

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE MAIN HALL AT BURNTWOOD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE, RUGELEY ROAD,
BURNTWOOD ON TUESDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2021 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Evans [in the Chair]

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

In attendance

G Hunt, Town Clerk

Ms J Minor, Deputy Clerk

S Lightfoot

County Councillor Cox

County Councillor Wilcox

One member of the public

LOCAL POLICING ISSUES

Councillor Evans welcomed Chief Inspector Beverley Rounds, Lichfield NPT Commander, Staffordshire Police and PCSO Thomas Passmore to the meeting.

Chief Inspector Rounds explained that it had been 20 years since she had worked in the Lichfield area and was still dealing with the same offenders even though they were a bit older. Chief Inspector Rounds stated the importance of partnership working and confirmed that the Police were currently reviewing their operational model. She stated that car thefts, burglaries etc were down over the last 12 months however, people carrying weapons were up. Out of town offenders were coming into the area due to the good road network. Even though there had been a reduction generally in anti-social behaviour, PCSO Passmore and his colleagues had spoken to young people and their parents regarding anti-social behaviour around Sankey's Corner.

PCSO Passmore reported that he was working closely with Chase Terrace Ward Members regarding the problems being experienced at Chase Terrace Park however he would urge local residents to report all incidents.

Councillor Norman asked what can the Town Council do to help? Chief Inspector Rounds reiterated PCSO Passmore's request that people report any incidents providing times, dates etc.

Councillor Willis-Croft referred to problems with e-scooters in Burntwood. Chief Inspector Rounds confirmed that it was an issue. Many of the e-scooters were not insured. The Police had got the powers to seize them. But again, people would need to report incidents and provide the evidence for the Police to act.

Councillor Woodward referred to the ongoing partnership working with the Police. She referred to an incident of anti-social behaviour by young people during the last Community & Partnerships Committee meeting held at Burntwood Library on 28 September 2021.

Councillor Banevicius referred to the Police's involvement with high schools. Chief Inspector Rounds confirmed that the Police were delivering packages in the schools which were delivered by the PCSOs i.e. child exploitation, acceptable behaviours. PCSO Passmore reported that they had good links with both Chase Terrace Academy and Erasmus Darwin

Academy. However, he also recognised that it was equally important to go into primary schools.

Councillor Flanagan explained that residents were concerned regarding the lack of presence of the Police around Burntwood. Chief Inspector Rounds explained that PCSOs were visible around the town during the day and held drop-in surgeries.

Councillor Greensill referred to the CCTV at Sankey's Corner. Chief Inspector Rounds confirmed that the CCTV were monitored at the Three Spires Shopping Centre. Councillor Greensill wanted to see the Police also being visible on a Saturday. Chief Inspector Rounds confirmed that there was always a team on duty 7 days a week, but not 24 hours a day either on foot, push bike or in vehicles.

Councillor Bishop referred to speeding in the Boney Hay area and in particular Oak Lane around 3pm. PCSO Passmore said that his colleague together with Bromford had been to the area. Chief Inspector Rounds stated that times, dates were needed. Then once the nature of the problem was understood perhaps a community speed watch could be set up to encourage drivers compliance and if necessary, enforcement could be taken.

Councillor Evans thanked Chief Inspector Beverley Rounds and PCSO Thomas Passmore for their attendance.

PUBLIC FORUM

No questions were raised by members of the public.

72. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Brown, D Ennis, L Ennis and Kirkham.

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

RESOLVED That Members formally received and approved Councillor Brown's request that he be granted a Leave of Absence from attendance at meetings from 16 November 2021 until 31 March 2022 on compassionate grounds.

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Woodward and Councillor Norman declared an interest in the Minutes of the Planning & Development Committee held on 21 September 2021 and in particular planning application 21/00567/FUL – Land rear of 79 Ironstone Road as they live in close proximity.

74. 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 14 September 2021 [Minute Nos. 61-71] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

Councillor Evans explained that Councillor R Place would be submitting an amendment to Agenda Item 12 – Council Budget 2022-23 and therefore Agenda Item 15 – Motion: Alternative Proposed Budget for 2022/2023 was withdrawn and taken off the agenda.

75. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair read out the following statement:

"This past month has made me aware yet again, of some of the amazing people we have in Burntwood.

I had the privilege of attending the Lichfield Live Community Awards at the Guildhall, which was sponsored by Cllr D Ennis's company Haywoods Blinds and I am delighted to report that Councillor Woodward won the Community Leader of the Year Award and Esther Allen from Spark won the Community Champion of the Year Award, so congratulations and well done to both of them.

On the 06 November, there was a presentation by HM Vice Lord Lieutenant for Staffordshire, Mr James Leavesley, to Spark, for winning the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, which is the equivalent of the MBE. A number of us attended and it was a great, well-deserved occasion.

The Fun Club here also won the same award and I have written to them both on behalf of Burntwood Town Council.

This last Sunday, Remembrance Day, wreaths have been laid by Councillors at St John's Community Church, Chase Terrace; Chasetown; Burntwood Institute and the burial ground at Coulter Lane. Councillor Norman was at St John's Community Church, Councillor Gittings at Chasetown and Councillor Birch and I at Burntwood Institute to pay our respects on behalf of the Council and Councillor Birch has attached one to the gate of the burial ground. The turnouts by the Uniformed Youths, was as always, magnificent.

Finally, you will probably know that Burntwood Be A Friend has opened a Community Store at Sankey's Corner, which is open to anyone to join for a modest amount and is another great initiative, so I encourage you to go and see what a great job they are doing.

All the above are demonstrating how volunteers are pulling together towards a Better Burntwood."

76. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

None received.

77. NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT

It was noted that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and the audited AGAR were published on the Town Council's website, as required, on 23 September 2021.

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

RESOLVED That it be noted that Mazars have completed the external audit of the 2020/21 accounts and did not identify any issues nor any minor scope for improvement.

78. OLD MINING COLLEGE IMPROVEMENTS

The Town Clerk explained that the upgrading of the intruder alarm system was the latest phase of improvements to the Old Mining College. Following the Policy & Resources Committee Meeting held on 30 September 2021, he explained that he was asked to provide a post meeting note addressing the concerns of the Committee, as the Committee had decided to refer the matter back to the Town Clerk as they felt there must be at least 3 tenders and that the work should be re-tendered to take account of the additional work in the basement and the Committee also questioned the need for a project manager to oversee the work. In response to the Committees concerns the Town Clerk asked for advice from the internal auditor. He confirmed that the tendering process used was compliant with the Town Council's Financial Regulations.

Councillor Woodward felt that it was only right and proper for Councillors to question the tendering process as we were spending public money and referred to the wording in the Financial Regulations which could be changed to "seek" rather than "get" to give a more accurate description of the process.

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

RESOLVED That

- i. the Town Council proceeds with the tender for the proposed upgrade of the intruder alarm system unless, as referred to in 4.1 there is a significant difference in the price, especially as stated in Appendix 1, the current system, although outdated, is working, is not unfit for purposes and does not pose any liabilities.
- ii. the Town Council retains Stirling Homes to provide the project manager.
- iii. the Town Council provides appropriate training for all Councillors in respect of tendering processes.
- iv. the Town Council to review the financial procedures.
- v. if there is a significant difference in price that the matter is referred back to Policy & Resources Committee.

79. UPDATES TO THE TOWN COUNCIL'S WRITTEN RULES

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

RESOLVED That the following changes be made to its written rules:

- i. Standing Order 9(a) Questions be re-worded to read "A Councillor may seek an answer to a question concerning any business of the Council provided 3 working days' notice of the question has been given to the Proper Officer."
- ii. Financial Regulation 11.1h) Contracts be re-worded to read "...for contracts between £10,000 and £1,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Town Clerk shall seek to obtain three quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply)."

80. OPTIONS FOR REPLACING PHOTOCOPIER

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

RESOLVED That the Town Council authorise the Town Clerk to explore options for the replacement of the photocopier.

81. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW UPDATE

Councillor Woodward recommended that the Town Council keeps an eye on this Review to see what the Town Council could do to influence the Review and referred to, in particular, parts of Henley Close and King Street which were in fact currently in Hammerwich Parish. She stated that the Town Council needed a timeline and action plan.

Councillor Ho declared an interest as he is a Hammerwich Parish Councillor.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor Flanagan, and following a show of hands [not Councillor Ho] it was

RESOLVED That the Town Council accepted Councillor Woodward's proposal and the Community Governance Review update be received and noted.

82. UPDATE ON INCOME AND EXPENDITURE COMPARED TO BUDGET

It was noted by Councillor Woodward and

RESOLVED That the current position against the approved budget be noted.

83. COUNCIL BUDGET 2022-23

Councillor Woodward explained that she was mindful of the financial pressure on families, however, the 4% increase would go towards the delivery of services that were previously undertaken by Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield District Council. The Town Council were also looking at continuing the markets which had proved a success and also employing a lengthsman to undertake such work as hedge cutting, fixing of drain covers etc. It was also hoped to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee next year and honour the schemes/proposals being put forward by the Planning Advisory Group [which included members of the public] to help create a Better Burntwood.

Councillor R Place proposed an amendment that the Town Council consider that the budget be cut by 5% allowing for a 5% reduction in the rate of the precept which was seconded by Councillor Ho. Councillor R Place felt that there was no need for the budget to go up as there was £580,000 currently in reserves as well as £20,000 currently proposed for Public Conveniences [which Lichfield District Council has no plans at the moment to transfer to the Town Council] and £22,240 currently proposed for the Burntwood Town Strategy. He stated that the country was emerging from a pandemic and the use of food banks was going up. Councillor R Place also questioned Councillor Norman over his decision to back the increase, having previously called [in February 2021] for such a step to be rejected at Lichfield District Council.

Councillor Ho explained that energy bills were going up, inflation was going up, cost of living was raising and that there was a strong probability that Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield District Council were going to raise their precepts to take into account statutory duties i.e. bin collections, social care etc. He felt that the Town Council did not have any legal obligations and with nearly £600,000 in reserves it was morally wrong to increase the precept.

Councillor Norman explained that the Town Council do have legal responsibilities e.g. allotments and felt that the figures discussed were minimal [equated to £1.64 for a whole year] and referred to the increase in National Insurance [would mean an extra £5 a year for those earning £10,000 a year and £130 for those earning £20,000 a year] and the cut to Universal Credit [£20 per week]. He also questioned why Conservative representatives on the Town Council did not call for cuts at either District or County level.

Councillor Tapper stated that we were all aware that we have no parliamentary roles and felt that it was unnecessary, as there were no grounds, to increase the precept, even though it was a small amount it was still a meaningful difference.

Councillor Loughbrough Rudd referred to Councillor Norman's comments referring to voting at Staffordshire County Council and stated that the Town Council needed to find a different way forward instead of increasing the precept as this was a community purpose budget and not a statutory purpose budget.

Councillor Taylor explained that his communication with residents was mainly via social media. The issues raised were mainly to do with why the Council does not things, rather than the increase in the precept. Regarding the public conveniences, he was of the understanding that this also referred to installing public conveniences at Morley Road.

Councillor Birch referred to the Town Council being employers and wage inflation, increased energy costs in respect of the Old Mining College, increases in the usage of food banks however he stated that there is redemption from the Council Tax bills for families on low incomes.

Councillor Woodward stated that we all understand the pressures on social care and the District Council's statutory provision but if we removed all non-statutory services what kind of quality of life would people have – it would be a sad world. She referred to the workshops attended by Councillors in respect of Traffic Management Schemes which we could have a massive influence on.

It was proposed by Councillor R Place, seconded by Councillor Ho, and following a named vote [6 For, 12 Against] it was

RESOLVED That the amendment to the budget as proposed for 2022/23 be not approved.

Councillor Birch felt that the 4% increase would give the Town Council scope to deliver a Better Burntwood and a better environment to live in. Councillor Woodward felt that this was a sensible budget and that she had consulted the whole Council on the budget and would continue to carry on working together.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor Birch, and following a named vote [12 For, 6 Against] it was

RESOLVED That the budget for 2022/23 be approved.

84. COMMUNITY WOODLAND PLANTING

Councillor Woodward explained that the Town Council had been approached by Mercian Labels who wished to undertake some tree planting to help mitigate against climate change as part of their social responsibility agenda. The planting will be undertaken by pupils of Holly Grove Primary School as part of their citizenship activities.

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

RESOLVED That the Town Council accepts the offer of sponsorship from Mercian Labels and authorise the Town Clerk to sign the License heads of terms.

85. MOTION: MARKET

Councillor Woodward explained that Councillor D Ennis had done an incredible amount of work on the markets and had spoken to Lichfield City Council, Lichfield District Council and Hednesford Town Council and wished to record her thanks to Councillor D Ennis.

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

RESOLVED That the following motion be passed:

Following the last Community and Partnerships Committee meeting, this Council resolves to take forward the recommendations that were made in regard to the establishment under the Food Act 1984 Part III of a new 'Producer's Market' to take place on the Second Sunday of the month and 'Christmas Market' on last Saturday in

November, and authority to enter into a preliminary agreement with Bert & Gerts to provide this market.

86. MOTION: ALTERNATIVE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2022/23

It was noted that this item had already been withdrawn.

87. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 21 SEPTEMBER 2021 AND 13 OCTOBER 2021

Councillor Evans explained that these were draft Minutes only and the respective Committee meeting will approve the Minutes.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

88. COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE – 28 SEPTEMBER 2021 AND 19 OCTOBER 2021

Councillor Evans explained that these were draft Minutes only and the respective Committee meeting will approve the Minutes.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

89. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

Councillor Evans explained that these were draft Minutes only and the respective Committee meeting will approve the Minutes.

RESOLVED That the Minutes be received and noted.

90. 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.

91. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

Councillor Evans explained that these were draft Confidential Minutes only and the respective Committee meeting will approve the Confidential Minutes.

RESOLVED That the Confidential Minutes be received and noted.

[The Meeting closed at 7:39 pm]

Signed

Date