

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Evans [in the Chair]

Councillors Birch, Bishop, Brown, Bullock, D Ennis, L Ennis, Flanagan, Gittings, Kirkham, Loughbrough Rudd, Norman, R Place, Tapper, Westwood, Willis-Croft and Woodward

In attendance

G Hunt, Town Clerk

Ms J Minor, Deputy Clerk

Three members of the public

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

The Chairman informed Members that Mrs Janet Taylor who is the Area Community Speedwatch Team Leader was unable to attend the meeting as her mother was unwell [speedwatch has been suspended until further notice due to Covid-19 restrictions].

PUBLIC FORUM

No questions were raised by members of the public.

Councillor Evans reminded Members of the rules of debate which would be enforced during the meeting and that Members were permitted to speak only once on the same subject.

Councillor R Place referred to the Town Council's Standing Orders, which were amended on 26 September 2019, and in particular No. 6 - Rules of Debate when a Councillor may speak again, to make a point of order, to give a personal explanation or in exercise of a right of reply. Councillor Woodward explained the process relating to points of order and personal explanation and stated that this was at the Chairman's discretion.

54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Banevicius, Ho, M Place and Taylor [Dispensation].

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

In respect of Agenda Item 7 – Better Burntwood Fund Councillor Gittings declared an interest in Spark, Burntwood Be A Friend and Burntwood Litter Heroes.

In respect of Agenda Item 7 – Better Burntwood Fund Councillor Evans declared an interest in CASES [as a Trustee] and Burntwood Be A Friend.

In respect of Agenda Item 7 – Better Burntwood Fund Councillor Woodward declared an interest in Burntwood Be A Friend and Spark.

56. MINUTES

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

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 20 October 2020 [Minute Nos. 47-53] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

57. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Evans referred to Tier 3, Very High Alert, which Burntwood would be moving into from 02 December 2020. She felt Councillors should be setting a good example in observing Covid-19 restrictions and appreciated their support. She then gave a brief explanation on the Burntwood Be A Friend initiative who were very effective in the community.

Councillor Evans referred to Councillors Bullock, Ho and M Place who had been co-opted onto the Town Council a year ago and thanked them for their contribution.

Councillor Woodward stated that there were numerous community groups e.g. MHA Communities Burntwood, Emmanuel Church Foodbank, Burntwood Lions, Burntwood Friendship Group, who were looking after their own members and contacts.

58. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS FROM 16 OCTOBER TO 15 NOVEMBER 2020

Councillor Woodward explained that the payment of £1,200 had been passed onto Beacon Community Church from the People Helping People Fund administered by Staffordshire County Council. The purpose of the project is to gather information from a wide range of sources to discover what may be the current issues and possible provision solutions for young people using Redwood Park.

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

RESOLVED That the payments from 16 October to 15 November 2020 in the sum of £18,000.68 be approved.

59. DRAFT COUNCIL BUDGET 2021-2022

Councillor Norman referred to the cost of the Covid-19 pandemic at Town Council, District Council and County Council levels and stated that as a Town Council representative he would be suggesting a zero percentage increase, as he would be voting for the same at Lichfield District Council meeting.

Councillor R Place confirmed that he had had sight of the budget a few weeks ago, he was in support of the draft budget in its current format and was in favour of a nil increase in the precept.

Councillor Loughbrough Rudd also supported a zero increase in the precept.

Councillor Tapper stated that he broadly supported what was in the draft budget however he made reference to cost centre 107 4019 - Employee Expenses and queried the difference between the actual figures for 2019-20 of £140,201 compared to the approved budget figures for 2020-21 of £155,560. Councillor Tapper referred to cost centre 204 4241 - Public Conveniences and asked what the reasoning behind the figure was of £20,000. He also referred to cost centre 107 4120 – Postage and asked if £200 was enough as the Actual Figure for 2019-20 was £494.

Councillor Bullock stated that he was broadly in agreement with a zero increase in the precept but there were arguments for a modest increase bearing in mind running a reserve that is proportionate [six months].

Councillor Birch stated that the Town Council needed to be mindful of any future plans e.g. grit bins, public conveniences, parks and open spaces, allotment provision, which had been discussed at previous meetings. The Town Council needed to be cautious about eating into reserves, future sustainability, and there may need to be an increase in the future.

Councillor D Ennis gave a brief explanation regarding cost centre 214 4764 - Community Projects which included defibrillators and asked Councillor Tapper, as District Councillor for Chasetown, if he had any plans or ideas to improve Chasetown as they could work together for a Better Burntwood.

Councillor Woodward reminded Members that this was only a draft budget and voting on the final budget may happen on 21 December 2020 or even 13 January 2021 as the Town Council does not have to declare the precept on Lichfield District Council until 22 January 2021. Councillor Woodward explained that Parish Councils are not subject to the same cap as District/County Councils.

In response to Councillor Tapper's questions Councillor Woodward and the Town Clerk clarified:

- i. **Public Conveniences** - Councillor Woodward explained that the Town Council have not been able to progress the public conveniences due to Covid-19 restrictions. She explained that if the Town Council does not take over responsibility of the public conveniences in Burntwood they would be closed. The Town Clerk confirmed that the £20,000 allocated in the draft budget was advice received from the District Council regarding current running costs. He confirmed that a further report updating Members would be going to the December Council meeting.
- ii. **Employee Expenses** - The Town Clerk explained that the 2020-21 approved budget figure of £155,560 included the Direct Services Manager position which had now been made redundant following the staffing review and the 2021-22 budget figure of £128,500 reflected that.
- iii. **Postage** - Councillor Woodward explained that the Town Council had changed a lot of their business methods to email.

Councillor Woodward stated that she hoped to work in partnership with both Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire County Council going forward as they may be restricted to legally required duties/services only in the future.

60. BETTER BURNTWOOD FUND

The Town Clerk informed Members that two applications had been missed e.g. Chasewater Friends and Friends of Burntwood Library and these would be reported to the December Council meeting.

Councillor Woodward explained that this was the first year for the small grants scheme.

Councillor Woodward suggested that the Town Council may need to consider “priorities/specifics” in the future so that the criteria are clearer and tighter. Councillor D Ennis stated that difficult decisions had to be made as £30,022 funding applications had been received but the Town Council had a budget of £10,000 for the large grants scheme. He also felt that it may be appropriate to have different target priorities each year.

Councillor Birch referred to the organisations who would not get funding this year and asked if the Town Clerk could make sure that those organisations are made aware of other funding sources.

Small Grants Scheme [Funding of up to £500]

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

RESOLVED That applications from Barons Place - Bromford Housing; Burntwood Brownies; Burntwood Litter Heroes; Burntwood Platinum Amateur Boxing Club; 1st Burntwood Rainbows; Burntwood St Matthews Cricket Club; Liberty Jamboree and Midland Soccer Academy be approved and that the application from Burntwood Community Allotments be deferred to allow the applicants time to provide additional information.

[COUNCILLOR EVANS VACATED THE CHAIR AS SHE IS A TRUSTEE OF CASES AND DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ITEM]

[COUNCILLOR BIRCH IN THE CHAIR]

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

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

RESOLVED That applications from Burntwood Be A Friend; Emmanuel Burntwood Foodbank; Fun Club; Gartmore Riding for the Disabled and Phoenix Counselling Service be refused. That applications from CASES; COGS Prepares 4 Life; MHA Communities Burntwood; Spark – Burntwood; St Anne’s Church and St John’s Community Church be deferred to enable further discussions to take place with the applicants. That the Town Clerk provides a progress report on the deferred applications which also includes Chasewater Friends and Friends of Burntwood Library to the December Council Meeting.

[COUNCILLOR EVANS IN THE CHAIR]

61. CORONAVIRUS CONTINGENCY PLAN UPDATE

Councillor R Place stated that it may be appropriate to discuss the continuation of virtual/on-line Town Council meetings at the December Council Meeting due to the continued Covid-19 restrictions. Councillor R Place asked if the Old Mining College would remain closed after 02 December 2020. The Town Clerk confirmed that the building would remain closed to the public whilst Staffordshire is in Tier 3. The situation would be reviewed if we move into a different tier. He confirmed that the tenants would still have access to the building and that Burntwood Cemetery would remain open on weekdays, as well as weekends, from 9am to 4pm.

Councillor D Ennis gave a brief update on the events which had been affected by the Covid-19 restrictions. He confirmed that the design for the TownTrader had been completed, that 150 letters had been sent out to local businesses relating to the shop front competition, Councillors D Ennis, Evans and R Place, to judge and that the Christmas trees had been erected.

Councillor Woodward stated that businesses should be encouraged to send in their shop front entries to the Deputy Clerk so that these could be included on the Town Council's social media platforms. She also confirmed that the industrial metal fencing which had been previously erected around the Christmas trees had been replaced by picket fencing which should look more attractive.

62. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor Evans moved that although there were no longer members of the public present the Council still needed to approve the exclusion of the press and public so the next agenda item could be treated as confidential.

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.

63. GAS AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO THE OLD MINING COLLEGE

The Town Clerk explained that the energy market is dynamic and prices change daily and the most competitive company at the moment uses renewable resources which fits in with the Town Council's Environment Plan which was approved by the Town Council on 21 October 2020. Councillor R Place explained that the company uses solar sites and wind farms.

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

RESOLVED That the Town Council authorises the Town Clerk to sign a new contract at a price equal to or below the Total Gas and Power price.

64. STAFFING REVIEW

Councillor R Place asked if the postholder had increased their hours due to increased responsibility and duties. The Town Clerk confirmed that there had been no increase in hours and the re-grading was to reflect the increased responsibility that the postholder had taken on.

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

RESOLVED That the Town Council agrees to the proposed re-grading for the Administrator from Salary Point 14 to Salary Point 18 with effect from 01 April 2020.

[The Meeting closed at 7.17 pm]

Signed

Date