

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 APRIL 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 Hawley
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Salt
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Smith
- Councillor Swift
- Councillor Yates

94. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive verbal or written representations from:

- *Staffordshire County Council representative(s)*

A written report from Councillor Flunder was read about by the Chief Officer.

- There is currently a spike in Covid Cases in Tamworth.
- There are no significant highway reports.
- 83% of drains have been cleared throughout the county.
- Councillor Flunder plans to attend the Environment and Climate Change Working Group meeting on Thursday.
- Councillor Flunder thanked the Council for all their work and is happy to receive queries directly from Councillors or via the Chief Officer.

- *Staffordshire Police*

PCSO Claire Sartin gave an update from Staffordshire Police. Anti-social behaviour is down since last year. The main location where antisocial behaviour is reported is Sainsbury's, but this has significantly reduced over the last 90 days. Since the easing of restrictions there has been a slight increase in issues, but the numbers are still down over the past year.

There are issues at the Grange County Park and the police are deploying extra resources over the weekend. Councillor Jones said that the issues need to be addressed between approximately 10pm to midnight, rather than during the day when there is little to be seen.

Councillor Yates said he feels high visibility patrols are needed round the entrance to Sainsbury's due to the antisocial behaviour. PCSO Sartin noted that there are regular patrols and they will continue.

Councillor Sheldon asked about an incident that occurred the previous week where a car that drove on to the St Johns' Road roundabout, stole clematis stands and then dumped them at the Talbot. The police representative said she would take a note and look in to this but it appeared this had not been reported.

Councillor Rushton asked about apparent drug dealing at Kingsfield Road. The police are liaising with Your Housing, but Covid restrictions are having an impact on addressing the issues. Councillor Rushton said that there is a very strong smell of cannabis at Kingsfield Road and there is someone who is apparently involved in drug dealing.

Councillor Harper asked the police to keep an eye on Castle View as there had been reports of a prowler there today. Councillor Harper also urged Councillors to ensure that if they do know of a potential crime, to ensure it is reported and a crime number is received.

Councillor Rogers said that he believes that some people don't report issues due to difficulties reporting.

Councillor Salt said that she struggled to get through 101, but got a really quick and thorough response through Facebook messenger when recently reporting an issue to the police.

95. APOLOGIES

Councillor Hart, Councillor Jackson and Councillor Adams all sent their apologies.

96. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

a) Disclosable pecuniary interests and dispensations,

Councillor Sheldon declared an interest in anything relating to Biddulph in Bloom,

b) Other interests,

None declared.

97. MINUTES

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting on 9 March 2021 were approved. The Minutes will be signed when restrictions on social distancing have been eased.
- b) The Minutes of the Recreation and Amenities committee held on 9 March 2021 were received.
- c) The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 16 March 2021 were received. Councillor Smith asked that her name be added to apologies.
- d) The Minutes of the Town and Community Committee held on 16 March 2021 were received.
- e) The Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held 23 March 2021 were approved.

98. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION

Councillor Jones noted that this is due to be his last meeting as Mayor. He also stated that the Visitor Centre expression of interests are being reviewed and asked that any Councillors wishing to be involved let the Chief Officer know.

Councillor Jones reminded people that he is fundraising this month and asked for any donations.

99. STANDING AGENDA ITEM – COVID RESPONSE UPDATE

The Chief Officer updated that the vaccinations are continuing to go well at the Town Hall. Town Council Officers have put the venue forward to support and distribute lateral flow tests. There are some continued prescription deliveries, and the Town Hall has opened for a few hours each morning.

100. STANDING AGENDA ITEM – TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF BIDUDLPH TOWN HALL

Quotes for emergency lighting will be shortly circulated to Councillors, when all information has been received. Work to identify fittings to be replaced as part of the Climate Change Action Fund Grant has been started.

Councillor Sheldon asked if the grounds at the Town Hall are going to be managed by the Town Council. The Chief Officer stated that the grounds fall within the lease managed by Biddulph Town Council.

101. STANDING AGENDA ITEM – UPDATE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Chief Officer updated the Council that the order had been placed to connect the fire alarm monitoring system with the intruder alarm to allow improved fire alarm responses.

102. TO APPROVE THE ATTACHED POLICY ON THE USE OF AMMANUENSES

The Chief Officer explained that this Policy is designed to support accessibility for Councillors. The support in the Council Chamber will be provided by either the Chief Officer or Deputy Mayor. However, for Council matters outside of meetings, extra support may be needed, and the Policy addresses how this is managed, and addresses issues around confidentiality.

Councillor Salt asked if this could include a family member, which the Chief Officer confirmed would be the case, and in many cases would be the ideal situation. Councillor Salt suggested contacting support teams in schools who are used to providing accessibility support to see if they have any further advice.

Councillor Jones proposed to accept the Policy

Councillor Perkin seconded the proposal. Councillor Hall added that he supported the document. All Councillors voted in favour.

103. TO CONFIRM RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING

- a) The Support Staffordshire Community Officer will be based in Biddulph Town Hall (no fee to be paid), working closely with Town Council Officers.

- b) Biddulph Town Council to write to the District Council to request a supplementary planning document in relation 20mph limits for new developments.

Councillor Jones moved to accept the recommendations from the Town and Community Committee meeting; Councillor Perkin seconded. All in favour.

104. THE CHIEF OFFICER TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON MEETINGS IN MAY AND JUNE IN LIGHT OF NEW GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE (BREIFING NOTE ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer explained that the emergency which permits Town Council meetings to take place virtually expires on 6 May 2021 and is not being extended. However, due to the number of Councillors, public and staff potentially exceeding thirty, Covid restrictions mean that the Council can't meet face to face until restrictions are further eased.

Three options were presented, continuing virtually, implementing a further scheme of delegation or holding face to face meetings, all of which present their own risks including legislative concerns.

Another option is to hold no meetings between 6 May and 21 June, with approvals being granted in advance; this would mean a very tight deadline for approving audit documents.

Councillor Rogers noted that streaming meetings had improved public engagement and wondered if the meetings could be streamed when face to face meeting resumed.

Councillor Jones proposed meeting on 4 May to carry out the Annual Meeting of the Town Council, and then conducting further meetings as restrictions permit.

Councillor Hawley said that Council meetings must be open to the public, and with face to face meetings, social distancing cannot be ensured. Councillor

Hawley was also concerned that the Planning Committee couldn't return their comments in time for the deadline for consultation responses. He wondered if the temporary scheme of delegation could be used to manage this.

Councillor Yates said he was very concerned about the expiration of the legislation, and felt that this is a backward step. He said he is not in favour of an extended scheme of delegation, and feels that a large venue would be the best way forward for the main meetings. He recommended also expressing the concerns about the legislation to the local Member of Parliament.

Councillor Hall recommended that the Annual Meeting takes place on 4 May and that Planning meetings continue virtually as it is not a decision-making Committee, rather it makes a recommendation which is advisory. Councillor Hall said he wants to ensure that the law is followed; the Annual Meeting should be brought forward.

Councillor Garvey said he had serious concerns about returning to face to face meeting as a number of Councillors are at greater risk from Covid due to health issues and this would restrict their ability to attend. He noted that case law suggests that it may be possible for virtual meetings to continue, and would prefer to go forward this way. Otherwise, he recommended using a scheme of delegation to the Chief Officer for a time limited period.

Councillor McLoughlin said that Town Council is the only body that meets monthly and makes legal decisions. As Committees are only advisory, they can continue virtually. Councillor McLoughlin asked about vaccinations in the Town Hall and whether this would impact on the ability to hold Town Council meetings at the Town Hall.

The Chief Officer clarified that the concern about socially distanced meetings is that the opportunities for public participation are limited and also the logistics of providing sanitisers, regular wiping down and the potential need for microphone equipment would be a challenge. She also wondered how Councillors who have been shielding will feel about being in the Town Hall; if many aren't able to attend there may be an issue having a quorate meeting.

Councillor Salt suggested that the Town Council meeting is held in May with a view for a face to face meeting in June in a bigger venue. She felt that tablets could be used to stream meetings and there would like be few public participants. Councillor Salt said she felt that delegated decisions stifle debate so the only legal option is to return to face to face meetings.

Councillor Yates proposed the Annual Meeting is held on 4 May virtually, June Town Council is held at a socially distanced venue and non-decision making Committees continue virtually in the mean time. Councillor Jones seconded.

The majority of Councillors voted in favour. One Councillor voted against.

105. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

All the following accounts and supplementary accounts were approved.

Expenditure over £5000

RGS Maintenance **£7100.00**

Burial Ground Maintenance - April to October 2021

Expenditure over £500 and below £5000

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council **£2029.25**

Business Rates April 2021 - Town Hall

Ray Gibson **£1300.00**

Storage of Artisan Stall Equipmented April - September 2021

Prism **£759.00**

Cabling Costs Door Entry and Radio Station

Prism **£534.37**

IT services April 2021

Expenditure Below £500

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council **£439.12**

Business Rates 2021/22 - Burial Grounds

Grenke **£439.67**

Photocopier Rental Q1 2021/22

Brian Webster Plumbing and Heating **£270.00**

Repairs to Urinals

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council **£170.00**

Business Rates April 2021 - Wharf Road Toilets

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council £90.00

Moorland Road Allotment Cost Q1 2021/22

Fifteen Group £102.00

Mobile Phone and Wifi

Brian Carter £80.00

Volunteer Expenses April 2021

Katelyn Ball £80.00

Volunteer Expenses April 2021

CommuniCorp £75.00

Subscription to Local Councils Update

Brammers Shoes £55.00

Repair of safety boots

Countrywide Grounds Maintenance £61.40

Springfield Road Grass Cutting

Barry Harrison £35.00

Stop Tap Valve

Cleaning and Hygeine Distributors Ltd £26.39

Hand Towels

E.On Next £7.99

Electricity, Town Hall, February 2021

Expenses paid in March 2021 to allow for payment within the 2020-21 financial year

Biddulph in Bloom £6125.00

Installment 4, 2021-22 grant

Mayor's Charity Account £4165.00

Civil Allowance Transfer

Terraplas	£3451.20
Turf Protection Mats	
Green Tree House Charity	£1000.00
Town Council Grant Award, November 2021	
Hanley Print Services	£393.00
Banners, Leaflets, Foamex Boards and Backdrop	
Moor First School Fund	£250.00
Councillor Grant - Councillor Garvey and Councillor Hawley	
High Peak Borough Council	£256.30
Fire, Health and Safety Advice / Reporting	
Myers and Co	£150.00
HR Advice Retainer April - May 2020	
Churnet Sounds CIC	£125.00
Councillor Grant - Councillor Garvey (Paid December 2021	
Biddulph Local People's Project	£100.00
Councillor Grant - Councillor Barlow	
Business Products	£72.91
Photocopier Usage March 2021	
Ray Gibson	£60.00
Station Road landscaping	
SLCC	£24.00
Staff Training	
Tidysite	£23.10
<u>Expenditure over £5000</u>	
Staff Salaries	£12231.90

April 2021	
Staffordshire Pension Fund	£5080.79
Staff Pension, April 2021	

Expenditure over £500 and under £5000

HMRC	£3839.41
Staff PAYE April 2021	
D&G Bus Ltd	£3537.40
93 Bus Contract - March 2021	
ADT	£1368.19
Fire Alarm Maintenance Contract 2021-22	
Moorland Contract Cleaning	£1288.88
Bus Hub Cleaning, March 2021	
Moorland Contract Cleaning	£1155.17
Visitor Centre Celaning, March 2021	
ADT	£1140.00
Fire Monitoring System Installation	
Rob Standell	£922.00
Lengthsman Work March 2021	
ADT	£876.25
Intrude Alarm Maintenance 2021-22	
Ash Waste Services	£551.78
Bins - Town Burial Ground	

Expenditure under £500

NABMA National Association of British Market Authorities)	£369.00
Subscription 2021/22	
ADT	£357.88
CCTV Maintenanct Contract 2021-22	
Prism	£189.79
Telephones February 2021	
Prism	£189.77
Telephones January 2021	
Water Plus	£99.46
Bus Hub Water Costs - 10/08/2020 - 30/01/2021	
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	£86.92
Town Hall Bins, April 2021	
Robert Pellington (The Asbestos Company)	£75.00

Asbestos Removal, Park Lane Allotments	
Sarah Haydon	£35.41
Reimbursement Operation Forth Bridge	
E.On Next	£8.80
Electricity, Town Hall Christmas Lights Metre, March 2021	
Credit Card Expenditure:	£1503.86
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Carried forward from previous balance	£1.20
Facebook	£6.98
Facebook advert	
HSQE	£18.00
Staff Training - Fire Marshal	
HSQE	£150.00
Staff Training - IOSH Managing Safely	
CEF	£99.18
Light bulbs	
Post Office	£13.77
Postage	
Royal Mail	£66.00
Stamps	
Home Bargains	£30.60
Stationery, First Aid and Maintenance	
Amazon	£35.51
Stationery, Commonwealth Flag	
GiffGaff	£8.00
Office Mobile Phone Cost	
The Workplace Depot	£64.78
Barriers	
Wickes	£18.00
Paint	
Amazon	£25.99
Floor paint	
UK Safety Store	£11.24
Signage	
Shelter	£264.00
Staff training	
Amazon	£6.99

Yellow Ribbon	
Amazon	£8.99
Black Ribbon	
All Signs	£426.31
Dementia Friendly Signage	
Facebook	£1.00
Facebook advert	
Post Office	£18.30
Postage	
Post Office	£48.00
Stamps	
Refund of facebook ad cost	£-1.20
Value Products	£32.64
Safety Signage	
Shuttershock	£19.00
Monthly Subscription Cost March - April	
Chells	£122.58
Timber and screws	
GiffGaff	£8.00
Caretaker Mobile Phone Cost	
Petty Cash	£34.58
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Sainsbury's	1.75
Cleaning Supplies	
B&M	6.98
Cleaning Supplies	
Snelsons	5.85
Key Cutting	
Biddulph Flower Shop	20
Flower Arrangement, Operation Forth Bridge	

The meeting ended at 7.08pm

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