

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 71 ROOM, BURNTWOOD MEMORIAL INSTITUTE, RUGELEY ROAD, BURNTWOOD
ON WEDNESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

PRESENT

Councillor Evans (in the Chair)

Councillors Banevicius, Bullock, Coe MBE, D Ennis, L Ennis, Galvin, Hancox, Holdsworth, Kirkham, Norman, P Taylor, S Taylor [from 6.32 pm], Tranter, Willis-Croft, Wittstock and Woodward

In attendance

S Lightfoot, Town Clerk

Ms J Minor, Deputy Clerk

Ms K Horner, Community Development and Engagement Officer

County Councillor Wilcox

County Councillor Cox

One member of the public [from 6.07 pm]

BURNTWOOD CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR 2023-2026

Councillor Evans explained to Members that the Head of Community Engagement – Lichfield Garrick Theatre and Studio was now unable to attend but was happy to take any questions that may come from the report by email or by phone and meet with any Councillors individually at any time.

The Community Development and Engagement Officer explained that she together with Councillor P Taylor had met with representatives from the Lichfield Garrick on several occasions. Although the Lichfield Garrick traditionally focused heavily within the city of Lichfield, with little history of creative engagement with the town of Burntwood, the new strategic plans recognise that the theatre must serve the whole district and build clear cultural partnerships.

The Community Development and Engagement Officer pointed out the aims of the strategy and some current barriers to accessing the theatre such as public transport for Burntwood residents who do not have access to their own vehicle and who might wish to visit the Lichfield Garrick [the last bus from Lichfield to Burntwood on a weekday or Saturday evening leaves at 8:10pm, with no bus running on a Sunday meaning evening performances are harder to access].

Members were informed that the development of a cultural programme within Burntwood would proceed through several phases over three years.

Councillor Woodward welcomed the progress made to date as Burntwood taxpayers had subsidised the Lichfield Garrick since it opened in 2003. She felt that "arts" had previously proven to be very popular and Members will recall that Burntwood was promised an Arts Centre once upon a time which had been taken away from us and the money put into the Garrick Theatre. She stated that Burntwood was not a cultural desert.

Councillor D Ennis was supportive of the strategy and felt that attitudes were changing.

PUBLIC FORUM

No questions were raised by members of the public.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Bacon [Personal Reasons]
Councillor R Ennis [Work Commitments]
Councillor Flanagan [Work Commitments]
Councillor Gittings [Personal Reasons]
Councillor Ho [Personal Reasons]

The reasons for apologies were approved.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Woodward declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 - Purchase of the Former Chase Terrace Methodist Church as she was a former member.

Councillor Woodward declared an interest in any discussion relating to Burntwood Be A Friend as she is a Trustee.

Councillor Woodward declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 - Policy and Resources Committee – 18 September 2023 and in particular the Co-operative Council's Innovation Network as she is a member of the Values and Principles Boards.

Councillor Evans declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 - Purchase of the Former Chase Terrace Methodist Church as she was a former member.

40. MINUTES

The Chair reminded Members that they were being asked to comment solely on the accuracy of the Minutes.

As a point of accuracy, Councillor Woodward referred to Minute No. 35 - Community and Partnerships Committee - 07 September 2023 and asked if the third paragraph could be amended to read "Councillor Woodward also referred to Minute No. 13 – Declarations of Interest and Dispensations and questioned the appropriateness of a members attendance at a voluntary organisations meetings as this had not been agreed by the Town Council".

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

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 21 September 2023 (Minute Nos. 27-37) be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

41. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair read out the following statement:

Since our last meeting I have attended a number of functions to represent the Council. These include the Memory Walk, presenting certificates and book tokens to the winners of the sunflower competition, planting a Coronation oak tree at Fulfen Primary School, attending the District Council Civic Service at Lichfield Cathedral with the Vice-Chair,

Councillor Coe MBE, CASES AGM representing this Council and of course the Remembrance Service last Sunday.

I would like to thank all of you who have supported me on some occasions and thank you to all the Councillors who participated in the Remembrance services around our town, at Chasetown, Chase Terrace and Burntwood. It was wonderful to see so many young people, mainly the uniform brigades, who were recognising the tremendous sacrifices made by women and men.

Looking forward I hope you will support the forthcoming Christmas celebrations the Council has organised around Burntwood. These include the gathering at Boney Hay on the 20th of this month, the big event at Sankey's Corner on the 25th and on the 2nd of December the Co-op at Morley Road have organised a festive event.

Finally as the days are shorter, please remember those less fortunate than us and give help and support when necessary. As this is the last full meeting before Christmas and although this is early, I hope you all have a very enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

Councillor D Ennis informed Members that the Burntwood Rotary Club's event held at Swan Island will take place on Sunday 26 November and the Chasetown event run by the businesses will be held on Thursday 23 November.

42. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

No questions were raised by Members.

43. NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT FOR 2022/23

Members noted that Mazars had completed their external audit of the 2022/23 accounts on 12 September 2023 and gave a satisfactory opinion in the external auditor's report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. It was also noted that there were also no minor issues identified for improvement in 2023/24.

44. FINANCIAL UPDATE FOR THE FIRST HALF OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR

Councillor Woodward thanked the Finance Officer for providing a readable and user-friendly spreadsheet. She queried Cost Centre 214 - Community Projects and the Town Clerk confirmed that the figures related to grants received from We Love Lichfield Fund and the generosity of our County Councillors.

Post Note

The '% Spent' figure of 249.4% against code 4764 under Cost Centre 214 is due to the high spend of £1,247 compared to a budget of £500. The majority of the expenditure was on work to, and parts for, the defibrillators and refurbishment of the phone boxes, with expenditure on other community projects such as Dementia awareness and the Sunflower Competition also being included there.

Members noted the report of income and expenditure compared to budget for the first 6 months of the financial year, April to September.

45. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2024/25

Councillor D Ennis referred to the Lichfield Live article dated 12 November:

Having just completed the budget setting process, it's always surprising what we can achieve with the proportion of council tax that we receive.

We all know costs have gone up and this is no different for Burntwood Town Council. We don't want to cut the services, events, and investment we provide in Burntwood, but we also don't want to be a bigger burden to residents.

Taking all of this into account, we have decided on a 6% increase which is less than inflation but will cover our own increased costs. This will allow us to continue to provide the things that matter to residents, such as our Christmas events, the Burntwood Wakes, Play in the Parks, maintaining our cemeteries, providing grants to community groups and local charities, our Burntwood Response and Repair Team and so much more.

With Staffordshire County Council being allocated 71%, and the Police and Crime Commissioner 13%, Burntwood Town Council receives just 2% of your council tax – and we use this to continue our work to make a better Burntwood.

Councillor D Ennis asked Members to consider moving £5,000 from Cost Centre 211 Burntwood Town Strategy & Nominal Code 4754 BTS Projects to Cost Centre 214 Community Development & Nominal Code 4764 Other Community Projects. Following a unanimous show of hands this was **agreed**.

A 6% increase was proposed by Councillor D Ennis, seconded by Councillor Norman, and following a show of hands [14 For, 3 Abstentions] it was

RESOLVED That the budget and precept [£385,542] for 2024/25 be approved.

46. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

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

RESOLVED That the Membership of Committees be retrospectively approved.

47. PURCHASE OF THE FORMER CHASE TERRACE METHODIST CHURCH

Members were informed of the current situation. Councillor D Ennis referred to the Community Ownership Fund application which had recently been submitted, if successful, this would cover 80% of the purchase cost and refurbishment. This was an exciting time for the Town Council.

Councillor Woodward stated that a whole group of partners are interested in hiring space at the former Methodist Church for example the food bank, BBAF, Spark, St John's Community Church etc and there had been a lot of community support for this project [petition]. She stated that we have been criticised previously for having too much in reserve, this investment would convert the reserves into bricks and mortar.

Councillor Tranter stated that she very pleased that the Town Council was starting to get properties of their own.

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

RESOLVED That Burntwood Town Council confirm intent to purchase the freehold on the former Chase Terrace Methodist Church for community use and authorises the following: -

(i) in view of the Community Ownership Fund application which, if successful, then £80,000.00 to be moved from reserves to the current account to fund the purchase, with the remainder being funded via the grant, and paid to the solicitor's client account at the appropriate time.

If unsuccessful

(ii) the purchase of the Church be funded though reserves, which would be £240,000.00 to be moved from reserves and paid to the solicitor's client account at the appropriate time.

48. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 18 SEPTEMBER 2023

Councillor Banevicius referred to Minute No. 11 – Apologies for Absence and confirmed that the technical problems she was experiencing have now been resolved.

Councillor D Ennis referred to Minute No. 16 – Delegates to the Co-operative Council's Innovation Network (CCIN) Annual Conference and confirmed that the conference and expenses were not as much as had been budgeted for. The conference had given an opportunity to develop nationwide contacts, share ideas and gain useful insights into the work of similar organisations across England. Councillor D Ennis gave Members a brief update regarding the conference and thought it had been value for money.

Councillor Woodward pointed out that the CCIN also informs Councils of funding opportunities.

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 Policy and Resources Committee held on 18 September 2023 [Minute Nos. 11-25] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

49. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 09 OCTOBER 2023

Councillor P Taylor referred to Minute No. 30 and in particular the discussion regarding the application for the Public Path Extinguishment Order No. 15 [part]. He stated that the right of way had been very overgrown for some years and illegally blocked by a metal fence leading to its disuse but felt that failure to properly maintain the route should not be used as an excuse for closure. He hoped that in future the Town Council would consider retaining all footpaths.

Councillor Bullock referred to Minute No. 31 and in particular BuRRT Update information available to Councillors on a regular basis. The Town Clerk confirmed that he was now aware of the data that the Councillors were requesting.

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

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on 09 October 2023 [Minute Nos. 25-31] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

50. 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.

51. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 18 SEPTEMBER 2023

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor Norman, 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 18 September 2023 [Minute Nos. 24-25] be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

(The Meeting closed at 6.50 pm)

Signed

Date