



Biddulph Town Council- Action Plan 2020-21, June 2021 update

Introduction

Biddulph Town Council prepares an annual action plan to ensure that decision-making is transparent, and priorities are appropriately resourced.

2020-21 was an unprecedented year as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, presenting new challenges for Biddulph Town Council. Despite this, good progress has been made with the actions agreed at the start of the year. Where disruption caused delays, mainly to capital projects or those requiring the input of community groups, these activities will be included for completion in the 2021-22 action plan; these activities are highlighted in **green**.

Strategically, the direction of travel for the Town Council is set out within the draft Neighbourhood Plan (a referendum is expected in Autumn 2021) and the emerging Regeneration Plan. In addition, following the completion of the long-term lease for the Town Hall, there is a five-year financial forecast. Following approval/ adoption of these documents, the Town Council will consult on a strategic plan in Autumn/ Winter 2021.

The priorities are attached to standing Committees, but may be delegated to Working Groups. This action plan is reviewed by the Finance Strategy and Management Committee.

(TCC- Town and Community Committee, RAC- Recreation and Amenities Committee, FSM- Finance Strategy and Management Committee, PC- Planning Committee)

No.	Committee	Objective	Key Task	Funding allocated	June 2021 update
1	TCC	Provide Support and Information to Town Centre traders	a) Keep under review a database of traders to enable the Town Council to communicate grant, event, etc. information effectively. b) Consider development of a BID. c) Pursue opportunities for town centre development following Covid-19 pandemic.	EMR- Neighbourhood Plan Implementation General Fund- Regeneration budget	The Biddulph Directory will be launched in Summer 2021 including trader information. The Town Council has actively shared and promoted re-opening news. There is an emerging Regeneration Plan. The Town Council successfully received £1500 grant funding for Covid improvements and has applied for 'Welcome Back Funding'.
2	TCC	Complete development of Station Road gardens	a) Complete purchase of Sainsbury's land and move to Phase 2 of development. b) Work with SMDC to take on lease for land, rather than license. c) Install monument/ sculpture. d) Ensure appropriate management arrangements are in place for fountain.	EMR- Development of Station Road project.	Sainsbury's completion due May 2021; issues with searches caused delays. SMDC lease/ license to follow when completion finalised. Meetings about sculpture to take place July 2021. Fountains to open when restrictions lifted permitting numbers of people to gather.

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3	TCC	Role of Artisan Market and town centre trading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote Artisan Market and Fresh Food Friday and consider appropriate changes in 2021-2. b) Consider the introduction of new initiatives, e.g. youth market, Ethical Fair. c) Undertake analysis of footfall on the High Street. 	General Fund- Artisan Markets budget and new Events budget	Markets commenced May 2021 following closure during 2020-21. Emerging schedule of events for 2021. Amey commissioned to consider footfall analysis in July 2021.
4	TCC	Increased involvement in Community Events	Continue to work on events such as the Biddulph Festival, Christmas Lights, Volunteer events, heritage celebrations, etc. Identifying new opportunities to promote tourism and increase footfall.	General Fund budgets allocated for Events, Tourism and Christmas Lights. Grants scheme available for local organisations. EMR- Tourism enhancements	Events on-hold during 2020-21. Re-opening of Town Hall and new lease arrangements provide opportunities for enhancing tourism offer. Website re-vamped and Town Guide/ Biddulph map provide information for visitors. Additional options at Biddulph Grange County Park Visitor Centre. Contact made with local organisations to provide tickets and information about events/ tourist opportunities at the Town Hall.
5	TCC	Enhancement of partnerships within the town	Continue to work on Biddulph Network, Dementia action plan, Tree Charter actions, collaborate with Friends Groups, health and mental health partners and support for the voluntary sector.	Enhanced role of Events and Partnerships Officer. General Fund budgets allocated for Dementia Action Plan EMR- Tourism enhancements	Emerging Tree Strategy/ training. Part of Staffordshire and Stoke-on Trent Dementia Network; emerging as a Dementia Friendly Community. New staff received Dementia Friends training. Directory emerging; groups to be contacted to check information when meetings commence. Support provided throughout the year to Friends Groups. Significant work with Health partners through delivery of flu and Covid vaccination programmes. Blue Badge drop-ins facilitated throughout lockdown.
6	FSM	Management of Town Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider future investment in the building and promotion of the asset. b) Effective management of health and safety, including statutory testing. c) Re-visit embryo business idea within Town Hall and opportunities for small businesses. d) Consider energy efficiency and future enhancements 	EMR- Town Hall (and toilet block) Development EMR- Projects	Town Council took over the management of the Town Hall, bus hub/ public conveniences and Visitor Centre in August 2020. A priority has been compliance activity and repairs/ maintenance. Two new tenants have become involved with the Town Council, with a third due to

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					start at the Visitor Centre in summer 2021. Town Council agreed to consider town centre opportunities to encourage new businesses. A grant for £1000 has been received from Staffordshire County Council for LED lighting.
7	TCC	Expand tourism activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explore opportunities at Biddulph Grange Visitor Centre. b) Print and distribute Biddulph map c) Improvements to website and tourism 'offer' within town Hall (inc. new cabinets) d) Improved signage in and around the town. e) Support for walking and Ramblers initiatives. f) Consider membership of Enjoy Staffordshire. 	EMR- Tourism enhancements General Fund Tourism budget	Initial phase of repair work completed at Visitor Centre. Due to re-open Summer 2021. Biddulph map to be delivered in June 2021 with additional information expected from Biddulph and District Historical and Genealogical Society following with. 'Welcome to Biddulph' signs to be delivered July 2021. Footpaths & Bridleways information is on website with online survey. 'The Great Outdoors' & local interest/walks is contained within the Town Guide
8	TCC	Provide services and support for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with Community Council to develop a youth vision. b) Work with Biddulph Youth and Community Zone to establish the effectiveness of a detached youth worker scheme/ disco. c) Facilitate Youth People's Working Group. d) Work with School's Learners Forum e) Support 'Staged' youth theatre project. f) Consider enhancements of play opportunities and youth facilities. 	EMR- Projects, youth facilities	Young People's Working Group due to meet June 2021. 'Staged' to re-start summer 2021. Opportunities emerging at Country Park for play areas.
9	TCC	Complete restoration projects and protection of heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Deliver MPB projects and identify other options. b) Restoration of war memorial. c) Consideration of designated conservation areas/ locally listed buildings. 	General Fund- Regeneration EMR- Projects	Existing projects moving forward; delayed because of SMDC staff availability. Officer allocated to work on community assets/ conservation areas and local listings.

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10	TCC	Lead town with Ceremonial occasions	Seek guidance from national agencies, as appropriate. Where possible, consider options for social distancing celebrations/ events.	General Fund- Civic Expenditure	Operation Forth Bridge was successful. Remembrance events were managed appropriately within social distancing guidelines.
11	TCC	Implement appropriate recommendations in relation to Environment and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Separate action plan with priorities to be developed by Environment and Climate Change Working Group. b) Consider public meeting in relation to a local response to environmental issues end 2020, early 2021. c) Enhance reputation of 'Garden Town of Staffordshire' d) Improvement to flood risk areas 	General Fund- Environment and Climate Change EMR- Projects	Working Group re-commenced March 2021 with clear focus. #gardentownofstaffordshire branding has been added to all social media.
12	TCC	Town Centre enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Refurbish bollards and noticeboards. b) Develop register of community assets (inc. other areas of town, as required) c) Identify opportunities to improve town centre public realm. d) Lobby for changes to car parking at Wharf Road to encourage footfall within the town centre. e) Consideration of a shop front grant scheme. 	EMR- Neighbourhood Plan implementation EMR- Highways Development General Fund-0 Regeneration	Biddulph in Bloom painted black and gold items. Emerging Regeneration Plan Amey commissioned to complete Options Appraisal on High Street. Trial completed in 2020 on town centre parking- results inconclusive.
13	TCC	Town centre toilet provision (inc. bus hub) and usage of old toilet block	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure cleaning and management is completed satisfactorily. b) Consider use of bus hub. c) Assess need for storage in the old toilet block and seek quotations for renovation. 	EMR- Town Hall (and Toilet Blocks) Development	Cleaning completed to good standard by private organisation. Bus hub survey completed; more work to do in 2021. Space used as pop-up grotto at Christmas 2020. Old toilet block still managed by SMDC; plans in progress to develop a 'Changing Places' space.
14	RAC	Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre	Seek quotations for significant scheme of work to ensure Centre is safe and accessible; aim to open in Autumn 2020.	EMR- Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre refurbishment	Electrical work completed Spring 2021. Aim to re-open August 2021.
15	RAC	Improvement of Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Implement Highways' consultant recommendations, b) Work with SCC to improve parking on North High Street; consider bollards in alley off John Street. c) To consider speed and use of town centre highways roads, in partnership with Amey and Staffordshire County Council. d) Install new/ refurbished signage at entrance of Biddulph 	EMR- Highways Developments	RPS work complete; Amey options appraisal to commence July 2021. 'Welcome to Biddulph' signage agreed; to be delivered July 2021.

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16	RAC	Development of Allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Continue to look for development opportunities, particularly Shepherd/ Slater Street. b) Work with existing sites to ensure sites managed appropriately. c) Review of existing paperwork and introduction of overarching Allotment Policy. 	General Fund- Allotments	SMDC Assets Team considering options for Shepherd/ Slater Street. Sites managed well throughout lock-Down; checked regularly by staff. Allotment Policy complete.
17	RAC	Maintain and monitor footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with Ramblers to identify issues and resolve these via Staffordshire County Council. b) Identify small improvements that are possible with BTC funding. c) Lengthsman to keep some town footpaths clear of debris and overgrown vegetation. 	General Fund- Footpaths General Fund- Lengthsman	Footpaths monitoring form implemented via the website, to identify improvements needed. Lengthsman tender to be renewed June 2021.
18	RAC	Effective management of Burial Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To keep in obedience introduction of Exclusive Rights of Burial b) Improvements to drainage in Section C c) Resurface footpaths in Section M and C d) Tree planting- October 2020 e) Introduce Memorial Testing f) Refurbishment of Garden of Remembrance g) Clarify ideas around new Garden of Remembrance development 	General Fund- Burial Grounds EMR- Future burial area, GOR development	Garden of Remembrance refurbishment work complete. Contract work to take place 2021-22, subject to availability.
19	RAC	Protection/ improvement of Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explore options to undertake additional mapping with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust b) Ensure riparian duties at Butterfly Gardens are undertaken c) Continue to maintain BTC owned/ managed areas. d) Complete Pocket Park and identify new areas for improvement. e) Develop Tree Planting Strategy 	General Fund- Butterfly Garden, Maintenance of Springfield Road EMR- Projects	Mapping work to take place Summer 2021; considered by Environment and Climate Change Working Group. Regular inspections take place of green spaces. Biddulph in Bloom improved Butterfly Garden area. First phase of Pocket Park complete; planting to take place summer 2021. Tree Planting Strategy emerging.
20	RAC	Improvement of transport options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Management and monitoring of 93 bus service. b) Active Working Group tackling range of public transport issues, including innovative approaches to working with schools at peak times. 	General Fund- 93 Bus EMR- Highways Development	93 bus service continued throughout pandemic; to be recommissioned by County Council Autumn 2021. Working Group meeting again from March 2021. 93 bus page added to website and in Town Guide to promote/increase usage.

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21	FSM	Ensure GDPR Compliance	a) Implementation and monitoring of new policy. b) Consideration of Data Protection Officer.	General Fund- Office Costs	New Officer in place to oversee GDPR requirements.
22	FSM	Monitoring of Asset Register	Effective monitoring of fixed assets and Town Council owned property.	New Finance and Admin Officer role	Reviewed annually. New assets acquired from August 2020.
23	FSM	Regular review of policies	a) Ensure Town Council is operating legally and with transparency. b) Solicitor instructed to provide employment advice on retainer basis. c) Development of Business Continuity Plan and Emergency Planning document, providing strategies for dealing with future possible outbreaks. d) Review of Finance procedures to coincide with new staffing	Chief Officer responsibility General Fund- Office Costs	Policies are now in an accessible format. HR employment solicitor working with Town Council. Business Continuity Plan and Emergency Planning documents nearly complete. New internal control and finance processes in place.
24	FSM	Administer grants scheme	a) Provide support for local organisations through the main grant fund and the Town Councillors' Community Grant fund. b) Second round of applications for main fund to be considered in October 2020.	General Fund- Grants	Two schemes available; two rounds of main grant scheme allowed additional opportunities in 2020-21.
25	FSM	Develop Town Council Strategy	Consider priorities in line with emerging Neighbourhood Plan.	FSM Committee to lead.	Regeneration Plan emerging.
26	FSM	Management of risk	a) Continue to review and assess risk, particularly in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic. b) Staff to attend refresher training.	General Fund- Training	Risk assessments reviewed and new documents emerging in line with additional responsibilities. All staff completing virtual vital skills training sessions.
27	FSM	Effective provision of lengthsman activities	Complete review of lengthsman scheme including consideration of wider grass cutting activities.	General Fund- Lengthsman	County Council still considering grass cutting work. Lengthsman scheme to be re-tendered June 2021.
28	FSM	Consideration of investments and use of earmarked reserves.	To keep income and expenditure under review	FSM Committee to lead.	2020-21 accounts closedown complete; reconciliations approved by FSM Committee. Budgets set by FSM/ Town Council. New internal control process.
29	FSM	Installation of effective IT and WIFI provision (inc. telephony)	a) Complete tender process b) Consider building transfer in relation to ongoing building security	General Fund- IT and Website Support EMR- Town Hall Development	New IT and wifi in place within Town Hall. Enhanced security to be considered 2021-22.

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30	FSM	Maintain good relationships with 999 partners	a) Work with partners to ensure PSPO and CCTV provision in the town is appropriate b) Lobby for appropriate provision	FSM Committee to lead.	Good relationships with Police within Town Hall.
31	PC	Provide timely responses to Planning applications	a) To ensure that responses to Planning applications are transparent and consistent. b) Work with SMDC to develop training opportunities.	Planning Committee to lead.	Planning Committee continued to meet during lockdowns, to engage with statutory planning process. Councillors attended Planning training run by SPCA.
32	PC	To develop/ implement the Neighbourhood Plan	Plan developed and submitted for Regulation 16 consultation (July 2020). Covid-19 has delayed referendum opportunities until May 2021.	Planning Committee to lead. EMR- Neighbourhood Plan implementation.	To be complete Autumn 2021.