



Biddulph Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT



2023-24

Mayor's Review of the Town Council's year 2023-24

Councillor Ken Harper and Mrs Sheryl Bayley became the Mayor and Mayoress on 9 May 2023.



They were delighted to attend a wide range of events throughout their Mayoral year, and visited groups and organisations within the town.



Biddulph Moor Well Dressing

Civic Service and St Lawrence's Church





Opening the new park at
Biddulph Moor- Hot Scotch Park

Presenting awards at the Classic
Vehicle Show



Armistice Day service at Biddulph
Cenotaph

Christmas Lights switch-on event



Biddulph Running Club cheque
presentation

The work of the Town Council

At the start of 2023-24 we welcomed **seven new Councillors** to Biddulph Town Council. At the start of their term of office, we spent some time establishing priorities for the next five years, and creating a **new five-year strategy**, which is available to view online or at Biddulph Town Hall. The Town Council team is made up of ten members of staff, and we are supported to deliver the Town Council's priorities by a wide range of local organisations and volunteers.

Biddulph Town Council is aspirational. The needs of our community are firmly at the forefront of every action and project that the Town Council undertakes. We want to improve services, facilities and public spaces, making it easy for our community to access support and ensuring that Biddulph is a good place to live and work.

Biddulph is the 'Garden Town of Staffordshire'. The Town Council's vision is:

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.



*Photograph courtesy of
Judie Tingle.*



2023-24 was a busy and successful year for Biddulph Town Council. We received a **silver award** from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), demonstrating our commitment to excellent health and safety. The Town Council was also **shortlisted** in the 'infrastructure' category for the Let's Celebrate Towns Visa awards. This was recognition of the hard work of Biddulph Town Council and its partners in improving services for its community.

At the end of 2023, the local planning authority asked the people of Biddulph to vote in a **referendum** to adopt (or not) the Biddulph Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order. These documents have been created by the community to ensure that, where there is development, this is the right development in the right places. Following a 'yes' vote for both documents, these documents now form part of the local planning policy. This is a tremendous achievement for the Working Group, and we have committed to continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Plan.



Biddulph Town Council has worked with partners at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to identify and deliver projects as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. During Autumn/ Winter 2023, the Town

Council team visited a range of venues across the town to speak to people over the age of 50. Face-to-face consultation, online and paper surveys collected important data that aims to make sure that **over 50-year olds** have access to the right services and support, and that they can plan effectively for the years to come. The outcome of this study is a list of recommendations for future action and investment.

UK Shared Prosperity Funding has also been granted to support the provision of events, and for improvements to the town centre. These activities will be delivered in 2024-25. One of these activities will be the development of a **town centre square**. We gained planning permission for this in 2023, with the work being scheduled for summer 2024.

In 2022, the Town Council led a partnership that became known as '**Biddulph Works Together**'. This began as a group of local organisations that were looking to coordinate efforts in relation to the cost-of-living crisis and has become something much more important. Throughout 2023-24 these services have continued to provide warm spaces and free food (funded by the Town Council), but also make a significant contribution towards tackling loneliness and social isolation, making vital connections to ensure services are delivered as efficiently as possible. This partnership has continued and provides an opportunity to share information and seek inspiration. At Christmas 2023, we ran a gift campaign for local families again. This year, there were even more families in need. Through the generosity of the Biddulph community, all these children had gifts at Christmas.



During 2023-24, Biddulph Town Hall continued to be a **hub for community activity**. Dougie Mac joined the Town Hall partnership in June 2023, offering support to patients, carers and family members who cannot get to the hospice. In January 2024, we were delighted to welcome Citizens Advice to the Town Hall. The team now use this as a base for drop-ins, Biddulph appointments and casework. This has made a fabulous addition to the range of organisations that now use the Town Hall to support our community. The Town Hall reception is a Community Help Point, with the aspiration of being able to deal with or signpost customers in relation to a wide range of issues.

Our **Environment and Climate Change** Working Group completed a consultation in relation to local priorities. These will form part of the action plan that will guide the Town Council's environmental work. Some of these priorities were:

- Create wildflower areas in parks, verges and hedgerows.
- Encourage engagement of the local population in sustainable gardening.
- Lobby for the installation of electric car charging points around the town.

We have continued to plant trees in 2023-24, planting around 500 on Moorland Road.



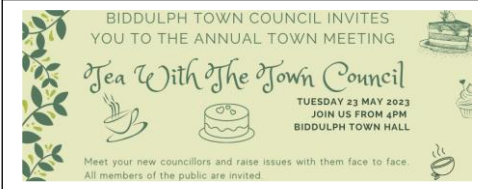
We continued to work with **young people** during 2023-24. Each year we are invited to Woodhouse Academy to speak as part of the PSHE sessions. We have also attended school assemblies and continue to embrace work experience opportunities. We host the Schools Learners' Forum at the Town Hall; a chance for young people to scrutinise the work of the Town Council and learn about our town. We were also pleased to attend the High School Career's Fair for the second time.

We were delighted when our partners in the **Fairtrade** team asked us to display some of the fabulous artwork from the schools.



In 2022, the Town Council committed to working with an apprentice, for the first time. In 2023-24, our apprentice passed her Level 2 qualification with distinction, and has gone on to start a Level 3 course.

Biddulph Town Council hosts and supports a wide number of **events** in the Town Hall and on the High Street. In 2023-24, we hosted an energy saving event, health and wellbeing drop-in, Volunteer Week funding fair, Remembrance parade, Classic Vehicle show, Christmas lights switch-on, Festival launch day- and many more.



We are determined to preserve and enhance current **heritage features** in the town. In 2023-24, we restored the platform edge at the Gillow Heath Smokies Way site. We also started a lovely partnership with the Trent Valley Trust who are linking footpaths across the length of the river Trent. We are proud to have the source of the River Trent on Biddulph Moor, and we're looking forward to working on this project throughout 2024-25.



In 2023-24, we have continued to support **local businesses** through Business Breakfast events, with bespoke support to access local grant funding. We have provided advice and opportunities for local businesses to host event and promote their activities.

Our **Community Cinema** happens once a month and has become a much-loved date for the diary. The sessions support the Town Council's work in relation to dementia provision, providing free food, refreshments and a relaxed environment. There is an intermission, and the lights are kept low.

The Town Council raises money through Council Tax (the precept), services provided and by accessing grants that are available from **external funders**. External funding was received in 2023-24 from the District Council in relation to market provision and the Lengthsman scheme, Moorlands Partnership Board for the restoration of the station platform in Gillow Heath, the County Council for the provision of support with energy saving and Groundworks to enable the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan and Neighbourhood Development Order. All grants help to ensure we can complete projects within the town without having to increase the amount of funds we request through Council Tax.

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).

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 (£40,000), 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**, 89 people were interred in 2023-24. We commenced work on the plans for the new Garden of Remembrance at the Woodhouse Burial Ground.

Our **allotment sites** continue to be full, with around 30 people on the waiting list. Current allotment holders met at the start of 2024 to agree priorities for development for 2024-25.

Thank you to all those who supported us during 2023-24. Your help, encouragement and guidance is very much appreciated.

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2024 (UNAUDITED)

Biddulph Town Council		
BALANCE SHEET		
31/03/2024		
(Last) Year Ended 31 Mar 2023		(Current) Year Ended 31 Mar 2024
£	CURRENT ASSETS	£
	Stocks and stores	
	Work in progress	
19,575.17	Debtors (Net of provision for doubtful debts)	4,731.63
	Prepayments	5,964.20
9,181.09	VAT Recoverable	10,503.29
	Temporary lendings (investments)	
743,347.48	Cash in hand	651,488.31
772,103.74	TOTAL ASSETS	672,687.43
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
41,772.65	Creditors	24,320.52
<u>730,331.09</u>	NET ASSETS	<u>648,366.91</u>
	Represented by:	
282,547.99	General fund Balance	230,273.74
	Reserves:	
	Capital	
447,783.10	Earmarked	418,093.17
	Adjustments	
<u>730,331.09</u>		<u>648,366.91</u>

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AT 31 MARCH 2024 (UNAUDITED)

Biddulph Town Council Income & Expenditure Account 01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024		
(Last) Year Ended 31 Mar 2023		(Current) Year Ended 31 Mar 2024
	Income	
247,196.69	Town Hall	183,227.54
396.53	Allotments - MOORLAND ROAD	392.00
2,218.00	Burial Ground ST LAWRENCE'S	2,382.00
47,068.00	Burial Ground WBG	40,006.00
15,655.66	Burial Ground TBG	23,180.00
3,934.41	Town and Community	2,304.14
405,180.65	General Admin	432,931.36
4.70	Burial Grounds ALL	
888.47	Other Organisations	1,108.28
7,200.00	Visitor Centre	7,200.00
483.00	Allotments - PARK LANE	495.00
6,385.19	Mayors Charity Account Income	2,589.18
60.00	Green Spaces - ALL	
-36,668.60	Restated	
£700,002.70		£695,815.50
	Expense	
	Allotments - ALL	1,052.10
	Mayors Charity Account Income	228.69
439,144.70	General Admin	457,560.79
468.41	Other Organisations	1,385.00
27,934.05	Visitor Centre	19,538.47
18,054.39	Bus Hub	19,435.93
131,021.69	Town Hall	107,731.91
665.47	Allotments - PARK LANE	2,380.00
360.00	Allotments - MOORLAND ROAD	360.00
3,016.54	Burial Ground WBG	2,415.90
1,220.32	Burial Ground TBG	4,585.33
38,386.69	Burial Grounds ALL	43,701.11
94,727.90	Town and Community	102,788.70
10,195.33	Green Spaces - ALL	9,165.00
1,000.00	Green Spaces - FOOTPATHS	1,200.00
12,149.18	Mayors Charity Account Expenditure	2,835.75
230.00	Green Spaces - BUTTERFLY GAR	1,415.00
240.00	Green Spaces - STATION ROAD	
-21,406.76	Restated	
£757,407.91		£777,779.68
	General Fund	
336,692.30	Balance at 01 Apr 2023	282,547.99
700,002.70	ADD Total Income	695,815.50
1,036,695.00		978,363.49
757,407.91	DEDUCT Total Expenditure	777,779.68
279,287.09		200,583.81
-3,260.90	DEDUCT Reserves Balance	-29,689.93
£282,547.99	Balance at 31 Mar 2024	£230,273.74
	Reserves:	
	Earmarked Reserve Balance	£418093.17

BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCILLORS

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