

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 24 MARCH 2026, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR.**

PRESENT:

- **Mayor:**
Councillor A C Lawton
- Councillor N Eardley
- Councillor D Hawley
- Councillor J T Jones
- Councillor W Rogers
- Councillor J Salt
- Councillor C Wood (Chair)
- Councillor N R Yates

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 Elizabeth Davies – Finance Officer

The meeting was not recorded, due to technical issues.

107. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor A K Harper
- Councillor M A Hopkins
- Councillor K J Jackson
- Councillor A Hart (Absent)
- Councillor C Smith

108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: None.
- ii. Other Interests: None.

109. MINUTES

a) To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 27 January 2026 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 10 February 2026)

<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Minutes-Finance-27-January-2026-FINAL-No-Confidential-1.pdf>

The minutes were confirmed; proposed by Councillor Hawley, seconded by Councillor Jones.

b) To **note** that the re-arranged Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting to be held on Monday 16 February 2026 was not quorate. An agenda was published, but no minutes are available.

It was noted.

110. AUDIT AND ACCOUNT MATTERS

a) To **approve** the bank reconciliations for December 2025 and January 2026 (attached).

<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/ALL-BANKS-RECONCILIATION-DEC-2025.pdf>

<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/ALL-BANKS-RECONCILIATION-JAN-2026.pdf>

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

b) To **receive** the Cost Centre Year Comparison Summary until 18 March 2026 (attached)

<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Cost-Centre-Comparison-18-March-2026.pdf>

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

c) To **note** that the next internal control visit will take place on Tuesday 31 March 2026

It was noted.

111. POLICY REVIEW (ATTACHED)

a) To **approve** the new Information Technology Policy

<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Information-Technology-Policy-January-2026.pdf>

Councillor Salt shared her experience of working temporarily in China, noting that her employer required all email accounts to be disabled during her time there.

Based on this, she proposed that the policy be updated to recommend disabling

email accounts when visiting countries identified as posing a cyber security risk, in line with Foreign Office guidance.

The Chief Officer confirmed she was supportive of incorporating this recommendation into the policy. It was agreed it would be added in section 9.6. Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Salt. All **agreed**.

b) To **approve** the revised Data Protection (GDPR) and Retention Policy
<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Data-Protection-GDPR-and-Retention-Policy-February-2026.pdf>

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

c) To **approve** the new Members Training Policy
<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Members-Training-Policy-January-2026.pdf>

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

d) To **approve** the revised CCTV Policy
<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/CCTV-Policy-February-2026.pdf>

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

e) To **approve** the revised Appraisal and Review Policy
<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Appraisal-and-Review-Policy-Including-Form-March-2026.pdf>

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

f) To **approve** the revised Flexible Working Policy
<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Flexible-Working-Policy-March-2026.pdf>

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

g) To **approve** the revised Whistleblowing Policy
<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Whistleblowing-Policy-March-2026.pdf>

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

h) To **approve** the revised Annual Leave and Special Leave Policy
<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Annual-Leave-and-Special-Leave-Policy-March-2026.pdf>

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

It was also agreed that policy documents to be reviewed would be distributed by email only going forward, and would not also be printed.

112. ASSERTION 10

To **receive** an update on the new Assertion 10 requirements as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)- briefing note attached.

<https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Assertion-10-February-2026.pdf>

The Chief Officer provided an overview of Assertion 10 and talked through the briefing note, which sets out how the council currently meets the requirements of Assertion 10. The briefing was received.

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

113. 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

114. TO CONSIDER CLOSURE OF THE NATWEST RESERVE ACCOUNT

The Chief Officer explained that the council holds £3,000 in a Natwest Reserve account. It was agreed that there is no longer a need for this account. We will retain the Natwest Current Account and close the Reserve Account.

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

115. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON TOWN COUNCIL ASSETS ENERGY USAGE

The Chief Officer presented the report and explained that we've changed energy providers several times in order to secure the most cost-effective arrangements; this had been approved by this Committee, most recently in October 2025.

The report was received.

116. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE

The Chief Officer delivered a presentation and confirmed the figures presented.

The update was received.

117. TO APPROVE A QUOTATION AND APPROACH TO TAX ADVICE (EMAIL ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer reported that the council's new internal auditor has recommended seeking specialist tax advice.

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

118. TO CONSIDER PROCUREMENT ACTIVITY IN RELATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE AT THE WOODHOUSE BURIAL GROUND

The Chief Officer confirmed that she was seeking the views of the council regarding the tender. There was discussion about possible options.

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

119. TO CONSIDER OPTIONS REGARDING THE BRIARSWOOD SITE

The Chief Officer confirmed she was seeking the council's advice.

There was discussion about the current state of the bridge and possible involvement of the County Council.

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

120. TO AGREE THE REMIT AND WORK PLAN OF THE EFFICIENCY WORKING GROUP

Councillor Wood invited suggestions for the remit of a potential working group. He suggested asking all councillors if they would be interested in joining the working group.

It was agreed that all councillors would be invited to join a working group via email, with staff involvement, to focus on identifying savings and income opportunities.

121. QUOTATIONS

- a) To **approve** the quotation for the annual boiler service and gas tightness test.

It was agreed to go forward with Royale Boiler Services.

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Lawton. All agreed.

- b) To **consider** the replacement of the Town Hall automatic door unit.

It was agreed to take back to the committee in the next financial year.

- c) To **approve** the quotation to test and inspect the stage lighting (annual).

It was agreed to go forward with Stage Management Services.

Proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All agreed.

The meeting ended at 7pm

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