



BIDEFORD TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL

PARISH

MEETING

7.00 pm on Tuesday 16 April 2024

Bideford

Councillor Ms Rachel Clarke chairing

Bideford Town Council

Summary Income & Expenditure Account

01/04/2023 to 31/03/2024

Last Year Ended
31st March 2023

551,805.55
3,608.25
934.46
78,697.42
6,891.58
3,000.00
0.00
4,010.94
0.00
£ 648,948.20

Income

Precept
Allotments
Bank Interest
Pannier Market
Event Income
Loans / repayments
Wayleave
Grants received
General Fund
TOTAL INCOME

Current Year Ended
31st March 2024

594,001.72
4,323.00
6,343.61
88,046.44
231.70
150,000.00
0.00
3,204.00
4,403.43
£ 850,553.90

Expenditure

312,079.52
0.00
60,319.09
3,406.87
5,592.91
1,435.00
82,702.82
82,768.20
0.00
17,340.15
0.00
76,234.98
2,594.77
£ 644,474.31

General Administration
Long Term Loans
Town Projects
Ceremonies
Environmental
Ford House Woodland
Grants
Tourism & Public Realm
Welcome Back Fund
Projects from Earmarked reserves
General Contingency
Pannier Market
Bank Charges
TOTAL EXPENDITURE

338,701.22
0.00
45,295.13
9,738.89
7,913.39
9,897.20
67,381.00
89,322.02
0.00
0.00
10,306.60
78,535.66
469.74
£ 657,560.85

4,473.89

Net Income / Expenditure

192,993.05

General Funds Balance

455,907.35
648,948.20
1,104,855.55
644,474.31
460,381.25
0.00
£ 460,381.25

Balance at 1st April 2023
Add Total Income
1,310,935.15
Less Total Expenditure
653,374.30
Transfer To/From Reserves
0.00
Balance at 31st March 2024
£ 653,374.30

Bideford Town Council Committee Members:

Allotments Committee:

Councillors: Ms R Clarke, J Craigie, Mrs J Gubb,
T Inch, S Inch (Chairman) and J McKenzie.

Plot Holders: Tricks: Mr S Long. Pollyfield: Mr A Mitchell.

Planning Committee:

Councillors: K Bines (Chairman), D Bushby,
Mrs L Hellyer, J McKenzie and M Taylor.

Market Management Committee:

Councillors: D Bushby, Ms R Clarke (Chairman), C Hawkins,
Mrs J Gubb, Mrs L Hellyer, S Inch and J McKenzie.

Traders/Tenants: Mrs K Austin

Staffing, Finance and General Purposes Committee:

Councillors: D Bushby (Chairman) Ms R Clarke, Mrs J Gubb,
C Hawkins, Mrs L Hellyer, S Inch, P Lawrence, D McGeough,
and J McKenzie.

Tourism Committee:

Councillors: D Bushby, Mrs J Gubb (Chairman), C Hawkins,
J Hellyer, S Inch and P Lawrence.

Decarbonisation and Environment Committee:

Councillors: K Bines, J Craigie (Chairman), Mrs J Gubb, T Inch,
M Taylor and J McKenzie.

AGENDA

1. Welcome by the Town Mayor.
2. To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 18 April 2023.
3. To receive the report from the Town Mayor on the activities of the Council during 2023/2024.
4. To receive a review of the work undertaken by the Council's Committees during 2023/2024:
 - a. Staffing, Finance & General Purposes Committee.
 - b. Market Management Committee.
 - c. Planning Committee.
 - d. Tourism Committee.
 - e. Allotment Committee.
 - f. Decarbonisation and Environment Committee.
5. To consider any matters raised by Registered Electors who reside within the parish of Bideford.



Manor Court Jury 2024

Minutes of the Annual Parish (Town) Meeting

held in the Town Hall, Bideford on

Tuesday 18 April 2023 at 7.00 pm.

Councillor J Gubb (Town Mayor) presided.

ATTENDANCE: 70 people attended the meeting.

001 WELCOME BY THE TOWN MAYOR

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone and advised that it was not a meeting of the Town Council, but a Parish meeting where anyone who lives in Bideford and is on the electoral role is entitled to attend and vote. This is governed by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. She invited the attendees who wished to speak or raise a question at agenda item 5 to state their name and confirm that they live in Bideford and are on the Register of Electors.

002 MINUTES

Minutes of the Annual Parish (Town) Meeting held on 19 April 2022 were approved.

003 REPORT FROM THE TOWN MAYOR ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL DURING 2022/2023

The Town Mayor presented her Annual Report for 2022/23.

004 REPORTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL DURING 2022/2023

The respective Chairmen of the Staffing, Finance and General Purposes, Market Management, Planning, Tourism, Allotment and Decarbonisation and Environment Committees presented reviews of the areas within their responsibility.

004 MATTERS RAISED BY REGISTERED ELECTORS WHO RESIDE WITHIN THE PARISH OF BIDEFORD

One Member led praise and thanks, on behalf of the cheque recipients, to the Council expressing the importance and value that the grant monies provide that facilitate the organisations' operation within the Bideford Community.

The business of the meeting having been completed the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and the Meeting concluded at 7.43 pm.

Councillor Attendance - Period 13 April 2023 - 4 April 2024													
	Town Council	S.F & Gp	Mkt Man	Planning	Allotment	Tourism	Decarb & Environ	N.Plan S.Group	Total Meetings Attended	Total Meetings Possible	No. of meetings not attended by cllr	Overall attendance %	Subbed
Total Mtgs=									1	2	3	4	5
Cllr													
Bines K	8	9	8	10					19	23	4	83	
Bushby D	9	9	8	14					48	57	9	84	
Christie P	6	5		10					21	33	12	64	
Clarke RA	9	6	4						21	23	2	91	1
Craigie J	8								10	15	5	67	
Gubb J	10	8	8	1	1	9			37	41	4	90	
Hawkins C	9	10	7			7			33	36	3	92	
Hellyer JR	11					5			16	19	3	84	9
Hellyer L	7	7	8			8			30	48	18	63	
Hind K	9								9	10	1	90	
Inch A	10								13	19	6	68	2
Inch S	11	9	8			2			39	41	2	95	
Lawrence P	9	9				9			25	30	5	83	2
McGeough D	6	3				7			9	21	12	43	
McKenzie J	9	8	8	15		2	1		43	49	6	88	1
Taylor M	7			15					21	29	8	72	
KEY												79	
1	Total number of meetings attended by councillor in 2023-2024												
2	Total number of meetings possible to attend by councillor in 2023-2024												
3	Unattended meeting number												
4	Overall attendance percentage												
5	Total number of meetings attend by councillor as a sub												
6	**Mayor's attendance including meetings missed due to Mayoral duties												

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023 - 24

The Annual Parish Meeting is the occasion where the Chairman provides an account of the Council's activities during the past year and when the Committee Chairmen also report on the activities of their Committees. Registered electors are also able to raise matters of importance in the parish. This Annual Report is based on the reports provided for the Annual Parish Meeting and will be presented in the Town Hall on 16 April 2024. It will be available from the Town Clerk's Office and on the website.

Mayor's Annual Report - Councillor Jamie McKenzie (read by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ms Rachel Clarke)

Ladies and Gentlemen, fellow Councillors – the Mayor sends his deepest apologies but cannot be here this evening. I am Councillor Ms Rachel Clarke and, as his Deputy, I will read his Annual Report, in the first person.

Good evening, I was hugely proud to be made Mayor in May last year, I am born and raised a Bidefordian and am passionate about my Town.

I hit the ground running, as it seems all Mayors do and at first it all seemed a bit daunting with juggling being Mayor and Chairman of the Council as well as working full time and fitting in all the invitations that were coming my way. The role of Mayor has grown over the years, and we get invited to attend all manner of events and special occasions. Every one of these is important in its own right and gives the Mayor the opportunity to be involved in life at all levels and to promote our lovely Town.

looking forward to spring!) to include morning coffee and afternoon tea. A Newsletter is being published and a suggestion box has been installed providing inclusivity.

The Pollyfield Site has benefited from some new tenants who have been motivated and worked their plots from the outset. The Site has had a good year and generally performed well. The consequence of the passing of a former tenant, did draw heavily on Council resource in clearing and preparing the Plot for subsequent letting. Boundary work reduced the tree / hedgerow providing for more light for the southern / lower plot areas.

A budget of £6,564.75 for 2024/2025 was set the shortfall of £3,000.00 requested from Central Funds combined with an expected income of £3564.75.

We are very appreciative towards the Representatives who help manage the Sites providing a link between Council (Landlord) and Tenants, the Chairman of the Associations, also and the Office staff who provide the administration.

Decarbonisation and Environment Committee - Councillor James Craigie (Chairman)

The Committee were instrumental in the Bideford Pannier Market having the funds to install LED lighting throughout the Complex.

A new Committee was convened that will continue to look for ways that can support residents and community groups within the Town to reduce their carbon emissions.

worked together for the benefit of the whole highlighted by the formation of a Working Party who attended to the boundary / tree areas. It is a tidy Site; they enjoyed their Inter Site competition victory!

The spirit of the Site saw the Members celebrate Bonfire Night with toffee apples (extending invitations to the neighbours) and gathering for a Christmas Party.

In addition, the Association has secured National Lottery Funding of £36,753.00. The bounty will provide raised beds that are suitable for a wheelchair user, beds that are suitable for people who find bending and or kneeling down challenging. Paths will be widened, a communal shelter established, water harvesting etc. In short, they are providing for Improved inclusion and the associated health and wellbeing benefits and improved relationships in the community and a positive environmental impact through the growing of food.

The Tricks Site although relinquishing the inter site best overall Site remains, with sixty tenants, a collection of well managed and tended plots. Everyone contributes to the overall site which is in good condition. There has been a turnover in tenancies, unusual for Tricks; two were given Notice to leave. It is important that tenants commit to their Plots; where illness or outside influences preclude attendance Site members have provided support.

A neighbouring house on Clovelly Road had alleged that the Site was the source of their rat infestation. DCS Pest Control combed the Site and reported that there was no evidence of rats on the Site. The source proved to have been from the garden of another house.

The Handy Cross Site Committee has engendered a positive community spirit amongst the Association members. A Working Party has been established to attend the wider site husbandry. Social Activities will be organised (they are

The Mayor has represented the Town at many “out of town” events which are annual and very traditional to those Towns – Holsworthy’s Pretty Maid Fair, Torrington May Fair, Northam May Fair and Barnstaple Fair Proclamation – every year they go ahead and are important to those communities, as are our own to us. We were invited and accepted an invitation to a Courts Leet in Alster (near Redditch in Warwickshire). Courts Leet is what we call Manor Court, we thought perhaps we could exchange ideas with them. Whilst a nice ceremony - it did not hold the gravitas that our Manor Court does and was not productive for its residents as ours is. Nonetheless we were made very welcome.

Closer to home, the Rotary Club’s Water Festival, the Bideford Fair, Bike Show and the Soapbox Derby were a great success and remain very important to the Town. They entertain our residents and draw huge numbers of visitors to Bideford, providing a much appreciated boost to our local traders. Christmas Lights Switch On is a lovely family event, bringing in thousands of people, and showcasing our beautiful Festive lights.

During the first half of my term, we celebrated Bideford’s 450th Charter Anniversary with a Procession through the Town – we were joined by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the First together with Sir Richard Grenville. A Royal spectacle no less, and they played out the re-enactment of the Signing of the Charter in Victoria Park. To round off this historic year, we had a treat from Professor Mark Horton (he of Time Team and Coast fame) came to enlighten us all about the Royal Charter, our beautiful artefacts and what happened to the Lost Colony.

And of course, this year, we have another milestone which is the 80th Celebration of the D-Day Landings. I understand from our Tourism Chairman that plans are on the go for this, and a Roll of Honour will be read out of all the local heroes who were involved in the D-Day Landings.

A person who is missing this evening is the late Peter Christie, and I feel he needs a mention. After a cancer diagnosis and a philosophical attitude to his demise, he was still looking at all things historical to the end. I can say on behalf of the Council that we will miss his enthusiasm, historical expertise and commitment to Bideford.

I would like to thank the Maintenance Team and the Office staff for all their hard work during the past year, keeping everything in order in the Town. The Office staff had a particularly challenging time between the Town Clerks, and I wish to thank Richard, Lesley and Claire for keeping everything ticking over until the new Town Clerk started. It would seem Paul has settled in now and is making inroads into introducing us to the technology of the 21st Century!!

You will now hear the reports from the Chairmen of our various Committees, and I would like to thank them for their continued commitment to this Council. Thank you.

Staffing, Finance & General Purposes Committee - Councillor Doug Bushby (Chairman)

The SFGP Committee is responsible for progressing Council projects, scrutinizing all major financial commitments and projects to ensure they fit with best value, as well as monitoring the financial affairs of the Council. This committee prepares and recommends the annual budget, considers the grant applications, looks after staffing issues and oversees the implementation of the Manor Court presentments.

look at 2024 for events. Any comments on its work to date are also welcomed as we strive to bring entertainment for all to the Town.

Bideford's Got Talent will go ahead with rehearsals on Friday 12th July and the final on Friday 19th July.

And then of course Chudleigh Picnic on Sunday 1st September.

Our new addition could be a Pancake Day in the Pannier Market next year and we are currently looking at a Bake Off event.

The Committee greatly appreciates the support from the Office Staff. They also thank the Maintenance Team for their design work and planting of the Decorative Bed at the Port Memorial each year. I would personally like to thank my fellow Councillors for their commitment and for supporting the events that we organise as a Committee.

The Tourism Committee continues to welcome suggestions from fellow Councillors, and the public, for other activities it could explore, especially as it is this time of year, we start to look at 2025 for events. Any comments on its work to date are also welcomed as we strive to bring entertainment for all to the Town.

Allotment Committee - Councillor Simon Inch (Chairman)

The Allotment Committee oversee the gardening opportunity which remains popular with the Pollyfield, Tricks and the self-managed Handy Cross / Marland Sites.

The Marland Allotment Site has gone from strength to strength. Spearheaded by their Committee the plot holders have

Chudleigh Picnic came along, and we gave it a different twist with a Hog roast. This event continues to be popular and gives a great family atmosphere. We will look forward to doing it all again this year.

We topped the year off with our very special Charter Anniversary evening with Dr Mark Horton, who impressed a great crowd with a wealth of history that he has unearthed over the years. He was marvellous and spent time in the interval chatting with anyone who had a question.

As the Chairman of Tourism, I am pleased to announce that our Clean Up days are back, just two for this year – on Sunday 28th April and again on Sunday 29th September.

Each year we try to add something to the Tourism Committee programme of events and ideally something that can be continued. And each year a National event crops up which adds to our list of events! This year, we have the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings. The date is slap bang in our Civic diary when we have the Mayor's Introduction and Mayor's Parade. So, this year we are doing things a little differently. D-Day 80 will be on Thursday 6th June at the Pollyfield Centre, with live music, food, a bar, and the Beacon Lighting as set out by the Royal Pageant master. We then thought that it could be a good idea to combine the Mayor's Parade with Bideford Fair. And that is what we are doing. It is going to be something very different for Bideford and quite interesting too. That will be on Saturday 8th June.

The Tourism Committee continues to welcome suggestions from fellow Councillors, and the public, for other activities it could explore, especially as it is this time of year, we start to

Bideford Town Council has set its budget for the financial year 2024 / 2025 at £655,748.77, which is an increase of 9.5 % (or 20p per week) on a band D. This year's budget does include the replacement of some large items such as vehicles and equipment as well as the move to the new maintenance depot at Caddesdown. The Town Council continues to undertake much of the maintenance work around the Town, all of which needs to be financed via our precept.

During the last year our Maintenance Team have undergone a small reorganisation to be re branded as Town Rangers to try and strengthen the connection to the Town. They have continued to undertake routine tasks, as well as support projects and events initiated by the Town Council. Regular routine tasks include the maintenance and refurbishment of the Town benches, finger posts and bus shelters, grass cutting, weed removal, watering the floral planters, maintenance work at the Pannier market and work at Ford Woods.

The Woodland is well cared for by the Town Council and provides a valuable green space for all. The woods are used by dog walkers, rambles and forest schools amongst others. In 2023 The Maintenance Team replaced the muddy entrance pathway to the Woodland with a new gravel more stable pathway as part of the Manor Court Presentments which was a large improvement to the Site.

I am sure many people also spotted that the south entrance side entrance to Victoria Park now has a new commemorative rose bed planted with Royal related named roses to celebrate King Charles III Coronation and is a beautiful addition to the Town. In addition to this two celebratory benches were sourced and one placed outside Victoria Park another in East the Water, both with ornate decorative metal panelling.

The Town Council has awarded grants to 45 voluntary organisations during the last year up 25%, the majority of whom are here this evening to collect their cheques. Thanks, must go to these volunteers for the sterling work they do within our community. As well as grants to local organisations, the Town Council has also made a contribution of £1,500 towards the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance and contributes £4,000 annually towards maintaining the Town's historical documents which are looked after by the South West Heritage Trust. In addition to this the Town Council agreed £2500 match funding with Torridge District Council to improve the neglected area at Ford Rock.

One of the major projects currently being undertaken by the Town Council is the build of a permanent Maintenance Team Facility. At present, the Team are operating from rented accommodation and require a permanent housing solution where The Town Council has permanency of tenancy. Having secured funding of £500,000 from the Public Work Loan Board, the Town Council are now in the process of acquiring the land and once complete, the build process will go to tender and we will begin construction shortly. This is an exciting project which will not only give the team security of tenure, but once the facility is built, the value of the completed unit will be greater than the build costs, therefore providing the Town Council with a significant asset.

Following the Manor Court presentments that were submitted at the Ceremony in March by Bideford Electors, we have some new projects to consider and progress and look forward to another productive year for both Town and Council.

The next few months will be an exciting time for the Council as we enter the summer season and begin our main body of works ensuring the Town is maintained to the vibrant and pleasant standards expected.

he did somewhat down-play it.

We funded a Big Lunch in the Pannier Market organised by Lucy Lowe, with live showing of the Coronation ceremony itself. Before that we took a Mayoral procession through the Town with Mike Harper and Gaylene Humphries piping the way. Rather than putting on an event, the Coronation was marked with a series of commemorations – the two beautiful benches, one at Heathfield Road, East the Water and one by our special railings at Victoria Park. Just in front of that bench is a Royal Rose Bed marking the Coronation with 6 different types of rose (all with Royal names) which will smell delightful when the blooms come along. We also planted a cherry tree in each of the Primary School green spaces, involving the children in the planting. And, to reward them, we gave a commemorative medal to every primary school age child in Bideford.

The celebration of Bideford's Royal Charter – the 450th Anniversary - started off with the Port Memorial Decorative Bed depicting this historic and exceptional achievement. Bideford being the only Town in our area with a genuine Royal Charter! Bideford Fair came along and the Mayoral Procession including a "Royal" presence – no less than Queen Elizabeth I herself with Sir Richard Grenville and attendants! The route through Town was lined with people taking photos and filming the spectacle. Once in Victoria Park the Signing of the Charter was re-enacted and was well done.

Bideford's Got Talent's first outing was a great success and something to build upon this year. We had a good number of entrants and narrowed the numbers down at the rehearsals. Finals night was great fun with a clear winner – and – a surprise performance from "Nancy" (Sinatra)!

to be a significant challenge, but one the Committee will pursue.

The provision of employment and support for businesses that provide this will be a key consideration, and the support to the challenges that need to be met to maintain a viable Town Centre.

These elements also have to be balanced against the wider environmental impacts of a proposed development including heritage assets, ecology and climate change.

At present there is very limited opportunities taken by people to make representations during the 15 minutes available each meeting and the availability of this needs to be encouraged to make the consultation responses from BTC as representative as possible.

The past year has thrown up challenges, but the Committee will continue to work in the best overall interests of the Town.

Tourism Committee - Councillor Jude Gubb (Chairman)

The Tourism Committee has continued to deliver planned projects and to work on new initiatives aimed at enhancing the Town for both residents and visitors.

The Committee plan for events several months in advance and as each one approaches there is some trepidation as to what the weather will do, especially as a lot of our events are outside! What has been refreshing is having the confidence to go ahead and book without a pandemic waiting in the wings.

Over the past year, the work of the Committee has included arranging the celebrations for the King's Coronation, although

Market Management Committee - Councillor Rachel Clarke (Chairman)

The Market as a twice weekly trading operation run by the Council has come to an end. In May the Studio Units were removed and, apart from two Tenants leaving the Complex altogether, the remaining ones occupied Units in Butcher's Row.

More recently the "striped" stalls were replaced with new lighter tables that can be stored more effectively. They also offer greater flexibility and, with some dressing, can provide banqueting opportunities!

The function of the Hall has provided much debate. It has though, been well used. The Kenwith Company of Archers continue to use the facility for their (indoor) winter season. There has been a successful offshoot from the Bike Show that provided for the Classic Bike Show in February this year. A local skating group has fallen for the indoor facility again during the winter period. They hope to develop opportunities to work on technical skills and teaching generally - open to all ages.

The Bideford Amateur Boxing Club enjoyed a packed night last year and are booked for Saturday, 18 May this year. There have been receptions, one wedding and one "significant" birthday and a Charity Drag Night. The Council also staged a "Bideford's Got Talent" Event which apart from being a lot of fun and well supported did prove that Bideford *has* got Talent. Rehearsals will be staged in the Pannier Market this year on Friday, 12 July with *the* Show being held the following Friday, 19 July 2024.

The Hall has been hired by the Devon Traders Alliance to host a dozen regular markets and Torridge Arts continues to use the venue. There has been a wedding fayre, bingo nights and a food festival; the Town Band have held concerts, also.

The Market Management Committee are keen to further develop and promote the facility more widely as an Event / Community Hall available for hire / use; the License to provide for the sale of alcohol has been obtained.

A rock band practiced in the Market Hall one Saturday afternoon to establish the acoustics; all those in attendance were in no doubt that the venue could stage live performances. The sound filled the Complex!

The Butcher's Row and Market Place Shops remain popular with tenants, many long term. Their offer sees a mix of Artisan / Arts and Crafts with a highly successful niche IT / gaming operation, a popular sweet shop, soft furnishings and a flourishing fishing / angling / shooting outlet.

Since joining the Market Management Committee and becoming Chairman I have taken it upon myself to become fully acquainted with the Tenants and regularly visit the Site attending all of the Market Hall Events / organized markets.

There has recently been a turnover of Tenants in Butcher's Row, and there will soon be two new tenancies in the Market Street front Shops. There are five former tenants now operating in Mill Street and one in the High Street; the Complex has provided the opportunity for entrepreneurs to work and develop their business. We have though welcomed an herbalist and a spiritual gift shop that offers crystal and sound therapies!

There is much to be optimistic about; the Complex works best when it maximizes the visitor experience.

Planning Committee - Councillor Keith Bines (Chairman)

Firstly, it is only fitting to mark again the hugely positive contribution made by Cllr Christie in his role as Chair of the Planning Committee. His experience and knowledge were second to none whether it be of the Planning system or the history of the Town and its buildings. It will be difficult, probably impossible for any individual to replace this. Thank you, Cllr Christie, Peter, for all you did for the Town.

We must, however, look to move forward and seek to represent the best interests of all individuals, groups and businesses when it comes to making our consultations responses on individual applications put to The Council. This is often challenging given the tensions that can exist when it comes to these.

We aim to deliver consultation responses that are solely based on the planning merits of these applications to ensure they carry the greatest weight with the ultimate determining authority, usually The District Council.

Since last May the Planning Committee has held 15 meetings, usually every three weeks, and considered a total of 87 applications, predominantly planning applications, 64, followed by listed building applications, 12, with advertisement applications, reserved matters applications, outline applications, certificate of lawfulness, prior approval and a footpath diversion order - making up the rest. Of these, 9 were recommended for refusal, 2 for deferment, 1 no additional evidence to submit, and the remainder for approval. The Committee, along with other Councillors present, also provided a response to TDC's Strategic Plan on behalf of BTC.

The need to deliver affordable housing and the infrastructure needed to support the overall growth of housing will continue