

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 27 MAY 2025, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR.**

PRESENT:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Mayor: | • Councillor J Jones |
| Councillor N R Yates | • Councillor N Eardley |
| • Deputy Mayor: | • Councillor C Brady |
| Councillor A C Lawton | • Councillor A H Hart |
| • Councillor D J Hawley | • Councillor C Wood |
| • Councillor K Jackson | • Councillor W Rogers (Chair) |

Councillor Jackson was in attendance but did not sign the attendance sheet.

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Mrs Margaret Warman – Compliance and Governance Officer
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administrator Officer

The Mayor, Councillor Lawton, recited the disclaimer regarding the recording of the meeting.

1. ELECTION OF A CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

The Mayor requested nominations for the position of Chair. Councillor Hawley nominated Councillor Rogers; seconded by Councillor Jackson. There were no other nominations. All agreed.

Councillor Rogers called for nominations for a Deputy Chair, Councillor Jackson nominated Councillor Wood; seconded by Councillor Hart. There were no other nominations. All **agreed**.

2. APOLOGIES

- Councillor M A Hopkins
- Councillor A K Harper
- Councillor J Salt
- Councillor C Smith

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests;

Councillor Yates declared a pecuniary interest for item 5 in reference to the Mayors account.

- ii. Other Interests

None.

4. MINUTES

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 22 April 2025 (approved at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council meeting on 13 May 2025)

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

5. ACCOUNTS MATTERS

- a) To **approve** the bank reconciliation for March 2025- all accounts (attached).

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

- b) To **receive** the draft income and expenditure account for 2024-25 (attached).

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

6. AUDIT

- a) To **confirm** that the final internal control meeting for 2024-25 is scheduled for 5 June 2025.

It was **confirmed**.

- b) To **confirm** the outcome of the internal audit completed on 16 May 2025 (report attached).

The Chief Officer noted that the internal auditor has signed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) document. It was concluded that the Town Council systems of internal control meet the requirements to a good standard.

It was **confirmed**.

- c) To **receive** the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)- Annual Governance Statement containing draft figures for 2024-25 (attached)

The Chief Officer explained that this is an annual document; it is usual for the Committee to have sight of this before it is ratified by Town Council. There were no queries.

It was **received**.

7. LET'S CELEBRATE TOWNS

To **confirm** that the Town Council will submit an application for the Let's Celebrate Towns Award in the 'High Street Transformation' category:

<https://www.visaeupromotions.com/lets-celebrate-towns/>

The Chief Officer reported that last year Biddulph Town Council was shortlisted for this award; she would like to apply again this year. The Town Council could win £20,000.

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

8. TO CONFIRM THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL SHOULD WORK TOWARDS SIGNING THE MODERN SLAVERY CHARTER

<https://party.coop/local/councillors/modern-slavery-charter/>

The Chief Officer explained that as a result of joining the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN) this issue has been highlighted. She stated that the procurement policy will require a small update to formalise that the Town Council are clear about the approach to paying contractors who work for and with the Town Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Hart to amend relevant documents and bring for back for approval; seconded by Councillor Jackson. All **agreed**.

9. TO CONFIRM THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL WILL SIGN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RELEVANT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS FOR THE TRANSFORMING THE TRENT HEADWATERS PROJECT (ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer explained that Staffordshire Wildlife Trust are the lead agency; they will pull together projects and apply for the funding. The Chief Officer stated that to continue to be a partner within this, the terms of reference needs to be signed.

It was proposed by Councillor Yates to sign to terms of reference tonight and arrange a date to meet to discuss possible projects to put forward in more detail; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

A further meeting would take place on Thursday 5 June 2025 at 4pm; **agreed**.

10. TO AGREE THE TOWN COUNCIL ACTION PLAN FOR 2025-26, BASED ON THE FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY (2024-2029) (ATTACHED)

Councillor Jackson questioned whether Shepherd street allotment site could be added to the action plan. It was agreed to add additional wording to this item.

The Chief Officer identified that this was the second year of the Five-Year Strategy. The action plan did not include all projects, but those deliverable this year. These had been costed, and there was cross-over with the Reserves Policy item below.

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Brady. All **agreed**.

11. TO APPROVE THE RESERVES POLICY 2025 (ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer explained that the Reserve Policy is reviewed annually and noted the edits.

Councillor Hawley queried the earmarked and general reserves, and where these are held.

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

12. STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

- a) To **consider** disposal of any assets, in line with the Asset Management Policy and Financial Regulations

None.

- b) To **confirm** approved suppliers as part of the Procurement Policy

None.

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.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

13. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE DEVELOPMENT- CONTRACT UPDATE MEETING WAS HELD ON 20 MAY 2025

The update was **received**.

14. TO APPROVE NEXT STEPS AND ANTICIPATED COSTS IN RELATION TO THE NEW GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE DEVELOPMENT

The Chief Officer presented costs for the Quantity Surveyor who would cost the project and develop the tender documentation; proposed by Councillor Hart, seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

15. QUOTATIONS

a) To **approve** a replacement window for the Town Hall annexe
Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

b) To **approve** Town Hall signage costs and content
It was agreed that the sign options would to be added to the next Committee agenda; all agreed that the totem-style design was preferable, on both sides of the site.
Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

c) To **approve** the painting/ repair of Town Council benches, railings, etc.
Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

d) To **approve** additional and replacement CCTV cameras at the Town Hall
The quotation had not been received in time.

e) To approve service of Blending Valves

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

f) To confirm Stage Lighting Remedial Work

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

g) To confirm Air Conditioning 6 Monthly Service

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

h) To confirm Fire Extinguishers Annual Servicing

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

**16. TO RECEIVE THE OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOLLOWING THE CHIEF OFFICERS APPRAISAL**

All staff members left the room.

An update was received.

The meeting ended at 7.15pm.

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