

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL  
TUESDAY 24 JANUARY 2023, 6PM  
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

**PRESENT:**

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • <b>The Mayor:</b>           | • Councillor K J Jackson    |
| Councillor J Garvey           | • Councillor J T Jones      |
| • <b>Deputy Mayor:</b>        | • Councillor A J McLoughlin |
| Councillor C Perkin           | • Councillor W Rogers       |
| • Councillor C Brady          | • Councillor J Salt         |
| • Councillor D A Hall (Chair) | • Councillor N R Yates      |
| • Councillor D J Hawley       |                             |

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnerships Officer
- Ms Elizabeth Norton – Finance Officer
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administration Officer
- Councillor A Lawton
- Councillor N Eardley

**75. APOLOGIES**

- Councillor J Davies (Absent)
- Councillor K Harper
- Councillor A H Hart

**76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: **None.**
- ii. Other Interests: Councillor Jones is a member of Lifeline.

**77. MINUTES**

- a) The Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on held on 22 November 2022 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 10 January 2023) were **confirmed**.
- b) The Notes of the Asset Management Working Group meeting held on 29 November 2022 were **received**. Proposed by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor Perkin.

## 78. AUDIT

- a) To **receive** a report following the 13 December 2022 internal control visit by Councillors Perkin and Hawley (attached).

Comments were made regarding the Council's regular payment method. There were no concerns raised. Proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Garvey and received.

- b) To **receive** a report in relation to Value Added Tax (VAT) following a recommendation within the internal control report (attached).

The Chief Officer tabled the report detailing the current arrangements with regard to Value Added Tax (VAT)

Councillor Jones asked whether VAT can be reclaimed on the Mayors Charity expenditures. The Chief Officer will ask the auditor and report back.

- c) To **approve** the internal auditor for the 2022-23 audit.

It was agreed to use the Joanne Taylor as the internal auditor; the previous year had been satisfactory.

## 79. COMPLAINTS

- a) To **approve** the reviewed Complaints procedure (attached)

Councillor Salt requested that the complaints and feedback procedure be combined. Councillor Hawley requested that the above revised procedure be brought back to the finance meeting to be approved.

*Chris Perkin entered the meeting 7.43pm*

- b) To **receive** an update on all feedback received during 2022. Please note, whilst the themes within this presentation are not confidential, the document contains names of members of the public and should not be shared.

The document was received.

## 80. POLICIES

- a) To **approve** the reviewed Induction Training and Development Policy.

There was discussion about the wording proposed for Town Councillor training. It was suggested that 'encouraged' should be used, rather than 'required'.

The Chief Officer suggested that training could be completed upon joining the committee and a refresher to be taken every two years.

Councillor Salt questioned whether there is a training record for all Councillors, the Chief Officer confirmed that this document exists.

Councillor Garvey requested that a list of training could be sent out to all Councillors to remind them what they had completed.

The document was proposed by Councillor Perkin; seconded by Councillor Jones and agreed.

**b) To approve the reviewed Data Protection and Retention Policy**

There was discussion about the safe disposal of documents.

Councillor Yates questioned whether there is a portal where the confidential items can be shared electronically. Councillor Hawley requested that the confidential sections of minutes be printed on a different colour.

The document was proposed by Councillor Harvey; seconded by Councillor Perkin and agreed.

**c) To approve the reviewed Dress and Appearance Policy**

Councillor Salt suggested that the wording 'disabled people' to be changed to 'people with disabilities' and 'employees with disabilities'.

Councillor Rogers suggested that the policy could be added to the Councillors induction policy. The document was proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hawley and agreed.

**81. TO RECEIVE A TABLED REPORT CONTAINING FEEDBACK FROM ROOM HIRERS AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL**

The Chief Officer tabled the report. Councillor Jones stated that the feedback is very positive. The Chief Officer reported that the lighting in the bar area has now been completed. Councillor Yates highlighted the comment regarding pictures being displayed in the Hall and agreed that this was a good idea. Councillor Garvey added that an art exhibition could be a beneficial addition. Received.

**82. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

To **receive** bank reconciliations for November and December 2022 (to follow)

Proposed by Councillor Perkin; seconded by Councillor Garvey and agreed.

## STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

**83.**

- a) To **consider** disposal of any assets, in line with the Asset Management Policy and Financial Regulations

The Chief Officer advised that the Finance Officer would begin to look at a review of this in the coming weeks.

- b) To **confirm** approved suppliers as part of the Procurement Policy

The Chief Officer advised that the Compliance and Governance Officer was currently reviewing this process.

*In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, the Council is to determine which items, if any, should be taken with the public excluded.*

## CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

### **84. QUOTATIONS (to be tabled)**

- a) Following a review of contracting arrangement in relation to statutory testing, to **approve** new arrangements for 2023.

Quotations were agreed.

It was agreed that the Fire Service would be asked to visit the Town Hall for an assessment.

*Councillor Hawley left the meeting at 6.28pm*

- b) To **approve** heating improvements at the Visitor Centre  
Work would be completed in the coming weeks.

- c) To **approve** repairs to fencing at Station Road  
Further investigation was necessary.

- d) To **approve** heritage/ restoration costs  
Costs were approved and the projects would continue.

## **85. TO APPROVE THE CREATION OF A PARKING LEAFLET TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL SCHOOLS**

The Town Council would not lead this project.

## **86. BIDDULPH IN BLOOM**

- a) To **receive** an update on progress with the revised Biddulph in Bloom Constitution.

Further information would be provided at a later date.

- b) To **receive** an update on the proposed new garden project.  
An update was received.

## **87. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE DEVELOPMENT**

Further information would be provided at a later meeting.

## **88. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ART PROJECT AT STATION ROAD**

Further investigation was necessary before the project could commence.

## **89. BUDGET AND PRECEPT CONSIDERATIONS**

*It was agreed to consider item b) first.*

- b) To **confirm** proposed fees (current fees attached)

Fees were agreed.

- a) To **confirm** Committee budgets (proposal document attached)

Budgets were agreed.

- c) To **confirm** Precept requirements, following information from the District Council on the parish tax base figure. The tax base for 2023/24 is 6287.

An increase was agreed.

*Councillor Salt left meeting 7.57pm.*

**It was agreed that, in order to continue with the agenda, Standing Order 3x should be suspended to allow an additional 30 minutes of consideration.**

Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Jackson and agreed.

**90. TO CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF A COMMUNITY ROLE TO SUPPORT THE BIDDULPH WORKS TOGETHER INITIATIVE**

A new role would be created for further consideration.

*Councillor Jackson and Councillor Yates abstained from vote.*

**91. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE TOWN HALL**

An update was received.

**92. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF RISK ASSESSMENTS AS PART OF THE PROCESS OF CONSIDERING INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS**

A programme of review is ongoing.

**93. TO CONFIRM THE APPROACH TO FREE OF CHARGE ROOM BOOKINGS DURING THE 2023 BIDDULPH FESTIVAL**

The booking process was discussed and agreed. No booking would be removed or turned away, but (where there is availability) a Festival event would be free of charge during July 2023.

**94. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (BRIEFING NOTE TO FOLLOW)**

It was agreed that the Chief Officer should continue with this work.

**95. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON RECENT STAFFORDSHIRE PENSION FUND COMMUNICATION**

The Chief Officer felt it would be beneficial for Councillors to receive a report about pension provision, in a similar format to the VAT report received at this meeting. All agreed that this would be beneficial.

*Councillor Rogers left meeting at 8.22*

**96. TO CONSIDER PROGRESS WITH GRASS CUTTING ACTIVITY WITHIN BIDDULPH AND THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FROM STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Further mapping work would be necessary.

The meeting ended at 8.26 pm.

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