Burntwood TOWN COUNCIL
BONEY HAY
BURNTWOOD
CHASE TERRACE
CHASETOWN

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Our Ref: SL/JM 04 March 2024

To: All Members of the Policy and Resources Committee
Councillors Woodward [Chair], Norman [Vice-Chair], Bacon, Banevicius, D Ennis, Evans, Flanagan, Hancox, Ho, P Taylor, Tranter and Wittstock

Dear Councillor

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Policy and Resources Committee will meet on **Monday 11 March 2024 at 6:00 pm** in **The Meeting Room, The Old Mining College Centre, Queen Street, Burntwood** to consider the following business.

Yours sincerely

Steve Lightfoot
Town Clerk

PUBLIC FORUM
As part of the Better Burntwood Concept and to promote community engagement, the public now has the opportunity to attend and speak at all of the Town Council's meetings. Please refer to the end of the agenda for details of how to participate in this meeting.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS
To consider any declarations of interests and consider requests for dispensations.

3. MINUTES
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 18 January 2024 [Minute Nos. 36-45] **[ENCLOSURE NO. 1]**.

4. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS
To approve the Schedule of Payments **[ENCLOSURE NO. 2A AND 2B].**

5. WORKS PROGRAMME
Councillors are asked to review the works programme **[ENCLOSURE NO. 3].**

6. USE OF PETTY CASH OR CARD FOR SMALL SUNDRY PURCHASES
To approve the recommendation to retain the petty cash account for small purchases **[ENCLOSURE NO. 4].**

7. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2023/24
To note the comments of the Internal Auditor after her interim visit in January 2024 and in particular to authorise VAT advice to be obtained **[ENCLOSURE NO. 5 AND APPENDICES A AND B].**

8. 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.

9. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES
To approve as a correct record the Confidential Minutes of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 18 January 2024 [Minute Nos. 43-45] **[ENCLOSURE NO. 6 - PINK]**.

10. OLD MINING COLLEGE CENTRE [ANNEX] ROOF MAINTENANCE
See Confidential Report **[ENCLOSURE NO. 7, APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B AND APPENDIX C - PINK]**.

PUBLIC FORUM
30 minutes will be set aside at the beginning of this meeting for you to raise issues relevant to the remit of the meeting but are not already on the agenda. So that the Members of the meeting can be properly briefed in order to enable them to provide considered response to your question, please advise the Town Clerk of the question[s] you wish to ask the Council at least three working days before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting has the right to reject any representations that he/she considers not to be appropriate for the particular meeting.

You will also now have the opportunity to discuss specific items on the agenda as the Chair now has the discretion to allow you to speak where you have a legitimate interest in the item. Again, you will need to give three working days' notice of your wish to speak. Where more than one person wishes to speak on a particular application the Chair may decide to limit the number of speakers or ask for a spokesperson to be appointed.

Generally, in respect of both speaking in the public forum and to specific agenda items you will have up to 3 minutes and can raise more than one issue. However, the Chair has the option to extend the time allowed to you if they think it is appropriate.

While audio and video recordings of this meeting are entirely legal, as a matter of courtesy to Town Council members who work for this town and this Council on a voluntary basis, we would be grateful if you would let the Clerk or the Chair know beforehand.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE MEETING ROOM, THE OLD MINING COLLEGE CENTRE, QUEEN STREET, BURNTWOOD ON THURSDAY 18 JANUARY 2024 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT

Councillor Woodward [in the Chair]
Councillors D Ennis, Hancox, Norman, P Taylor, Tranter and Wittstock

In attendance
Ms J Minor, Deputy Town Clerk

PUBLIC FORUM
No questions were raised by members of the public.

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Bacon [Unwell]
Councillor Banevicius [Family Member Unwell]
Councillor Evans [Unwell]
Councillor Flanagan [Unwell]

The reasons for the apologies were approved.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

None received.

38. MINUTES

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

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

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 06 November 2023 (Minute Nos. 26-35) be approved as a correct record.

39. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Councillor Woodward queried the three separate payments made for the purchase of selection boxes for the Xmas Event. Members were informed that three visits were needed as retailers did not hold the required 500 stock needed for the event.

Councillor Woodward referred to the payment made to Greenhills Nursery and said that it was good to see planters being installed at Sankey's Corner.

Councillor Norman referred to the mixture of payments to both G E Collis and Sons and Screwfix. Councillor D Ennis felt that it was important for the Town Council to be seen to support local businesses but best value needed to be achieved.

Councillor P Taylor referred to the two payments made in respect of the Town Council's Student Award in Memory of Stephen Sutton MBE and said that he was proud to have been involved in this process. Councillor Woodward explained that originally it was Councillor Evans' suggestion following the death of Stephen to undertake a bursary.

Councillor D Ennis referred again to the Petty Cash Spend and referred to the fact that the Town Council is charged £2.50 by Lloyds Bank every time they withdraw cash from the cash point. He explained to Members that his business [after mitigating the risk] does not have petty cash and he felt that all of the items on the list could be purchased via a 'debit' card. Councillor Wittstock suggested that the card should be ringfenced to say £100 and not left open ended.

Following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That

(a) the schedule of payments from 01 November 2023 to 18 January 2024 in the sum of £351,950.44 and the Petty Cash Spend from 26 October 2023 to 13 December 2023 be approved and noted.

(b) the Town Clerk investigates the possibility of a 'debit' card and an email be sent to Members informing them whether this is feasible **or** not.

40. WORKS PROGRAMME

Members referred to the works programme in depth, page by page. Referring to the works programme submitted to this Committee on 06 November 2023, Councillor Woodward stated that she felt that it was not clear which items had been amended and suggested that the current works programme needed a comprehensive edit and all edits between meetings need to be indicated.

Councillor D Ennis informed Members that some planters had been installed back in November 2023 at Sankey's Corner but asked what is the plan for planting as this was not clear. He confirmed that, as Leader, he had recently met with the Response and Repair Principal Team Member with regard to outstanding tasks for example restoration of fingerposts and defibrillators as some of the work had been started but not completed, however, some of the work had been weather dependent. He felt these tasks were being held up by the Town Council and needed to be moved up the priority list.

Councillor Wittstock referred to, for example, the restoration of the fingerposts and pointed out that the date was 01 December 2022 and even though this may have been low priority at the time and weather dependent, is it now January 2024. She stated that the Town Council had said that they would use in-house resources to refurbish them but this had not been done therefore, the Town Council is not fulfilling their role.

Councillor D Ennis suggested that the Officer Lead should not always be the Town Clerk and asked if the BuRRT Team were consulted on the works programme regarding tasks that they would be carrying out. Perhaps the Response and Repair Principal Team Member could be the Officer Lead on such tasks as Restoration of the Fingerposts and Installation of Defibrillators. Councillor Woodward felt that some of the BuRRT tasks originally rated as low priority appear not to have been done. Members felt that this Committee is here to set the priorities/target dates and agreed that longstanding, lower priority tasks needed a clear date for completion and should not be continually deferred.

Councillor Woodward referred to the works programme submitted to this Committee on 06 November 2023 and the Minutes agreed earlier in the meeting where Members asked if a presentation could be provided by the energy broker with regard to solar panels and asked where are we with the presentation as the Committee may feel that it is more appropriate to install solar panels onto the former Church [now known as Chase Terrace Community Centre] as the purchase was completed on the building on 21 December 2023. Councillor Woodward confirmed that no decision had been made to date, as Members need the presentation to see if it is viable. As the Town Council is the owner of the Community Centre, Councillor Woodward explained that landlords consent would not be required, just planning permission. Councillor D Ennis felt that the Town Council's focus may change now that we owned the Community Centre. Councillor Norman referred to the Town Council's Environment Policy.

Members suggested an item entitled Chase Terrace Community Centre (to replace the Purchase of the Former Chase Terrace Methodist Church) could be added which should include the work done on the Community Ownership Fund application and potential solar panels.

Councillor Woodward confirmed that the Community Ownership Fund application had not been successful, however, Councillor D Ennis in consultation with Officers were in the process of submitting another Community Ownership Fund application (closing date of 31 January 2024) to fully refurbish the building. If successful, the application would mean that the grant would cover 80% of the refurbishment costs.

Members referred to Minute No. 30 – Works Programme (06 November 2023) and in particular the flag pole at the Old Mining College Centre. The Deputy Clerk thought that the planning application had yet to be submitted as no payment had been requested from the Town Clerk. Members agreed that this should now be expedited.

Members referred to the CIL expenditure and Councillor D Ennis confirmed that the bike racks had been delivered, permissions given by site owners had been received and were now awaiting installation by the BuRRT Team. However this was weather dependent but he felt that the bike racks would be easy to install. With regard to the Heritage Trail, Councillor D Ennis confirmed that he would be having a meeting with Mrs Williams, Friends of Burntwood Library on Saturday 20 January 2024. He stated that the book was complete and ready for editing and that a local artist was being employed. However he confirmed that no CIL money had been released to date.

Moving forward, Councillor D Ennis felt that the Town Council does not get the recognition it deserves and this needs to be included in the Strategic Plan (Marketing and Branding Strategy). He confirmed that he was in the process of writing up the IT Strategy and Councillor Woodward confirmed that following the group meetings to review the Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations and Risk Register these would be submitted to the Town Council meeting on 23 May 2024.

Councillor Woodward referred to the proposed wildflowers planting at Sister Dora Avenue and confirmed that a joint meeting had been held with the Leadership Team from Lichfield City Council and Burntwood Town Council. It was hoped that a joint procurement could be achieved with the City Council as they were also interested in increasing their wildflowers planting scheme. Councillor Norman asked with whom were the quotations being sought from.

RESOLVED That a radical update of the Works Programme be undertaken by the Town Clerk and forwarded to Councillors **before** the next meeting scheduled for 11 March 2024.

41. PROPOSED NEW NEWSPAPER – LICHFIELD AND BURNTWOOD INDEPENDENT

Councillor Woodward explained that since the demise of free local newspapers, there had been a noticeable increasing challenge to make sure messages and information was received by residents. She stated that the Town Council had previously tried other options for example the TownTrader and Citylife.

Members were informed that the Town Council could assist by helping to promote the proposed newspaper, allowing our venues to be a collection point and consider using paid for advertising space when appropriate. Councillor Norman stated that there was no timescale given in the report for when the newspaper would start and Councillor Woodward thought it was imminent and explained that Lichfield Community Media (Lichfield Live) were trying to get sponsors and advertisers to cover the cost before commencing the trial run.

Councillor P Taylor questioned the value and reach of the newspaper as the Town Council already had its own newsletter which members of the public could subscribe to. Councillor D Ennis stated that this was only a trial (initially set for 4 fortnightly editions with a print run of no more than 5,000) - if it is successful it will grow. He confirmed that the Town Council already had a communications budget (Cost Centre 108, Nominal Code 4171) with an agreed budget of £8,000 for 2024-25. Councillor D Ennis felt that there were positives to the newspaper however the cost element of advertising was needed.

Councillor Wittstock and Councillor Norman referred to the Grapevine magazine which is distributed around some parts of the town. Councillor Norman explained that the TownTrader is mainly advertisements and the Grapevine magazine was made up of more stories.

RESOLVED It be noted that the Committee were supportive in principle of the trial newspaper however the cost element of advertising was needed.

42. CHASE TERRACE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Members were informed that as the first bid had been unsuccessful, another bid was being prepared to fully refurbish the building. The terms of the funding would mean that the grant would cover 80% of the refurbishment costs. However, Councillor D Ennis explained that there is no limit to the bid as this could also include solar panels, new tables & chairs, new flooring to main area etc and there was no way, at this stage before the bid is submitted, how much 20% would be as written quotations were needed. Members felt that as the first bid had been unsuccessful there was no guarantee that the second bid would be successful and asked if the Town Council does not get the grant, what happens next. The Deputy Clerk referred Members to Minute No. 32 – Investment Strategy (06 November 2023) and confirmed that there was funding available in the Barclays Business Premium Account and CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund and the earmarked reserves as at 22/23 for Town Strategy.

Councillor D Ennis informed Members that the closing date for the bid was 31 January 2024 and the Town Council should know by end of February 2024.

Councillor Wittstock referred to marketing of the Community Centre and Councillor P Taylor stated that he thought it was a sellers' market and would have no problem attracting hirers. Councillor D Ennis confirmed that the bidding process included a Business Plan which would be shared with Members in due course.

Following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That

(a) the Town Clerk be authorised to continue essential work as required to bring the building up to the necessary standard for re-opening, in consultation with the Leader and Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee and that a budget of £5,000 be established to fund any necessary work.

(b) the Committee, in principle, agrees to fund the 20% maximum of the refurbishment costs. This to be reviewed once the bid has been submitted and costings are known.

(c) if unsuccessful, the refurbishment works be funded from the Earmarked Reserves for Town Strategy to a maximum of £40,000.

43. 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.

44. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

See Confidential Minutes.

45. STAFF CONTRACTS

See Confidential Minutes.

(Councillor P Taylor left the meeting at 7.45pm)

(The Meeting closed at 7.50 pm)

Signed …………………………………………

Dated ……………………………………………….

BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

	DATE PAID			PAYEE	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE	CHQ NO.	COST CENTRES & NOMINAL CODES	SUB TOTAL	VAT	TOTAL
								£	£	£
1	25	01	24	MB Office Systems Limited	Photocopier Charges for Mono & Colour [Billing Period Dec-23]	DD	107/4211	77.29	15.46	92.75
2	31	01	24	CPC	Cloakroom Items	BACS	104/4059	23.28	4.66	27.94
3	31	01	24	Pennon Water Services Limited	Burntwood Cemetery - Water [01.07.23 to 15.12.23]	BACS	401/4863	46.07	0.00	46.07
4	31	01	24	Pennon Water Services Limited	OMCC - Water [15.06.23 to 22.12.23]	BACS	104/4023	783.41	0.00	783.41
5	31	01	24	Viking	Cloakroom Items, A4 Paper, Stamps	BACS	104/4059 & 107/4120	139.29	10.86	150.15
6	31	01	24	Screwfix	Abrasive Disc, Metal Grinding Pack and Crank Chisel	BACS	502/4065	31.48	6.29	37.77
7	31	01	24	Screwfix	Disposable Masks	BACS	502/4065	13.32	2.66	15.98
8	31	01	24	Screwfix	OMC - Ladies Toilet New Taps & Marker Spray	BACS	104/4056 & 203/4260	30.18	6.03	36.21
9	31	01	24	Screwfix	OMC - Ladies Toilet New Taps	BACS	104/4056	16.23	3.25	19.48
10	31	01	24	Octopus Energy	OMCC Gas & Electric 01.12.23 to 02.01.2024	DD	104/4055	1,441.97	288.39	1,730.36
11	31	01	24	Central Cherry Picker Services Limited	Xmas Trees - Removal Tree Lights	BACS	203/4260	220.00	0.00	220.00
12	31	01	24	Lichfield District Council	Grass Cutting - Sister Dora Open Space	BACS	401/4864	271.33	54.27	325.60
					Grass Cutting - St Matthews Avenue Front Verge	BACS	401/4864	271.33	54.27	325.60
					Grass Cutting - Burntwood Cemetery	BACS	401/4864	2,370.78	474.16	2,844.94
					Grass Cutting - Traffic Islands	BACS	205/4241	723.52	144.70	868.22
					Traffic Islands - Monthly Maintenance of Shrub Beds	BACS	205/4241	4,974.02	994.80	5,968.82
					Traffic Islands - Monthly Litter Picking	BACS	205/4241	180.88	36.18	217.06
					Traffic Islands - Weedkilling Paviour Surrounds	BACS	205/4241	120.58	24.12	144.70
					Planter Outside Library - Supply and Plant	BACS	206/4241	55.27	11.05	66.32
					OMCC - Hanging Baskets	BACS	206/4241	316.61	63.32	379.93
					Coulter Lane - Cut Whole Site Monthly [July to October]	BACS	209/4241	862.28	172.46	1,034.74
					Burntwood Cemetery - Footpath rear of Cemetery Weed Spray	BACS	401/4864	120.57	24.11	144.68
					Burntwood Cemetery - Road Sweeping	BACS	401/4864	87.79	17.56	105.35
					Burntwood Cemetery - Maintenance of Shrub Beds	BACS	401/4864	776.90	155.38	932.28
					Swan Island - Planters, Prepare and Re-Plant	BACS	205/4241	361.14	72.23	433.37
					Swan Island - Supply, Install and Remove Hanging Baskets	BACS	205/4241	286.28	57.26	343.54
					Swan Island - Watering of Planters and Hanging Baskets	BACS	205/4241	682.71	136.54	819.25
					Supply, Install and Remove Christmas Trees	BACS	203/4260	1,950.00	390.00	2,340.00
13	31	01	24	TechCare Limited	Monthly IT Support	BACS	107/4139	884.23	176.85	1,061.08
14	31	01	24	Focus Group	Monthly Line Rental	DD	107/4057	150.57	30.11	180.68
15	31	01	24	E.on Energy Solutions Limited	Highway Lighting Maintenance/Energy 2023/2024	BACS	201/4055 & 201/4241	1,505.37	301.07	1,806.44
16	31	01	24	The Stambridge Group Ltd	Cemetery Open/Close December 2023	BACS	401/4863	300.00	60.00	360.00
17	01	02	24	Lloyds Bank	Monthly Fee	CARD	107/4165	3.00	0.00	3.00
18	06	02	24	Poster My Wall	Monthly Subscription	CARD	108/4171	8.93	0.00	8.93
19	09	02	24	Information Commission's Office	Renewal of ICO	DD	107/4059	35.00	0.00	35.00
20	09	02	24	Octopus Energy	OMCC - Gas & Electric period 03.01.24 - 31.01.24	DD	104/4055	1,179.41	235.88	1,415.29
21	12	02	24	EE	Contract Charges for Samsung Tablet and Samsung Mobile Phone	DD	107/4057	48.74	9.75	58.49
22	15	02	24		Employee Costs Month 11	BACS	107/4019 & 104/4019	12,364.09	0.00	12,364.09
23	15	02	24		LGPS Month 11	BACS	107/4019 & 104/4019	4,245.32	0.00	4,245.32
24	15	02	24		NI/PAYE Month 11	BACS	107/4019 & 104/4019	3,941.39	0.00	3,941.39

AGENDA ITEM 4 - ENCLOSURE NO. 2A

	DATE PAID			PAYEE	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE	CHQ NO.	COST CENTRES & NOMINAL CODES	SUB TOTAL	VAT	TOTAL
								£	£	£
25	15	02	24	Sage	Payroll	DD	107/4139	8.00	1.60	9.60
26	15	02	24	Broxap	Cycle Racks - CIL	BACS	100/4998	739.90	147.98	887.88
27	15	02	24	Barnes Skips and Recycling	Chase Terrace Community Centre - Skip	BACS	502/4065	240.00	48.00	288.00
28	15	02	24	Staffordshire Signs and Graphics	Cycle Rack Stickers - CIL & BuRRT Sticker 'Caution Sudden Stopping'	BACS	100/4998 & 212/4766	21.50	4.30	25.80
29	15	02	24	Staffordshire Signs and Graphics	Chase Terrace Community Centre - Banner	BACS	502/4065	65.00	13.00	78.00
30	15	02	24	Grangemoor Working Mens Club	Better Burntwood Fund - Over 50's Lunch Club	BACS	302/4416	460.00	0.00	460.00
31	15	02	24	G E Collis and Sons Limited	Screwdrivers, Driver, Rubber Mallet	BACS	502/4065	28.71	5.76	34.47
32	15	02	24	G E Collis and Sons Limited	Floodlight & Gloves	BACS	104/4056	23.47	4.69	28.16
33	15	02	24	Preece Burford Limited	OMCC - New lock to front door	BACS	104/4056	445.26	89.05	534.31
34	15	02	24	inLIFE Design Limited	Website Package, Security Updates, Hosting and Backups - Jan 24	BACS	108/4171	229.00	45.80	274.80
35	15	02	24	L J Plumbing and Gas	Chase Terrace Community Centre - Boiler Service & Certificate	BACS	502/4065	100.00	20.00	120.00
36	15	02	24	Clean All [Windows] Limited	OMCC - Window Cleaning	BACS	104/4059	145.20	29.04	174.24
37	15	02	24	Staffordshire Pest Control Limited	OMCC - Pest Control from 24.01.24 to 23.04.24	BACS	104/4056	60.00	12.00	72.00
38	25	02	24	MB Office Systems Limited	Photocopier Charges for Mono & Colour [Billing Period Jan-24]	DD	107/4211	99.39	19.88	119.27
39	26	02	24	Breakwells Paints Limited	Bike Racks CIL Paint	CARD	100/4998	25.00	5.00	30.00
40	28	02	24	British Gas	Chase Terrace Community Centre - Electricity Bill	CARD	502/4055	39.63	1.98	41.61
41	29	02	24	G E Collis and Sons Limited	Repair to Bus Shelters - Decking Stain, Rope, Fixing Bond	BACS	202/4241	118.27	23.66	141.93
42	29	02	24	G E Collis and Sons Limited	Bike Racks - Thunderbolts & Mallet CIL Expenditure	BACS	100/4998	76.24	15.20	91.44
43	29	02	24	G E Collis and Sons Limited	Adhesive, Flashband, Nailing Plates, Wood Trim	BACS	202/4241	44.00	8.75	52.75
44	29	02	24	G E Collis and Sons Limited	Fuses, Terminal Blocks, Screws, Washers	BACS	104/4056	20.17	4.03	24.20
45	29	02	24	Burntwood Memorial Association	Better Burntwood Fund	BACS	302/4416	500.00	0.00	500.00
46	29	02	24	Magnolia Friends	Better Burntwood Fund	BACS	302/4416	500.00	0.00	500.00
47	29	02	24	Entrust	Asbestos Re-inspection - December 2023	BACS	104/4056	419.56	83.91	503.47
48	29	02	24	Cathedral Leasing Limited	OMCC Supply of Hygiene Services - Quarterly	BACS	104/4059	64.98	13.00	77.98
49	29	02	24	Viking	Office Stationery	BACS	107/4211	120.56	24.11	144.67
50	29	02	24	J&M Electrical Supplies	Chase Terrace Community Centre - Switched Sockets	BACS	502/4065	42.30	8.46	50.76
51	29	02	24	The Stambridge Group Limited	Cemetery Open/Close January 2024	BACS	401/4863	240.00	48.00	288.00
52	29	02	24	Lichfield District Council	Parish Council Elections - May 2023	BACS	310/4701	19,544.00	0.00	19,544.00
53	29	02	24	Focus Group	Monthly Line Rental	DD	107/4057	149.99	30.00	179.99
54	29	02	24	TechCare Limited	Monthly IT Support	BACS	107/4139	884.23	176.85	1,061.08
55	29	02	24	IDEA Ingham Energy Limited	Chase Terrace Community Centre - Commercial EPC	BACS	502/4065	250.00	50.00	300.00
56	29	02	24	Ridgway Burial Services	Burntwood Cemetery - Grave Digger	BACS	401/4810	370.00	0.00	370.00
57	29	02	24	Richard Winterton Auctioneers	Chase Terrace Community Centre - Clearance/Collection of Items	BACS	502/4065	90.00	18.00	108.00
58	29	02	24	Magic Party	Wakes 2024 - Deposit Balloon Modellers	BACS	213/4390	175.00	0.00	175.00
59	29	02	24	Screwfix	Meter Tails 3m	BACS	502/4065	19.15	3.83	22.98
								68,259.07	**4,989.55**	**73,248.62**

PETTY CASH SPEND

DATE	ITEM	SPEND	CASH OUT BANK
03.01.24	Swing Bin & Refuse Bags & Surface Cleaner	£7.34	
31.01.24	Raffle Ticket Books for Chair's Charity Event	£8.55	
07.02.24	Community Centre - Electricity Bill	£1.75	
19.02.24	Refuse Bags	£1.60	
22.02.24	BuRRT Wiper Blades	£5.00	
	Balance	£61.43	

AGENDA ITEM 4 - ENCLOSURE NO. 2B

	Work Item	Date	Decision	Action update	Target Date	Officer Lead	Member Lead
1.	Brighter Burntwood. *Planters, wildflowers, hanging baskets, traffic islands*	11.03.24	Leadership team agreed to lay out a pilot wildflower meadow at Sister Dora Avenue	*LDC team have agreed to undertake appropriate works immediately in time for display this summer.*	Spring 2024	Steve Lightfoot	Cllr Norman
2.	Restoration of Finger Posts – to examine the possibility of restoring the three historic finger posts in the Parish of Burntwood	01 December 2022	The Town Council adopt the fingerposts [namely corner of Farewell Lane, Junction of Hospital Road and Junction of Coulter Lane] and use in-house resource to refurbish them in place, by cleaning, removing rust and repainting at a cost of approximately £1,000.	*Still ongoing. Assessment of the state of the posts has been carried out.* *Work started on the repairing/refurbishing as stated.* *Low priority for use of resource. Work is weather dependent.*	April 2024	Steve Lightfoot	Cllr Woodward
3.	Solar Panels and Environment Plan – Verbal Update. Research is being done but is taking longer than hoped for and a report will be brought to the February meeting	01 December 2022	A report would be presented to the next meeting of the P&R Cmtte on 09 February 2023	*Reported again to the 09.02.2023 meeting* *Preliminary work regarding electricity consumption being undertaken.* *Town clerk in discussion with 2 brokerage firms to compare*		Steve Lightfoot	Cllr Woodward

AGENDA ITEM 5 – ENCLOSURE NO. 3

	Work Item	Date	Decision	Action update	Target Date	Officer Lead	Member Lead
				costs, installation arrangement etc.			
		11 April 2023	The Town Clerk be directed to further investigate the installation of solar panels for OMC, work with appropriate supplier and produce a detailed report for consideration	*Town Clerk in talks with an energy broker regarding various options available to the Town Clerk.* *Report for consideration to P&R 09/23* *Explored this matter as far as possible. Members requested to agree not to proceed at this time, due to low return and high cost, but explore solar at CTCC*	Autumn 23		
4.	Chase Terrance Community Centre	11.3.24	Initial works	*Community Ownership Fund grant applications complete. Draft Business Plan Complete.*	May – October 24	Steve Lightfoot	Cllrs Woodward Ennis Norman
5.	Defibrillators	15 March 2023		*Maintenance incorporated into BuRRT routine*	End of September/ongoing	Steve Lightfoot/ Aaron Knox	Cllr D Ennis

AGENDA ITEM 5 – ENCLOSURE NO. 3

	Work Item	Date	Decision	Action update	Target Date	Officer Lead	Member Lead
6.	Flag Pole[s]	17 July 2023		See report. *Supplier selected for pole 1 (Burntwood Library) arrangements for installation tbc* *Flagpole installed. Completed. Flagpole at OMC. Two companies declined to install as required citing difficulty and safety. Planning permission and building permission required. Members asked to consider ending this project.*	If approved installation should be complete end of Oct	Steve Lightfoot	Cllr Woodward
7.	Strategic Plan	17 July 2023		Informal discussions regarding brand and values. Not currently a priority.		Steve Lightfoot / Kat Horner	Cllr Woodward
8.	CIL Expenditure	17 July 2023	Target date for installation of cycle racks Target date for heritage trail [Both had been approved by P&D Cmtte on 12 May 2022]	*18.07.2023 Locations identified by Cllr D Ennis awaiting inspection on whether the locations are suitable by the Response and Repair Team and then landowners permission will be sought.* *7.9.23 Locations inspected for suitability and 3/5 site owners responded and given permission. Type of rack has been identified with option to powder coat.* *Heritage Trail is external project. Book complete and ready for editing.*	Spring 24	Kat Horner	Cllr Woodward

	Work Item	Date	Decision	Action update	Target Date	Officer Lead	Member Lead
				Cycle racks purchased and delivered. Installation underway.			
9.	Standing Orders Code of Conduct Financial Regulation Risk Register Complaints Panel	17 July 2023		*Small Task Groups met.* *Financial Regs under review by NALC.* *Readoption at Annual Council.*	May 24	Steve Lightfoot /Jayne Minor	Cllr Woodward
10.	IT Strategy		To approve tender specifications for on-going replacement of IT	*Draft tender complete. Report back to P&R(May(with recommendation to determine supplier.*	May 24	Steve Lightfoot	Cllr D Ennis

AGENDA ITEM 5 – ENCLOSURE NO. 3

Policy and Resources Committee

Monday 11 March 2024

Means for making small sundry purchases

1. **Background**

At this Committee's meeting on 18/1/24 the Town Clerk was asked to investigate the possibility of using a debit card for small sundry purchases currently made using petty cash and to inform members as to its feasibility (Minute 39 (b)).

2. **Current situation**

Small, sundry purchases are made from the petty cash account. An amount of up to around £100 is kept in petty cash, with the money being held in the office safe under the responsibility of the Office Administrator. Receipts are required for any reimbursement and details are entered to the accounts package and checks made by the Finance Officer as part of the monthly and year end accounts processes. A list of petty cash payments is provided to each meeting of this Committee. During 2022/23, there were 41 petty cash purchases totalling about £660.

The petty cash is topped up, roughly every 2 - 3 months, by a cash withdrawal made by the Town Clerk using the Council's Multipay credit card in his name. Whilst a charge of £2.50 is made each time, in 2022/23 this amounted to only £17.50 (for 7 top ups), which is not material in the context of the Council's overall expenditure.

3. **Options for replacing petty cash**

It was suggested that a card could be used instead for such purchases. However, Unity Trust Bank, the holders of the Council's current account, do not at present offer a debit card and offered the alternative of a Multipay credit card.

As mentioned, the Council already has such a card in the Town Clerk's name, which is used for online purchases from the office. To acceptably replace the petty cash account, another card would presumably be required with a much lower credit limit. However, there is a £3.00 per month fee for the card, which would in fact be higher than the fees currently being paid for cash withdrawals.

An understanding of credit card terms and conditions is that the cardholder should be present and the card should not be given to others to use. Many of the petty cash purchases arise when members of staff purchase small items either during their working day or, for instance, whilst doing their own shopping e.g. the cleaner might buy cleaning supplies. Thus a Council card would not conveniently replace cash for such transactions.

4. **Recommendation**

Whilst recognising that the majority of transactions are now carried out electronically, holding the petty cash account on the premises is not thought to be any particular security or fraud risk and currently offers greater flexibility and convenience for staff than a card.

Members are therefore recommended to approve the retention of the petty cash account for the time being, at least until a more flexible option is available from the Council's bank.

Contact Officer

Alison James
Finance Officer

alison.james@burntwood-tc.gov.uk

01543 677166

Policy and Resources Committee

Monday 11 March 2024

Interim Internal Audit Report 2023/24

1. **Background**

Black Rose Solutions (Sandie Morris) was appointed as internal auditor in March 2023 and carried out interim and year end audits in March and April 2023 respectively. A satisfactory report was given for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023/24 and a more detailed Internal Audit Report was presented to this Committee in September 2023. The internal auditor made her interim visit for 2023/24 on 24th January and issued the attached letter and interim report, pending the year end audit visit scheduled for 3rd May.

2. Internal Auditor's Interim Report, notes and recommendations

<u>Objective C (Risk management) and Objective I (Bank reconciliations)</u> –

The notes recognise the planned reviews which await, in particular, revised templates from NALC. When available, the template for Financial Regulations will be amended to incorporate the revised procedure, approved at this Committee's September 2023 meeting, for email approval of bank reconciliations.

<u>Objective E (items relating to VAT)</u> –

One of the recommendations of last year's Internal Audit report was the need for a detailed check of compliance on claims for VAT on exempt activities. Work has been carried out by the Finance Officer in the last 2 months, with guidance from the Internal Auditor, to look at the accounts for 2022/23 in detail and this exercise will need to be repeated for 2023/24 after year end.

The calculations for 2022/23 show that the Council is very close to the exemption limit. The purchase, intended refurbishment and subsequent income from Chase Terrace Community Centre has implications for this. The new Council building may need to be treated differently from the Old Mining College for VAT purposes. Whilst the Internal Auditor has offered pointers to various guidance, it is felt necessary to obtain specialist advice. That would also be helpful regarding the need to review what is currently treated as exempt and subject to VAT at the Old Mining College, in light of the Internal Auditor's comments.

The Finance Officer is seeking quotes for specialist VAT advice, currently from 2 contacts who have worked with Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association and with 2 local councils respectively. An update may be available for verbal report at the meeting.

<u>Other objectives</u> -

The report lists records various checks as 'tbc', which will be covered as part of the year end audit.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

1. Note that the Internal Auditor found no material errors, omissions or irregularities in the financial records and has no significant concerns about internal control procedures (Appendix A).
2. Note the contents of the detailed Internal Audit report (Appendix B).
3. Authorise the Town Clerk and Finance Officer to obtain additional advice on VAT, to check the current charging practices at the Old Mining College and to advise the Council regarding Chase Terrace Community Centre.

Contact Officer

Alison James
Finance Officer

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01543 677166

Black Rose Solutions Limited

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ST19 5BU

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30th January 2024

Dear Alison,

Burntwood Town Council – Interim Internal Audit 2023/24

I confirm that I have carried out an examination of your accounts and procedures, in line with the Practitioners Guide 2023 and in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. (See additional note on next page about the role of internal audit.)

I can state that I found no material errors, omissions or irregularities in your financial records and I have no significant concerns about your internal control procedures.

Please refer to the enclosed report for further details of the audit work covered.
Comments marked **REC** denote an issue recommended for action as it may affect the Internal Audit response on the AGAR (Annual Governance and Accounting Return).
Comments marked **note** are included for reference or information.
Items referenced **FR** – relates to clause in the council's financial regulations.
Items reference **PG** – relates to a clause in the practitioners Guide.

I would also confirm that I am totally independent of your Council and have no contact with any Member or employee.

Yours sincerely,

S Morris

Mrs Sandra Morris ACMA

Enc –
Summary of Findings,
note about scope of internal audit,
Full Report

Black Rose Solutions Limited, Registered in England and Wales No. 6136400
Registered Address : 74 Leacroft Road, Penkridge, Staffs, ST19 5BU

Summary of Findings

E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Note

A proportion of the Council's income relates to activities which are Exempt of VAT (unit leases, burials, stall hire at events), this means that the council must check that input VAT claimed relating to these exempt activities does not exceed the "insignificance" threshold (£7500 p.a. or 5% of total VAT - as per VAT Notice 749 section 7.) A quick review suggests this is within the insignificance limit, a formal review will be completed at the end of the year to ensure compliance.

REC

There is inconsistency in the application of VAT in the Old Mining College, which may be incorrect.

Room hire is charged at 20% - presumed to be on the basis that the hire includes other facilities (tables, chairs, screens etc.) however VAT notice 742 2.6 states hiring out a hall or other accommodation for meetings or parties and so on (but not wedding or party facilities where the supplier does more than supplying accommodation, for example by assisting with entertainment and arranging catering), the use of a kitchen area, lighting and furniture can be included [as exempt]
Unit Leases are charged exempt of VAT (as per VAT notice 742 - presumption that building has not been "opted in" to standard rate VAT)
Service charges on leased units is charged at 20% though VAT notice 742, 11.2 states that service charges should "follow the same VAT liability as the premium or rents payable"

The council should ensure that it has properly applied VAT, and documents the basis and reasoning behind the rates charged.

B. This authority complied with its financial regulations…
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Regular bank reconciliations are performed by the RFO in the RBS Omega System (bank payments are entered by the Deputy Clerk and approved by 2 councillors). These are then emailed with copies of statements to be reviewed and approved. (Confirmation by return email)

Financial Regulations 4.2 (and best practice) require a wet signature on the reconciliation and the statements as evidence of approval and that they are minuted by the Policy and Resources Committee.

The council has considered this issue and considers the current emailed approval to be adequate, the financial regulations need to be updated to reflect this.

Note about purpose and scope of Internal Audit and improving councillor oversight.

I would draw your attention to the Practitioners Guide
4.4. It is not the purpose of either internal or external audit to detect or prevent fraud.
4.8. essential competencies to be sought from any internal audit service should include: understanding the role of internal audit in reviewing systems rather than undertaking detailed checks that are more appropriately the responsibility of management.

As your Internal auditor I review and test the systems of control, this will be through examining procedure documents, discussion with staff and examining a selection of transactions, reconciliations, approvals, publications etc.
I examine, test and report on risks based on my understanding of the council's operations, my knowledge of statutory requirements, best practice and issues that have arisen elsewhere – and anything else that my instincts lead me towards. The Practitioners Guide contains a lot of information about this.

This means there is a chance that I will detect errors and frauds, but there can be no guarantee.
There is a better chance that I will identify an opportunity to improve your control procedures.

For example - the only way for me to detect that a councillor who has approved an invoice or a reconciliation has not *properly* checked it (perhaps just signed on trust or a brief glance) is if I find a discrepancy. If I do not find a discrepancy, it does not guarantee that it was checked properly – but I have to trust that the signature/approval is in line with the policy.

The best chance of a council detecting errors and frauds is by councillors and staff being vigilant and maintaining an enquiring mind about all financial transactions.
It is never an act of mistrust to ask for clarification or to seek further assurance.
It is too easy to "leave it to the expert" and feel silly for asking. It is essential that enough councillors understand the financial operations of the council and training should be sought if this is not the case.

Some simple examples of things that I check – and could also be checked by councillors (even occasional check of this nature can assist in detecting fraud or error).

Opening/Closing Balances - When reviewing accounts, bank statements, reconciliations, you should check the closing balance on the previous statement matches the opening balance on this one. Check that the balances agree to an official document from the bank, print from the system etc. Check back to an online statement if you have access.

Sequential Numbering - for sales receipts, invoices, cheques – verify that there are no numbers missing from the sequence – if so, seek explanation.

Transaction details – make sure that invoice details match the payment details and the bank statement details. For new/unknown/irregular suppliers also verify the details from a secondary source – website, companies house, VAT number checker etc.

Black Rose Solutions Ltd

Internal Audit - Interim Report

Name of Council - **Burntwood Town Council**

Date of Audit - **24th January 2024**

Annual Return - Internal Control Objectives

A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	YES
Is the cashbook maintained and up to date?	yes
Is the cashbook arithmetic correct?	yes
Is the cashbook regularly balanced?	yes
The council uses the RBS Omega financial system - no issues noted.	

B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	YES
Are payments supported by invoices?	yes
Is all expenditure approved?	yes
Is VAT appropriately accounted for?	yes
Does the Council hold Power of Competence?	yes
If not, does the council monitor s137 expenditure against limit?	n/a

C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	TBC
Does a review of the minutes identify any unusual financial activity?	no
Do minutes record the council carrying out an annual risk assessment?	tbc
Is Insurance cover appropriate and adequate?	tbc
Are internal financial controls documented and regularly reviewed?	tbc
	Review
Risk Assessment	tbc
Financial Regulations	tbc
Standing Orders (amedned 16/11/21 - based on NALC 2013)	tbc
The Risk Register, Standoing Orders and Financial Regulations are currently being reviewed and updated. It may be wise to wait until NALC publish their updated templates (imminently) to ensure you have considered the current recommended best practice.	note

AGENDA ITEM 7 - ENCLOSURE NO. 5B

D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	TBC
Has the council prepared an annual budget in support of its precept?	yes
Is actual expenditure against the budget regularly reported to the council?	yes
Are there any significant unexplained variances from budget?	no
Are reserves appropriate?	tbc

E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	TBC
Is income properly recorded and promptly banked?	tbc
Does the precept recorded agree to the Council Tax authority's notification?	tbc
Are security controls over cash and near-cash adequate and effective?	yes
Is the council VAT registered?	yes
Are returns submitted in a timely manner?	yes
Is VAT reclaimed on exempt business activities reviewed and considered insignificant?	yes*
Are receipts for business activities within the registration threshold?	n/a
A proportion of the Council's income relates to activities which are Exempt of VAT (unit leases, burials, stall hire at events), this means that the council must check that input VAT claimed relating to these exempt activities does not exceed the "insignificance" threshold (£7500 p.a. or 5% of total VAT - as per VAT Notice 749 section 7.) A quick review - sugests this is within the insignificance limit, a formal review will be completed at the end of the year to ensure compliance.	note
There is inconsistency in the application of VAT in the Old Mining College, which may be incorrect. **Room hire** is charged at 20% - presumed to be on the basis that the hire includes other facilities (tables, chairs, screens etc.) however VAT notice 742 2.6 states *hiring out a hall or other accommodation for meetings or parties and so on (but not wedding or party facilities where the supplier does more than supplying accommodation, for example by assisting with entertainment and arranging catering), the use of a kitchen area, lighting and furniture can be included* [as exempt] **Unit Leases** are charged exempt of VAT (as per VAT notice 742 - presumption that building has not been "opted in" to standard rate VAT) **Service charges** on leased units is charged at 20% though VAT notice 742, 11.2 states that service charges should "follow the same VAT liability as the premium or rents payable" The council should ensure that it has properly applied VAT, and documents the basis and reasoning behind the rates charged.	REC

AGENDA ITEM 7 - ENCLOSURE NO. 5B

F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	YES
Is all petty cash spent recorded and supported by VAT invoices/receipts?	yes
Is petty cash expenditure reported to each council meeting?	yes
Is petty cash reimbursement carried out regularly?	yes

G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	TBC
Do all employees have contracts or employment with clear terms and conditions?	tbc
Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the council?	tbc
Are other payments to employees reasonable and approved by the council?	yes
Have PAYE/NIC been properly operated by the council as an employer?	yes
Does line 4 include only Salary, NI & Pension	tbc
Does the council monitor off payroll working (IR35)	tbc

H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	TBC
Does the council maintain a register of all material assets owned or in its care?	yes
Are the assets and investments registers up to date?	tbc
Do asset insurance valuations agree with those in the asset register?	tbc

I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	TBC
Authorities should refer to Para 5.10 to 5.27	
Is there a bank reconciliation for each account?	yes
Is a bank reconciliation carried out regularly and in a timely fashion and approved by council?	yes*
Are there any unexplained balancing entries in any reconciliation?	no
Is the value of investments held summarised on the reconciliation?	tbc
Regular bank reconciliations are performed by the RFO in the RBS Omega System (bank payments are entered by the Deputy Clerk and approved by 2 councillors). These are then emailed with copies of statements to be reviewed and approved. (Confirmation by return email) Financial Regulations 4.2 (and best practice) require a wet signature on the reconciliation and the statements as evidence of approval and that they are minuted by the Policy and Resources Committee. The council has considered this issue and considers the current emailed approval to be adequate, the financial regulations need to be updated to reflect this.	REC

AGENDA ITEM 7 - ENCLOSURE NO. 5B

J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	TBC
Are year end accounts prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure) ?	I&E
Are debtors and creditors properly recorded?	yes
Do accounts agree with the cashbook?	tbc
Is there an audit trail from underlying financial records to the accounts?	yes

K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 22/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly certified itself exempt	N/a
The council did not certify itself exempt	

L. The authority publishes information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	YES
All councils - Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015	
Accounts remain pulished for 5 years	yes
Community Infrastructure Levy Return 22/23	yes
Transparency Code for Larger Authorities (income/expenditure >£200k)	
Quarterly:-	
All items of expenditure above £500	yes
Government Procurement Card transactions	n/a
Procurement information (initiations to tender > £5k)	yes
Annually:-	
local authority land	n/a
social housing assets	n/a
grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations	yes
organisation chart	yes
trade union facility time	n/a
parking account	n/a
parking spaces	n/a
senior salaries (>£50k)	n/a
constitution (standing orders)	yes
pay multiple	no
social housing fraud	n/a
One off:-	
Waste contracts	n/a
The council within the large authority thresholds for Transparency requirements so the code details what **should** be published. ("Should" not "must" - best practice, prefered, but not required.)	

AGENDA ITEM 7 - ENCLOSURE NO. 5B

M. The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2023 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations. (Evidenced by website or minutes)	YES
Approval Date (meeting)	24/05/2023
Publication Date (announcement date)	02/06/2023
Date from (commencement date)	05/06/2023
Date to	14/07/2023

N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR.	YES
Notice of Period for Exercise of Electors Rights	yes
Section 1 Annual Governance Statement	yes
Section 2 Accounting Statements	yes
Notice of Conclusion of Audit	yes
Section 3 External Audit Report & Certificate	yes
Internal Audit Report	yes

O. Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	N/a
The council is not a trustee	

AGENDA ITEM 7 - ENCLOSURE NO. 5B