

PRESENT:

North Ward:

Councillor D Bushby (Chairman)  
Councillor P Christie

South Ward:

Councillor P Lawrence

East Ward:

Councillor J Craigie (Substitute for Cllr Mrs R Craigie).  
Councillor Mrs J Gubb (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor J McKenzie

West Ward:

Councillor Mrs K Corfe  
Councillor D Ratcliff

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs H J Blackburn (Town Clerk)  
Councillor S Inch  
4 x Members of the Public.

084. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Mrs R Craigie (East Ward – illness)

085. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

There were no declarations of interest.

086. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION OF 15 MINUTES DURATION

No Members of the Public wished to speak at this point.

087. MINUTES

Proposed by Councillor Christie and seconded by Councillor Craigie, the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Vote – For: 7, Against: 0, Abstention: 1)

088. CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

The Chairman advised that he had discussed the Manor Court Ceremony with the Town Clerk and given the current Covid situation, it may be prudent to regretfully cancel the ceremony. He asked the Town Clerk to explain further. The Town Clerk advised that the rising number of Covid 19 cases, and the necessity to isolate, could make the logistics of the ceremony very difficult if either the staff, speaker or Jurors needed to isolate at the last minute. Consideration should also be given as to whether to hold an indoor event given the rising levels of Covid 19 and the very transmissible variants. The Council's Covid risk assessment will require seated guests to wear face coverings and attendees to provide evidence of negative covid test before the Ceremony. Logistically there will be difficulties with space, especially when seating the Jurors.

The Pannier Market was suggested as a venue, but disregarded as Manor Court takes place on a Saturday, which is a market day.

Committee Members agreed that this should be placed on the Town Council agenda with a view to cancelling the ceremony for 2022.

Members received the list of payments.

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gubb and

RESOLVED: That the list of payments is approved.

(Vote – For: 8, Against: 0)

#### 090. INTERIM INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Members received and approved the Council's interim Independent Auditor's Report for the period 1 April – 30 September 2021.

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Christie and

RESOLVED: That the Council's Interim Independent Auditor's Report for the period 1 April – 30 September 2021 is noted.

(Vote For: 8, Against: 0)

#### 091. FORMAT OF REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PARADE

Members reviewed the recommendation made at the SFGP meeting on the 2 December 2021 "That there is an open invitation for the Veterans to lead the Remembrance Sunday Parade from the Town Hall and back again on Remembrance Sunday" following the request from Full Council in the light of information brought forward by the Town Marshal and Council Members. There was a full discussion which included the following points:

- The Town Council should ask the views of other organisations and veterans.
- The original decision should stand as it went forward on a majority vote.
- Further information/opinions had come forward following the SFGP meeting decision which had altered the view of some Members.
- Discussion as to whether Remembrance Sunday is a civic or military event.
- The veterans do lead on the way back from Victoria Park and then the Mayor takes the salute.
- There has been mixed feedback from different parties.

It was then proposed by Councillor Craigie and seconded by Councillor Christie for Standing Orders to be suspended in order for Members of the Public to speak.

(Vote For: 8, Against: 0)

A Member of the public addressed the meeting and spoke about:

- The Code of Conduct
- He said the Town Marshall had only contacted 2 associations – there are 50.
- Feedback had only been elicited to confirm the current position. He spoke of an Echo Chamber, where like minded views are repeated back for bias confirmation. He said there was a lack of integrity and due diligence.
- He spoke about the purpose of Remembrance Sunday, and who was being honoured, as well as the proceedings in London where the Royal party do not march or proceed.

Members continued the discussion with the following comments:

- There are mixed opinions, and the local people need to be canvassed for their view. The Town Marshall has been the backbone of Remembrance Sunday.
- The difference between a parade and procession.
- Which organisations do the Members of the public (present at the meeting) represent when expressing their views on behalf of others? (The Member of the Public said he was a serving member of the military but not representing any one organisation.)
- If the veterans lead the parade back, who will they salute?

It was then proposed by Councillor Bushby and seconded by Councillor Christie that the meeting return to Standing Orders.

(Vote For: 7, Against: 1)

Councillor Craigie suggested that Remembrance Sunday takes place this year as recommended at the last SFGP Committee to see whether this makes for a better or worse event.

- Concern was raised at the knock-on effect of making this change. The plan for the whole event would need to be changed.

- One Member said that the Mayor represents the Councillors and the Queen. It would not be correct protocol for the Councillors to march in front of the Mayor.

Proposed by Councillor Christie, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gubb and

RECOMMENDED: That a letter is drawn up and that as many veteran organisations are contacted as possible to find out their views on the order of the parade. The Town Clerk will put together the wording with the Chairman and this will be circulated to Members of the SFGP and The Member of the Public (who can help with contacts for veteran organisations). A decision on the format of the parade will be made once further information is available.

(Vote For: 5, Against: 3)

#### 092. FORD WOODS

Members considered fixed the price quotations for the arboricultural work identified.

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Ratcliff and

RESOLVED: That Hoopers Tree Surgeons are selected to undertake the work required in Ford Woods.

(Vote For: 8, Against: 0)

#### 093. HANGING BASKETS FOR COOPER STREET

The Town Clerk advised that in previous years a local business owner had purchased the hanging baskets for the whole of Cooper Street. However, due to the pandemic, he had not done so last year, and the Town Council had stepped in and organised the baskets via Welcome Back funding. The Town Clerk has asked about his intentions for this year, and he has advised that he will be purchasing baskets for his own properties this year, but not for the properties he does not own.

Members agreed to purchase the remaining baskets for Cooper Street.

The Town Clerk advised that the Council does not currently hold a licence for these baskets, but would make the application.

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gubb and

RESOLVED: That the Council will purchase the required number of baskets for Cooper Street to ensure that there are baskets along the entire street.

(Vote For: 8, Against: 0)

#### 094. UPDATE ON WELCOME BACK FUND

The Town Clerk advised that she had been in contact with the TDC Officer regarding the remaining funds in the Welcome Back Fund and the following funding requests had been made:

- Purchase of Chewing Gum removal system.
- A mobile advertising trailer, that we can deploy in Bideford and the outlying areas, to advertise town events, points of interest, retail offer etc.
- Bus shelter for the taxi rank in the town centre.
- Advertising in the town centre for the Pannier Market, and vice versa.

Only the advertising request has been approved. The Development Officer will be moving this forward.

The Development Officer and The Town Clerk have a meeting with the TDC Officer next week, where the TDC Officer will share some Best Practice and project ideas, following a meeting that she has attended. The Town Clerk will continue to liaise with the Mayor and Chair of SFGP to discuss eligible projects. All expenditure must be spent by 31 March, so time is short. Members suggested some further possible project ideas as follows:

- Overhead signage in the High Street for the Pannier Market- to be seen from the bottom of the High Street.
- Advertising the Pannier Market on buses.
- A Board advertising.
- A party in the Pannier Market to replace the New Year's Eve party which had to be cancelled.
- A cover for the paddling pool in the park.

#### 095. UNDERBRIDGE LIGHTING

Members considered the quotations options received for the underbridge lighting. The committee discussed whether alternative quotations were required and agreed it would be in order to waive the financial regulations given the extremely specialist nature of the tasks required. It was suggested that Red Earth, who are developing Brunswick Wharf may be willing to make a contribution to the lighting, as their properties will overlook the Longbridge.

Proposed by Councillor Christie seconded by Councillor McKenzie and

RECOMMENDED: That Option 3 is accepted and that Red Earth are asked to make a contribution towards the cost of the replacement lighting.

(Vote For: 8, Against: 0)

#### 096. BIDEFORD CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Members considered the quotations for the bracket pull testing, repair, installation and dismantling, and provision of new Christmas Lights provided by DS Electrical. The committee discussed whether alternative quotations were required and agreed it would be in order to waive the financial regulations given the extremely specialist nature of the tasks required. This exercise in past years yielded only one quotation, which exceeded the current quotation.

Proposed by Councillor Christie, seconded by Councillor Mckenzie and

RECOMMENDED: That DS Electrical continues to install, pull test, repair, maintain and dismantle and provide new Christmas lights under the current arrangement and in accordance with their quotation.

(Vote For: 7, Against: 0, Abstention 1)

#### 097. COMMUNITY ACTION ON EMPTY HOMES WORKING GROUP

Members considered the request from the Community Action on Empty Homes Working Group for a budget of £300 to facilitate a search on empty properties.

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor Gubb and

RESOLVED: That a budget of £300 to facilitate a search on empty properties is agreed.

(Vote For: 8, Against: 0)

#### 098. INVESTMENT IN A COOPERATIVE HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Members considered the resolution from the Town Council meeting of 12 August 2021 that: The SF&GP Committee investigate using a proportion of the reserves to invest in a cooperative housing opportunity.

Councillor Craigie explained that Local Authorities are investing in Co-operative Housing Opportunities to enable Co-operatives to set up. There are currently no Co-operatives in Bideford, but an allocation of funds may help encourage Co-operatives to set up.

The Chairman suggested that as Torridge District Council are the Local Authority, this function should really fall to them. He suggested however that if a scheme is looking to set up in the local area, Bideford Town Council could consider investment, at the point of set up.

#### 099. ADOPTION OF A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Members considered the adoption of a Social Media Policy.

Proposed by Councillor Lawrence, seconded by Councillor Christie and

RESOLVED: That the draft Social Media Policy is not adopted.

(Vote For: 8, Against: 0)

#### 100. NEW CURTAINS FOR THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR

Members considered the purchase of new curtains for the Mayor's Parlour.

Proposed by Councillor Ratcliff, seconded by Councillor Bushby and

RESOLVED: That the proposed new curtains for the Mayor's Parlour are approved.

(Vote For: 5, Against: 3)

## 101. MAINTENANCE OPERATIVES

Members received an update on the tasks undertaken by the Maintenance Operatives and noted the report. The Town Clerk was asked to thank them for the excellent work they do around the town.

## 102. BUDGET 2022/2023

The Town Clerk presented the draft Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2022/2023.

Following discussion, a final draft budget was agreed which is attached and forms part of these Minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor McKenzie and

RECOMMENDED: That the Council approves the budget of £ 551,805.55 which is an increase of 4.87 % (or 9p per week) on a band D, in respect of the Financial Year commencing 1 April 2022. The Council's reserves will remain at £130,000.00.

(Vote For: 8, Against: 0)

The business of the meeting having been completed, the Chairman thanked the members for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 8.20 pm.

<b>Bideford Town Council Draft Budget For The Financial Year 2022/2023</b>						
		Budget 2021/22	Expend as at 13/12/2021	Adjust- ment	Variance	Budget 2022/23
<b>Administration</b>						
Bank Charges		500.00	567.18		67.18	600.00
Employees	Salaries, NI, Pension	257,990.00	182,843.01	5,471.40	80,618.39	249,422.55
Contracted Services (incl. caretaker)		1,400.00	58.50		1,341.50	1,400.00
Honorariums	All	2,120.00	2,000.00		120.00	2,000.00
Allowances	Mayor's/Councillors	17,383.00	10,244.80		7,138.20	17,383.00
Advertising	Grants / Parish Mtgs	700.00	340.00		360.00	700.00
Audit Fees		1,800.00	1,460.00		340.00	1,700.00
By Elections		2,000.00	-		2,000.00	2,000.00
Insurance		4,000.00	4,117.80		117.80	4,200.00
Insignia		400.00	119.56		280.44	400.00
Hospitality		100.00	25.00		75.00	100.00
Postages, Stationery, Sundries		3,800.00	1,800.53		1,999.47	3,000.00
Subsistence / Expenses	Officers / Members	400.00	-		400.00	400.00
Training Courses / Days		2,000.00	214.55		1,785.45	1,500.00
Subscriptions		2,200.00	2,338.00		138.00	2,200.00
IT / website		2,500.00	1,590.48		909.52	2,500.00
Office rental incl. queen st		6,000.00	6,688.70		688.70	7,000.00
		<b>305,293.00</b>	<b>214,408.11</b>	<b>5,471.40</b>	<b>90,884.89</b>	<b>296,505.55</b>
<b>Ceremonies</b>						
Civic Functions		4,200.00	1,131.20		3,068.80	4,200.00
Celebratory Events		2,500.00	56.44		2,443.56	500.00
Remembrance Sunday		980.00	643.50		336.50	700.00
Twinning Reception		300.00	-		300.00	300.00
		<b>7,980.00</b>	<b>1,831.14</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,148.86</b>	<b>5,700.00</b>

<b>Domestic</b>						
Allotments	5,000.00	329.20		4,670.80	-	
Environmental projects	10,000.00			10,000.00	10,000.00	
Dog/Litter Bins	2,000.00	600.00		1,400.00	1,000.00	
	17,000.00	929.20	-	16,070.80	11,000.00	
				-		
<b>Grants</b>				-		
Local Organisations	82,000.00	82,335.00		335.00	75,000.00	
North Devon Record Library	4,000.00	4,000.00		-	4,000.00	
	86,000.00	86,335.00	-	335.00	79,000.00	
				-		
<b>Projects</b>				-		
Welcome Back Fund	-	26,727.91	20,272.76	6,455.15		
Grass cutting	- 2,900.00				- 2,900.00	
Town Projects	35,000.00	49,058.98	69,230.21	55,171.24	61,000.00	
	32,100.00	75,786.89	89,502.97	45,816.09	58,100.00	
				-		
<b>Tourism &amp; Public Realm</b>				-		
				-		
Bridge Floodlighting	2,500.00	1,958.36		541.64	2,500.00	
Christmas Lights	39,000.00	940.54		38,059.46	58,500.00	
Decorative Lighting - Quay	1,800.00	1,756.30		43.70	2,000.00	
Planters / Floral Displays	8,700.00	8,820.45		120.45	10,000.00	
General (Xmas parking & Tic )	12,350.00	3,014.95		9,335.05	20,500.00	
Pull Testing	1,000.00	-		1,000.00	1,500.00	
Public Clocks maintenance	500.00	-		500.00	500.00	
	65,850.00	16,490.60	-	49,359.40	95,500.00	
				-		
<b>Woodland</b>				-		
Maintenance	6,000.00	360.00		5,640.00	8,000.00	
	6,000.00	360.00	-	5,640.00	8,000.00	
				-		
<b>Loans</b>				-		
Rugby Club loan	- 3,000.00	- 3,000.00		-	- 3,000.00	
	- 3,000.00	- 3,000.00	-	-	- 3,000.00	
<b>General</b>				-		
	-			-		
General Contingency	1,000.00	121.44		878.56	1,000.00	
	1,000.00	121.44	-	878.56	1,000.00	
				-		
<b>SUB-TOTALS</b>	518,223.00	393,262.38	94,974.37	219,935.00	551,805.55	
		21/22			22/23	
<b>TOTALS</b>	518,223.00	393,262.38		124,960.63	551,805.55	
		Current band D	£96.54			
		New Band D:	£101.24			
		Increase on band D	4.87 %	£0.09 per week		
		Tax base (for 2022/2023)	5,450.58	£4.70 per year		
		Amount required by precept 22/23	551,805.55			
		Amount required by precept 21/22	518,223.00			

UNMARKED RESERVES	spend 19/20	20/21	Spend 20/21	21/22	Spend 21/22	22/23
Bus Shelters (Manteo Way)		10,000.00		10,000.00		10,000.00
Regeneration Projects	-	15,587.42		15,587.42		15,587.42
Play equipment		25,000.00		25,000.00		25,000.00
Solar Panel		20,000.00	18,868.80	1,131.20		1,131.20
Digital Display board		10,000.00	9,843.50	156.50	156.5	-
Market development officer	5,750.27	6,249.73		6,249.73	5471.4	778.33
Onebideford Project	-	3,567.75	1000.00	2,567.75		2,567.75
Maintenance Team Facility		20,000.00		20,000.00		20,000.00
MW/Althalland Street	-	18,272.98		18,272.98		18,272.98
Town Council Reserves		130,000.00		130,000.00		130,000.00
	5,750.27	258,677.88	29,712.30	228,965.58	5,627.90	223,337.68

**Ratified Tourism Expenditure for 22/23**

**RECOMMENDED: That a budget of £15,000 be set and apportioned for 2022/23 as follows:**

Up Close Heritage Theatre Events	£1,000
To run Bideford Fair – Jubilee	£3,000
To pre-promote Cream Tea Event	£1,000
Port Memorial Decorative Bed & Sign – Jubilee	£1,100
Beacon Lighting Jubilee	£5,000
Chudleigh Picnic 2022	£3,000
Contingency	£ 900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£15,000</b>

**Plus 1,500 for bookmarks, £3,000 for Xmas Parking and £1,000 Tourist information grant**

**Committed Project expenditure for FY 21/22**

Pollyfield path £20,000  
 New Road Festoons £24,000  
 Helicopter pad £5,000

**Total £49,000**

**BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL – Accounts for approval at the SF&GP Meeting – 6 January 2022**

FV NO	ALLOCATION	VAT	NET	TOTAL
1 21-Dec	Just Office Stationery	17.98	89.89	107.87
2 21-Dec	Eaterprise Vehicle Rental: 1 - 16 Nov 21	77.88	389.40	467.28
3 4/01	Torrige District Council Christmas Parking 18 December 2021: Bridge Street, The Pill, The Manor and the Quay		1,606.00	1,606.00
4 11/01	Guild of Mace Bearers Membership: P Stone + V Morrish		20.00	20.00
5 11/01	Hocking's Dairy Cream Ices Site visit and serve 80 small 99 ice creams + misc ice creams - Chudleigh Fort Event - 4 Sep 21	£33.33	166.67	200.00
6 11/01	Jewson Maintenance: Hens	10.49	52.46	62.95
7 11/01	RGB Maintenance: Hens	2.91	14.52	17.43
8 11/01	M P Wilkin Internal Audit 24 November 2021		130.00	130.00
9 11/01	DS Electrical Installation of Christmas Illuminations.	4,000.00	20000	24,000.00
10 DD	British Gas Cooper Street - 2 Dec 21 - 1 Jan 22	4.63	92.74	97.37
		<b>4,147.22</b>	<b>22,561.68</b>	<b>26,708.90</b>
	Bank Balances at 4 Jan 22 - Current Account	<b>12,564.98</b>		
	Bank Balances at 4 Jan 22 - Deposit Account	<b>509,836.50</b>		