

Biddulph Town Council



POLICY ON THE USE OF AMANUENSES

Approved April 2021

To be reviewed April 2023

Introduction

The definition of an 'Amanuensis' is a person employed to write what another dictates or to copy what has been written.

Biddulph Town Council has developed this policy to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010, s. 149), and to maintain confidentiality.

In the context of Biddulph Town Council activities, an amanuensis is someone who writes down or keys a Councillor's dictated words, and reads materials aloud to a Councillor. This is a voluntary position.

Appointment of an amanuensis shall be according to this Town Council policy.

Provisions within this Policy

A Councillor with a disability that impairs their ability to carry out day-to-day council communications shall have an amanuensis appointed to:

- a) assist them with their responsibilities, and
- b) safeguard Council rules of confidentiality, which would otherwise be breached if a Councillor were to share confidential information or materials.

A relevant disability is any physical, intellectual or mental health disability that affects written or spoken communication, and could involve, for example, impaired vision, hearing, dexterity, literacy or numeracy.

A Councillor who declares a relevant need shall have an amanuensis appointed to them as soon as possible after taking up office. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief Officer, together with the Chair or other designated Councillor, to organise the appointment of an amanuensis, in discussion with the Councillor.

Where an amanuensis is required to support the position of Mayor, the individual should be nominated at the point of election and approved by the Town Council.



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Where possible, the Chief Officer shall be the appointed amanuensis. Where the amanuensis is not the Chief Officer, they shall report to and be accountable directly to the Chief Officer, unless the amanuensis is another Councillor.

An amanuensis shall be acceptable to the Councillor, the Chief Officer and the Chair. An amanuensis shall be subject to the same rules of confidentiality as the Councillor to whom they are appointed.

An amanuensis shall not advise or offer an opinion to the Councillor on a council matter or join in discussion with the Councillor as though they were a member of the council.

An amanuensis shall be able to produce an accurate record of the Councillor's words.

They must be able to write legibly and use a keyboard.

They are not expected to have a knowledge of council terminology or regulations.

It is the Councillor's responsibility to direct the amanuensis in day-to-day needs.

The amanuensis:

- shall write or key communications and other documents exactly as they are dictated
- shall read communications and other documents exactly as they are written
- shall offer no content suggestions or interpretations to the Councillor
- shall not advise the Councillor on what to think or how to respond to an issue
- shall be subject to the same rules of confidentiality as the Councillor



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