

## **MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **PRESENT**

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

The Deputy Mayor noted that he had received a request to move agenda item 37 into a confidential section of the meeting; proposed by Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Jones and approved.

### **28. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*To receive verbal or written representations from:*

- *Staffordshire County Council representative(s)*

Councillor Flunder updated Councillors in relation to a number of County Council projects:

- 'Grab a job', pop- up centres and testing centres were still operating across the County.

- There had been a Highways/ DHP Working Group meeting; this would be reported later that night.
- The new access for Aldi was being installed, with diversions in place.
- Resurfacing activity had generated complaints in Biddulph East; this was being tackled.
- The hedge at the bottom of Park Lane would be tackled by the Highways Inspector.
- Statistics are available in relation to County issues that had been resolved.
- Councillor Flunder had received a warm welcome at the gym at the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone; he would continue to support this.
- The Bowling Club had held an open day, which Councillor Flunder had attended.
- There would be a restructure of the Corporate Parenting team; Councillor Flunder had requested that the Town Council receive a presentation.
- There had been a meeting of Prosperous Committee; the future of bus services would be considered in January/ February 2022. Councillor Flunder had requested that the Town Council should attend.
- There were a number of environmental projects; Councillor Flunder thanked Councillors for inviting him on the footpath walk.
- Councillor Flunder didn't have information about the 'DRT' bus services; this doesn't involve Biddulph.
- Brown Lees Community Project would begin soon.
- The vacant seat scheme would not be available because there is insufficient time to upgrade the buses.

Councillor Rogers asked whether it is appropriate to stand in the Chamber when addressing the Mayor; it was confirmed that this is usual practice.

Councillor Rogers felt that 9 weeks is a long time for the Aldi road changes; Councillor Flunder understood this would be the maximum time.

Councillor Yates had a query about the traffic lights on Station Road onto the inner relief road; the magnetic strip needs re-positioning. Councillor Flunder would pass this on to Councillor Lawson.

Councillor Jackson queried whether the loading bay on North High Street was funded by the DHP grant; Councillor Flunder believed this was the case, but would ask Councillor Lawson to confirm.

Councillor Garvey asked whether this information could be circulated to Town Council.

Councillor Jones asked about the rural bus service; this had been raised in April. There were still no answers and Councillor Jones did not feel this was good enough. Councillor Flunder would try again.

Councillor Sheldon wondered whether there would be repairs to kerbs on the roundabouts when the Aldi roadwork was done. Councillor Flunder would try to find out.

Councillor Salt noted that there is an email address attached to this notification; this person may be able to provide some information.

Councillor Garvey queried when pavements would be resurfaced on Lyneside Road; is there a prioritisation process and timescale for completion. This would be passed to Councillor Lawson.

Councillor Garvey had a query about hedges on Woodhouse Lane; vehicles were forced to drive in the middle of the road.

Councillor Salt noted that there had been another accident on Grange Road. No response had been received.

Councillor Flunder noted that all issues should be logged on the Highways system, as well as contacting Councillors directly.

Councillor Garvey asked that Councillor Lawson try to attend meetings in future.

Councillor Harper noted that a beacon had been demolished at the Grange Road junction; this had not been replaced and had been gone for three years.

Councillor Lawton provided clarification about the road closures; it appeared that closures would be overnight.

- *Staffordshire Police*

A representative was unable to attend.

**The Mayor confirmed that attendees will be named in the Minutes, unless otherwise instructed.**

## **29. APOLOGIES**

The following apologies and reasons for absence were approved:

- The Mayor - Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Hawley
- Councillor Smith

## **30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

a) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations:  
The Chief Officer noted that she had an interest in a bus scheme that had previously been mentioned by Councillor Flunder.  
Expenses would be received by Councillor Jones following approval of accounts.

b) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests:  
Councillor Sheldon in any matter relating to Biddulph in Bloom.

## **31. MINUTES**

a) To **approve and sign** the Minutes of the meeting of the Special Town Council held on 27 July 2021

Moved by Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Jones and approved.

b) To **approve and sign** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 27 July 2021

Moved by Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Perkin and approved.

Councillor Jones queried whether there would be a Mayoral Awards ceremony; the Chief Officer had asked the Mayor to identify a date with Councillor Jones.

c) To **receive** the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1 September 2021

Moved by Councillor Garvey, seconded by Councillor Yates and approved.

### 32. MAYORS COMMUNICATIONS

Councillor Rushton had provided an update about the opening of the Hideaway Café. She had also attended the Stone and Congleton Civic Services and the opening of the gym at the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone.

The Classic Vehicle Show had been a fabulous day; Councillor Garvey thanked Councillors Davies, Rogers and the Town Council team for organising the event.

Councillor Davies thanked Councillors for marshalling or supporting the event; thanks also to Rooster, the team at the Town Council and Churnet Sound.

Councillor Jones thanked Councillors Rogers and Davies; it was wonderful to see the High Street 'normal' again.

Councillor Hall also offered his thanks for a successful event.

Councillor Garvey noted that the Civic Service would be on Sunday 17 October.

Councillor Rogers thanked Councillors for their kind words; all being well, this would take place again next year.

### 33. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS:

- a) To **receive** an update on the Town Council's covid pandemic response

The Chief Officer noted that flu and covid-boosters would be offered at the Town Hall into the New Year.

- b) To **receive** an update on the management of Biddulph Town Hall  
The Chief Officer noted that the Finance, Strategy and Management Committee would receive a paper about the first year of management activities, with recommendations.

- c) To **receive** an update on health and safety  
The Chief Officer noted that there had been a Health and Safety Audit at the end of July; Councillor Harper and the Chief Officer had scrutinised this report. The situation in the Town Hall is an 'improving picture'. There was one concern in relation to the storage of Police bikes; these had been dealt with. Some resurfacing work would be needed, with budget consideration, going forward.

**34. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR JONES: TO APPROVE A RESPONSE IN RELATION TO RECENT ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT AMBULANCE PROVISION IN THE TOWN**

Councillor Jones is a retired paramedic; the service had been very good previously; he was increasingly dismayed. The crews are heroes, 'lions led by donkeys'. There is a reduction in cover, dual crewed ambulances are not a better service in comparison to response vehicles. It does not seem that patient safety is important. There are now proposals to remove the community ambulance service from Biddulph. Councillor Jones feared that this is a 'done deal'.

The ambulance has been taken out of Biddulph for the last 18-month. Now there are no community first responders; now made too onerous for volunteers. This is about saving money and meeting national targets; the town is being neglected by stealth.

This Town Council should write to the West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS); Councillor Jones urged the public to write to the Member of Parliament and the WMAS. There is also a petition that could be signed.

Councillor Salt wondered what the response should be and noted that the ambulance does not return to Biddulph after 10am each day. How does this community get what it wants? People have been neglected for the last 18 months. There is a lack of funding for this service.

Councillor Jones responded that the ambulance never comes back to Biddulph after it has gone to Stoke. This is why response cars are better; a paramedic would attend to the patient and the car would stay in Biddulph. Councillor Jones was aware of occasions where the service had failed patients. He was doubtful about the data.

Councillor Perkin felt that statistics were necessary, so that examples could be used. Response times then and now were important; the Town Council's first action should be to request this information.

Councillor Rogers was concerned that 999 services should not be affected. There is too much work and too few staff; the first responders should be resurrected.

Councillor Jones felt that community volunteers should be there as well as the response vehicle, not instead of. A Freedom of Information request should be made.

Councillor McLoughlin felt that the Town Council had been misled when the rapid response vehicle (RRV) had been removed; it was essential to keep the ambulance presence in the town as the area was rural.

Councillor Yates noted that these were difficult times and speculated that once this provision had gone, it is unlikely to return. In addition to the loss of service from the WMAS, there were also less Police in the town.

Councillor Jackson was concerned that this decision had already been made; he would wait to see what happened at the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) Health Scrutiny Committee the following day. Information should be presented to Councillors at this session.

Councillor Harper had used the ambulance a number of times this year; on one occasion, it had come from Lichfield. This was not acceptable.

Councillor Hart also noted that his partner had been taken ill. Ambulances were 'stacked up' at the Accident and Emergency Unit. Councillor Jones confirmed that ambulances are 'sucked' into the middle.

There was a discussion about the information that would be requested in a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. It was agreed that there would be a two-stage response; a letter would be written when the FOI data was received.

Information requested would be:

- Data for the past two years (since the RRV was removed) August 2019- August 2021  
Please include response times within the parish of Biddulph: speed of response, nature of response and outcome for patient.
- Data for the previous two years (during the existence of the RRV) August 2017- August 2019  
Please include response times within the parish of Biddulph: speed of response, nature of response and outcome for patient.

When the letter was sent to the WMAS, a copy should be sent to the Member of Parliament.

This approach was proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Salt and agreed.

### **35. PETITIONS:**

- a) To **approve** the attached Petitions Policy.
- b) To **note** that a petition has been received and will be processed in line with the approved Petitions Policy.

Councillor Yates presented a number of proposed changes to the Petitions Policy (on behalf of the Labour Group), which had not been seen by other Councillors in advance.

Councillor Hall proposed that this interim policy should be accepted and then reviewed, enabling the Town Council to deal with the petition that had been received. Seconded by Councillor Jones.

Councillor Salt proposed that both items should be deferred for further discussion at the Finance Strategy and Management Committee.

Councillor Jones withdrew his support of the first proposal.

Councillor Jackson seconded the proposal put forward by Councillor Salt.

There was a vote and it was agreed to defer the policy and consideration of the petition until the Finance, Strategy and Management Committee.

### **36. TO AGREE A TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE IN RELATION TO THE HIGHWAYS CONSULTATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A LOADING BAY IN NORTH HIGH STREET (EMAIL AND PLAN ATTACHED)**

Councillor Davies noted that this issue had been going on for some time. He perceived that the sensible place for the loading bay was in the middle of the street and queried why there had been a change.

Councillor Jackson was in favour of this project, but queried where the funding had come from.



It was agreed that the Town Council would provide a positive response; the Chief Officer would clarify the location and the funding.

### **37. LEGAL ADVICE**

- a) To **approve** that this Council will seek legal advice in relation to repeated unsubstantiated claims that may damage the reputation of the Town Council.
- b) To **approve** that this Council will seek legal advice in relation to repeated unsubstantiated claims that may damage the reputation of Town Councillors and staff working for the Town Council.

It had been agreed to move this item into a confidential section of the meeting.

### **38. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE**

- a) The following accounts to be paid in **September 2021**:

#### **Expenditure between £500 and £5000**

<b>D&amp;G Bus Services Ltd</b>	£3229.80
93 Bus August 2021	
<b>Staffordshire Moorlands District Council</b>	£2027.00
Business Rates, Town Hall, September 2021	
<b>Moorland Contract Cleaning</b>	£1315.32
Bus Hub Clean August 2021	
<b>Moorland Contract Cleaning</b>	£1315.32
Bus Hub Clean July 2021	
<b>Moorland Contract Cleaning</b>	£1178.63
Visitor Centre Clean August 2021	
<b>Moorland Contract Cleaning</b>	£1091.42
Visitor Centre Clean July 2021	
<b>Ignite</b>	£1050.72
Boiler Repair	

**R G Standell** £600.00  
Pocket Park Soil and level

**Prism** £534.37  
IT Support August - September 2021

**Expenditure below £500**

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**Ash Waste Services** £414.50  
Town Burial Ground Bins Sept 2021

**Parish Online** £378.00  
Annual Cost

**Hanley Print Services** £332.40  
Vehicle Show Banners and Boards

**Prism** £194.34  
Telephones July 2021

**Market Stall Contractors** £180.00  
Artisan Market Stall Erection 1 October 21

**Staffordshire Moorlands District Council** £161.00  
August Fishing Ticket Sales

**Myers & Co** £150.00  
HR Advice Retainer September

**Fifteen Group** £102.00  
Wifi and Office Mobile Phones

**Brian Carter** £80.00  
Volunteer Expenses September 2021

**Katelyn Ball** £80.00  
Volunteer Expenses September 2021

**John Jones** £75.85  
Reimburse Paint for Visitor Centre

<b>Jodie Hancock</b> Reimburse Visitor Centre Hi-Vis	£71.00
<b>WaterPlus</b> Town Burial Ground Water	£70.87
<b>Tidysite</b> Town Hall and VC Bins	£62.10
<b>Eon Next</b> Electricity, Christmas Lights Account	£48.64
<b>Tidysite</b> Town Hall Bin Empties 23/08/2021	£47.40
<b>Tidysite</b> Town Hall Bins 16/08/2021	£47.40
<b>Tidysite</b> Town Hall Bin Empty 05/07/2021	£47.40
<b>Business Products</b> August Photocopier Usage	£47.11
<b>Tidysite</b> Town Hall Bin Empty 30/08/2021	£41.40
<b>Tidysite</b> Town Hall Bin Empty 30/08/2021	£41.40
<b>Alan Richardson</b> Reimbursement Repair Items	£32.95
<b>WaterPlus</b> Woodhouse Burial Ground Water	£27.82
<b>Scottish Power</b> Electricity, Station Road May - Aug 21	£27.41

<b>Applied Logo Services</b> Fleece	£25.34
<b>Garth Machin</b> Reimburse padlock Woodhouse Burial Ground	£22.58
<b>Tidysite</b> Visitor Centre bin empty	£20.70
<b>Hanley Print Services</b> A1 Poster Printing	£18.00
<b>WaterLogic</b> Water Cooler Rental	£6.00

**b) To note the following payments made in August 2021**

**Expenditure greater than £5000**

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<b>Staff Salaries</b> Salaries August 2021	£10,691.39
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**Expenditure between £500 and £5000**

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<b>Staffordshire Pension Fund</b> Staff Pensions August 2021	£4470.35
<b>HMRC</b> Staff PAYE August 2021	£3366.60
<b>Moorlec Electrical Services Ltd</b> Town Hall Emergency Lighting Remedial s	£1188.00
<b>Eon</b> Replacement Lamp Pole, Robin Hill	£1050.28
<b>Esther Gladstone</b> Reimbursement of Visitor Centre Fittings	£517.19

<b>Ash Waste Services</b>	£516.18
Town Burial Ground Bins, August 2021	

**Expenditure below £500**

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<b>Shaw and sons</b>	£374.40
Minute Book, Burial Register	

<b>High Peak Borough Council</b>	£239.15
Health and Safety Advice	

<b>Moorland Contract Janitorial</b>	£122.10
Cleaning Products	

<b>Staffordshire Moorlands District Council</b>	£105.00
Fishing Ticket Sales	

<b>Brian Webster Plumbing and Heating</b>	£90.00
Country Park Thermostat Repair	

<b>Thorin Creed</b>	£60.00
Visitor Centre Floor Plan	

<b>WaterLogic</b>	£52.42
Water Cooler rental and usage	

<b>WaterPlus</b>	£40.27
Water Supply, Bus Hub Toilets	

<b>Derbyshire County Council</b>	£23.00
Shortfall in payment for visitor centre mag lock repair.	

<b>Tidysite</b>	£20.70
Bin Empties 09/08/2021 Town Hall	

<b>Tidysite</b>	£20.70
Town Hall Bin Empties 02/08/2021	

<b>Sarah Haydon</b>	£18.90
Milage - Transporting Audit Documents	

c) To consider supplementary accounts

Supplementary accounts were presented:

**Expenditure greater than £5000**

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**Staff Salaries** £11730.46

**Rob Standell** £7100.00  
Burial Ground Maintenance Oct - Mar 2021

**Expenditure between £500 and £5000**

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**Staffordshire Pension Fund** £4909.27  
Staff pensions Sept 2021

**HMRC** £3735.79  
Staff PAYE Sept 2021

**Rob Standell** £1042.00  
Lengthsman Work July - Sept 2021

**Rob Standell** £900.00  
Visitor Centre Landscaping Maintenance

**Rob Standell** £630.00  
Visitor Centre Landscaping Materials

**ADT** £523.20  
Visitor Centre Call Out (discount applied)

**Applied Logo Services** £502.80  
Hi Vis Jackets

**Rob Standell** £470.00  
Visitor Centre Landscaping Plant Hire

**AJ Environmental** £300.00  
Mole Control, Woodhouse Burial Ground

<b>Biddulph Local People's Project</b> Provision of refreshments for Car Show	£150.00
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**Expenditure less than £500**

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<b>Hanley Print Services</b> Map Printing	£60.00
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<b>Jodie Hancock</b> Reimburse tripods and cleaning supplies	£52.01
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<b>Biddulph Local People's Project</b> Provision of refreshments for tea with the town council	£50.00
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<b>Moorland Contract Cleaning</b> Cleaning Supplies	£35.10
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<b>Mark Edwards</b> Travel Expenses March - Aug 2021	£9.68
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**Credit Card Expenditure**

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<b>EIS</b> Lightbulbs	£234.06
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<b>A1 Mini Slips</b> Visitor Centre Skip	£145.00
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<b>Amazon</b> Visitor Centre Paint	£130.32
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<b>A J Philpott</b> Timber for Storage Cupboards	£123.93
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<b>B&amp;Q</b> Visitor Centre Paint	£100.46
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<b>Staffordshire Moorlands District Council</b> Gardens Sacks	£70.00
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<b>Eventbrite</b> Future Communities Event	£38.93
<b>High Peak Borough Council</b> Health and Safety Advice	£36.11
<b>Argos</b> Toaster for Town Hall Kitchen	£34.99
<b>Southern Regalia</b> Mourning Rosettes	£33.00
<b>Amazon</b> Visitor Book, GDPR Compliant	£31.80
<b>Screwfix</b> Toilet Seat	£29.99
<b>Safety Brands UK</b> Caretaker Safety Shoes	£28.99
<b>Shutterstock</b> Subscription	£19.00
<b>Ebay</b> Black Armbands	£16.99
<b>Facebook</b> Adverts	£9.46
<b>GiffGaff</b> Caretaker Mobile Phone	£8.00
<b>GiffGaff</b> Office Mobile Phone	£8.00
<b>Petty Cash Expenditure</b>	
<b>Sainsbury's</b> Tea with town council supplies	10.29



**Sainsbury's** 9.00  
Stationery

**Sainsbury's** 5.00  
Cleaning Supplies

**Sainsbury's** 3.80  
Cleaning Supplies

Councillor Davies queried the payment for ADT for the Country Park Visitor Centre; he felt this was extortionate.

Accounts were proposed by Councillor Harper; seconded by Councillor Jones and approved.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

*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.*

It was agreed further discussion was required with regard to seeking legal advice in relation to unsubstantiated claims that may damage the reputation of the Town Council, Councillors and staff working for the Town Council.

The meeting closed at 8.13pm.

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