

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL  
TUESDAY 24 JUNE 2025, 5.30PM  
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR.**

**PRESENT:**

- |                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • <b>Mayor:</b>         | • Councillor M A Hopkins      |
| • Councillor A C Lawton | • Councillor A K Harper       |
| • Councillor N Eardley  | • Councillor K Jackson        |
| • Councillor C Wood     | • Councillor J Jones          |
| • Councillor N R Yates  | • Councillor W Rogers (Chair) |
| • Councillor A H Hart   | • Councillor J Salt (18:06)   |

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnership Officer
- Mrs Margaret Warman – Compliance and Governance Officer
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administrator Officer
- Mrs Elizabeth Davies – Finance Officer
- Councillor J Redfern (Substitute for Councillor Hawley)

*Councillor Rogers recited the disclaimer regarding the recording of the meeting.*

**17. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

- Councillor D J Hawley- Substitute Councillor J Redfern
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor C Smith

**18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

- ii. Other Interests

Councillor Hart and Jones declared interests in item 32b.

## **19. MINUTES**

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 27 May 2025 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 10 June 2025)

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

## **20. ACCOUNTS MATTERS**

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

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

It was **approved**.

b) To **receive** the summary of receipts and payments to-date (attached).

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

## **21. AUDIT**

a) To **confirm** the outcome of the internal control meeting completed on 5 June 2025 (reports attached)

Councillor Rogers explained that Councillor Hawley completed the internal control visit. Councillor Eardley advised that there were 'no red flags'; a couple of tweaks were suggested.

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

b) To **confirm** that the external audit report and associated documentation has been submitted to MAZARS

The Chief Officer confirmed that the period of elector rights will start tomorrow.

It was **confirmed**.

## **22. TO CONFIRM AN APPROACH TO THE ALLOCATION OF COUNCILLOR YATES' MAYORAL FUND**

The Chief Officer tabled the basic application and poster, and explained the process that had been considered by the small advisory group. Councillor Yates had raised £9753.57. It was agreed that the process of allocating this would be considered by this Committee, to ensure transparency.

It had been previously agreed to create a group who will decide on the applications for a £250 grant from this pot. Councillors Yates, Rogers, Jackson and Lawton would form part of the group.

Councillor Yates explained that the fund is aimed at post-covid recovery support for one-off events or to promote a taster session, which will provide sustainability moving forward.

Councillor Jones questioned which charities were on Councillor Yates list when he took office. Councillor Yates stated that he agreed the Canal and Rivers Trust, and this 'above and beyond' fund.

Councillor Harper gave his congratulations to Councillor Yates for raising the amount of money.

Councillor Jones proposed to agree the process; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

## **23. POLICY REVIEW**

### **a) To approve the reviewed Community Engagement Statement**

It was discussed to amend point 3.4 to 'may' act.

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

### **b) To approve the reviewed Social Media, Press and Public Communication Policy**

Councillor Redfern stated how pleased he is at how robust the council is in regard to harassment.

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

### **c) To note that the following policies will be considered in September, in line with the emerging Modern Slavery Policy: Equal Opportunities Policy, Procurement and Approved Suppliers Policy and Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy**

The Chief Officer stated that after the approval at the last meeting of the creation of a Modern Slavery Policy meant that other policies would require amendments.

## 24. COUNCILLOR TRAINING

- a) To **confirm** an approach to recording Councillor training

The Chief Officer advised that it would be helpful to demonstrate training that Councillors had attended outside of their Councillor role. It was requested that details of this are reported so that these can be recorded on the database.

Councillor Wood noted that there are many free online courses for Councillors to attend, if they wanted to enhance their knowledge in a particular area.

- b) To **consider** completing a Councillor skills audit, to support training needs

The Chief Officer explained that by auditing current skills, it identifies what training is required in the future.

It was **agreed** to consider a draft document in September.

## 25. 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

Two new contractors have been added to the approved suppliers list.

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

*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**

**26. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE DEVELOPMENT AND TO APPROVE POTENTIAL KNOWN EXPENDITURE (CONTRACT UPDATE MEETING WAS HELD ON 24 JUNE 2025)**

An updated was received.

*Councillor Salt joined the meeting at 18.06pm.*

**27. TO CONFIRM NEXT STEPS REGARDING THE NEW GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE AT WOODHOUSE BURIAL GROUND**

It was discussed to continue with the Quantity Surveyor work at the same time as the architect is revisiting the planning documents.

**28. TO RECEIVE A LETTER RECEIVED FROM THE ARCHITECTS REGISTRATION BOARD (ATTACHED)**

It was agreed to pursue this course of action.

**29. TO RECEIVE THE COMPLETED SEARCHES FOR THE VISITOR CENTRE AT THE BIDDULPH GRANGE COUNTRY PARK AND TO APPROVE NEXT STEPS (ATTACHED)**

It was discussed to move forward with the 30-year lease; there were no 'red flags'. Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

**30. TO APPROVE REQUESTS FOR FUNDING FOR BIDDULPH WORKS TOGETHER PROJECTS (TO BE TABLED)**

Councillor Hart proposed to move the funding requests; seconded by Councillor Salt. Agreed; 1 abstention.

### 31. QUOTATIONS

- a) To **approve** a quotation for the resurfacing of paths at the Burial Grounds

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

- b) To **approve** a quotation for the repair of fences at the Butterfly Garden

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

- c) To **approve** Option 1 for the replacement of a lantern at Orme Road (EON communication attached)

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

- d) To **approve** a quotation for the emergency lighting annual inspection

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

- e) To **approve** a quotation for the 6-monthly RCD Flick Test

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

- f) To **approve** a quotation for the Air Conditioning Remedial Work following the 6-monthly inspection

It was agreed to defer this for now, as it was not deemed to be a priority. Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

- g) To **approve** a quotation for the legionella remedial actions

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

- h) To **approve** a quotation for the blending valves remedial work

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

- i) To **approve** a quotation for the fire extinguisher remedial work following the annual inspection

Proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

- j) To **approve** a quotation for the annual management of the website

Proposed by Councillor Redfern; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

- k) To **approve** a quotation for the installation of Windows 11 on five managed machines

Proposed by Councillor Harper; seconded by Councillor Salt. All **agreed**.

**l) To approve** a quotation for new blinds in the Council Chamber  
Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Harper. All **agreed**.

**m) To approve** a quotation for Welcome signage outside the Town Hall  
Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.

### **Emergency item**

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

## **32. GRANTS**

**a) To receive** feedback on the scoring process for grants and recommendations  
for potential changes to the Grants Policy  
An update was received.

All **agreed**.

**b) To consider and approve** attached grant applications for 2025-26  
(applications and summary spreadsheet attached).

*It was proposed by Councillor Rogers, to suspend Standing Orders 3x to allow the meeting to continue; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed**.*

| <b>Name of Group</b>               | <b>Amount Requested in 2025-26</b> | <b>AGREED FIGURE</b>                                      |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1st Biddulph Moor Scout Group      | £2,000                             | £1,600  |
| 1st Biddulph Rainbows              | £300                               | £50 (subject to receipt of an evaluation form)            |
| Biddulph Community Wellbeing Group | £400                               | £300 (subject to expenditure information being submitted) |
| Biddulph and District Probus Club  | £500                               | £250  |
| Biddulph District Guides           | £500                               | £150  |
| Biddulph Festival Committee        | £3000                              | £2000   |

|   |         |                |
|---|---------|----------------|
| Biddulph In Bloom                           | £25,000 | £20,000        |
| Biddulph Ladies Afternoon Club              | £300    | £300           |
| Biddulph Moor Evergreens                    | £250    | £0             |
| Biddulph Trefoil Guild                      | £300    | £50            |
| Biddulph Twinning Association               | £250    | £0             |
| Biddulph Youth & Community Zone             | £2,592  | £2,000         |
| Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and SOT | £25,000 | £20,000        |
| Douglas Macmillan Hospice                   | £2,000  | £800           |
| Moorlands Voluntary and Community Transport | £1,600  | £1,600         |
| The Green Tree House                        | £24,760 | £7,900         |
|   |         | <b>£57,000</b> |

It was agreed that a number of groups would be supported by Councillor Yates' Mayoral fund, rather than via the Grants Scheme.

Councillor Yates would support: 1<sup>st</sup> Biddulph Rainbows, Biddulph District Guides, Biddulph Moor Evergreens, Biddulph Trefoil Guild, Biddulph Twinning Association and Douglas Macmillan Hospice with £250 grants.

*The meeting ended at 8.22pm*

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