

## Biddulph Town Council

### Action Plan 2021-22



#### Introduction

Biddulph Town Council prepares an annual action plan to ensure that decision-making is transparent, and priorities are appropriately resourced. Following an unprecedented year in 2020-21, the Town Council made good progress with the actions that had been agreed, but also noted that there were some areas where additional input was needed in 2021-22. These items have been carried forward into this action plan.

The Town Council is aspirational and seeks to provide high quality operational services, but also to drive forward strategic capital improvements in the town.

There are five key documents that underpin the strategic priorities of the Town Council:

1. This action plan, revised every six months and refreshed annually
2. The Neighbourhood Plan- referendum due Autumn 2021
3. The Neighbourhood Development Order- referendum due Autumn 2021
4. The Regeneration Plan; a five year document, focussing priorities for the regeneration of the town
5. The Environment and Climate Change action plan; developed following a public meeting in Autumn 2019 and updated by a dedicated Working Group.

These documents were all developed following identification of key priorities by the community. The Town Council continuously seeks to represent the community, building stronger communities and providing good governance.

The following opportunities are available to communities to identify priorities for the town:

- Public participation at the beginning of each Council meeting.
- The publishing of agendas and minutes for all Council meetings on the website, in the office window and on a notice board within the town.
- Active involvement in the Annual Town Meeting with its public question time.
- The annual External Audit provides the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet. A synopsis of the financial accounts is published within the Annual Report.
- The Town Council Grant Scheme and the Town Councillors' Community Grant Fund identify voluntary and community sector priorities.
- The ability to provide Town Council information, when requested, to those with a need for alternative formats or languages.
- Making Councillor contact details available on the website.
- News and events are publicised through the website and a variety of social media platforms.
- When the Council is considering specific issues, methods of engagement such as surveys, focus groups/ workshops or seeking comments through social media may be used.

Further information is available in the Town Council's Community Engagement Statement.

The priorities are attached to standing Committees, but may be delegated to Working Groups. This action plan is reviewed by the Finance Strategy and Management Committee.

(TCC- Town and Community Committee, RAC- Recreation and Amenities Committee, FSM- Finance Strategy and Management Committee, PC- Planning Committee)

No.	Aim	Key Task	Funding allocated
<p><b>Town and Community Committee</b>  <b>Overall Strategic Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote opportunities for economic success of the area, working with High Street traders and businesses.</li> <li>• Work to become greener in our activities, lobbying those who have key responsibilities for improvements and supporting our communities.</li> <li>• Signpost and inform residents and visitors, guiding them through the range of services available to them.</li> <li>• Improve safety and reduce anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Improve the wellbeing of the people of Biddulph.</li> </ul>			
1	Provide Support and Information to Town Centre traders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Communicate the priorities identified in the Regeneration Plan to ensure priorities are reflective of public opinion.</li> <li>b) Be business-friendly. We will investigate: digital connectivity/ Wi-Fi hotspots; Business Improvement Districts; ‘Buy Local’ schemes; options for embryo and pop-up businesses; and, lobby to provide support with business rates.</li> <li>c) Ensure ‘Welcome Back Funding’ is spent on appropriate initiatives to encourage the community to feel confident in the town centre, post- covid.</li> <li>d) Work to establish a traders forum. We appreciate that business owners in the town have a wealth of valuable experience to support these proposals.</li> <li>e) Consideration of a shop front grant scheme in line with the Neighbourhood Development Order.</li> </ul>	EMR- Neighbourhood Plan Implementation General Fund- Regeneration budget
2	Enhancement of partnerships within the town	Continue to work on Biddulph Network, Dementia action plan, Tree Charter actions, collaborate with Friends Groups, health and mental health partners and support for the voluntary sector.	Dedicated support through Events and Partnerships Officer. General Fund budgets allocated for Dementia Action Plan and grants scheme
3	Consider public realm improvements in the town centre, to enhance the appeal of the town for visitors and the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Consider pedestrianisation of the town centre and/ or a ‘flexible event space’ following further consultation. This will necessitate the development of town centre improvement programmes that attract grant funding.</li> <li>b) Work with Amey and Staffordshire County Council to identify public realm improvements that are both easily achievable and aspirational.</li> <li>c) Promote Artisan Market and Fresh Food Friday and consider appropriate improvements.</li> <li>d) Ensure that enhancements to public realm within the town centre link to surrounding green spaces.</li> </ul>	EMR- Neighbourhood Plan implementation EMR- Highways Development General Fund- Regeneration
4	Understand who uses our town and when the peak usage times are.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Invest in footfall analysis; understand the anchors and enhance the ‘offer’.</li> <li>b) Enhance signage to ensure visitors are directed to key areas of the town.</li> </ul>	EMR- Neighbourhood Plan implementation EMR- Highways Development General Fund- Regeneration

No.	Aim	Key Task	Funding allocated
5	Work with key enforcement agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour within then town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure that CCTV provision within the town provides a deterrent for damage to public assets</li> <li>b) Continue to ensure that the relationship with the Police is positive and supportive.</li> </ul>	EMR- Projects
6	Implement actions from the Environment and Climate Change Working Group, delivering key environmental improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Engage with national projects such as the Refill scheme.</li> <li>b) Enhance open spaces and biodiversity.</li> <li>c) Explore options to undertake additional mapping with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust</li> <li>d) Enhance reputation of 'Garden Town of Staffordshire'</li> <li>e) Improve flood risk areas</li> <li>f) Create safe links and spaces within the town, focusing on the needs of cyclists and walkers in the area.</li> </ul>	EMR- Environment and Climate Change EMR- Projects
7	Complete restoration projects and protection of heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Establish a 'local listing' process that takes into consideration our community assets and heritage features.</li> <li>b) Work to enhance, restore and improve these assets, where possible.</li> <li>c) Deliver MPB projects and identify other options.</li> <li>d) Restoration of war memorial.</li> </ul>	General Fund- Regeneration EMR- Projects
8	Enhance arts and culture in the town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Work with creative and artistic communities to support and showcase the incredible talent within our community, promoting festivals and community events.</li> <li>b) Work with partners to apply for grant funding to support new and emerging projects that will increase access to arts within the town.</li> <li>c) Increase opportunities to engage is art and cultural activities.</li> </ul>	EMR- Projects General Fund- New Events
9	Enhance tourism opportunities within the town, increasing the number of people that visit the town and choose to spend time here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Create opportunities for attractions to promote their offer within Biddulph Town Hall.</li> <li>b) Endeavour to retain visitors from Biddulph Grange, attracting them into the town.</li> <li>c) Explore opportunities at Biddulph Grange Visitor Centre.</li> <li>d) Print and distribute Biddulph map</li> <li>e) Improvements to <a href="http://www.biddulph.co.uk">www.biddulph.co.uk</a> website</li> <li>f) Improved signage in and around the town.</li> <li>g) Support for walking and Ramblers initiatives.</li> <li>h) Consider membership of Enjoy Staffordshire.</li> </ul>	EMR- Tourism enhancements General Fund- Tourism
10	Improve health and wellbeing opportunities for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Enhancements to cycling provision within the town.</li> <li>b) Pursue the installation of a Changing Places facility within the town centre (including shower facilities for cyclists).</li> <li>c) Commence phase 2 of the Station Road community garden, ensuring license/ lease arrangements are in place with SMDC.</li> </ul>	EMR- Projects General Fund- New Events EMR- Development of Station Road project.

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		<p>d) Provide opportunities to purchase fresh seasonal food through markets and events, which also promote existing town centre traders.</p> <p>e) Ensure appropriate management arrangements are in place for fountains.</p>	
11	Continue to lead and develop community events, providing and encouraging volunteering opportunities	<p>a) Continue to work on events such as the Biddulph Festival, Christmas Lights, Volunteer events, heritage celebrations, etc.</p> <p>b) Lead town with Ceremonial occasions.</p> <p>c) Identify new opportunities to promote the town centre, e.g. the Classic Vehicle Event.</p>	General Fund budgets allocated for Events, Tourism and Christmas Lights. Grants scheme available for local organisations. EMR- Tourism enhancements
12	Provide services and support for young people	<p>a) Work with Community Council to develop a youth vision.</p> <p>b) Work with Biddulph Youth and Community Zone to establish the effectiveness of a detached youth worker scheme/ disco.</p> <p>c) Facilitate Young People's Working Group.</p> <p>d) Work with School's Learners Forum</p> <p>e) Support 'Staged' youth theatre project.</p> <p>f) Consider enhancements of play opportunities and youth facilities.</p>	EMR- Projects, youth facilities
13	Develop innovative and imaginative uses for the Bus Hub	<p>a) Work with communities to develop ad hoc exhibition and event space</p> <p>b) Work with Young People's Working Group to identify detached youth work opportunities</p>	EMR- Town Hall (and Toilet Blocks) Development
<p><b>Finance Strategy and Management Committee</b></p> <p><b>Overall Strategic Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee the strategic direction of the Town Council.</li> <li>• Manage the Council's assets and resources responsibly and transparently.</li> <li>• Be an exemplar of Local Government.</li> </ul>			
14	Management of Community Facilities	<p>a) Consider future investment in the Town Hall and promotion of the asset.</p> <p>b) Ensure there is a clear role for Biddulph Town Hall, Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre and the public convenience buildings within the town centre</p> <p>c) Effective management of health and safety, including statutory testing.</p> <p>d) Ensure appropriate management of tenancies and new opportunities for tenant creation.</p>	EMR- Town Hall (and toilet block) Development EMR- Projects
15	Ensure GDPR Compliance	<p>a) Implementation and monitoring of Confidentiality and Information Management Policy.</p> <p>b) Consideration of working with a Data Protection Officer from Staffordshire County Council.</p> <p>c) IT Working Group to determine need for Councillor email addresses and specific Town Council IT equipment.</p>	General Fund- Office Costs

No.	Aim	Key Task	Funding allocated
16	Continuous monitoring of Asset Register	a) Effective monitoring of fixed assets and Town Council owned property. b) Develop process for appropriate disposal of assets	General Fund- Office Costs
17	Regular review of policies	a) Ensure Town Council is operating legally and with transparency. b) Solicitor instructed to provide employment advice on retainer basis. c) Development of Business Continuity Plan and Emergency Planning document, providing strategies for dealing with future possible outbreaks.	Chief Officer responsibility General Fund- Office Costs
18	Administer community-led grants scheme	a) Provide support for local organisations through the main grant fund and the Town Councillors' Community Grant fund. b) Ensure evaluation takes place in robust manner to provide feedback on impact of grant process.	General Fund- Grants
19	Effective management of risk	a) Continue to review and assess risk, to be reported to Council annually. b) Ensure appropriate insurance cover for new and emerging asset management.	General Fund- Training
20	Consideration of investments and use of earmarked reserves.	a) To keep income and expenditure under review b) To invest reserves in low-risk financial services.	FSM Committee to lead.
<p><b>Recreation and Amenities Committee</b></p> <p><b>Overall Strategic Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the Council's operational services effectively to meet the needs to the communities we serve.</li> <li>• Strive for continuous improvement, lobbying partners to make improvements to assets within the town.</li> </ul>			
21	Effective provision of Lengthsman activities	Ongoing review of Lengthsman scheme including consideration of wider grass cutting activities.	General Fund- Lengthsman
22	Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre	a) Ensure building is fit for purpose and well maintained. b) Work with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to extend the area of responsibility and also to develop events collaboratively with the Friends Group. c) Consider the financial viability of the building beyond 2021.	EMR- Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre refurbishment
23	Improvement of Highways	a) Work with SCC to improve parking on North High Street; consider bollards in alley off John Street. b) To consider speed and use of town centre highways roads, in partnership with Amey and Staffordshire County Council. c) Install new signage at entrance of Biddulph	EMR- Highways Developments General Fund- Regeneration



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24	Development of Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Continue to look for development opportunities, particularly Shepherd/ Slater Street.</li> <li>b) Work with existing sites to ensure sites managed appropriately.</li> </ul>	General Fund- Allotments
25	Maintain and monitor footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Work with Ramblers to identify issues and resolve these via Staffordshire County Council.</li> <li>b) Identify small improvements that are possible with BTC funding.</li> <li>c) Lengthsman to keep some town footpaths clear of debris and overgrown vegetation.</li> </ul>	General Fund- Footpaths General Fund- Lengthsman
26	Effective management of Burial Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To keep in obedience introduction of Exclusive Rights of Burial</li> <li>b) Improvements to drainage in Section C</li> <li>c) Resurface footpaths in Section M and C</li> <li>d) RE-visit tree planting priorities</li> <li>e) Introduce Memorial Testing</li> <li>f) New row to be installed in Garden of Remembrance</li> <li>g) Clarify ideas around new Garden of Remembrance development</li> </ul>	General Fund- Burial Grounds EMR- Future burial area, GOR development
27	Effective maintenance of Town Council Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure riparian duties at Butterfly Gardens are undertaken</li> <li>b) Develop proposals for grass cutting that finds an appropriate balance between improving biodiversity and ensuring areas are 'tidy'</li> <li>c) Complete Pocket Park and identify new areas for improvement.</li> <li>d) Develop Tree Planting Strategy</li> <li>e) Identify training on ancient and veteran trees.</li> </ul>	General Fund- Butterfly Garden, Maintenance of Springfield Road EMR- Projects
28	Improvement of transport options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Management and monitoring of 93 bus service.</li> <li>b) Active Working Group tackling range of public transport issues, including innovative approaches to working with schools at peak times.</li> <li>c) Consider improvements to transport and infrastructure within the town centre, focusing on bus and taxi services.</li> </ul>	General Fund- 93 Bus EMR- Highways Development
<b>Planning Committee</b> <b>Overall Strategic Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent residents on key planning and strategic issues</li> </ul>			
29	Provide timely responses to Planning applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To ensure that responses to Planning applications are transparent and consistent.</li> <li>b) Work with SMDC to develop training opportunities.</li> </ul>	Planning Committee to lead.
30	To develop/ implement the Neighbourhood Plan	Support SMDC plan for consultation and examination of the Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order; referendum planned for Autumn 2021.	Planning Committee to lead.