

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT THE OLD MINING COLLEGE CENTRE, QUEEN STREET, CHASETOWN, BURNTWOOD
ON THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2019 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Evans [in the Chair]

Councillors Banevicius, Birch, Bishop, Brown, D Ennis, L Ennis, Gittings, Greensill, Kirkham [from 7.10 pm], Loughbrough Rudd, Norman, Tapper, Westwood, Willis-Croft and Woodward

In attendance

G Hunt, Town Clerk

Ms J Minor, Senior Administration Officer

County Councillor M Tittley [from 6.50 pm]

Four members of the public

Sgt Fay Mills [Neighbourhood Shift 2 - Burntwood/Chasetown]

D Sgt Alison Barker [CID – Operation Jackal Team]

PC Luke Ashford [Neighbourhood Shift 2 - Burntwood/Chasetown]

PC Luke Darby [Student]

UPDATE ON LOCAL POLICING

PC Ashford informed Members of the rise and fall of crime in both Burntwood and Chasetown. Councillor Woodward explained to officers that Burntwood is one town in the eyes of the Town Council.

In respect of Burntwood, PC Ashford explained that for the period September 2018 to September 2019 there had been 22 more reported incidents relating to rowdy and inconsiderable behaviour and 12 more reported neighbour disputes over a 12 month period.

Sgt Mills explained that they deal with a lot of disputes between neighbours which can be caused by a variety of reasons [e.g. repairing vehicles on the road/private driveway, boundary issues, location of bins etc] however these are civil issues and not a matter for the police. If the dispute involves an assault, a breach of the peace or criminal damage then it is a police matter.

In respect of Chasetown, PC Ashford explained that for the period September 2018 to September 2019 there had been 32 more reported incidents relating to drugs.

Sgt Mills stated that there were various ways members of the public can contact the police [e.g. email, crime stoppers, 101 or by writing in]. Councillor Woodward stated that she had received complaints from members of the public relating to the length of time it took operators to answer 101 calls. Councillor Woodward made reference to Ryecroft Shopping Centre and the rowdy behaviour by certain members of the public.

PC Ashford explained that an intelligence led warrant had led to an arrest of a male from an address in Railway Lane. PC Ashford confirmed that a substantial amount of drugs had been found at the address [£10k of cannabis and £30k 95% pure cocaine] and that the male had been charged and is awaiting trial. Councillor Woodward stated that she had received telephone calls from members of the public relating to cars at the top of Railway Lane and stated that Members of the Town Council can also report incidents.

PC Ashford explained that following the issue of an intelligence led warrant a cannabis factory had been located in a property in Princess Street.

Two warrants had been issued relating to drug issues in Hillside Close and that two males had been arrested and that a closure order had been issued on the property under Operation Cuckoo. Operation Cuckoo is when vulnerable members of the public are targeted by drug gangs. The gangs are able to operate from the premises and deal and manufacture drugs.

PC Ashford explained that he had spoken to residents in Ogle Hay Road relating to ASB [Anti-Social Behaviour] in respect of boy racers. This had resulted in more police in this location [higher visibility] and an arrest had been made however this had resulted in officers being “out of the game” for three to four hours [custody].

D Sgt Barker explained Operation Jackal [car key burglaries and keyless thefts] and stated that it was important to take extra care to reduce the risk of becoming a victim [e.g. by keeping all keys out of sight and away from doors and windows, keeping doors and windows locked even when you are at home, purchasing a faraday bag etc]. D Sgt Barker stated that fourteen groups had been charged in the last six months with thirty currently under investigation. Organised crime groups target vehicles to either strip down and make fake vehicles or export them.

The Chairman thanked the police for the attendance and stated that if members of the public had any questions for the police there was some post-its available.

PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised by members of the public.

PRAYERS

Prayers were led by Reverend M Wallace from St John’s Community Church.

A minute silence was held in memory of former Councillor Shirley Drinkwater and Mrs Josephine Thornhill [employee of Burntwood Town Council] who had died recently.

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Flanagan, Place and Taylor.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None declared.

29. TOWN COUNCIL: MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 25 July 2019 [Minute Nos. 15-26] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

30. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Evans made reference to the fact that dementia was her chosen charity and stated that she had attended a number of events namely the retirement service for the Reverend Christopher Parkes at Chasetown Methodist Church and Chaseview Nursing Home for Morfudd's 100th Birthday Celebrations. Councillor Evans also confirmed that she would be attending Chaseview Nursing Home for their Harvest Festival and Macmillan Coffee Morning. Councillor Evans also stated that she would be attending Lichfield District Council's Civic Service with Councillor Birch [Vice-Chairman].

Councillor Banevicius stated that it was good to see that the Chairman was spending her time in this community.

31. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Councillor Woodward made reference to Minute No. 19 [Improved out of hours access controls at the Old Mining College Centre] and in particular stated that this was part of a process of re-defining the purpose of Old Mining College Centre.

Councillor Westwood made reference to Minute No. 18 [Public Participation at Council Meetings] and in particular the Openness in Local Government: Recording of Meetings and explained that this was for members of the public only and councillors could not opt out of being recorded.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 09 September 2019 [Minute Nos. 14-24] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

32. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Councillor Birch made reference to Minute No. 22 [Advertising Banners] and thanked the Town Clerk for the briefing note which he had produced [a copy of which was circulated at the Town Council Meeting]. Councillor Birch explained that if the banners were on the highway then it was an issue for Staffordshire County Council and any planning issues were to be signposted to Lichfield District Council. Councillor D Ennis stated that there should be a policy in place as the Town Council needed to lead the way and comply with Class 3[D] [the advertisement permitted by Class 3[D] must not exceed 0.6 of a square metre. It must not be displayed more than 28 days before the sale or event begins and must be removed within 14 days after it ends].

Councillor Norman supported the recommendations and made reference to a sign which was erected at Greenwood House in August 2012 which showed a number of Councillors [which did not comply with Class 3[D]]. Councillor Norman stated that Councillors should also lead the way on such issues.

Councillor Woodward made reference to Minute No. 22 [Advertising Banners] and welcomed this report and felt that whilst banners show a vibrant community [Better Burntwood] however the organisation[s] should be encouraged to take them down within the timescales of Class 3[D].

Councillor Birch made reference to Minute No. 23 [Planning Advisory Group] and confirmed that the Group would consist of five elected members of the Town Council [namely Councillor

Flanagan as Chairman, together with two further members from the Labour Group, one member from the Conservative Group and Councillor Greensill]. Councillor Birch hoped that the Planning Advisory Group would start its business within the next couple of months.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Planning and Development Committee held on 15 August 2019 [Minute Nos. 17-23] and 11 September 2019 [Minute Nos. 24-29] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

33. COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Councillor Banevicius made reference to Page 15 [Together We're Better] and as she had previously explained doctors surgeries were closing on certain days. Councillor Woodward stated that doctors surgeries were closing one afternoon per week however no information and/or consultation had been given to members of the public and this was making it even more difficult to make and/or obtain an appointment. Councillor Woodward stated that Together We're Better are supposed to engage with local councillors which they are not and that events organised by them are not properly advertised.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council needed to have regular dialogue with the CCG [Clinical Commissioning Group] and he was awaiting a name and contact details.

Councillor D Ennis advised that an email had been sent to the Chief Executive of Together We're Better however a response was awaited. Councillor D Ennis confirmed that he would be following up this matter.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community and Partnerships Committee held on 16 September 2019 [Minute Nos. 18-25] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

34. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

No Members questions were raised.

35. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Councillor Woodward stated that the internal audit report was for information for both Councillors and members of the public.

RESOLVED That the internal audit report produced by Alan Toplis Associates be received and noted.

36. UPDATE OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to explain the proposed updates to the Town Council's Financial Regulations and highlight some key implications of the revised Regulations.

Members were informed that the Financial Regulations, together with the Standing Orders, are the two main documents which govern the workings of the Council and should be regularly

reviewed. The Internal Auditor noted in his recent report on the year ended 31st March 2019 that the Financial Regulations need updating to reflect current roles, job titles and procedures. In particular, the post of Finance Officer was created in May 2018 and became the Responsible Financial Officer [RFO], a role which had previously been undertaken by the CEO.

Councillor Woodward stated that hopefully the updated Financial Regulations would increase transparency and openness and made reference to 3.0 [Proposed Amendments to Regulations and Items for Highlight] and in particular 3.3 - a 3 year forecast. Currently there was no 3 year forecast being undertaken.

36.1 Proposed Amendments to Regulations and Items for Highlight

- a. Members were informed that NALC recently issued an updated model template. The amendments were few and minor but have been incorporated in the proposed version.
- b. In line with current roles and job titles Members were informed that the Regulations have been updated to replace previous references to CEO with references to Town Clerk and/or Finance Officer [as appropriate]. Similarly, references to Senior Administration Officer have been changed to Deputy Town Clerk.
- c. Members were advised that the timetable for the annual budget setting exercise has been brought forward by a month and the revised timescales are reflected in section 2 [Annual Estimates]. At the same time, a 3 year forecast will be prepared by the Town Clerk. This area of work, as with some of the other items highlighted further on in this report, were included in the previous Regulations but are not currently being carried out.
- d. Members were informed that the Regulations now state in section 3 [Budgetary Control] that the RFO will provide more frequent financial reports of income and expenditure against budget, to each Town Council meeting (para. 3.3). However, this will not be fully implemented until the accounting and IT systems and procedures have been updated to facilitate more timely collection of data and easier production of reports.
- e. Members were advised that in section 4 [Accounting and Audit], the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee will now be required to verify and sign, on a regular basis, the monthly bank reconciliations for all accounts against the bank statements, prepared by the RFO.
- f. Members were advised that the responsibility for scrutiny of Council payments was delegated from the Town Council to the Policy and Resources Committee in late 2018. This change has been reflected, in particular, in section 5 [Banking Arrangements and Authorisation of Payments].
- g. Members were advised that in future, the Town Clerk or Finance Officer will draw up a list of all the regular payments [para. 5.6] to be made in the financial year (such as continuing contracts, maintenance agreements, salaries and statutory requirements) and will ensure these are authorised according to the Regulations for all payments and included on the schedule of payments. The latter will also henceforth include payments made with any Council credit cards, which will then also include any re-imbursements of the petty cash account.

- h. With reference to section 6 [Instructions for the Making of Payments] Members were advised that the Internal Auditor recently pointed out that councillors should have access to copies of invoices and purchase orders when being asked to authorise payments. These will now be made readily available in the office and, in future, it is hoped to introduce an intranet system giving authorisers electronic access to all the relevant documents.
- i. Members were advised that the log in information including any PINs and passwords for access to Council systems, such as the online bank account, are to be retained in a sealed envelope in the Council's safe and administered by the Town Clerk [para. 6.8].
- j. Members were advised that the thresholds at which the Council should carry out a tendering exercise or seek 3 quotations have been amended in section 11 (Contracts) in line with the recent report approved by the Policy and Resources Committee.
- k. With regard to the section on Charities [previously section 16] Members were informed that this has been deleted, as the Council is no longer a trustee of any charitable bodies [the William Cadman Charity having been closed down in 2016].

RESOLVED That the Financial Regulations be approved and adopted subject to Minute No. 36.1 [a. to k.] being incorporated into the Regulations and that the additional procedures [to ensure adherence to the Regulations] be approved and adopted.

37. DUTIES OF THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

RESOLVED That the duties of the Responsible Officer be approved and adopted.

38. NOTICE OF CASUAL VACANCY - COUNCILLOR B BACON [SUMMERFIELD AND ALL SAINTS WARD]

Members formally noted that the Town Clerk had declared a casual vacancy on the Town Council on 17 September 2019 following the resignation of Mr Brian Bacon.

39. NOTICE OF CASUAL VACANCY - COUNCILLOR N BACON [HIGHFIELD WARD]

Members formally noted that the Town Clerk had declared a casual vacancy on the Town Council on 17 September 2019 following the resignation of Mrs Norma Bacon.

Councillor Woodward thanked Norma and Brian for their many years of public service [Lichfield District Council, Lichfield City Council and Burntwood Town Council] and confirmed that she had spoken to them. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had also written to them.

40. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to seek authority for the amendment of the Council's Standing Orders to allow for greater public participation at all Council meetings.

Reference was made to Minute No. 18 [Policy and Resources Committee dated 09 September 2019] where the recommendation to allow the public to speak at all Council meetings [providing 3 days' notice is given to the Council] was approved.

Councillor Woodward made reference to 3.0 [Proposed alteration to Standing Order No. 1] and in particular 3.1 and felt that this would give greater engagement with stakeholders and members of the public. Councillor Woodward made reference to 3.2 and stated that this would give the public an opportunity to participate in all of the meetings held by the Council [including committee meetings].

Councillor Westwood made reference to Appendix 1 - 4 [Openness in Local Government: Recording of Meetings] and explained that this was for members of the public only as Councillors do not have the right not to be filmed.

Members were advised that to bring into effect the decision of the Policy and Resources Committee [09 September 2019] it was proposed that sections D, E, F, and G of Standing Order No 1 should be amend to:

- d] Meetings of the Council shall be open to the public unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of the meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.
- e] Public Forum: Town Council Meetings only: Subject to Standing Order 1(d) above, a maximum of 30 minutes will be allocated prior to the commencement of the meeting where members of the public may put questions/comments on any matter in relation to which the Town Council has powers or duties which affect the area.
- f] All other Council meetings: Subject to Standing Order 1(d) above, members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions, and give evidence in respect of any item of business included on the meeting's agenda, subject to the Council being given 3 working days' notice of the issue to be raised.
- g] Subject to Standing Order 1(d) above, each member of the public shall not normally speak for more than 3 minutes. The Chairman will have the discretion to allow a speaker more time if appropriate.

RESOLVED That the amendments outlined in the report to Standing Order No. 1, Sections D, E, F and G be approved and adopted.

41. 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.

[Standing Orders were suspended to allow County Councillor Tittley to stay and participate in the meeting]

[Councillor Kirkham joined the meeting]

42. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE: CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

See Confidential Minute.

43. REPLACEMENT GAS BOILERS

See Confidential Minute.

[The Meeting closed at 7:25 pm]

Signed

Date