

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD AT BURNTWOOD LIBRARY, SANKEYS CORNER
ON THURSDAY 18 JUNE 2015 COMMENCING AT 7.00 P.M.**

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs Tranter (in the Chair)
Councillors Drinkwater, Mrs Fisher, Mosson and Mrs Woodward

In attendance

Mrs M Danby, Town Clerk
One member of the public (Minute Nos. 1 – 13 only)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Mrs Pullen and Mrs Rigby.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Woodward declared a Personal Interest with regard to:

- Minute No.10 (Queen's Award for Voluntary Service – Embroidery for Burntwood Community)
- Minute No. 12 (Spark (Burntwood) CIC)

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 19 March 2015 (Minute Nos. 38 - 53) be received and noted.

Councillor Mrs Woodward asked that, in the interests of clarity, it should be noted that she had raised concerns at the previous meeting of the Committee (after the meeting had been formally closed) on her dissatisfaction on how a complaint she had brought had been handled, citing the length of time it had taken to conclude the investigation process, not having had the opportunity to put her case at the investigative stage and that she would have appreciated more feedback during the process.

4. 2015/16 BUDGET: INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TO 03 JUNE 2015

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The report on the 2015/16 income and expenditure to date be received and noted.
- b) Expenditure under Cost Centre 211 (Burntwood Town Strategy) be broken down into separate nominal codes.

- c) The Council be encouraged to look to attempt to balance the cost of the Burntwood in Bloom competition from income in the coming years

5. REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT PACKAGE

Members were advised that the Town Council's Twitter and Facebook accounts were currently managed (i.e. maintained and updated) by inLife Design Ltd, Burntwood at a cost of £595 plus VAT per month. The Town Council had previously arranged for the service to be provided until the end of June 2015 so that an assessment could then be made as to whether to continue with the arrangement.

Members were of the opinion that the monthly cost was too high. In the light of the Chairman's Blog having been recently set-up, maintained and updated by the Chairman's Secretary, it was felt that it would only require a minimal amount of time for the Council's Twitter and Facebook accounts to be maintained and updated in-house as well.

It was noted that the Council had been previously informed that there was insufficient capacity to take on this work.

RESOLVED That the current contract be terminated with effect from 30 June 2015 and that the Council's Twitter and Facebook accounts be maintained and updated in-house with effect from 01 July 2015.

6. FRANKING MACHINE

Members were advised that the previous Committee had been requested to consider the various options to replace the franking machine and the Committee had resolved "That this matter be deferred until after the May election for further consideration and decision by the Policy & Resources Committee." The decision meant that the contract rolled over onto a month-by-month arrangement and the Town Council was billed for the higher quarterly rental and annual maintenance fees, currently totalling £587 plus VAT.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that she had met with the Leader and Deputy Leaders of the Council following the May local elections and she had explained the above situation, adding that the current machine was beginning to show signs of wear and tear. The Town Clerk was instructed to enter into a five year contract with Mailcoms Ltd (the Council's current supplier) for a machine with an integrated scale and MailMark2D technology.

The new machine was installed on 04 June 2015. There will be no maintenance fee charged on the machine in its first year (covered by warranty) and the money paid to date on the old machine will be refunded in due course. The maintenance fee will be £240 plus VAT thereafter.

Members were advised that the £355.05 unspent postage on the old machine would be refunded by Royal Mail when the de-registration process had been completed. £1,000 postage had been credited to the new machine on delivery.

The Committee was requested to retrospectively approve the above action.

RESOLVED That the above action be retrospectively approved.

7. WELCOME SIGNAGE

Members were advised of the current situation with regard to securing the necessary permissions and licences to enable four brick plinths housing "Welcome to Burntwood" signage to be located on all arterial roads into Burntwood, such signage to incorporate the Town Council's logo.

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) This matter be deferred for decision at the next meeting of the Committee to enable indicative costs for the supply and erection of the brick plinths and associated signage.
- b) The Burntwood Business Community be requested to consider part funding the project.

8. OLD MINING COLLEGE CENTRE – S106 PROJECT

Members were advised that Lichfield District Council are in receipt of £29,296 of developers contributions accrued from the development of Planning Application No. 12/00063/FULM at Chasetown High Street.

Burntwood Town Council had successfully applied earlier this year to secure a proportion of these funds (£19,285) against a project to improve the exterior and gardens of the Old Mining College Centre, Queen Street, Chasetown. This project is intended to be completed by the end of November 2015.

It was now proposed that the remainder of the funds (£10,011) should be applied for in order to improve the kitchen areas which show significant wear and tear. Improved facilities would improve conditions for both the users and tenants and enhance the prestige of the Old Mining College Centre, thereby being of benefit to the local community.

Burntwood Town Council would be expected to submit a costed and justified application to Lichfield District Council for a decision before funds would be released.

RESOLVED That Burntwood Town Council apply for the remaining funding to refurbish and enhance the kitchen facilities at the Old Mining College Centre.

9. STAFFORDSHIRE PARISH COUNCILS' ASSOCIATION (SPCA)

Members were advised that the Town Council had previously agreed not to renew its membership of the SPCA as it was felt that there was insufficient benefit to justify the annual subscription fee (currently £1,428).

The Town Clerk met recently with Councillors Mosson, Mrs Fisher and Mrs Tranter and it was agreed that the Policy & Resources Committee be requested to reconsider this decision. The request is made bearing in mind that through membership of the SPCA the Town Council:

- is kept briefed on matters of interest to local councils via the National Association of Local Councils (NALC, the umbrella organisation within which the SPCA sits);
- is a member of a national body able to lobby Government on matters relevant to local councils;
- receives updates on new or amended legislation, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, etc;
- has access to training for councillors and employees at discounted rates, and
- has access to advice, either directly from SPCA (or NALC where relevant)

RESOLVED That the Town Council re-join the SPCA on the proviso that this decision be reviewed in 12 months to ascertain whether Members felt that there is sufficient benefit in remaining a member of the Association.

**10. QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE:
EMBROIDERY FOR BURNTWOOD COMMUNITY**

Members were advised that it had recently been announced that a local voluntary group, Embroidery for Burntwood Community, had been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The prestigious UK National Honour recognises outstanding voluntary contributions and sets the national benchmark for excellence in volunteering, with the work of those awarded being judged to be of the highest standard. The award has an equivalent status for voluntary groups as the MBE has for individuals. The group is one of four in Staffordshire to be recognised this year.

Members were informed that the group would receive a certificate signed by the Queen along with an exclusive commemorative crystal. The group had been requested to organise a formal Reception where the award will be presented. Regrettably, the group has no funds and they had asked that the Town Council provide funding to enable a venue to be booked, the event catered for invited guests and the certificate to be framed – a figure of £600 had been suggested as being sufficient to provide a suitable Reception.

RESOLVED That the Town Council grant the sum of £600 to fund the formal Reception, as set out above.

11. CHERRY ORCHARD GARDENING SERVICE (COGS)

Councillor Mosson reported that the Town Council had been requested to write a letter of support with regard to COGS seeking to become tenants of the former Cherry Close Youth Centre, viz:

"COGS have shown in detail the way in which they would be an appropriate tenant for Cherry Close Youth Centre, COGS are able to fulfil the statutory and strategic needs of the County Council and are in position to mobilise the community behind the projects they propose. Following the work COGS have carried out for Our Place they have a clear vision of the needs of the community and how these can be met in an engaging and fruitful way; at the core is a health issue approached indirectly through low-impact sport and community action. In some ways this links back to the core of COGS' work with adults with a Learning Disability, their gardeners carry out services that are of benefit to the community and at the same time improve their own health and maintain independence. By supporting this proposal Staffordshire County Council would enable COGS to scale this approach, through a different delivery vehicle, to the wider community of the town."

RESOLVED That a letter of support, as set out above, be provided SUBJECT TO an explanation being provided as to what their plans are for the building.

12. SPARK (BURNTWOOD) CIC

Members considered an application for funding from Spark (Burntwood) CIC:

"Spark has been formed to support families, carers and extended families with pre-school age children in Burntwood. It is formed by four local women who were involved in the petition to keep Burntwood's Children's Centres open, following on from the SCC's Best Start consultation. There was a massive amount of local public support for the petition to keep Burntwood's Children's Centres open, with over 1500 signatures collected in two weeks.

The petition was presented by Councillor Mrs Woodward to SCC and after this pressure a decision was made to fund Burntwood's two centres for six months whilst alternative options were explored. Sue has supported Spark to form as a CIC to run the Children's Centres at Springhill and Boney Hay schools. They were otherwise due to close on 31st August 2015, resulting in local families having to travel to Lichfield and Cannock for groups. The breathing space from SCC allowed Spark to form; thus offering an innovative solution and good value for public spending.

Spark are concerned about the effects of the potential loss of family services on children and families in the area and for Burntwood's future generations. Although money is being found for the Think 2 Nursery Places for age 2 upwards nationally, Spark are set up to particularly support the first two years of a child's life. Research has found that the first two years of a child's life are critical to their future life chances.

Spark wish to meet the needs of families in Burntwood by providing access to support in the centres including: antenatal and postnatal groups, breastfeeding support, stay and play groups, healthy eating classes, baby massage and yoga, literacy support, social worker meetings, intergenerational groups, toddler music and art classes,

positive parenting groups, behaviour support, volunteering opportunities, signposting, etc.”

Councillor Mrs Woodward informed the Committee that she has committed £5,000 from her SCC LMIS funding and the group were also applying to other County Councillors for funding.

RESOLVED That the sum of £2,500 be awarded to Spark (Burntwood) CIC on the proviso that the funding be returned in full should the project fail to secure all the necessary funding.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (Section 2) (and as expended by the Local Government Act 1972, Section 100), the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

14. OLD MINING COLLEGE CENTRE

RESOLVED That the draft Lease be received and noted.

15. BURNTWOOD PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Members received an update on a recent meeting with LDC representatives.

16. HR: PROFESSIONAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Members considered three proposals to provide the Town Council with an HR advice and support package.

RESOLVED The proposal submitted by Ellis Whittam be accepted on a three year agreement at a cost of £1,850 per annum plus Legal Expenses insurance @ £7.50 per employee per annum.

17. PROPOSED ALARM RESPONSE SERVICE

RESOLVED bbp Security Services & Training Ltd be engaged at a cost of £130 plus VAT (annual registration fee) and £25 plus VAT per visit.

18. LAND AT PLANT LANE, OFF CANNOCK ROAD

RESOLVED That this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to enable quotations to be obtained for the initial grounds clearance and ongoing grounds maintenance so that Members can decide whether it wishes to recommend to the

Town Council that it seek to acquire adverse possession of the unregistered land in question.

19. BURNTWOOD TOWN STRATEGY: IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER

RESOLVED That the Implementation Officer's contract be extended to 30 September 2015.

(The Meeting closed at 8.47 p.m.)

Signed

Date