

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE MAIN HALL, BURNTWOOD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE, RUGELEY ROAD,
BURNTWOOD ON WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Birch [in the Chair]

Councillors Bacon, Banevicius, Bishop [from 6.03pm], Bullock, Coe, D Ennis, L Ennis, Evans, Flanagan, Gittings, Greensill, Norman, Taylor, Willis-Croft and Woodward

In attendance

S Lightfoot, Town Clerk

Ms J Minor, Deputy Clerk

Ms A James, Finance Officer

T/Chief Inspector K Green

One member of the public [from 6.22pm]

Councillor Birch confirmed that this was the last Town Council meeting before the elections on 04 May 2023. He welcomed T/Chief Inspector Karen Green to the meeting.

LICHFIELD POLICE BRIEFING

T/Chief Inspector Karen Green gave a snap shot of the challenges currently facing Burntwood. A hard copy of the briefing had been circulated at the meeting which stated that Sgt Kevin Royce covered the Burntwood and Chasetown area but they still faced challenges with recruiting staff and current staff capacity/capability. She stated that early focus, responsiveness, engagement, and partnerships was essential. T/Chief Inspector Green confirmed that a Mental Health Nurse was based at Lichfield and that the current faster response time was 13 minutes and 2 seconds [the target being 13 minutes].

T/Chief Inspector Green stated that local challenges included vehicle crime [which is over social media all of the time], violence especially violence against women and girls [which is dealt with by the public protection unit], youth coordination, community cohesion [the current situation in Cannock regarding asylum seekers] and cost of living crisis [shop lifting for food is on the increase]. She confirmed that crime reported % change in the last 12 months was up by 24% however, reported ASB % change in the last 12 months was down 33%.

T/Chief Inspector Green stated that the next 3 months would include a new Chief Inspector in post by May, student officers will continue to arrive – full strength resources by June, continuing to improve on investigation quality and outcomes and be more visible with proactive policing in the area.

Councillor Birch thanked T/Chief Inspector Green for the briefing and stated that the regular email updates received were very helpful. He asked if any Members wished to ask any questions.

Councillor Norman referred to stolen motor vehicles and asked if the majority of vehicles were being stolen for parts. T/Chief Inspector Green stated that the vehicles were not necessarily stolen for parts but exported to another country. Councillor Norman asked what the current average time was for answering 101 calls. T/Chief Inspector Green confirmed that it was 8-10 minutes and 999 calls were answered within 6 seconds.

Councillor Flanagan stated that good ground was being made in the fact that vehicle crime was coming down but he asked how does the public know that. He referred to regular social media posts from Cannock Police. T/Chief Inspector Green confirmed that it was a fine

balance but the COMMS Team could always do more. Councillor Flanagan stated that constituents would appreciate more information.

Councillor Willis-Croft felt that the Neighbourhood Alerts are good however he highlighted the problems with e-scooters. T/Chief Inspector Green stated that within 6/8 weeks we should see some action by the Mobile Crime Team.

Councillor Woodward thanked T/Chief Inspector Green and felt on the whole the briefing was positive. She felt that the meetings held at Burntwood Leisure Centre were also a positive way to engage with members of the public. With regard to communication, loss of a printed media is a problem and there can be negative reaction on social media.

Councillor D Ennis referred to boundaries and asked if the data could be changed to reflect north Burntwood and south Burntwood as the data referring to Chasetown does not accurately reflect the area. T/Chief Inspector Green said that she was happy to ask the question.

Councillor Coe thanked T/Chief Inspector Green for doing an excellent job and gave a brief background into her involvement with Pathway. She said that Pathway staff and volunteers had attended domestic violence COMMS training where 3 police officers had made inappropriate comments. T/Chief Inspector Green stated that due to recent events regarding police officers, all police officers are being re-vetted at a higher level to include such things as social media records before they joined the Police.

PUBLIC FORUM

No questions were raised by members of the public.

81. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Brown [dispensation], Ho, Kirkham, M Place, R Place and Westwood.

82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None declared.

83. 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 D Ennis, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 12 January 2023 [Minute Nos. 66-80] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

84. CHAIR'S REPORT

Councillor Birch read out the following statement:

Over the last year as Chair of Burntwood Town Council I have felt really privileged to be in this role and to have been asked to represent the interests of Burntwood Residents and the Council. I have been fortunate to meet many people who give so much for our community and to see the efforts made by volunteer organisations and those who contribute to them. They don't only impact positively in their own area of work but they contribute hugely to a more cohesive and caring society where people in need can be assured of finding support where there may otherwise be gaps in service provision.

In February I attended the celebration of Burntwood be a Friend obtaining charitable status. This was a milestone moment for them and one which they should be rightly proud of. Their work over the last few years has provided immeasurable support to our residents, including some of the most vulnerable. I have no doubt that we will see them go from strength to strength over the coming years. We must not forget however they as an organisation, and their volunteers also need support and I am sure this Council and you as individual Councillors will continue to offer that as will others.

On Friday 24th March I will be joining members of the University of the Third Age at Chasetown Methodist Church for their Group Fayre. All Burntwood Town Councillors are also extended the invitation if you wish to attend. They offer a range of life enhancing opportunities for older people, which benefit wellbeing, mental health as well as offering companionship and personal development opportunities.

I will also be attending the Annual Scout Parade in Lichfield on St George's Day which is Sunday 23rd April. The event will begin with a service at the Cathedral followed by a parade and salute at the Guildhall.

Greatly assisted by our Council Staff we held the charity quiz night in support of Papyrus, my chosen charity for the year. It was a very well supported event to raise both funds and awareness for this worthy cause. Not only do I need to thank those who attended and supported the evening I need to say a heartfelt thanks to the staff who were unfailing in their efforts to make the event a success. It only happened because of them and their hard work so on behalf of the charity and those who will benefit from the money raised I thank them again.

As we are coming to the end of the municipal year and the end of this Council's 4-year term, it is worth reminding ourselves of the achievements of this Council and our Community during our term in office. Being a Councillor is often challenging, regularly thankless and at times leaves us questioning why we do it. It is therefore important to take some time to reflect on the good work that has been done and what has been achieved by our efforts in the community, working with our staff, volunteer organisations and members of our community. I would like to invite the Councillor Woodward who has been the Leader of this Council for the last 4 years to remind us all of what has been achieved Since May 2019 when we were all last elected.

Councillor Woodward stated that she believed that we had achieved all of the overarching aims and, in spite of the challenges thrown at us by the pandemic, the current economic climate, the increase in social isolation and fuel poverty, we had played a significant part in bringing the community together to create a Better Burntwood and she thanked all Members of this Council as she felt that all Members had contributed to this [at the meeting a briefing note highlighting the achievements of the Council from 2019 to 2023 was circulated]. Councillor Banevicius thanked the Leader and Councillor Bacon thanked the Chair.

[Councillor L Ennis left the meeting at 6:47pm]

85. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Councillor D Ennis asked the following question:

I'm sure the Leader and most of the Council are, by now, aware of the decision by Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board [the ICB] to not continue with the contract for the running of Burntwood Health and Wellbeing Centre in March 2024. This would leave the town of Burntwood with one less GP surgery and force the distribution of 5,000 patients across the remaining three already overstretched surgeries. I know the Leader feels as strongly as I do on this subject because she's been at the same meetings, I have held by BH&WC's Patient Participation Group [The PPG].

I would like to ask the Leader what representations can Burntwood Town Council make and what assistance we can provide the PPG in the fight to reverse this decision to the detriment of the majority of Burntwood residents.

Councillor Woodward provided the following response:

Yes, I very much share Councillor Ennis's concerns and am grateful to him for bringing this to wider attention. I'm also grateful to Councillor Norman who has ensured that this issue is properly scrutinised at Lichfield District Council.

I think there are three immediate things we can do: firstly, if members agree, we can write as a Council to the ICB to express our serious concerns that the "dispersal" of nearly 5000 patients at this surgery will have an adverse impact on all local surgeries and particularly on patient care. We all know how difficult it is now to get appointments and how great a worry this is for local residents.

Secondly, we can all do what we can as individual patients to give our own views, both to the ICB and to our own GP practices and Patient Participation Groups.

Thirdly, we can support the Save Our Surgery group formed by the Patient Participation Group at the Burntwood Centre by promoting their campaign and joining in with their actions (eg demonstration at the Centre on Saturday 25th March at 11am).

I hope all members will support these proposals.

86. ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING ATTENDANCE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022-23

Councillor Woodward referred to the Town Council meeting held on 29 July 2020 where Councillor R Place referred to paragraph 3.2 under the heading of Legal Requirements and asked why the Town Council publishes their record of attendance of Members when it was not a legal requirement for the Town Council to do so. The Town Clerk stated that this was for transparency purposes.

Councillor Woodward felt that we are still a transparent council and will continue to be.

RESOLVED That the report detailing the annual Members meeting attendance for the municipal year 2022-23 be noted.

87. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

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

RESOLVED That the calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 be received and adopted.

88. FINANCIAL UPDATE TO END JANUARY 2023

The Finance Officer explained that the table was a standard report produced by the accounts system and the label of the '% Spent' column was slightly misleading. For income items it is actually the percentage of income received compared to budget and thus a percentage over 100%, such as for CCLA interest, is positive.

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

RESOLVED That the report of income and expenditure compared to budget for the first 10 months of the financial year, April 2022 to January 2023 be received and noted.

89. EARMARKING OF RESERVES AT FINANCIAL YEAR END

Councillor Woodward referred to the column Old Mining College and Street Lighting and asked if the unspent 22/23 budget could go into General Reserves.

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

RESOLVED That the potential earmarking of reserves at year end 2022/23 Budget Statement be received and noted, and the suggested General Reserves of the underspend be approved.

90. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 17 JANUARY 2023 AND 15 FEBRUARY 2023

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 17 January 2023 [Minute Nos. 48-52] and 15 February 2023 [Minute Nos. 53-57] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

91. COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE – 09 FEBRUARY 2023

Councillor D Ennis referred to Minute No. 53 – His Majesty King Charles III Coronation – Gifts to School Children and asked if Ridgeway Primary School even though not in the Parish of Burntwood could be included. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had received an email from Ridgeway Primary School regarding partnership working.

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

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community and Partnerships Committee held on 09 February 2023 [Minute Nos. 45-55] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

92. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 09 FEBRUARY 2023

Councillor D Ennis referred to Minute No. 59 – Works Programme and asked how far back this goes and raised the issue of defibrillators in redundant phone boxes. He explained that the Town Council own and currently have 3 redundant phone boxes and we already have the 3 defibrillators so he felt that the work should happen as soon as possible.

Councillor Evans felt that it was really important that the defibrillators were installed as soon as possible and thanked Councillor D Ennis for the work he had undertaken.

It was agreed that the installation of defibrillators would be included in the Works Programme and the Town Clerk confirmed that BuRRT would be going out to undertake a survey of works.

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 09 February 2023 [Minute Nos. 50-63] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

93. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

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

RESOLVED That the appointment of Sandra Morris from Black Rose Solutions Limited as Internal Auditor for the current financial year 2022/23 and the three following years from 2023/24 to 2025/26 be ratified and authorise the Town Clerk to sign the Letter of Engagement on behalf of the Town Council.

94. 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.

95. CONFIDENTIAL 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 D Ennis, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Confidential Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 12 January 2023 [Minute Nos. 78-80] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

96. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 09 FEBRUARY 2023

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

RESOLVED That the Confidential Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 09 February 2023 [Minute Nos. 61-63] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

[The Meeting closed at 7:08 pm]

Signed

Date