

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON 16 JUNE 2020; THE MEETING WAS HELD OVER ZOOM DUE
TO COVID-19 SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS**

The Town Crier began the meeting:

OYEZ OYEZ OYEZ

*HOW STRANGE TO SEE EVERYONE
ON MY COMPUTER SCREEN*

*INSTEAD OF AT THE TOWN HALL
WHAT A STRANGE TIME IT'S BEEN!*

*I'VE WATCHED THE ZOOM SESSIONS,
AS YOU'RE ALL SAT AT HOME.*

*EVERYONE LOOKING SMART
TEETH BRUSHED, AND HAIR COMBED*

*BUT NOW DOWN TO BUSINESS,
SO BE OF GOOD GRACE*

*MAYOR JIM DAVIES RETIRES
LOOK AT THE SMILE ON HIS FACE!*

*I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU COPEd SIR
BUT YOU LED YOUR TEAM WELL*

*NOT MANY COULD HAVE DONE IT,
IF THE TRUTH I MUST TELL.*

*YOUR SUCCESSOR TONIGHT
WILL HAVE TO STEP UP TO THE PLATE*

WITH THE LOCKDOWN EASING WEEKLY,

WHO KNOWS WHAT'S OUR FATE?

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE
YOU CERTAINLY HAD WHAT IT TAKES*

*IT'S SAD WE'RE ON ZOOM
BECAUSE FOR WAYNE THERE'S NO CAKES!*

STAY SAFE, GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

The Mayor read a short statement:

I would like to inform everyone on 'Zoom' or participating by other means that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet by way of 'Facebook'.

The images and sound recording may be used for training purposes within the council.

Any views expressed are the speakers own and do not necessarily reflect the view of Biddulph Town Council.

In order to ensure that the meeting is effectively managed please respect the following guidelines:

Only speak when invited by the chair (Mayor).

Indicate that you wish to speak using the raise hand symbol. This is found by clicking on or pressing the three dots symbol.

Please 'mute' when not speaking as this improves the sound quality for all.

To vote please use the raise hand symbol.....chairs can choose their preferred mode of voting.

PRESENT

- The Mayor – Councillor Davies
- The Deputy Mayor – Councillor Jones
- Councillor Barlow
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Garvey
- Councillor Hall
- Councillor Harper

- Councillor Hart
- Councillor Hawley
- Councillor Jackson
- Councillor McLoughlin
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Salt
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Smith
- Councillor Swift
- Councillor Yates

1.20 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR & MAYOR MAKING CEREMONY

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

Councillor Hall nominated Councillor Jones to be Town Mayor. Councillor Rogers seconded this nomination. Councillor Hall stated that in these uncertain times it was important for the Town Mayor to lead the town and community. Councillor Jones is straightforward in his thinking and will have the support of his wife Ann.

There were no other nominations. A vote took place and Councillor Jones was elected as Mayor of Biddulph for 2020-21.

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

In anticipation of the election, the Mayoral chain had been received by Councillor Jones; this was presented by Mrs Ann Jones, the Mayoress.

- c) Speech of Acceptance by Mayor

Councillor Jones thanked Councillors for their support. These are strange times. The lockdown is easing and Councillor Jones quipped, 'just as the year is getting better, you have me'.

Councillor Jones thanked the previous Mayor and Mayoress for doing a fantastic job; this would be a hard act to follow.

Councillor Jones felt it was a great honour to be elected as Mayor; this is an exclusive Mayoral club with high quality predecessors.

Councillor Jones would do his best to represent the town with dignity and respect; he nominated CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young) as his charity for 2020-21 and would do his best to organize fund raising opportunities in the near future.

d) Speech by outgoing Mayor

Councillor Davies had had an incredible brilliant and wonderful year; it had been a real privilege and honour to be Mayor of Biddulph. During the year, Councillor Davies had tremendous support from Councillors, friends and Biddulph Rotary Club throughout. In addition, Sue and Geoff Fletcher had hosted an Antarctic Evening; Biddulph Male Voice Choir; all those that contributed to the Swimathon, which raised £1500; attendees at the Classic Car Show (hopefully there will be another in September, or in 2021); Craig Pickering for the fabulous music and the first Biddulph Beer Festival where around 900 pints were consumed; the Christmas Lights Switch-on were supported by Keith Flunder, the Rotary, Councillors, Neil Nevill and the incredible Town Crier, who makes any event a special occasion; and, Biddulph Running Club who braved the aftermath of Storm Dennis.

Councillor Davies noted that £8000 would be distributed to Biddulph Youth and Community Zone, Citizens Advice, Biddulph in Bloom and the Foodbanks. Councillor Davies had tried to support local charities, who supported local people.

Councillor Davies paid tribute to members of the Council who had stepped up to help. In recent times, Town Councillors and volunteers had delivered over 2500 prescriptions and provided food, support with essential trips and facemasks, leading the county in taking on the responsibilities brought on us.

Councillor Davies thanked Councillor Rogers in his particular for his constant and thoughtful support, from the early days of being a Councillor.

Councillor Davies thanked the Mayoress, Sue; he valued her support, wisdom and good advice. Mrs Davies had just had a birthday, so they would by-pass the flowers this time!

Councillor Davies valued the unfailing support from Sarah and Jodie for their enthusiasm with new events. Councillor Davies valued the Chief Officer's professionalism, expertise, level-headedness and cheerful demeanor. The Mayor and Mayoress had flowers for Sarah and Jodie.

Councillor thanked Councillors for their generous support and wished the new Mayor and Mayoress very best wishes. May God bless you all.

e) Vote of thanks

Councillor Hall noted that Councillor Davies' year in office (even with the slight extension) had flown. As had been expected, Councillor Davies had been a very capable Mayor, always fair and even-handed.

Councillor Davies and Mrs Davies had been excellent ambassadors for the town. Councillor Davies had been a hands-on Mayor, tackling problems and never avoiding the issues involved.

Councillor Davies had been ably supported by Sue; thank you for your year in office.

Councillor Jackson quoted Bob Monkhouse. He thanked Jim and Sue, despite the end of the year, which had cut short the fundraising. Despite that, fundraising had been tremendous.

Councillor Jackson felt that Councillor Davies had set his stamp and had been even-handed. A personal thanks for giving up 12-months of their lives to serve the people of Biddulph.

f) Presentations to outgoing Mayor

Councillor Jones congratulated Councillor Davies on the money that had been raised. He noted that this was usually the point when he would award the 'I used

to be Mayor of Biddulph' badge; this would happen in due course. These would be big shoes to fill.

Councillor Jones noted that some Councillors seemed to struggle with the electronic hand signal. If this was a problem, Councillors should wave their hands at the screen.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the following Councillors and reasons for absence were approved:

- Councillor Adams
- Councillor Baddeley
- Councillor Redfern

Councillor Rogers thanked Councillor Davies for his kind words; it had been a pleasure to work with him.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests & Dispensations: Councillor Sheldon in anything pertaining to Biddulph in Bloom.
- b) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests: None.

4. ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL ~ 14 MAY 2019

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting of 14 May 2019 (signed at the Ordinary Town Council meeting on 11 June 2019)

Councillor Jones read through the minutes; proposed by Councillor Hall and seconded by Councillor Davies. Agreed.

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 Jackson nominated Councillor Sylvia Rushton; she had given a significant amount of time to the town and was a 'stalwart' of Biddulph East. This

was seconded by Councillor Smith. There were no other nominations and this was agreed.

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

In anticipation of this election, Councillor Rushton's daughter presented the Chain of Office.

Councillor Rushton was 'thrilled to bits'. This would be a year of fun working with Councillor Jones; Councillor Rushton would do as much as she could for Biddulph.

Councillor Jones felt they would be a good team. Councillor Rogers stated that Councillor Rushton would have Councillors' full support.

6. CONSTITUTION

i. APPROVAL OF STANDING ORDERS

To **approve** Standing Orders containing updated advice from NALC (enclosed).

Proposed by Councillor Hall; seconded by Councillor Jackson and agreed.

ii. APPROVAL OF MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEES

~ To approve the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation document (enclosed)

~ Committee membership to be distributed separately; to **approve** membership for 2020/21:

- 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 items contained within ii; seconded by Councillor Hart and agreed.

iii. APPROVAL OF MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

~ To **note** that there are no established Sub-Committees in June 2020.

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)
- * IT (Finance Strategy and Management Committee)
- * Asset Transfer (directly to Town Council)
- * Biddulph Network (Town and Community Committee)

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

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Hart and agreed.

iv. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

To **receive** the Town Council's Financial Regulations, which were approved at the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting on 9 June 2020 (copy sent to all Councillors for this meeting).

Proposed by Councillor Hall; seconded by Councillor Hart and agreed.

v. CODE OF CONDUCT

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

Councillor Jones reminded Members that issues agreed at Committees were not agreed until they had been approved at Town Council.

Proposed by Councillor Hall; seconded by Councillor Hart and agreed.

7. FINANCIAL MANDATE

- 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)**

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Davies and agreed.

b) Mayor's Charity Account: To give authority to the Chief Officer and Finance and Administration Officer of the Council to be the two signatories for the Mayor's Charity Account. The Finance Strategy and Management Committee will receive an annual review of this account.

Proposed by Councillor Davies; seconded by Councillor Rushton and agreed.

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 Hawley; seconded by Councillor Rushton and agreed.

d) 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.

Proposed by Councillor Davies; seconded by Councillor Rushton and agreed.

ADDITIONAL TOWN COUNCIL ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

8. MINUTES

- a) To **approve** the Minutes of the meeting the Town Council held on 26 May 2020 (Minutes to be **signed** when restrictions on social distancing have been clarified)

Proposed by Councillor Rushton; seconded by Councillor Hart and agreed.

- b) To **approve** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 9 June 2020 (Minutes to be **signed** when restrictions on social distancing have been clarified)

Councillor Hawley had declared an interest in Biddulph Moor Community Association; this had not been recorded.

Proposed by Councillor Hall; seconded by Councillor Davies and agreed.

9. TO APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON 9 JUNE 2020, PARTICULARLY:

- a) To **approve** the contractor to complete the Pocket Park project.
- b) To **sign** the Country Park Visitor Centre lease, with no further amendments.
- c) To **approve** a relationship with an external employment specialist.
- d) To **approve** that the following documents are agreed, with appropriate amendments negotiated by the legal advisers, to enable commencement from 1 July 2020:
 - Management Agreement.
 - 25-Year Lease.

- Service Level Agreement for provision of reception services.
 - TUPE liability - caretaking team.
 - To approve that staff undertaking caretaking responsibilities will become members of the Staffordshire Local Government Pension Scheme, with no break in service, with effect from 1 July 2020.
- e) To **approve** the staff structure (effective 1 July 2020). The Chief Officer to interview candidates on Scale 5 and lower. The Chief Officer, Chair of Finance Strategy and Management Committee and Leader of the Labour Group to form the interview panel for other recruitment.
- f) To **note** that agency staff maybe needed on a short-term basis to facilitate public toilet opening requirements.

Councillor Salt noted that item e) should also include that there would be a change in the Recruitment Policy. This was agreed.

Councillor Hall voted to move items a-f inclusive; seconded by Councillor Rushton and agreed, including the amendment from Councillor Salt.

10. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

Accounts received for payment in June 2020

Please note, the following cheques were issued between meeting cycles:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Sukis Snacks | 200.00 |
| Provision of hot meals for vulnerable self-isolating residents | |
| Charltons Solicitors | 6000.00 |
| Legal fees for Sainsbury's solicitors- sale of Station Road land (agreed at Town Council meeting on 26 May 2020) | |

Expenditure above £500

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| RBS - Rialtas | 672.00 |
| 2019-20 Closedown | |
| D&G | 2922.20 |
| 93 Bus service | |

| | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Salaries | 5076.93 |
| HMRC | 1738.47 |
| Staffordshire Pension Fund | 2129.70 |

Expenditure below £500

| | |
|---|--------|
| RGS - Lengthsman First cut of Congleton Road, Haydon Park, Albert Street and Towerhill Road | 180.00 |
| RGS - Lengthsman April and May grass cutting (areas above) and footpaths at Church Lane, Downs Close, St Johns Road and Conway Road | 666.00 |
| Sherolyn Martin (Moorland Road allotment Secretary) Reimbursement for rehoming bees | 35.00 |
| Business Products Photocopying charges | 77.22 |
| Tidysite Skips Woodhouse Burial Ground bins | 23.10 |
| CHD PPE for staff and Town Hall rooms | 35.04 |
| Countrywide Springfield Road grass cutting | 61.40 |
| Reimbursement for Prescription Deliveries Councillor Wayne Rogers | 164.70 |
| Councillor Chris Perkin | 28.80 |
| Councillor Nigel Yates | 146.70 |
| Chells Building Supplies Plasterboard for new office space | 41.38 |

| | |
|--|--------|
| Triad Floor Stickers (2m distance) | 90.90 |
| Triad Selection of floor tapes (36 rolls) | 166.80 |
| RBS- Rialtas Annual support and maintenance agreement | 464.40 |
| Ash Waste Services Town Burial Ground bins | 427.08 |
| SLCC Training on Reducing energy use, Operation London Bridge (x2), Emergency Planning | 186.00 |
| Sarah Haydon Reimbursement for plumbing items for new office space | 48.68 |
| Waterplus Burial Grounds water supply | 68.13 |
| NPower Electricity supply | 29.09 |
| Fifteen- mobile phones (Direct Debit) | |
| 18 May 2020 | 44.40 |
| 17 June 2020 | 57.67 |
| Moorside Memorials Re-turfing | 140.00 |
| Elizabeth Heap Re-issue of cheque to OnTap, for Christmas Lights switch-on power | 50.00 |

Credit card

| | |
|--|--------|
| Facebook - Coronavirus updates | 4.67 |
| Bill and Ben Skip Hire - debris from office development | 90.00 |
| Giff Gaff - WIFI | 25.00 |
| Zoom - purchase of annual package to facilitate meetings | 143.88 |
| Shutterstock - images | 19.00 |
| Amazon - varnish, brushes and silicone | 44.59 |

Supplementary Accounts

| | |
|---|--------|
| Pettycash | 56.08 |
| Brian Carter (opens Woodhouse Burial Ground) | 40.00 |
| Business Products (paper, laminating pouches and clips) | 126.93 |
| Hanley Print Services (Help Biddulph to Bloom banners) | 246.00 |

Grants Awarded

| Organisation | Amount Allocated |
|---|-------------------------|
| Citizens Advice | 25000 |
| Biddulph in Bloom | 25000 |
| Biddulph Lifeline | 2000 |
| Moorlands Voluntary and Community Transport | 2000 |
| Biddulph U3A | 1000 |
| First Biddulph Moor Scout Group | 2000 |
| Support Staffordshire | 500 |
| Biddulph Moor Community Association | 250 |
| Friends of Biddulph Valley Way | 950 |
| Douglas Macmillan Hospice | 882 |
| Aglow | 200 |
| Green Fingers | 2000 |

Accounts and Finance were moved by Councillor Hall; seconded by Councillor Davies and agreed.

Councillor Jones noted that it was traditional for Councillors to have a buffet and a drink, courtesy of the Mayor. He had bought a bottle of wine!

The meeting closed at 6.48pm.

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