

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL  
TUESDAY 30 MAY 2023, 5.30PM  
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

**PRESENT:**

- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • <b>The Mayor:</b>         | • Councillor M A Hopkins      |
| Councillor A K Harper       | • Councillor K J Jackson      |
| • <b>Deputy Mayor:</b>      | • Councillor J T Jones        |
| Councillor N R Yates        | • Councillor A C Lawton       |
| • Councillor A H Hart       | • Councillor W Rogers (Chair) |
| • Councillor D J Hawley     | • Councillor C Wood           |
| • Councillor F A Holdsworth | • Councillor N R Yates        |

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Ms Elizabeth Norton – Finance Officer
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administration Officer
- Mrs Margaret Warman – Compliance and Governance Officer

Councillor Harper requested an additional item to be added to the confidential items at the end of the meeting in relation to a staffing update. Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Rogers. All agreed.

**1. ELECTION OF A CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR**

Councillor Harper welcomed the Town Councillors to the meeting, and requested nominations for a Chair. Councillor Hart nominated Councillor Rogers; seconded by Councillor Jones. There were no other nominations. All agreed.

Councillor Rogers requested a nomination for Deputy Chair, Councillor Hart nominated Councillor Wood; seconded by Councillor Jackson. There were no other nominations. All agreed.

## 2. APOLOGIES

- Councillor C Smith
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor J T Salt

## 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. None.
- ii. Other Interests. None.

## 4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 25 April (approved at the Town Council meeting on 9 May 2023) were **confirmed**. Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Jones. All agreed.

## 5. EXTERNAL AUDIT

- a) The Internal Audit report was **received**.

The Chief Officer discussed the process of internal audit and presented the report, which had been sent by email.

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Jones. All agreed.

- b) A presentation on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)- Annual Governance Statement was **received**.

The Chief Officer tabled figures that would be confirmed by Town Council.

- c) To **approve** the Accounting Statements 2022-23, which will be presented to Town Council on 13 June 2023.

The Chief Officer explained the process that the Town Council would go through at the meeting in June, and tabled a document which outlines how the Town Council meets each of the Accounting Statements.

There were a number of queries. Councillor Harper queried the formal period where electors have a right to check the finances. The Chief Officer confirmed that this is advertised on the website, and displayed on the notice boards.

Councillor Wood questioned what is stated in the reserves policy as the minimum level of general reserves. There was discussion about this and the Chief Officer explained that she would bring a proposal to a future meeting.

It was suggested that a more detailed accounts be circulated for the benefit of the new Councillors.

**6. To **consider** Finance Strategy and Management Committee actions for 2023-24**

The Chief Officer explained that the action plan is due to be created and requested whether there were any projects that the town councillors wish to focus on during the year 2023/2024.

Councillor Yates requested further analysis on the Town Hall; the contracts that are in place, the occupancy and the risks associated with that.

Councillor Hawley requested to review the day to day expenditure; and look at ways in which income can be increased.

Councillor Hart requested investigation into whether a charitable arm is possible to access funding.

**7. To **receive** an update on the June Funding Fair and Volunteer Week activities.**

The Chief Officer reported that as part of the Volunteer Week, the Town Hall is hosting a Funding Fair, 9 June 2023, at 10am until 1pm.

As part of the Volunteer Week, the Chief Officer reported that there will be live chats with local groups to talk about the importance of volunteering.

Councillor Yates requested application forms to be distributed for the County Council and District Council fund during the Funding Fair.

Councillor Jackson suggested inviting the Coalfields Regeneration Trust and requested an analysis of the outcome for this fair.

**8. To **receive** an update on the Community Ownership Fund and to **consider** options for Biddulph.**

The Chief Officer had sent the email received from the Community Ownership Fund and explained that it is part of the levelling-up process.

It was agreed to move this item to the confidential items in case commercially sensitive issues were discussed.

**9. To **receive** an update in relation to the Shared Prosperity Funding.**

The Chief Officer gave an update regarding the Fund and explained that Biddulph Town Council is on a reserves list for one of the three bids that were applied for; there has been no response for the other two, and the deadline to spend this funding is imminent.

**10. POLICIES (attached)**

**a) To **approve** the reviewed Employee Code of Conduct**  
Proposed by Councillor Wood; seconded by Councillor Hart. All agreed.

**b) To **approve** the reviewed Policy on the Use of Amanuenses**  
Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Jones. All agreed.

**STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**

**11.**

**a) To **consider** disposal of any assets, in line with the Asset Management Policy and Financial Regulations**  
None.

**b) To **confirm** approved suppliers as part of the Procurement Policy**  
The Chief Officer noted that the team are continuing to expand the list of suppliers. Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Jones.

*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**

- (8)** To **receive** an update on the Community Ownership Fund and to **consider** options for Biddulph.

Potential sites were considered. The Chief Officer would make enquiries and report back to a future meeting.

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

- a) To **approve** provision of IT equipment for new Councillors

The Chief Officer would purchase a device within existing spending limits.

The Chief Officer will circulate an email requesting how many council members would require the IT provision.

*Councillor Hart left the meeting at 7.37pm*

b) To **consider** quotations for maintenance activity within the Town Hall  
The Chief Officer tabled three quotations for an annual service for the fire extinguishers.

Your Choice and Security Limited was proposed by Councillor Yates; seconded by Wood. All agreed.

c) To **consider** the provision of boxes to accommodate bleed kits  
Councillor Jones proposed that the one gifted to the Town Hall be located in the Town Hall De-Fib box; seconded by Councillor Harper. All agreed.

## **13. POLICE ACTIVITIES**

To **receive** an update on potential costs of additional police activity.

An update was received.

*Councillors Jackson and Yates left the meeting at 7.50pm*

#### **14. BIDDULPH IN BLOOM CONSTITUTION**

To **receive** an update from the Town Council's solicitor and to **agree** next steps

It was agreed to continue with negotiations and plans.

#### **EMERGENCY ITEM**

A staffing update was provided; an update would be provided at a future meeting.

*The meeting ended at 8.00pm.*

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