

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING, BIDDULPH TOWN COUNCIL
TUESDAY 23 JANUARY 2024, 5.30PM
HELD AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, BIDDULPH ST8 6AR**

PRESENT:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Deputy Mayor: | • Councillor F A Holdsworth |
| • Councillor N R Yates | • Councillor K J Jackson |
| • Councillor D J Hawley | • Councillor A C Lawton |
| • Councillor M A Hopkins | • Councillor W Rogers (Chair) |

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

Councillor Rogers recited the disclaimer regarding the recording of the meeting.

67. APOLOGIES

- Councillor A K Harper
- Councillor A H Hart (Absent)
- Councillor C Brady
- Councillor J T Jones
- Councillor C Wood
- Councillor C Smith (Absent)
- Councillor J T Salt

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:
- ii. Other Interests: Councillor Garvey declared an interest in item 79.

69. MINUTES

To **confirm** the Minutes of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee meeting held on 28 November 2023 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 9 January 2024). The Minutes were **confirmed**.

70. ACCOUNTS MATTERS

- a) To **approve** the bank reconciliations for October and November 2023- all accounts (attached).

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

- b) To **consider** attached amendments to the Financial Regulations in relation online banking and the management of funds between Unity, NatWest and CCLA accounts.

The Chief Officer stated that amendments have been made to the Financial Regulations, which propose how the Town Council's accounts with CCLA, NatWest and Unity Bank will be managed.

Councillor Hawley questioned whether an amendment is required in section 7 relating to payments of salaries.

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

71. TO CONSIDER ENTERING THE 'LETS CELEBRATE TOWNS AWARD':

<https://www.visa.co.uk/campaign/talk-of-the-town/lets-celebrate-towns.html>

The Chief Officer gave a brief description of the award.

There was a discussion around the positives of the award and the items that could be included.

Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Yates. All **agreed**.

72. TO CONFIRM DETAILS OF COUNTY COUNCIL FUNDING RECEIVED IN 2023-24

The Chief Officer tabled the amounts that have been received. **Confirmed**.

£1500	Councillor Yates- Climate action, Visitor Centre windows
£700	Councillor Flunder- Community Fund, cost-of-living support
£450	Councillor Yates- Community Fund, Feast and Flicks
£335	Councillor Flunder- Climate action, Town Hall reception

73. POLICIES (attached)

- a) To **approve** the reviewed Stress Management Policy
All agreed.
- b) To **approve** the reviewed Violence at Work Policy
Councillor Lawton questioned whether there has been an increase in threats that the staff have received in recent years. The Chief Officer stated that the CCTV, lone working device/s, glass screen for the reception area all help to provide safe working.
All agreed.
- c) To **approve** the reviewed Anti-Fraud Bribery and Corruption Policy
Councillor Yates questioned whether gifts and hospitality are reported and recorded. There was discussion about the range of documents that highlight Code of Conduct requirements.
All agreed.
- d) To **approve** the reviewed Data Protection (GDPR) and Retention Policy
All agreed.

The Chief Officer reported that all policies have been sent to the employment solicitor for consideration; after this, employees will consider any significant changes.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

74.

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

The Chief Officer reported that following the chair inspection of 367 chairs, 35 require to be disposed of.

Proposed by Councillor Yates; seconded by Councillor Lawton. All **agreed**.

- b) To **confirm** approved suppliers as part of the Procurement Policy
The Chief Officer reported that there are an additional four contractors added to the approved contractors list.

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; 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

75. BUDGET AND PRECEPT CONSIDERATIONS

a) To **confirm** Committee budgets (proposed budget attached)

There was consideration of each of the Committee budgets. The Chief Officer confirmed that the Reserves Policy is reviewed each year, at year end, with updated figures.

Proposed by Councillor Hawley; seconded by Councillor Jackson. All **agreed**.

b) To **consider** the attached room hire benchmarking activity.

The Chief Officer noted that this had been a comprehensive piece of work completed by the Customer Support Apprentice; it was a challenge to identify a venue that was exactly comparable with the Town Hall. The document was **received**.

c) To **confirm** proposed fees (current fees attached)

Councillor Jackson requested data detailing how often the rooms are hired and additional information regarding the refundable deposit. Councillor Hawley proposed to defer the consideration on the room rates to the next meeting as it required further data; seconded by Councillor Lawton. At present, there should be no change. All agreed.

Councillor Jackson proposed 2.5% increase in burial fees; seconded by Councillor Lawton. 5 agreed. 1 opposed.

Councillor Jackson proposed to increase by 2.5% for allotment fees; seconded by Councillor Yates. 5 agreed. 1 opposed.

Councillor Jackson proposed no change to the market fees; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All agreed.

d) To **confirm** Precept requirements, following information from the District Council on the parish tax base figure. The tax base for 2024/25 is 6338.

Councillor Hawley proposed an increase of 4.73%; seconded by Councillor Jackson. All **agreed**.

76. TO APPROVE THE LICENSES FOR THE LAND AT SMOKIES WAY AND THE TOWN HALL FRONTAGE (ATTACHED)

The Chief Officer had circulated the licenses for both the heritage project at Smokies Way and the Town Hall frontage.

Councillor Yates proposed to approve both; seconded by Councillor Lawton. All **agreed**.

77. TO CONSIDER THE APPROACH TO RISK MANAGEMENT IN ADVANCE OF INSURANCE RENEWAL IN FEBRUARY 2024

The Chief Officer gave a presentation explaining the approach to risk, she detailed the various risk assessments and ongoing policies; this would be circulated to all Councillors.

Received.

78. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH LOCAL ARCHITECTS IN RELATION TO POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Proposed by Councillor Jackson for the Chief Officer to continue with discussions; seconded by Hawley. All **agreed**.

Councillor Jackson proposed to suspend standing order 3x and continue with the meeting; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All agreed.

79. TO CONSIDER A SUITABLE CONTRIBUTION FOR THE STORAGE OF THE MINERS LANTERNS

A contribution was considered and agreed.

Councillor Rogers declared an interest in this item and abstained from the discussion and vote, giving only information.

80. QUOTATIONS (to be tabled)

- a)** To **approve** a quotation and approach to the management of Japanese Knotweed at the Butterfly Garden.

The Chief Officer tabled the quotations.

Proposed to use Complete Weed Control by Councillor Yates; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All agreed.

- b)** To **confirm** the quotation for the installation of an additional heater at the Visitor Centre.

Confirmed. All **agreed**.

- c)** To **approve** a quotation for tree work at the Town Burial Ground

The quote received by Wain Marsh was proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

- d)** To **approve** a quotation for memorial testing at the Burial Ground (all sites)

The Chief Officer tabled the quotes received. Councillor Yates proposed the ICCM quote; seconded by Councillor Hopkins. All **Agreed**.

- e)** To **approve** a quotation for the second-floor fire doors.

The Chief Officer gave a brief explanation of the requirements relating to the quotes. Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Holdsworth. All **agreed**.

- f)** To **approve** a quotation for a replacement door in the reception area.

Proposed by Councillor Jackson; seconded by Councillor Hawley. All **agreed**.

81. STAFFING

- a) To **consider** communication in relation to pension provision for a member of the town council team

Considered.

- b) To **consider** the role of the Apprentice in 2024-25.

Considered.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.

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