



Biddulph Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT



2022-23

Mayor's Review of the Town Council's year 2022-23

In opening my review of the last 12 months, I would firstly like to thank the Biddulph Town Council for giving me and my wife the opportunity to serve as Mayor & Mayoress of Biddulph, in what has been a unique year in recent history, something we feel privileged to have been a part of. I would also like to thank the officers and town hall staff who have supported us throughout our year in office, and our Deputy Mayor & Mayoress, Chris Perkin and his daughter Harriet, who have stood in for us on those occasions we have not been able to attend.

When Sue and I were asked to represent our town as Mayor & Mayoress back in May 2022, the country was a different place. It was starting to emerge from the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic that had blighted the previous two years and we were looking forward to celebrating the unique event of the Platinum Jubilee as the biggest event of the year ahead. While this was a truly wonderful weekend of celebration, it was overshadowed a couple of months later by the unexpected and sad news of the death of our sovereign Queen Elizabeth. Along with these royal events, we have seen another unique event for the town, with the inauguration of our first "Freeman of Biddulph", Councillor Tony Hall, who has been recognised for his 50+ years of service to the town as a councillor & our first town Mayor in 1974.

In addition to the multitude of town events, we have organised numerous Mayoral events throughout the year. We have highlighted the heritage of our town through the Craft & Textile Event, as well as providing some slightly risqué entertainment by the History Wardrobe. And, while all these events were enjoyable in themselves, their purpose

was to raise money for our chosen charities: Approach Dementia Support, Alzheimer's Research UK, and the Biddulph Youth Initiative. These events have raised just over £10,000. It has been hard work, but immensely rewarding, and it is thanks to all those who have come along and supported us and our events, that enabled us to achieve this. During our year in office, we have also had the opportunity to promote Biddulph throughout the surrounding towns in Staffordshire and Cheshire, and most notably in our twin town of Fusignano, where we enjoyed participating in their town festival. It has been quite a roller-coaster ride, with the multitude of town events and civic duties. These were interspersed with sad losses of fellow councillors, Hilda Sheldon and Ian Lawson and local hero Gerard Booth, not to mention a cost-of-living crisis to deal with. However, when we look back, while it has been quite a year with many landmark events, it is the people we have had the opportunity to meet that we will remember most of all; the local characters, visiting dignitaries and the huge supporting cast of sponsors, volunteers, event organisers and fundraisers, who have helped to make this such a memorable experience.

Councillor JIM Garvey



Tree planting with the U3A (above)

Proclaiming the Accession of King Charles III (left)

The work of the Town Council

2022-23 was the end of the term of office for those Councillors in post since 2019. We spent some time at the end of the year reflecting on the achievements and challenges during this period. As 22 Councillors were elected in 2019, they could not have foreseen the Covid pandemic, changes within our monarchy or the cost-of-living crisis. As a Town Council, we worked hard to support our community, providing opportunities to engage and responses to changing levels of need.

As this year concludes, we welcomed **new faces** to the Town Council, and **said goodbye** to Councillors who had represented their communities for many years. Councillors Adams, Baddeley, Davies, Hall, Redfern and Swift retired at the end of the year, and we were pleased to welcome new and returning faces to start 2023-24, following the local government elections.

This photograph was taken at the close of the 2022-23 year.



In 2022, we were saddened to hear about the deaths of a number of ex-Councillors. We marked their deaths by lowering the Town Hall flag and reflecting on their service to the town. We were also devastated to lose two serving Councillors: Councillor Sheldon and Councillor Lawson. It takes a very special person to 'stand up and be counted' in local government; they will be much missed.

In 2022-23, the Town Council was awarded the Local Council Award Scheme **Quality Gold**. We are incredibly proud of this achievement, which reflects the forward-thinking and innovative approach the Town Council has adopted over the past few years.



The Local Council Award Scheme was created in 2014, designed by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), to 'celebrate the successes of the very best local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential.'

We put together a portfolio of evidence to show how we met the criteria. A Gold Award means the council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and performance management, while constantly seeking opportunities to improve at the cutting edge of their sector. Our award letter said: 'this award shows that your **council has gone above and beyond the legal obligations; you lead your community and continuously seek opportunities to improve and develop even further.** Therefore, the council is to be congratulated immensely.'

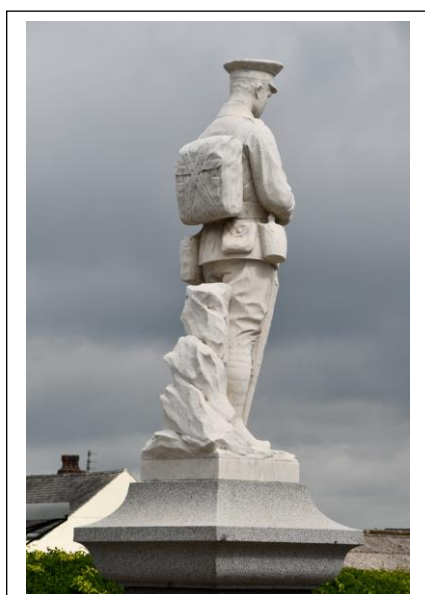
In 2022-23, we celebrated the **centenary of the cenotaph** in Biddulph Town Centre.



The Town Council is the custodian of the cenotaph (fondly known as ‘Albert’), which was funded by public subscription and was unveiled on 29 April 1922 by Corporal J.J. Gibson.

On 1 May 2022, the Town Council worked with partners to re-create the unveiling ceremony. We were joined at the cenotaph by members of the Mercian Regiment, Biddulph Male Voice Choir, British Legion, local churches and community organisations.

We were delighted that the Biddulph and District Genealogy and Historical Society produced an interesting presentation about this period in history, which they delivered the following week.



Later this year, the cenotaph played a vital role in bringing together the community for a period of reflection for Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

We were pleased to partner with the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce in May 2022 to deliver a **Business** Roadshow, providing advice about a range of subjects - from grants to support with legal issues.

In March 2023, we held a Business Networking event in the Town Hall, providing support to a range of organisations in our town:



The Town Council has an **Environment and Climate Change** Working Group. We are clear that there are some issues where our influence is limited, but there are others where we can make a difference.

In 2022-23, we planted over 500 trees in our town. We supported the District Council's orchard initiative at the start of the year and also planted over 400 trees as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project. We were pleased to be joined by lots of volunteers, which makes such a difference to the speed at which we can plant and in making sure the trees are cared for in years to come.



Every one of the chairs in this photograph represented a child who was gifted a toy as part of the project.



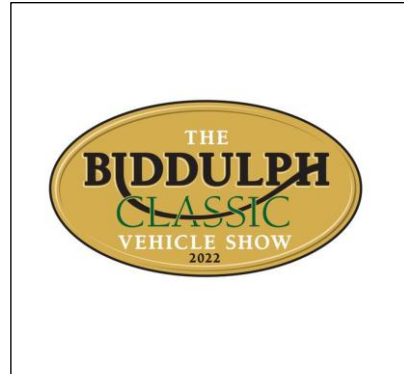
The Town Council is working towards becoming a **Dementia Friendly Community**. In 2022-3 we were proud to partner with Approach Staffordshire (<https://approachstaffordshire.co.uk/>) to provide a Carer Support Café on the second Thursday of each month, 10.30-12.30 at the Town Hall. This is an opportunity for those living with dementia and their carers to come together to meet others who are experiencing the same issues. We still offer a popular Dementia Friendly Cinema screening within the Town Hall.

This year, we also welcomed the Beth Johnson Foundation into the Town Hall to provide a Bereavement Friendship Group. This takes place on the second Wednesday of the month, 10.30-12pm. In 2023-24 we are hosting Douglas Macmillan, who will be providing a group to support those with a range of diagnoses.

The Town Council supports a number of **large events** within the town, either by arranging them ourselves or by providing funding for others to organise them. 2022 was a tremendous year for large events, with the Jubilee activities across a range of venues within the town, the

Biddulph Festival launch (combined with Biddulph by the Sea), Classic Vehicle Show and the Christmas Lights Switch-on.

We also hold a lot of other events in the Town Hall and other venues, such as Energy Saving Days, Twilight Markets, Christmas Singalong, etc.

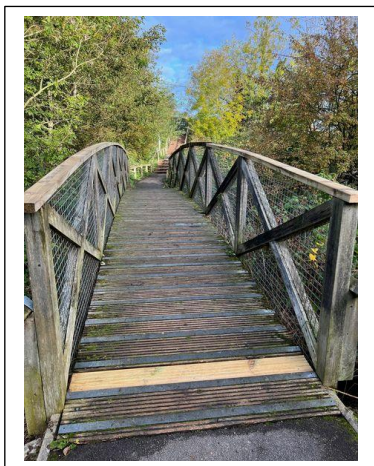


At many of our events this year, the Biddulph Local People's Group offered free refreshments for attendees. We are incredibly grateful for their support.

The Town Council raises money through Council Tax (the precept), services provided and by accessing grants that are available from **external funders**.

In 2022, we were fortunate to receive funding from Severn Trent Water for repairs to the footpath and bridge at Briarswood (photo below). We also had an allocation from Western Power to raise awareness of energy saving.

Awards for All funded Jubilee celebration activities, and Staffordshire County Council provided funds for temperature monitors that we have been able to give away through the Town Hall activities. The Welcome Back fund helped with town centre activities. The Woodland Trust and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council supported our tree planting projects.



Each year the **Town Council allocates £74,000** to support groups within our community. You can find more about the grant schemes here: <https://www.biddulph.co.uk/grant-awards-schemes/>

Many of these groups are published on the 'Clubs, Groups and Societies' booklet, which provides information about different activities that you could get involved with: <https://www.biddulph.co.uk/clubs-groups-societies-5/> (paper copies are available in the Town Hall).

Our aim is to fill the **Town Hall** with events and groups that help to support our community.



In 2022-23, the Town Council agreed that a key focus was **Health and Wellbeing**, and we created a Working Group to guide this work. We hosted the GPs surgeries as they completed their annual covid and flu booster scheme. In April 2023, we organised a Health and Wellbeing Day in the Town Hall, and provided blood pressure checks through our regular 'Feast and Flicks' event. We also worked in partnership with a local business to complete First Aid training. We are planning defibrillator training for the 2023 Biddulph Festival, for the whole community.

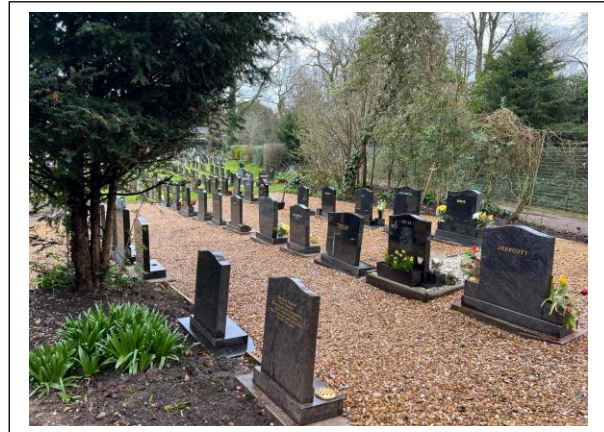


Each month we publish a guide to all the activities that are taking place in the Town Hall. Pop into reception for the latest copy. You can also find more about what is happening within our town, by viewing the Town Guide.

In addition to projects that we plan throughout the course of the year, we maintain a large burial site, two allotment sites and several areas of green space. We fund the 93 bus service, offered by D&G (timetable information is here: <https://www.biddulph.co.uk/93-bus-service/>) We are also responsible for the annual servicing of three public clocks within the town.

At the **Burial Grounds**, 102 people were interred in 2022-23. To ensure our sites are well managed, we completed a tender exercise for a three-year maintenance agreement in 2022-23; this also included management of the Springfield Road site.

In early 2023, we completed a drainage project within the conservation area at the Town Burial Ground to ensure safe access to graves by visitors. We also completed tree management and path renewal this year.



Our **allotment sites** continue to be full, with around 30 people on the waiting list. Current allotment holders met at the start of 2023 to agree priorities for development for 2023-24.



The Town Council is keen to work with **young people** in our town. In January, we welcomed back the **Schools Learners Forum** into the Town Hall, with representatives from schools around the town. It's really important that young people tell us how they want the town to develop, and what the priorities should be.

We spent some time this year working with young people at Woodhouse Academy around the importance of elections, as part of their PSHE Day. We explained the process and the importance of voting. We had some very enthusiastic debate and quite a lot of exciting manifesto promises!

Officers from the Town Council also provided advice and support at the High School Careers Fair in April 2023.

The reception at the Town Hall aims to answer or provide signposting in relation to a wide range of queries, and we were delighted to welcome our first Customer Service Apprentice in October 2022.



As the year drew to a close, we worked with a range of partners across the town to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. We also presented pin badges to young people at local first schools as a memento of the time.

BIDDULPH CELEBRATES THE CORONATION

Biddulph In Partnership
Supporting Community Activities

WHAT'S ON

Friday 5th May

In partnership with Biddulph Youth & Community Zone, Family Disco at the Town Hall from 6.00 pm till 8.00 pm. Food available. Free Entry but please book via Eventbrite for catering purposes.
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/family-friendly-disco-tickets-623600224057>

Youth Club Coronation Street Party & BBQ, BYCZ Church Road, From 6.30 pm till 8.30 pm.

Mumbo Jumbo-No Hit Wonders, Biddulph Moor Village Hall, From 8.00 pm till late.
Tickets are available from Moor Stores: £12 and Concessions £10

Saturday 6th May

Coronation Street Party, The Rose & Crown, Biddulph Moor, From 11.00 am

Family Fun Day, The Gardeners Arms, Brown Lees, From 2.00 pm till 8.00 pm

Sunday 7th May

Coronation Garden Open Day, Biddulph Old Hall. Garden open from 12.30 pm till 5.00 pm, Ticket Only. Tickets £20 available from Sue on 07961093332 or Biddulph Town Hall.

Civic Service at St Lawrence's Church, 6.30 pm. Open to all.

Monday 8th May

Community Litter Pick, Church Road Park, From 12.00 pm. Deb Evans on 07943865339

WWW.BIDDULPH.CO.UK



Our **Business Plan** contains the following vision:

Biddulph is loved for its beauty, with a distinctive identity and independent retail experience. Biddulph is a good place to live, attracting investment and tourism, providing services that support our residents. Biddulph is innovative and proactive with environment and climate change projects, working to enhance and protect our community spaces.

Thank you to all those who helped us work towards achieving this.

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2023 (UNAUDITED)

Biddulph Town Council BALANCE SHEET 31/03/2023

<i>(Last) Year Ended 31 Mar 2022</i>		<i>(Current) Year Ended 31 Mar 2023</i>
£		£
	CURRENT ASSETS	
	Stocks and stores	
	Work in progress	
37,742.90	Debtors (Net of provision for doubtful debts)	19,575.17
3,600.58	Prepayments	
6,572.77	VAT Recoverable	9,181.09
	Temporary lendings (investments)	
765,901.69	Cash in hand	743,347.48
813,817.94	TOTAL ASSETS	772,103.74
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
26,081.64	Creditors	41,772.65
<u>787,736.30</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>730,331.09</u>
	Represented by:	
336,692.30	General fund Balance	282,547.99
	Reserves:	
	Capital	
451,044.00	Earmarked	447,783.10
	Adjustments	
<u>787,736.30</u>		<u>730,331.09</u>

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the council as at 31 Mar 2023

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AT 31 MARCH 2023 (UNAUDITED)

Biddulph Town Council Income & Expenditure Account 01/04/2022 to 31/03/2023		
(Last) Year Ended 31 Mar 2022	(Current) Year Ended 31 Mar 2023	
		<u>Income</u>
		Town and Community 3,934.41
		Burial Ground TBG 15,655.66
		Burial Ground WBG 47,068.00
		Burial Ground ST LAWRENCE'S 2,218.00
		Allotments - MOORLAND ROAD 396.53
		Town Hall 247,196.69
		Burial Grounds ALL 4.70
		Other Organisations 888.47
		General Admin 405,180.65
		Allotments - PARK LANE 483.00
		Mayors Charity Account Income 6,385.19
		Green Spaces - ALL 60.00
		Visitor Centre 7,200.00
		Restated -36,668.60
		<u>£700,002.70</u>
		<u>Expense</u>
		Green Spaces - STATION ROAD 240.00
		Green Spaces - BUTTERFLY GAR 230.00
		Mayors Charity Account Expenditure 12,149.18
		Green Spaces - FOOTPATHS 1,000.00
		Green Spaces - ALL 10,195.33
		Town and Community 94,727.90
		Burial Grounds ALL 38,386.69
		Burial Ground TBG 1,220.32
		Burial Ground WBG 3,016.54
		Allotments - MOORLAND ROAD 360.00
		Allotments - PARK LANE 665.47
		Town Hall 131,021.69
		Bus Hub 18,054.39
		Visitor Centre 27,934.05
		Other Organisations 468.41
		General Admin 439,144.70
		Restated -21,406.76
		<u>£757,407.91</u>
		<u>General Fund</u>
		Balance at 01 Apr 2022 336,692.30
		ADD Total Income 700,002.70
		1,036,695.00
		DEDUCT Total Expenditure 757,407.91
		279,287.09
		DEDUCT Reserves Balance -3,260.90
		Balance at 31 Mar 2023 <u>£282,547.99</u>
<u>£336,692.30</u>		
		Reserves:
		Earmarked Reserve Balance £447,783.10

BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCILLORS

Name	Ward	Email Address
Councillor M A Hopkins	Biddulph East	michael.hopkins@biddulph-tc.gov.uk
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