

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 27 JUNE 2023, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

PRESENT:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • The Mayor: | • Councillor M A Hopkins |
| Councillor A K Harper | • Councillor K J Jackson |
| • Deputy Mayor: | • 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 Smith |
| • Councillor F A Holdsworth | • Councillor J T Salt |

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
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnerships Officer

15. APOLOGIES

- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor C Wood

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. None.
- ii. Other Interests- Councillor Jones declared an interest in Biddulph Moor projects. Councillor Hopkins declared an interest in Knypersley Cricket Club and Social Club.

17. MINUTES

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 30 May 2023 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 13 June 2023). The Minutes were **confirmed**.

18. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

To **consider** introducing Ward meetings for Councillors and a planning session to reflect on Town Council priorities.

The Chief Officer noted that Committees had considered their priorities for 2023-24, but there appeared to be a number of different priorities that needed to be developed further. The Chief Officer questioned whether Councillors felt a separate meeting would be appropriate to consider ideas for a 2-3 year strategic plan rather than a rolling annual action plan.

The Chief Officer also noted that she had been approached about introducing ward meetings; probably only for North, East and West ward. This might be useful to ensure that constituent or ward-based issues could be tackled effectively.

All agreed these meetings would be beneficial.

19. SHARED PROSPERITY

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

The Chief Officer gave an update on the Shared Prosperity Funding that was being allocated by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. She noted that during the tourism meeting last week, themes appeared to be supporting the community with social enterprises and new business endeavours. It was also noted that membership of the Board is allocated from central government, and it appeared to be increasingly unlikely that the Town Council would be able to bid for funds. The community should be supported to do this.

Councillor Jackson reported that Councillor Flunder should not have promised Biddulph the 'lion share' of this funding. Councillor Jackson expressed his scepticism in relation to how Staffordshire Moorlands District Council will allocate the funding.

Councillor Hart explained that previous tourism sessions with Councillor Flunder established that Biddulph was short of accommodation. Accommodation businesses would increase the footfall in the town and Councillor Hart suggested that tourism investment would be a positive.

Councillor Hart questioned who the portfolio holder was for tourism, Councillor Jackson confirmed it was Councillor Matt Swindlehurst.

20. £2 BUS FARES ON 93 SERVICE

*To **confirm** that the £2 fare will continue until the end of October 2023, in line with the government's initiative. This was initially introduced as part of the 'Biddulph Works Together' programme.*

Councillor Jones suggested by the statement above should read 'at least until the end of October'.

Councillor Holdsworth questioned the usage data. Councillor Lawton gave a brief update on the data and reported that he receives usage updates regularly; these are reported back to the Transport Working Group.

Councillor Hart expressed his support for and would like the service to be publicised more.

The Chief Officer noted that D&G had not submitted an invoice yet, as the cost to them had not exceeded £100.

Proposed with the amendment to the deadline by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hart. All Agreed.

21. SUPPORT STAFFORDSHIRE- VOLUNTEERING FOR ALL

*To **receive** an update on a new role within Support Staffordshire, based within the Town Hall.*

The Chief Officer tabled a promotional poster that had been received that day, and gave an update on a new role within Support Staffordshire.



The aim is to increase volunteering within the town. The Chief Officer reported that they will be based within the Town Hall in the reception.

Councillor Jackson requested promotion to be added to the website.

22. SEND PROVISION

*To **receive** a verbal update on SEND provision within the town; briefing note provided by Councillor Flunder.*

The Chief Officer noted that Councillor Flunder was concerned that responses should be gathered in relation to the SEND consultation before the required deadline. The update was:

- 1) *The County Council has recently launched their 'new' SEND Strategy partly in answer to the 2 remaining areas that Ofsted said needed improvement within Children Services. I believe this is the largest employment area within the Council and the council is now seeing employment numbers improving with a transformation programme still going on. Overall, our Children services are doing better than many other Councils across the region.*

- 2) *I arranged the meeting with the cabinet member for SEND Cllr. Jonathan Price at which several members of the Town Council Jill, Jim and Nigel were present, and we were promised a response after the consultation(s) regarding co-production (units in schools) over the coming months. It would appear that the unit that has been built (but not utilised yet) at Biddulph High School would 'fit' the new Strategy and therefore improve SEND services in the Town and the surrounding area.*
- 3) *At the same time as the meeting in Stafford there were meetings concerning the new Strategy with Dr. Hallit being the main officer leading the new Strategy. I have been told that I will have a meeting with Jonathan and Dr. Hallit sometime over the summer, after the consultation period has been completed. I will then push for another meeting with Jonathan and co. as soon as I hear of any response.*
- 4) *Just to confirm that the Potteries Trust have sent in an expression of interest to the council that they would like Biddulph High school to be considered as a possible location for co-production. This will mean that they could provide some more SEND services not just for their own students, but for children at other local schools as well.*

Overall, the idea is to work with children and families at an earlier age and to integrate SEND services into the existing school system.

There was a discussion around the ACORN provision currently at Biddulph High School, and that Co-Production is required within the town. Councillor Salt explained that she will be approaching local schools to able to facilitate this.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

23.

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

The Chief Officer noted there was nothing to report.

- b) To **confirm** approved suppliers as part of the Procurement Policy
- The Chief Officer noted that there has been two new contractors added to the approved suppliers list; Wain Marsh and Westland. She noted that all the application information had been received in relation to health and safety, approach to equality, insurance, etc. The Chief Officer was happy to recommend that they should be added to the list. Agreed.

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

24. QUOTATIONS (to be tabled)

- a) To **re-affirm** that the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust should complete survey activities in line with agreed Neighbourhood Plan priorities (previously agreed).

The Chief Officer provided some background information in relation to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust mapping activity, and tabled the proposals that had been agreed previously.

Councillor Hart proposed that all mapping activities should be completed; seconded by Councillor Yates. All agreed.

- b) To **consider** quotations for maintenance activity within the Town Hall
The Chief Officer tabled the proposal for fire extinguishers to be surveyed; these are remedial works. All agreed.

- c) To **consider** quotations for a survey of the trees at the Burial sites and the Town Hall
The Chief Officer tabled the quotation from N & J Tree Services to complete the annual tree survey.

Proposed by Councillor Hart, seconded by Councillor Hawley. Agreed.

- d) To **consider** quotations for the installation of blinds in the reception area
The Chief Officer tabled three quotes, each were discussed.

JanTex quote was Proposed by Councillor Jones; seconded by Councillor Hart.

Councillor Yates left the meeting.

The Chief Officer noted that she had received some additional information in relation to the restoration of the platform at the Gillow Heath station site. She wondered how Councillors would prefer to deal with this issue.

Councillor Jones proposed an emergency item to be added to the agenda; seconded by Councillor Hart – All agreed.

24e) Additional Item of Gillow Heath Platform.

The Chief Officer noted that in order to meet the requirements of the Conservation Officer and the Moorlands Partnership Board, the contractor would need to complete more work on-site.

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

25. GRANTS

- a) To **agree** a position with regard to Town Council involvement in the Biddulph Festival.

The position was discussed; there would be a 'reset' after this Festival.
Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Jones. All agreed.

- b) To **confirm** the position with regard to free room hire for voluntary and community sector groups

Proposed by Councillor Hart to give money and not 'in kind' allocations; seconded by Councillor Jackson. All agreed.

- c) To **receive** an update on grant evaluations received.

The Chief Officer reported that there are outstanding evaluation forms. It was discussed that an extension be given of 11th July 2023 to receive these forms; any grant will not be awarded until receipt of the evaluation form. Proposed by Councillor Yates, seconded by Councillor Smith and agreed.

Councillors Harper and Holdsworth were against the proposal.

d) To **consider** and **approve** attached grant applications for 2023-24

Organisation	Grant Requested	Grant Awarded
1st Biddulph Moor 'Saracens' Scout Group	1,600.00	1,000.00
1st Biddulph Rainbows	500.00	500.00
1st Biddulph Moor Rainbows and Brownies	450.00	450.00
2151 (Biddulph) Squadron Air Training Corps	1,996.00	1,000.00
Biddulph Community Wellbeing Group	250.00	250.00
Biddulph District Guides	400.00	400.00
Biddulph Festival Committee	5,000.00	3,000.00
Biddulph in Bloom	30,000.00	25,000.00
Biddulph Ladies Afternoon Club	300.00	300.00
Biddulph Methodist Church	1,000.00	600.00
Biddulph Moor Evergreens Club	500.00	500.00
Biddulph Trefoil Guild	200.00	200.00
Biddulph Twinning Association	250.00	250.00
Biddulph Yarnbarms	1,000.00	500.00
Biddulph Youth and Community Zone	2,500.00	2,000.00
Brown Lees and District Community Association	500.00	500.00
Christ Church Biddulph Moor	2,000.00	1,500.00

Organisation	Grant Requested	Grant Awarded
Citizens Advice Staffordshire North & SOT	25,000.00	15,000.00
Douglas Macmillan Hospice	2,000.00	1,000.00
Thrive Youth - Life Stream Church / G.E.M's – Crafty Coffee Morning (Life Stream Church) / Life Stream Church – 'Children's Work'	2000.00/ 300.00 / 3,000.00	1,000.00
Knypersley Bowling Club	2,000.00	1,000.00
Knypersley Cricket Club	2,000.00	500.00
Moorlands Voluntary and Community Transport	1,800.00	1,000.00
New Road Methodist Church Biddulph Moor	750.00	500.00
The Probus Club of Biddulph and District	300.00	300.00
Social Connective CIC	1,317.00	1,000.00
The Green Tree House	18,124.00	9,750.00
Lifeline	2,000	2,000

The meeting ended at 9.06pm.

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