

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 25 JULY 2023, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

PRESENT:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Deputy Mayor: | • Councillor K J Jackson |
| • Councillor N R Yates | • Councillor A C Lawton |
| • Councillor A H Hart | • Councillor W Rogers (Chair) |
| • Councillor F A Holdsworth | • Councillor C Smith |
| • Councillor M A Hopkins | • Councillor J T Salt |

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mrs Sarah M Haydon – Chief Officer (Minute Taker)
- Mrs Angela Williams – Administration Officer
- Ms Jodie Hancock – Events and Partnerships Officer

26. APOLOGIES

- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor A K Harper
- Councillor J T Jones
- Councillor D J Hawley

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests: **None.**
- ii. Other Interests: Councillor Rogers declared an interest in the Classic Vehicle Show.

28. MINUTES

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 27 June 2023 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 11 July 2023)

The Minutes were **confirmed**.

29. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

*To **consider** initial feedback from the meeting on 18 July in relation to projects for the period 2023-2027 (attached).*

A strategy document (linking to Business Plan priorities- attached) will be developed over the summer.

The Chief Officer highlighted the key projects brought forward from previous discussions in relation to each of the committees. Each of the projects fit under the four headings outlined in the Business Plan.

Councillor Jackson felt this was ambitious and should be reviewed annually.

Councillor Yates felt the Environment and Climate Change Working Group should be re-started; he noted that voluntary groups could apply for funding from the County Council.

Councillor Hart proposed to move forward with the activities highlighted; seconded by Councillor Yates. All agreed.

30. BANK MATTERS

- a) To **approve** the bank reconciliations for April and May 2023- all accounts

The Chief Officer stated that the statement for June will be provided in September as it is the end of the quarter, and the VAT is currently being calculated. All **agreed**.

- b) To **receive** an update on receipts and payments to-date.

Councillor Yates requested clarification on the billing period in relation to the utility bill at the Visitor Centre as it is above the budgeted amount. Councillor Yates requested to keep an eye on it. Current figures were **received**.

- c) To **receive** a verbal update on the application to Unity Bank

The Chief Officer gave an explanation regarding the three approval levels for the banking application; Councillors details have been updated on the application.

It was explained that a NatWest account will be kept to pay cash and cheques in; a new policy will be written to cover this. The update was **received**.

31. TOWN COUNCILLOR GRANTS

To confirm that the Town Councillor Grant Scheme will open on Monday 11 September 2023.

Councillor Rogers informed Councillors that each Town Councillor is allocated £250 per year to fund community projects. He explained that Councillors may join together to fund a group, or split it as they see fit.

The Chief Officer noted that the draft application forms are now available, and queried whether there were any amendments.

Councillor Jackson questioned whether the applications are paper copies or electronic. The Chief Officer confirmed that both are available, in reception and on the website.

There were no changes; it was agreed to publish the form and guidance.

32. POLICIES

The Chief Officer noted that the policies have small amendments in red.

- a) To **approve** the reviewed Community Engagement Statement
Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Yates.
All **agreed**.
- b) To **approve** the reviewed Social Media, Press and Public
Communication Policy
Councillor Rogers noted the change regarding the use of YouTube.
Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Yates.
All **agreed**.
- c) To **approve** the reviewed Co-option Policy
Councillor Smith suggested a change to the policy to allow a debate.
Councillor Yates agreed that a 5-minute presentation and a confidential
debate should be added.

Councillor Wood expressed his concern over the Mayor having the casting vote which is a 'political appointment'.

There was a discussion around how to change the policy. The Chief Officer will amend the policy and bring back to the September meeting.
All agreed to amend the policy for future review.

- d)** To **approve** the reviewed Equal Opportunities Policy
Councillor Salt requested an amendment to Section 2.1.

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

- e)** To **approve** the reviewed Health and Safety at Work Policy

The Policy was discussed at length. It was agreed to make amendments regarding manual training being offered to volunteers. It was requested that Councillors forward confirmation of any relevant completed training to the Chief Officer.

Proposed by Councillor Salt; seconded by Councillor Yates.
All agreed.

Internal training sessions on Town Council Finance and the role of a Chair in Committees was discussed. The Chief Officer will create a package of in-house training.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

33.

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

The Chief Officer noted some low value items needed to be disposed of: two white notice boards, a fax machine, shredder and snow machine that cannot be fixed. Councillor Rogers will look at the snow machine first.

It was explained that any computers/ laptops/ mobiles get disposed of correctly in line with data protection. All **agreed**.

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

The Chief Officer reported that a sole trader, who would like to be added to the approved contractor list, only has £2 million public liability insurance coverage and the policy states that £5 million insurance coverage is required to be added to the list.

Councillor Yates suggested a risk assessment and mitigation.

It was agreed to request the sole trader to increase his insurance to £5 million.

Proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Yates.
All **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

34. QUOTATIONS (to be tabled)

a) To approve a quotation for Classic Vehicle Show stickers for exhibitors

Three quotations were displayed. Hanley Print was proposed by Councillor Wood; seconded by Councillor Hart.
All **agreed**.

b) To approve quotations for Town Hall repairs/ maintenance

The Chief Officer gave background information regarding the boiler in the Town Hall kitchen; the boiler has broken recently and can not be fixed. Electrical Deals Direct quote was proposed by Councillor Wood; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

The Chief Officer reported that the hand washing boiler in the Police area has also broken and is leaking. It was proposed to replace like for like, which was recommended by the electrician.

Proposed by Councillor Smith; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

- c) To **approve** a quotation/ approach to the review of Station Road fountains

It was agreed that investigation would take place.

- d) To **approve** the renewal of the Myers and Co. Employers Assist Service

It was proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Wood. All **agreed**.

- 35.** To **receive** a verbal update on CCTV provision in the town.

The update was received, and it was agreed that CCTV could be positioned on Town Hall land- if necessary. Proposed by Councillor Smith; seconded by Councillor Hart. All **agreed**.

- 36.** To **consider** a list of outstanding District Council Assets Team tasks (to be tabled) and how to progress these.

A list would be presented to the District Council.

- 37.** To **consider** setting a budget for Christmas celebrations from Earmarked Reserves

The Chief Officer tabled the previous year's expenditure for consideration.

£4600 was proposed by Councillor Hart; seconded by Councillor Wood.
All **agreed**.

- 38.** To **consider** setting a budget for Biddulph Works Together projects from Earmarked Reserves

The Biddulph Works Together projects were discussed. It was previously agreed to add £500 to Fuel Bank.

Councillor Smith reported that all councillors can access the supermarket voucher of £60 and refer members of the community.

It was stated that the next meeting of the Working Group is due in September.

Councillor Salt proposed a budget of £10,000; seconded by Councillor Hart.
All **agreed**.

- 39.** To **receive** an update on defibrillator funding by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and to approve the allocation of remaining grant funding

Proposed by Councillor Rogers; seconded by Councillor Holdsworth to discuss this again in November. All **agreed**.

- 40.** To **approve** a payment for the Remembrance Sunday band

£225 for the band was proposed by Councillor Smith; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

The meeting ended at 7.26pm.

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