

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2021 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Evans [in the Chair]

Councillors Banevicius, Birch, Bishop, Bullock, D Ennis, L Ennis, Flanagan, Gittings, Greensill, Ho, Kirkham, Loughbrough Rudd, Norman, R Place, M Place, Tapper, Westwood, Willis-Croft and Woodward

In attendance

G Hunt, Town Clerk

Ms J Minor, Deputy Clerk

Two members of the public

PUBLIC FORUM

No questions were raised by members of the public.

82. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Brown.

83. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None declared.

84. MINUTES

The Chairman reminded Members that the Minutes were for accuracy purposes only.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 13 January 2021 [Minute Nos. 75-81] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

85. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman stated that Members should be aware of the death of Councillor Steve Taylor who had previously represented the District Council and Town Council during his time as a Councillor. She confirmed that she had formally sent a letter of condolence to his wife and family and stated that due to Covid-19 restrictions the funeral, which would be held at St John's Community Church, would be family only.

Councillor D Ennis stated that all Members were aware that Steve had been unwell for some time due to his dispensation at meetings, however, he had known Steve for 25 years having gone to school with his daughter. In his early days as a Councillor, Councillor D Ennis explained

that Steve had been very helpful to him and he had very good, funny memories of him and that his thoughts go to his wife, daughters, and grandchildren.

The Chairman referred to the death of Captain Sir Tom Moore and thanked Susan Williams, Friends of Burntwood Library, who had raised the Union flag at half-mast over Burntwood Library on behalf of the Town Council.

Councillor R Place associated himself and the Conservative Group with the death of Captain Sir Tom Moore and Steve Taylor and stated that in memory of Steve he was wearing his Villa shirt.

A minutes silence was held in respect of Captain Sir Tom Moore and Steve Taylor.

The Chairman stated that the fight was not yet over, even though residents were getting the vaccine there was still a long way to go.

86. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS FROM 12 JANUARY TO 29 JANUARY 2021

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the payments from 12 January to 29 January 2021 in the sum of £28,900.70 be approved.

87. NOTICE OF CASUAL VACANCY - COUNCILLOR S TAYLOR [SUMMERFIELD AND ALL SAINTS WARD]

Members formally noted that the Town Clerk would declare a casual vacancy on the Town Council on 15 February 2021 following the death of Mr Steve Taylor.

88. IMPROVEMENTS TO BUS STOPS

Councillor Woodward explained that discussions had taken place with Staffordshire County Council who had now agreed to relinquish some land to enable the bus shelter on Milestone Way to be sited within the playing fields attached to Cherry Close. Regarding the bus shelter on Rugeley Road, this would give the opportunity to provide hardstanding immediately around the bus stop.

Councillor Ho referred to the letters of consultation and the two residents' responses and asked whether the other residents did not feel the need to respond as they were in favour.

The Town Clerk confirmed that to date, three responses had now been received which were not in favour of providing a gap in the hedge. The consultation letters had asked for an opinion to be expressed whether in favour or not. By undertaking the hardstanding now, it does not preclude the Town Council in the future from creating the gap in the hedge.

Councillor Birch confirmed that the bus shelter was in the Boney Hay and Central Ward and briefed Members regarding accidents which had occurred at this location in the past and explained that there was a risk to cutting a gap in the hedge.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the expenditure of £1,026 to enable the replacement bus shelter on Milestone Way to be re-sited be approved [the improvements to the bus stop at Rugeley Road will be undertaken by Staffordshire County Council in its capacity as highway authority].

89. WINTER CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Councillor Woodward thanked both the Town Clerk and Councillor Birch for the work undertaken. She explained that there were strategic grit bins and community grit bins, the latter of which are filled once a year. Councillor Woodward stated that the County Council were slow to facilitate to hand down responsibility to the Town Council even though she felt that the Town Council may be able to provide better value for money.

Councillor Ho explained that he had done some research and the County Council website stated that it filled grit bins throughout the season. He stated that a little bit of grit goes a long way.

Councillor Birch stated that he was really pleased to see the update during this prolonged period of cold weather. He stated that the website referred to by Councillor Ho did refer to two types of grit bins but confirmed that the community grit bins were filled once only per year. Councillor Birch agreed with Councillor Ho in that people needed to be educated regarding the amount of grit needed. He explained that in the Boney Hay and Central Ward there was quite a lot of grit bins due to the hilliness of the ward, however, other areas lacked bins.

Councillor Tapper stated that whilst the Town Council could pressure the County Council into relinquishing their duties, the Town Council cannot take over their jobs as the grit bins were not empty of grit at this moment in time. There may be an opportunity to take over the responsibility if they were empty, but they are not.

Councillor R Place stated that he agreed with Councillor Tapper and that the Town Council had no authority.

Councillor Woodward stated that all Members had been given the opportunity to check the grit bins in their wards. She confirmed that the “community” grit bins were only filled once a year. Councillor Woodward explained that she had asked the County Council to re-introduce the ice busters or a similar scheme which would involve encouraging the community/individuals to hold road salt in sensitive areas not covered by the gritting routes or grit bins.

Councillor Woodward referred to the general power of competence provided for by the Localism Act 2011 which would enable the Town Council [if agreed by the County Council] to provide such items for example additional grit.

Councillor Woodward confirmed that the County Council were currently reviewing Stable Way with regard to putting the road on the gritting routes.

The Town Clerk explained that at this stage the Town Council did not need to make any decision about the grit bins. The Town Council were currently were in preliminary discussions with the County Council about how it could help to improve the level of maintenance are exploratory and do not commit the Town Council to any course of action.

90. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor Evans moved that although there were no longer members of the public present the Council still needed to approve the exclusion of the press and public so the next agenda item could be treated as confidential.

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies [Admissions of Meeting] Act 1960 [Section 2] [and as expended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972], 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.

A Councillor drew attention to the fact that during the public part of the meeting one Member of the Council was behaving disrespectfully. The Council Leader and Leader of the Opposition undertook to investigate. (POST-MEETING Note - a full apology has now been received.)

91. OLD MINING COLLEGE VALUATION REPORT

See Confidential Minute.

92. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENTS AT THE OLD MINING COLLEGE

See Confidential Minute.

93. RENEWAL OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

See Confidential Minute.

[The Meeting closed at 7:03 pm]

Signed

Date