

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE MAIN HALL AT BURNTWOOD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE, RUGELEY ROAD,
BURNTWOOD ON WEDNESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2022 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Birch [in the Chair]

Councillors Bishop, Bullock, Coe, D Ennis, Evans, Flanagan, Gittings, Greensill, Ho, Norman, Taylor, Willis-Croft and Woodward

In attendance

S Lightfoot, Town Clerk

Ms J Minor, Deputy Clerk

Ms A James, Finance Officer

County Councillor Wilcox

County Councillor Loughbrough Rudd

One member of the public

PUBLIC FORUM

No questions were raised by members of the public.

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 31.1** Councillors Banevicius, Brown [Dispensation], L Ennis, Kirkham, M Place, R Place and Westwood.

Councillor Birch informed Members that Councillor R Place would like his apologies for absence recorded as he does not feel it appropriate to attend meetings during the mourning period.

- 31.2 RESOLVED** That Members formally received and approved Councillor Brown's request that he be granted a Leave of Absence from attendance at meetings from 14 September 2022 on compassionate grounds until the end of the Municipal Year.

31.3 Planning and Development Committee Membership

Councillor Woodward explained that due to Councillor Brown's dispensation and the recent resignation of Councillor Tapper, she felt it would be appropriate, to ensure quorate, to replace Councillor Brown with Councillor Bishop.

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

RESOLVED That Councillor Bishop be appointed to the Planning and Development Committee.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None received.

33. MINUTES

The Chair reminded Members that they were being asked to comment solely on the accuracy of the Minutes.

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

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 20 July 2022 [Minute Nos. 17-30] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

34. CHAIR'S REPORT

Councillor Birch read out the following statement:

My Chair's announcements this evening will focus on the passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Whilst we were all aware of the Queen's advancing years it was still a shock to hear of her passing on Thursday 08 September 2022. There has been a national outpouring of grief since her death, and we will all have seen the footage going back decades showing her lifetime of service to our own nation and beyond in the Commonwealth.

The coverage we have seen over the last few days is evidence of the deep respect that the nation has for her memory, and it is in her memory that I would like us to hold this meeting this evening.

Some have questioned if the meeting should still take place whilst we are in national mourning and that is a discussion that it is right to have, I also questioned it myself. I have taken in to account all the views I have heard, and I have reached the conclusion that the best way we can honour Her Majesty is to continue to serve the public she loved with the determination and diligence that she herself lived by. Through all manner of national and personal tragedy she stoically and unwaveringly continued to serve us all. I believe that we too should serve as we mourn and by doing so, we honour her memory and continue with the ethos of public service that she lived her life by.

We have taken the decision to postpone the Burntwood Memory Walk that was to take place this coming weekend. The purpose of the walk was to raise awareness of the issues caused by dementia and it was planned to be a community event that would see us celebrating the carers of those with dementia as well as gathering people together who have a shared interest in the issues around the disease. As it was to take place on the eve of Her Majesty's funeral, we felt it would be better held at a later date when people were in a lighter mood.

On Saturday myself and Councillors D Ennis, Flanagan and Ho attended Lichfield Cathedral where the proclamation from the Privy Council was read to the people of the District. I attended to specifically represent the people of Burntwood and yourselves as Councillors. It was a sombre event in many ways due to the overriding mood of those present, but it was also uplifting for many to hear the new words of the national anthem and the crowd gave three cheers for King Charles III.

We must of course place on record that the Royal Family are in our thoughts at this time. For them this is a very personal bereavement as she was not just our Queen. She was to them a mother, grandmother, great grandmother and so much more. She was the figurehead of their family and not just our nation. On behalf of you all I want to send my deepest condolences to The King and the Royal Family.

You will recall that my chosen charity for this municipal year is the suicide prevention charity Papyrus. It was World Suicide Prevention Day on Saturday and at this time it is more important than ever for us to look at how mental health can be impacted by all manner of events including those that are seemingly external to our own day to day lives. At this time of national loss, it is a timely reminder that grief can and will affect us all at some point and it is important for us to all look after ourselves and each other at times of stress and sadness. I will be working with the Town Clerk to arrange a fundraising event prior to Christmas so that we can raise both funds and awareness of this important cause.

I would now like to take this opportunity to use my discretion as Chair to invite Councillors who wish to do so to say a few words to express their respect for Queen Elizabeth II and King Charles III if anyone feels they would like to do so. I know that Councillor Woodward as Council Leader would like to lead the tributes.

Councillor Woodward said that she concurred with the words of the Chair and that the Queen had given a lifetime of public service and our own public service was a small reflection of that service of which she was proud. She always felt very close to the Queen as she was born a few months after the Queen became Queen. The Queen was the best-known face in the world and represented everyone of us. Councillor Woodward recalled a Garden Party which she had attended in 2016 at Buckingham Palace. May she rest in peace and God Save the King.

Councillor Ho made the following statement

I like I am sure everyone else here was very sad to hear about the passing of our much beloved Queen. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gave our nation a lifetime of service. She provided us with consistency, courage and hope. Whenever I say that I am proud to be British, it was our Queen who was an integral element of that pride. Queen Elizabeth II was not just the Queen; she was our Queen. She was the head of our Great British family. She was a mother, a grandmother, and great grandmother. She will be missed by millions and millions of people for all different reasons. Not just in the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, but all over the world. I had the good fortune of meeting Her Majesty the Queen in 2002 at her Golden Jubilee. As leaders of the Chinese community, my family was honoured to perform the traditional unicorn dance of our Hong Kong village. We were part of the royal procession leading Her Majesty the Queen on her visit to Burton on Trent. At one point she looked down at me and asked if I was war in "there". I giggled nervously and replied yeah, just a little bit. I hope I am a little more eloquent in my tribute to her today. If you ever visit my family's restaurant, you can see this moment in photographs. I was a hot sweaty mess. I would like to finish by using two quotes which I hope will offer some relief and hope to those of us desperately feeling the loss of our beloved queen: Never give up never despair, when life seems hard, the courageous do not lie down and accept defeat, instead, they are all the more determined to struggle for a better future. And to echo the words of Paddington Bear to our Queen on her Platinum Jubilee "Thank you for everything."

Councillor Evans made the following statement:

Perhaps I am the only one in this room who remembers the death of George VI and the accession of Elizabeth II. I was actually at school when the Headteacher came into all the classrooms and said, "the King is dead" and so a new reign began. Therefore, I have experienced the whole realm of Queen Elizabeth and the dignified, devoted and amazing ways she conducted herself with fortitude since she pledged and committed to her country, the commonwealth and the world. I remember the Coronation which I was able to watch in black and white on a tiny 12" television screen, bought especially for the occasion. Before this, in school, we spent many months preparing and participating in ceremonies and activities while red, white and blue colours were everywhere and most houses had large flags hanging from their houses.

Over the years the Queen became a constant in our lives and so in many ways we have taken her presence for granted and her flamboyance, her sparkling personality and her smile will linger in our minds, partly due to modern technology where she was always immediately in the public eye. I was in the company of the Queen when she distributed the Maundy money at Lichfield Cathedral back in 1988 and then at lunch afterwards. Then I was so glad to observe that she ate her peas just like we sometimes do by chasing them around the plate with her fork. They must be one of the worst things to eat in public! I was also able to see her at one of the garden parties at Buckingham Palace. I was immensely touched when I saw the very frail, but still smiling Queen on Tuesday when Liz Truss went to Balmoral and then after a few hours to sadly hear of her demise. What an absolutely amazing feat, showing the strength and determination of a person who must have been in considerable pain and knowing she was again in the public eye before millions. I'm sure we hold her memory in our hearts as we welcome King Charles III and wish him a very successful and fruitful reign. Queen Elizabeth will be a very hard act to follow and our support also needs to go to the Royal Family who are grieving and mourning the great loss we are all experiencing. Rest in Peace Your Majesty our much beloved Queen and God Bless our new King Charles III.

Councillor Flanagan made the following statement:

Like so many others, up until last Thursday, my whole life has been lived with a single monarch on the throne of the United Kingdom. I feel unlucky in that I didn't get to meet the late Queen Elizabeth, but have always been impressed by her speeches, which showed a complete knowledge of both events you may consider she should be aware, as well as a detailed understanding in areas where you wouldn't, not to mention the smiles she left wherever she visited. In the height of the Covid pandemic, my mum had her 100th birthday. My family were lucky enough that the rules had relaxed sufficiently in that we had been able to meet her in her garden just outside Leeds for a kind of celebration. The minute we arrived; she told us about the card she'd received from Queen Elizabeth that morning. The postman had knocked on her door, knowing what she was delivering, given a full rendition of Happy Birthday to you at the top of his voice [from the Queen you understand] which mum found delightful, but more than that, was her enthusiasm for the card he had delivered. She proudly displayed it in her garden and ensured every person read and admired. Like me, she had also never met Her Majesty, but was so content that Queen Elizabeth had taken the time and effort to send her a card. Her day was very special. Queen Elizabeth lived in a similar age to my parents – so all the changes they saw in technology; how people lived; how long people lived; the war and travel [to name a few] have all been part of my everyday conversations. I was saddened to hear about Queen Elizabeth's death – to me it felt like a family member had been taken away and brought back memories of losing my mum last year. Throughout the Queen's adult life, she was always an advocate for the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland and the other realms she ruled over. I hope and pray that King Charles and his heirs will be of a similar mind during their reigns. Queen Elizabeth – may you rest in peace – thank you for all you have done for us.

Councillor Willis-Croft made the following statement:

It is a sad time for us all with the death of our Queen. The Queen was my boss for six years when I served in the armed forces which gave me confidence and self-discipline something that I find lacking in today's society. I have seen quite a few places in the world the one that I will never forget is my last army assignment to West Africa being sent to help Christian Aid deliver vehicles.

Councillor Coe referred to her being awarded the MBE in 2018, her visit to Buckingham Palace and her granddaughter's gift of a necklace for Her Majesty [necklace to match the one she had made for her Nan] and for which her granddaughter received a thank you letter on behalf of Her Majesty.

Councillor Norman recalled his time as Chair of the Council and attending a concert where he sat on the front row in his Chain of Office and he said that the Queen did this on a day-to-day basis. He also recalled attending a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

35. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

None received.

**36. NOTICE OF CASUAL VACANCY – COUNCILLOR SAMUEL TAPPER
[HUNSLET WARD]**

Members formally noted that the Town Clerk had declared a casual vacancy on the Town Council on 12 August 2022 following the resignation of Mr Samuel Tapper.

**37. ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE 5-YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING 01
APRIL 2022**

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and

RESOLVED That no action be taken, thereby the Council remains part of the central scheme for the appointment of external auditors for the 5-year period 2022-2023 to 2026-27.

38. UPDATE ON INCOME AND EXPENDITURE COMPARED TO BUDGET

The Finance Officer referred to Page 4 of the Income and Expenditure table which showed expenditure of £33,533 on the Jubilee Wakes to end July compared to a budget of £15,600, the percentage spent is therefore calculated as 215%. She explained that it had been agreed that the original annual budget set would be increased by taking an additional amount from the reserves earmarked for events. She confirmed that this transfer will be made later in the financial year or at the end of the year in the accounts system once the final Jubilee Wakes expenditure is known.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council currently had [as at 14 September 2022] £655,443.77 in the Unity Trust Bank.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and

RESOLVED That the current position against budget be noted.

39. BURRT UPDATE

The Town Clerk confirmed that the recruitment process had been completed and Mr Aaron Knox had been the successful candidate. The Town Clerk confirmed that Mr Knox's start date would be Monday 03 October 2022. He confirmed that 22 applications had been received and six potentials had been interviewed. The interviewing panel had consisted of the Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk and either Councillor

Norman or Councillor D Ennis. The skills test had been carried out under the guidance of the Caretaker.

The Town Clerk stated that BURRT had been an invaluable engagement tool over the summer attending all of the Play in the Parks events and Producers Markets. He confirmed that the Policy and Resources Committee would be looking at the process and it was hoped that all Councillors would have an input. He felt that it was a great asset for the Town.

Councillor Woodward felt that BURRT would be a useful resource for the Town and could explain to members of the public the separate responsibilities [i.e. of Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire County Council]. She explained that BURRT would provide a fairly swift response.

Councillor Ho felt that it would have been nice to have had a Conservative Group Member on the interviewing panel in order to have an input.

Councillor D Ennis felt that the recruitment process had been excellent and a credit to the staff involved, a true reflection of team work. Good questions had been asked and the Caretaker had carried out a good practical skills test and his feedback were invaluable.

40. BURNTWOOD MEMORIAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – TRUSTEE APPOINTMENT

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

RESOLVED That Councillor Taylor be appointed as a Trustee representing the Town Council up to May 2023.

41. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Councillor Woodward explained that there was at present a very small staff team and she felt that the Town Council was unable to take forward some of their aspirations even though they had carried out several community activities this year [i.e. Platinum Jubilee event, Play in the Parks events, Producers Markets, Ukraine event, Sun Flower competition, community seed share greenhouse] she wanted the Town Council to work alongside the community.

Councillor D Ennis pointed out that the previous Town Clerk had repeatedly said that the Town Council had no man power/capacity to carry out extra projects and he did not want to delay the projects.

Councillor Ho referred to Page 2 of the report and in particular section 4 – Funding and asked what was the reasoning behind this and what the current percentage of the budget would this be.

Councillor Ho referred to Page 1 of the report and in particular section 3 – Proposal and asked where the funding would come from after the two- year fixed term had ended. He stated that following research, he felt that the salary was more than the average person was earning in Burntwood. Councillor Ho questioned what the new postholder's responsibilities would be and felt that the majority could either be undertaken by Town Councillors or the current staff. He felt that Town Councillors could seek out charities,

community groups which could work in partnership with the Town Council and stated that all District Councillors had a small fund which could also be distributed locally.

Councillor Taylor pointed out that he had, over the last few months, carried out a considerable amount of volunteering hours to support the Platinum Jubilee event and Producers Markets but felt that the current staff should have additional support.

Councillor Norman felt that the role of a community development worker was a specific skills set and he referred to the newly formed Youth Council which has a District Council budget of £60,000. He also referred to the Burntwood Town Strategy document which was produced by Localecon Associates in March 2011. Councillor Norman confirmed that Councillor Ho's comments would be addressed at a future meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Woodward stated that she personally does not want to sit on reserves but spend it on services which better serve our community.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and following a show of hands [11 For, 2 Against] it was

RESOLVED That the Town Council agrees in principle to this post but delegate first to Policy and Resources for further detail and scrutiny and in meantime advise the Town Clerk to buy in extra capacity on an ad hoc basis as needed, subject to the agreement of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Conservative Group.

42. A WARMER WELCOME

Councillor Woodward stated that the Town Strategy could be used for this project. The Town Council could create a log of premises and this could go some way to address loneliness in all ages.

Councillor D Ennis stated that he had personally been approached by residents already e.g. regarding increasing heating bills, financial struggles.

Councillor Evans felt that it was an important initiative and it was vitally needed across the age ranges. She explained that she still telephones members of the public who express concerns especially now that the weather is getting colder. Councillor Evans stated that the more the Town Council can do the better.

Councillor Ho explained that he agreed in principle to the initiative but referred to costs again being taken from the Town Strategy. He felt that this should be a Town Councillor role in that Councillors could ask local churches etc in their Wards.

Councillor Flanagan wholeheartedly supported the initiative and felt that the current staff were at full capacity and the Town Council needed to employ someone to develop the scheme.

Councillor Woodward referred to the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network and explained that other Councils around the country were doing something similar and had not heard to date an initiative being undertaken by either the District Council or County Council.

Councillor Woodward also asked if all Members could ask local churches, businesses etc if they would be willing to provide a Warmer Welcome and email the Town Clerk.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and following a show of hands [11 For, 2 Abstentions] it was

RESOLVED That the Council backs the Warmer Welcome Initiative and authorises the Town Clerk to progress the freelance of employment of a suitable person to development the scheme as an emergency priority with a Warmer Welcome budget of £2,000.

43. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 10 AUGUST 2022

It was proposed by Councillor Norman, seconded by Councillor Evans, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 10 August 2022 [Minute Nos. 15-25] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

44. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 16 AUGUST 2022

It was proposed by Councillor Flanagan, seconded by Councillor Gittings, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on 16 August 2022 [Minute Nos. 19-24] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

45. COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE – 17 AUGUST 2022

Councillor Woodward referred to Minute No. 21 and in particular the grant which was given to Burntwood Platinum Amateur Boxing Club. She confirmed that she was led to believe that the lease was still with Beacon Community Church who had sub let to the Boxing Club which was against the terms of the lease. She asked if all District Councillors could put pressure on the Chief Executive, Officers and Councillors to get the terms of the lease sorted out.

It was proposed by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Bishop, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community and Partnerships Committee held on 17 August 2022 [Minute Nos. 16-24] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

46. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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.

47. MINUTES

See Confidential Minute.

48. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 10 AUGUST 2022

See Confidential Minute.

49. COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE – 17 AUGUST 2022

See Confidential Minute.

[The Meeting closed at 7:38 pm]

Signed

Date