



Biddulph Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT



2020-2021

Mayor's Review of the Town Council's year 2020- 2021

When I put myself forward to be Deputy Mayor in 2019 hoping to ascend to Mayor in 2020, no one had even heard of Covid19 and I could never have imagined how the ensuing pandemic would impact our town and the Mayoral year we have just had.

Sadly, for most of the last year, none of us have been allowed to partake in any of the usual social activities which enhance our lives and, whilst the responsibilities of the Mayoral office were undiminished, any civic pleasantries were almost completely off limits too.

I took office back in June 2020 and only carried out my first engagement for the VJ commemoration in August. Several fund raising events, including the car show planned for the year, had to be postponed and/or cancelled and even our annual Christmas Light switch-on gatherings were unable to go ahead. I did get asked to go along to three 100th Birthday celebrations though and these were most pleasurable and an honour to attend.

The last year has been an extremely difficult one for many but in many ways it has brought out the very best in people. The caring community spirit in the Biddulph and Biddulph Moor areas is second to none and Town Councillors and Officers are often at the centre of the effort.

From delivering prescriptions to assisting at the food bank and vaccination clinics, plus many other activities, your council has shown that it cares about the people it represents.

October saw a visit to Biddulph by the High Sherriff of Staffordshire, who met many of the volunteers from our area. He was extremely impressed by the massive community spirit apparent in our town and commented that it was “amongst the best he had ever seen”

The Town Council continued to work hard, completing extremely long and complex negotiations to take over management of both Biddulph Town Hall and the Visitor Centre at Biddulph Grange Country Park. The Town Hall front desk service is back now in part and will be restored to completely normal as soon as national restrictions allow. After an extended period of neglect the Visitor Centre is now in the final stages of an extensive re-fit with the intention that the doors will be open by the August Bank Holiday. The Dorset Drive “Pocket Park” is pretty much completed, plans are well advanced for five “Community Orchards” and the Station Road Park project will be completed soon with fountains and a new Mining Memorial.

Despite the restrictions, one thing I was determined to do was to raise, at least, some money for my nominated charity “CRY” (Cardiac Risk in the Young) To that end, on 22nd April both I and my wife Anne the Mayoress, took on the terrifying “VELOCITY2” in Bethesda. This 1.2Km long Zip Wire attains speeds of up to 100mph at a height of up to 500ft! We were both very apprehensive but we did it and, due to the generosity of many kind sponsors, we raised over £1200 in the process. A massive thank you to all who supported us, including the Deputy Mayor and our Town Crier, who did not hesitate to donate their unused Civic allowances which, when added to mine, took the total raised for the charity during the year to well over £5000!

We’re still not quite out of the woods but we are fast approaching the end of this painful time and I think Biddulph people can be immensely proud of the way they have handled it. We are very near the end though so, let’s all hold on just a bit longer and look forward to a brighter future.

Councillor John Jones



The work of the Town Council

We feel incredibly thankful to have such an **amazing community**. During this unprecedented year, we saw an increase in volunteering, with people checking on their neighbours, organising deliveries, supporting people to access food and creating interesting activities.

The Town Council is based within the Town Hall, and although it is the smallest of the Councils operating in the town, the Town Council has a varied workload, impacting the lives of those living in the town.

The COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented. The Town Council adapted quickly in March and **delivered 2500 prescriptions**, worked with a wide range of local organisations to carry out signposting, organised deliveries and **provided support to local groups**. It is often easier for smaller organisations to adapt to changes and we remain committed to ensuring that people in the town are well supported.



During 2020, some of the lovely things that were planned could not go ahead. Despite this, the Town Council tried to ensure that **important dates and events were still marked**. We had organised a long weekend of activities for VE Day in June. To reach as many people as possible in their homes, we worked with our partners at Moorlands Radio to put

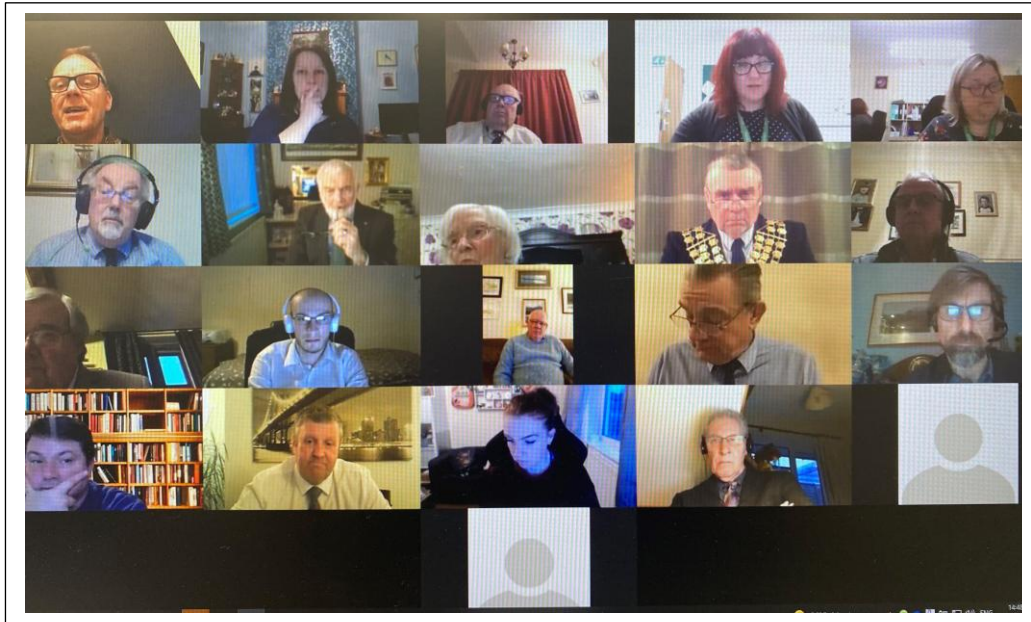
together a radio broadcast with clips from the Mayor, Town Crier and other readings.



The Town Council also supported the Biddulph Branch of the Royal British Legion to sell poppies from the Town Hall in November, when their previous selling point couldn't accommodate them. Facebook helped us to broadcast the Remembrance Sunday service live to those who could not attend. Well done to all who made this work.



During 2020/21, the Town Council **discovered the world of Zoom**, and joined the nation in the familiar chant of 'you're on mute'! It was a challenge to get 22 Councillors successfully using Zoom, but by May 2020 we were having meetings online. Debate feels much different when Councillors are not in the same room, but it was so important to keep business going, that we adapted to ensure decision-making could take place in this way. We hope to keep some form of virtual meetings going when we are able to meet in the Council Chamber again.



The Town Council is not responsible for roads, bins, housing or planning. We do run **two allotment sites, the Burial Grounds and fund the 93 D&G Bus.**

During this year, we continued to ensure that these services were run safely. The 93 Bus continued to run all year, with no break in service.



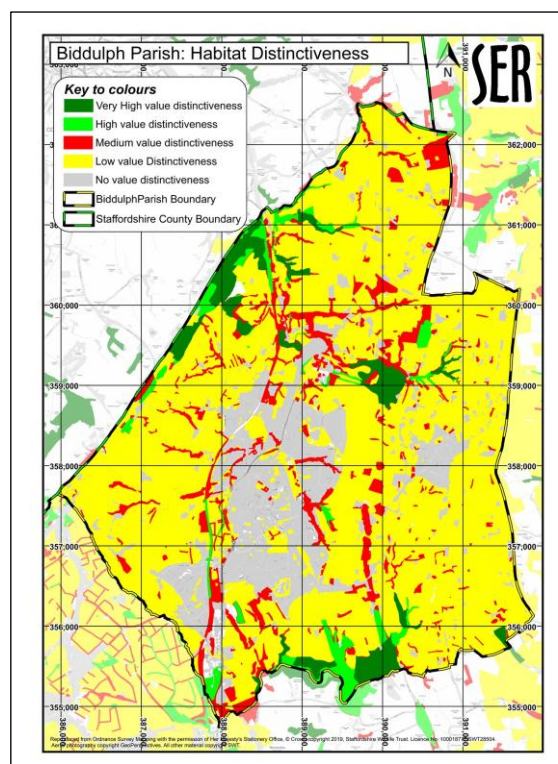
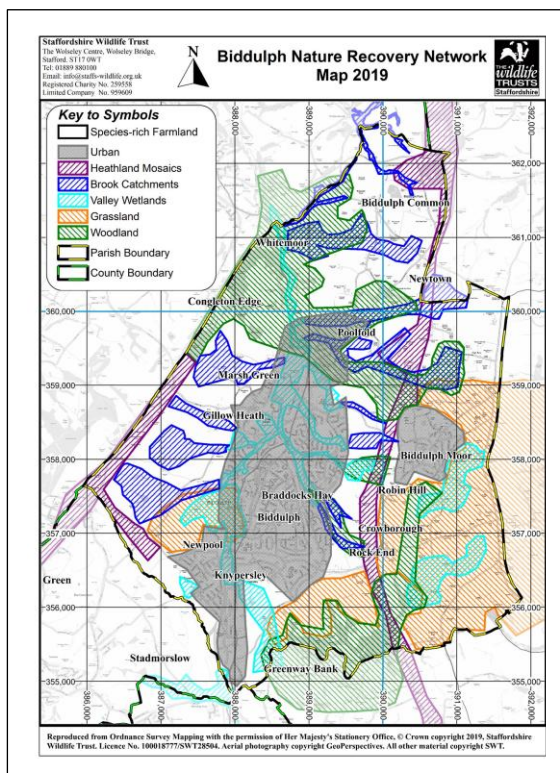
We worked with local Funeral Directors to make sure those who had lost loved ones could organise the service they needed, in line with the new restrictions.

Our allotment holders have continued to garden some beautiful spaces; being outside has provided a good opportunity for exercise in a relatively safe environment.

We continue to expand the work we do, whilst ensuring that our core services continue.



Local people have the best knowledge about how the town should develop. We have a draft **Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order**. We need a referendum to complete this process; this should take place during 2021. These documents will help to guide planning in the town; we will continue to enhance the environmental mapping information we have and implement the recommendations within the Plans.



We have developed some amazing **relationships with partners in Health services** this year.

The Town Hall is a good venue for training, one-to-one sessions and large community events. We have supported the delivery of all of these this year. We had some very positive feedback about the delivery of flu clinics during the Autumn. In January COVID-19 **vaccinations began at the Town Hall**. It was a pleasure to work with both GP surgeries in the town to help to deliver this service.



In 2020, the Town Council was **pleased to work with existing groups in the town and also new groups** that were developed as a result of the very difficult year.

The 'Chasing Rainbows Biddulph' group was responsible for some fantastic activities within the town, ensuring that families had lovely safe outdoor experiences.

We are also enormously proud of the work of the Biddulph Local People's Project who carried out activities at the Town Hall, including the incredibly popular book exchange. They work tirelessly to tackle social isolation across the town, supporting those in need of help with blue badges.

We were pleased to welcome Oasis Community Church to the Town Hall in March 2020; throughout this period, they have continued to adapt their practices to support both the community and their existing congregation.

Our thanks also go to Sainsbury's for a very successful Toy Appeal this year. This was the first year that the Town Council had been involved with this, and we were so delighted with the range of gifts that we were able to pass onto Biddulph families. Thank you to all who took part in this.

We are incredibly grateful for the work of the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone, Biddulph in Bloom and Citizen's Advice, whose volunteers worked tirelessly throughout this period.

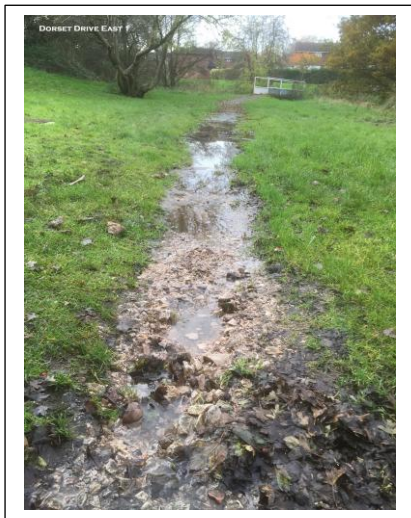


In February 2020, we worked with partners at the Environment Agency to improve the flow of water in the Biddulph Brook. This is a project where our role is to lobby for improvements and to provide additional resources, if necessary. We hope to encourage agencies to make changes that will slow the flow of water in the valley when there is significant rainfall.



At the start of 2020, the Town Council was awarded funds from the Ministry of Communities and Local Government to develop an area off Dorset Drive. Funds were to create a **Pocket Park** with improved paths and drainage, a community orchard and some wetland planting. After a tricky start, this project began in January 2021 and will be concluded in the Autumn.

BEFORE



AFTER



Each year, the Town Council allocates £74,000 to support local groups through a **grants scheme**. It has been a difficult year for community groups to predict what they will need funds for. We completed the first round of applications in June, and held a further opportunity for people to access funding in November 2020.



In August 2020, the Town Council took over the **management of Biddulph Town Hall (inc. Bus Hub and public conveniences) and Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre.**

We want the Town Hall and Visitor Centre to be real **community spaces**, offering important opportunities for people to get together. Clearly, 2020 was a difficult year for this! We have been using the time when the buildings are closed to make improvements. The new team have been working on ensuring the building remains covid-secure and completing lots of decoration.



The Town Hall will become the centre of the town again, with a re-vamped Artisan Market set-up and new events, when we are able to.

We have new tenants within the Town Hall and have re-vamped the pricing and offers available to ensure this is accessible to a wide range of groups.

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2021 (UNAUDITED)

31st March 2020		31st March 2021
	Current Assets	
0	Debtors	93,861
2,527	VAT Control A/c	4,845
406,320	Current Bank A/c	356,810
60	Petty Cash	60
0	Mayors Charity Account	4,275
304,138	CCLA	304,741
<u>713,046</u>		<u>764,391</u>
713,046	Total Assets	764,391
	Current Liabilities	
0	Creditors	11,966
9,501	Accruals	1,302
1,200	Receipts in Advance	0
<u>10,701</u>		<u>13,269</u>
702,345	Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	751,122
	Represented By	
211,949	General Reserves	271,987
490,396	Earmarked Reserves	479,135
<u>702,345</u>		<u>751,122</u>

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AT 31 MARCH 2021 (UNAUDITED)

Biddulph Town Council 2020/21		
Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ended 31st March 2021		
31st March 2020		31st March 2021
	Operating Income	
403,036	General Administration	364,629
6,079	Town and Community	4,225
3,166	Grants	807
62,725	Burial Grounds	63,620
901	Allotments	858
0	Green Spaces	16,078
0	Mayor	8,106
0	Town Hall	97,173
475,907	Total Income	555,496
	Running Costs	
160,724	General Administration	238,368
170,380	Town and Community	100,165
71,200	Grants	78,724
10,855	Burial Grounds	25,186
589	Allotments	691
5,093	Lengthsman	5,690
2,095	Green Spaces	564
2,868	Planning	3,103
14,728	Neighbourhood Plan	4,750
0	Mayor	4,275
0	Town Hall	36,599
0	Country Park	8,604
438,532	Total Expenditure	506,718
	General Fund Analysis	
172,574	Opening Balance	211,949
475,907	Plus : Income for Year	555,496
648,481		767,444
438,532	Less : Expenditure for Year	506,718
209,949		260,726
(2,000)	Transfers TO / FROM Reserves	(11,261)
211,949	Closing Balance	271,987

BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCILLORS

Councillor	Address	Tel	Email	Ward
GS ADAMS				North
EE BADDELEY			elainebaddeley84@gmail.com	West
C BRADY			connor.brady@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk	East
JE DAVIES			jim.davies@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk	North
JIM GARVEY			jimgarvey2211@gmail.com	North
DA HALL			halletal.2@virgin.net	North
AK HARPER			ken.harper51@yahoo.com	North
AH HART			andrew.hart@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk	North
DJ HAWLEY			davehawley12@hotmail.com	Moor
KJ JACKSON			kevin.jackson80@ntlworld.com	East
JT JONES			johntjones999@gmail.com	Moor

AJ McLOUGHLIN			Alistair.McLoughlin@outlook.com	West
CR PERKIN			chrisperkin.Biddulph@gmail.com	East
JP REDFERN			johnredfern90@gmail.com	South
W ROGERS			cllrwaynerogers@hotmail.com	West
ES RUSHTON				East
JT SALT			planejin@hotmail.co.uk	East
HM SHELDON MBE			hildamsheldon@gmail.com	West
CM SMITH			charlottesmith.labour@gmail.com	East
GG SWIFT			graham1525@sky.com	West
NR YATES			nigel.yates@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk	West

In June 2021, there is one vacancy (in the South ward), which will be filled through co-option.