3550.00

93 Bus April 2021

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	£2027.00
Business Rates, Town Hall, June 2021	
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	£2027.00
Business Rates, Town Hall May 2021	
Moorland Contract Cleaning	£1288.88
Bus Hub Cleaning, April 2021	
Moorland Contract Cleaning	£1288.88
Bus Hub Cleaning, May 2021	
Moorland Contract Cleaning	£1155.17
Visitor Centre Cleaning	
Moorland Contract Cleaning	£1155.17
Visitor Centre Cleaning May 2021	
Natwest Business Card	£1000.00
As invoiced, full itemisation to be provided at next Town Council	
Prism	£534.37
IT Support 30/06 - 29/07/2021	
Prism	£534.37
IT Support 30/05 - 29/06/2021	
Expenditure under £500	
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Ash Waste Services	£400.00
Bins - Town Burial Ground	

Tidy site	£220.00
Bins - Town Hall, May 2021	
Prism	£189.79
Telephone Lines April 2021	
Prism	£189.79
Telephone Lines May 2021	
Barry Harrison	£170.00
Skip Hire, Park Lane Allotments	
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	£166.00
Business Rates, Bus Hub, May 2021	
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	£166.00
Business Rates, Bus Hub, June 2021	
Myers and Co	£150.00
HR Advice Retainer May - June 2021	
Myers and Co	£150.00
HR Advice Retainer June- July 2021	
Fifteen Group	£102.00
Wifi and Mobile phones x 2 May 2021	
Fifteen Group	£102.00
Wifi and Mobile phones x 2 June 2021	

Katelyn Ball £80.00
Volunteer Expenses June 2021

Brian Carter £80.00
Volunteer Expenses June 2021

Countrywide Grounds Maintenance £61.40
Springfield Road Grass Cutting May 2021

Tidy Site £23.10
Bins - WBG May 2021

Tidy Site £23.10
Bins - WBG April 2021

E.On Next £8.80
Electricity, Town Hall Christmas Lights Acc April 2021

E.On Next £8.80
Electricity, Town Hall Christmas Lights Acc May 2021

The Meeting Ended at 6.46pm

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