

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 21 DECEMBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Evans [in the Chair]

Councillors Banevicius, Birch, Bullock, L Ennis, Flanagan, Gittings, Greensill, Ho, 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.

65. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Bishop, Brown, D Ennis, Kirkham and Taylor [Dispensation].

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

In respect of Agenda Item 10 the following Councillors declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Chasewater Friends, following their application for a grant to the Better Burntwood Fund:

Councillors Flanagan, Woodward, Norman, Birch, M Place, L Ennis and Evans.

In addition, Councillors Woodward, Ho [as his wife is a volunteer] and Evans declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Spark following their application for a grant to the Better Burntwood Fund.

Councillor Evans declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of CASES [as a Trustee] following their application for a grant to the Better Burntwood Fund.

67. MINUTES

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

Councillor Woodward referred to Minute No. 61 - Coronavirus Contingency Plan Update and stated that due to Councillor D Ennis's interest in local businesses, it had been decided that she would join the judging panel together with Councillors Evans and R Place. Members were informed that the awards had already been made and the winners shared on social media.

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

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 26 November 2020 [Minute Nos. 54-64] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

68. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As this was the last meeting for 2020, the Chairman wished all Councillors and members of the public a Happy Christmas and an improving New Year. She asked that everyone continued to observe the guidelines and to keep safe.

Councillor Evans acknowledged the work of Burntwood Litter Heroes, Burntwood Be A Friend and Spark who offered help and support to the community and numerous other groups and individuals who have helped to support others in need. She also acknowledged that there were still people in need who may be struggling with their mental health and loneliness. She urged Councillors to do what they could to help these people such as a phone call to check if they were ok, let us not forget others but continue with the great community spirit, we have here that is going a long way into making a Better Burntwood.

69. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS FROM 16 NOVEMBER TO 21 DECEMBER 2020

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

RESOLVED That the payments from 16 November to 21 December 2020 in the sum of £45,180.06 be approved.

70. CORONAVIRUS CONTINGENCY PLAN UPDATE

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

RESOLVED That the extension of the virtual meeting arrangements until the end of March 2021 and the provision of an additional meeting on 11 February 2021 be approved.

71. OLD MINING COLLEGE IMPROVEMENTS

Councillor Woodward reminded Members that the Town Council had a full maintenance and repair lease obligation of the Old Mining College.

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

RESOLVED That the Town Clerk be authorised to seek written quotations for a fire barrier and insulation and replacement of fire alarm system.

72. TRANSFER OF PUBLIC TOILETS

Councillor Woodward explained that if the Town Council did not take over responsibility and maintenance of the public conveniences in Burntwood they would be closed. She felt it was important for a town of this size to make sure we retain essential services, and this is such an important service for a civilised society, not just for residents but for visitors of the town and to support retail activities. It is good to know there was cross-party support for this move.

Councillor R Place stated that this was an important issue and that he fully supported the recommendation.

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

RESOLVED That the Town Council takes over the ownership and management of the public toilets at Sankey's Corner, Swan Island and Chasetown High Street from 01 April 2021 be approved.

73. DRAFT COUCIL BUDGET

Councillor Woodward believed that a zero-percent increase in the precept could be achieved through sound management, although the authority's income had dropped because of Covid-19. She stated that there was a real consensus across the Town Council that we should stick to a zero increase this year - although the Town Council tax levy is relatively small, the Council wanted to show their residents that they did not want to add to any financial pressures they are feeling. The Council is also conscious too that budget pressures are even greater for higher tier councils, e.g., Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire County Council.

Councillor Norman referred to other Authorities previous increases and stated that the Town Council could manage on a nil percent increase.

Councillor R Place thanked the Leader and Deputy Leader for their cross-party discussion regarding the budget and confirmed that he, together with Councillor Ho, had had sight of the draft budget and confirmed that this was a joint budget agreed by both parties.

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

RESOLVED That the draft 2021/22 budget be approved and that a Precept of £344,733.83 [Band D Council Tax of £40.90] be declared on Lichfield District Council for the 2021/22 financial year.

74. BETTER BURNTWOOD FUND

Councillor Evans stated that she would vacate the Chair if a discussion was to take place on CASES as she is a Trustee.

Small Grants Scheme [Funding of up to £500]

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

RESOLVED That applications Friends of Burntwood Library and Chasewater Friends be approved.

Large Grants Scheme [Funding of between £500 and £3,000]

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

RESOLVED That applications from MHA Communities Burntwood; Spark - Burntwood; St John's Community Church and CASES be approved.

[The Meeting closed at 6.26 pm]

Signed

Date