

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 17 MAY 2022, 6PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

PRESENT:

- **The Mayor:**
 - Councillor J Garvey
- **Deputy Mayor:**
 - Councillor C Perkin
 - Councillor J Davies
 - Councillor D A Hall
 - Councillor A H Hart
- Councillor D J Hawley
- Councillor K J Jackson
- Councillor A Lawton
- Councillor W Rogers
- Councillor C M Smith

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnerships Officer
- Mrs Margaret Warman – Governance and Compliance Officer
- 1 Member of the Public

APOLOGIES:

- Councillor G S Adams (Absent)
- Councillor E E Baddeley (Absent)
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor K Harper
- Councillor J T Jones
- Councillor A J McLoughlin
- Councillor J P Redfern (Absent)
- Councillor S Rushton
- Councillor J Salt
- Councillor H M Sheldon MBE
- Councillor G Swift
- Councillor N R Yates

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The minutes of Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 6 July 2021 were confirmed.

2. ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Councillor Garvey read the 2021-22 Annual Report, on behalf of the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Rushton.

The Annual Report and unedited financial statement for the financial year ending 31 March 2022 were received.

3. PRESENTATION ON TOWN COUNCIL CURRENT AREAS OF WORK

Councillor Hall gave an update on the work of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee.

It has been a busy year for the Finance Strategy and Management Committee. This Committee develops the strategic direction of the Town Council through the action plan and Regeneration Plan . In addition, our tasks have been:

- *Responsibility for compliance and audit arrangements*
- *Approval of tenders and quotations in line with adopted policies. A significant amount of resource has been spent improving the assets that the Town Council is now responsible for. We have improved the Visitor Centre, Town Hall and bus hub.*
- *This year, we were allocated Welcome Back funding which had to be spent in line with government procurement rules.*
- *The Committee allocated £74,000 of grant funds*
- *We introduced new email addresses and reviewed current IT provision, supported by the IT Working Group*
- *We set budgets and an ambitious precept, with fees that did not increase.*
- *We oversaw banking and investments*
- *There was also some change with staffing and recruitment, which we provided support with.*

Councillor Hall thanked all Biddulph Town Council staff.

Councillor Davies summarised the work of the Town and Community Committee.

Meetings of the Town and Community Committee have felt more 'normal' in the last few months of 2021-22.

This Committee focuses on interactions with community groups and community events; the covid-19 pandemic saw a shift in our priorities.

This year we have:

- *Re-modelled the Artisan Market to become a Twilight Market, with an enhanced Friday offering.*
- *Improved signage and promotion of the town, with new leaflets and a more accessible website.*
- *The Environment and Climate Change Working Group planted trees, supported our community and lobbied government for change.*
- *We worked with the Young People's Working Group to commission detached youth work and to support schools with bespoke projects.*
- *It was positive to hold some of our larger events- Classic Vehicle Show, Christmas Lights, Civic events such as Remembrance Sunday*
- *We developed a beautiful 2022 Calendar with local photographers*
- *The Dementia Action Plan continued to develop; the Dementia Friendly Cinema sessions returned and more of our community became 'Dementia Friends'.*
- *We supported the Twinning Association and Fairtrade Group.*
- *We are working with local traders to reintroduce the Business Chamber and support the High Street.*
- *The Committee worked on a number of heritage projects inc. Albert restoration and developing Local Heritage listings*
- *The Town Council sought grants to support our community; we held an energy café distributing LED bulbs and useful information.*
- *We supported arts activity in the town, through the Biddulph Festival and a partnership with Support Staffordshire.*

Councillor Hart presented an update regarding the work of the Recreation and Amenities Committee.

The Committee's core work involves the management of our services and land, ensuring we continue to improve these areas and strive to make additional enhancements.

The Committee has overseen the work of the Transport Working Group who have reviewed the 93 bus service and other transport related issues in the town.

Each month we consider jobs for our Lengthsman and opportunities for land management within the town.

We have developed several key new documents this year:

- *An overarching Burial Policy*
- *A Tree Strategy*

We have reviewed reserved graves.

We have undertaken a memorial safety risk assessment at the Burial Ground.

We have consulted with users of our sites at Springfield Road and in relation to Section L at the Burial Ground. This has led to decisions about improvements that are necessary.

We have scrutinised the West Midlands Ambulance Service in relation to ambulance provision within the town and we have provided challenge about the management of the Briarswood green space.

On an operational level, we have added new signage to the Burial Ground, entered into a new contract for the maintenance of the site and removed asbestos from one of our allotment sites.

We have also shown innovation this year, with the completion of the Pocket Park at Dorset Drive, a new Aldi bus route and consideration of plans for a new Garden of Remembrance at the Woodhouse Burial Ground.

Councillor Hawley summarised the work of the Planning Committee. The Committee makes recommendations to the District Council. Neighbourhood Plan and Development Order are progressing – Councillor Hawley thanked the Committee members for their input.

4. FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS ABOUT THEIR PROJECTS (FROM PRESENTATIONS THROUGHOUT THE DAY)

The Chief Officer gave a summary of the presentations by local community groups that had taken place throughout the day. These are available on Facebook for people to re-watch.

Biddulph Local People's Project are undertaking a number of activities to support adults over the age of 50, including craft and social activities and a book exchange.

Biddulph Youth and Community Zone provides services to young people and adults of all ages. In addition to numerous social and fitness groups, fruit and vegetable boxes are available for a small cost and food is often given away through the group.

Biddulph Library are returning to 'normal' post-covid and have expanded the services that are on offer to the people of the town.

Presentations by Biddulph Police and Staffordshire Moorlands Children's Centre will be published to Facebook at a later date.

In summary, the Chief Officer confirmed there was a variety of free events available in the town, for all ages, and was thankful for the volunteers who work so hard to provide them. Over 300 people had watched the videos on Facebook so far.

5. OPEN FORUM

A member of the public thanked the Town Council for it's work across the town, and for the Councillors' service over the previous 12 months; John Robinson for being our Town Crier and Town Hall staff – for their friendly and caring attitude and for the many events they'd co-ordinated. Residents should feel lucky to have such a dedicated group of people working on their behalf; who he looked on as friends.

The meeting was closed at 6.20pm

Signed..... Date.....