# MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
# TUESDAY 28 APRIL 2026, 6PM
# HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR.

**PRESENT:**

- **Mayor:**

Councillor A C Lawton

- Councillor D Hawley
- Councillor A K Harper
- Councillor M A Hopkins
- Councillor J T Jones
- Councillor W Rogers (Chair)
- Councillor J Salt
- Councillor N R Yates
- Councillor C Smith (18.05)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker) (18.35)
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnership Officer
- Mrs Margaret Warman – Compliance and Governance Officer
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administration Officer
- Mrs Elizabeth Davies – Finance Officer
- Ms Susan Booth – Customer Service Officer

*The meeting was not recorded, due to technical issues.*

Councillor Rogers requested the addition of item 133e, a quotation for tree work at the Bateman walk; proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Yates. All agreed.

## 122. APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

- Councillor C Wood
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor A Hart
- Councillor K J Jackson (Absent)
- Councillor N Eardley

## 123. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Salt declared an interest in item 133b.

ii. Other Interests

Interests were declared throughout item 132:
Councillor Salt- relative is a member of Trefoil; left during Cricket Club and Green Fingers discussions.
Councillor Hopkins- involvement with Cricket Club

## 124. MINUTES

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 24 March 2026 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 14 April 2026)
https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Minutes-Finance-24-March-2026-Draft-No-Confidential.pdf

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

## 125. AUDIT AND ACCOUNT MATTERS

**a)** To **approve** the bank reconciliation for February 2026 (attached)
https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/ALL-BANKS-RECONCILIATION-FEB-2026.pdf

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

**b)** To **receive** the Cost Centre Year Comparison Summary until 22 April 2026 (attached)
https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Cost-Centre-Comparison-22-April-2026.pdf

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

**c)** To **receive** the report from the internal control visit on Tuesday 31 March 2026 (attached) and to confirm that the year-end visit will take place in June 2026

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

**d)** To **receive** the interim Internal Audit report for 2025-26 (attached)

Jodie Hancock explained that this is the first time we've used this internal auditor, and the report is fair. There are some slight amendments to make, and we've taken the advice regarding VAT.

Proposed by Councillor A. Lawton; seconded by Councillor Salt. All **agreed.**

**e)** To **receive** a copy of the Asset Register (Scribe report attached) https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Asset-Register-Records-April-2026.pdf

Jodie Hancock reported that the internal control team requested that this should be reviewed twice a year. There may be some final amendments as year-end comes to a close.

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

**f)** To **receive** a copy of the Practitioners Guide for 2026-27 (attached) https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/AD455-Practitioners-Guide-2026-27.pdf

Councillors should ensure they have an understanding of this document for the year ahead.

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

**g)** To **receive** a copy of the revised three-year forecast (April 2026-March 2030) https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Draft-Three-Year-Forecast-April-2026.pdf

Jodie Hancock explained that the document is updated annually following the precept and budget setting process. She advised that a 10% uplift has been applied to each budget line, reflecting the uncertainty in future years and the need for a cautious approach.

She outlined the rationale for this approach, noting that:

- A key driver is anticipated inflation across major cost categories—staff salaries, supplier contracts, utilities, and general overheads. Even if actual inflation varies year to year, applying a consistent 10% provides a prudent buffer against rising costs.
- The uplift acts as a built-in contingency.
- Biddulph Town Council anticipates growth (higher activity levels, expansion, increased demand), costs will typically rise alongside this. A 10% uplift can reflect scaling requirements—more staff, higher operational throughput, and increased support costs.

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

## 126. TO CONSIDER THE 'WHAT DOES GOOD LOOK LIKE' DOCUMENT IN RELATION TO FINANCIAL AND STRATEGIC ISSUES (ATTACHED)

https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/What-Does-Good-Look-Like-2026.pdf

Jodie Hancock explained that the other committees have given their feedback, and asked whether there was feedback from this committee after considering the finance and management side.

Proposed by Councillor Harper; seconded by Councillor Yates. All agreed.

## 127. POLICY REVIEW (ATTACHED)

**a)** To **approve** the reviewed Councillors Handbook 2026-27
https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Councillors-Handbook-2026-27.pdf#

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

**b)** To **approve** the reviewed Mayoral Handbook 2026-27
https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Mayoral-Handbook-2026-27.pdf

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

**c)** To **approve** the reviewed Protocol to Mark the Death of a Local Holder of Office
https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Protocol-to-Mark-the-Death-of-a-Local-Holder-of-Office-March-2026.pdf

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

**d)** To **approve** the reviewed Flag Flying Protocol
https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Flag-Flying-Protocol-March-2026.pdf

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

**e)** To **consider** whether changes are needed to the Financial Regulations for
2026-27
https://biddulph.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Financial-Regulations-2025.pdf

Proposed by Councillor Harper; seconded by Councillor A. Lawton. All **agreed.**

## 128. 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

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Smith. 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

## 129. TO RECEIVE AN VERBAL UPDATE ON TAX ADVICE DISCUSSIONS

Information had been sent off; there has not been a response as yet.

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

## 130. TO APPROVE A QUOTATION FOR BARRISTER ADVICE

There was a discussion regarding the quotations received. It was agreed to move forward with the phone call conversation quotation.

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

## 131. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON GRANTS APPLIED FOR BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

The Chief Officer tabled a list of potential grants that could be applied for during this financial year.

The list was proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Salt. All **agreed.**

## 132. GRANTS

To **consider** and **approve** attached grant applications for 2026-27 (applications and summary spreadsheet attached).

There was a discussion regarding an additional question for those applying for over £2000. They would be required to highlight why their organisation should be treated as a special case, and asked for a breakdown of predicted costs. This would be added to the application form in 2027-28.

There was discussion about consideration of those applications where there was still outstanding information. It was **agreed** that, if information had been provided

by the date of this meeting, the application would be considered. If not, it would be disqualified. Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Harper.

There was extensive discussion about the grants to be awarded.

*Councillor Hawley left the meeting at 8.26pm.*

*Councillor Yates proposed to suspend Standing Order 3x , allowing for an additional 30 minutes of discussion. Seconded by Councillor A Lawton and agreed.*

## 133. QUOTATIONS

**a)** To **approve** the quotation for remedial repairs to the lift in the Town Hall

Concept Elevators was proposed by Councillor Hopkins; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

**b)** To **consider** the advice received for the Wharf Road roller shutter

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

Councillor Salt abstained from the vote.

**c)** To **approve** the quotation for automatic doors at the Town Hall (deferred from the March 2026 meeting)

Councillor Yates proposed the Door Maintenance Specialists quote; seconded by Councillor Jones. All **agreed.**

**d)** To **consider** the purchase of a replacement OWL for streaming meetings

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

**e)** To approve quotation of tree works on the Bateman walk

The Wain Marsh quote was proposed by Councillor Smith; seconded by Councillor Salt. All **agreed.**

## 134. TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STAFF APPRAISALS (TO BE TABLED)

The Chief Officer tabled recommendations following the outcome of recent staff appraisals.
Staff members left the room to enable Councillors to consider this item.

Proposed by Councillor Yates, seconded by Councillor Jones. All recommendations were approved; Councillors extended their thanks to the team for their hard work and dedication over the past year.

*The meeting ended at 9pm.*

Signed……. Date……