MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT BURNTWOOD LIBRARY, BRIDGE CROSS ROAD, BURNTWOOD ON THURSDAY 23 MAY 2024 COMMENCING AT 6.20 PM

PRESENT

Councillor Evans (in the Chair)
Councillors Bacon, Bullock, Coe MBE, D Ennis, L Ennis, R Ennis, Gittings, Hancox, Holdsworth, Norman, Tranter, Willis-Croft, Wittstock and Woodward

In attendance
S Lightfoot, Town Clerk
Ms J Minor, Deputy Clerk
Ms A James, Finance Officer
Ms K Horner, Community Development and Engagement Officer
Ms L Jackson, Administration Officer
1 Member of the Public

Councillor Evans welcomed Ms Jackson the newly appointed Administration Officer to the Town Council.

Councillor D Ennis thanked the outgoing Chair, Councillor Evans for chairing the Full Council meetings over the last 12 months and for representing the Town Council at many functions. The Leader, on behalf of members, presented Councillor Evans with some flowers to thank her for her service to the town as Chair. Councillor Evans stated that it had been a privilege to represent the Town Council at functions and events and thanked fellow Councillors for their support.

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

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

It was proposed by Councillor D Ennis, seconded by Councillor Woodward and

RESOLVED That Councillor Kathy Coe MBE be elected Chair of the Town Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Coe MBE made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

It was proposed by Councillor Evans, seconded by Councillor Bullock and

RESOLVED That Councillor Laura Ennis be appointed Vice-Chair of the Town Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor L Ennis made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Banevicius (prior commitments)
Councillor Flanagan (prior commitments)
Councillor Galvin (prior commitments)
Councillor Kirkham (prior commitments)
Councillor P Taylor (prior commitments)
Councillor S Taylor (prior commitments)

The reasons for apologies were approved.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Woodward declared an interest in Confidential Agenda Item 23 – Community and Partnerships Committee Meeting on 08 May 2023 as she is a Trustee of Burntwood Be A Friend.

5. 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, seconded by Councillor Norman, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 14 March 2024 (Minute Nos. 66-83) be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

6. TO APPOINT CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES

Councillor D Ennis thanked all of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees over the last 12 months for the work they had undertaken and confirmed that the only change was that Councillor Evans would now be Chair of the Community and Partnerships Committee with Councillor P Taylor as Vice-Chair.

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

RESOLVED That the Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of Committees be as circulated.

7. CHAIR'S REPORT

Councillor Coe MBE read out the following statement:

Thank you so much for electing me into this position. To serve our community is a privilege and to be entrusted with the role of Chair is a real honour which I don't take for granted.

I have spent the last year as Vice Chair, learning from the legend, Councillor Diane Evans. She has very generously shared her experience and her wisdom. Thank you so much Di. Yours is a very tough act to follow but I will do my best. I am very blessed to have as Vice Chair, Councillor Laura Ennis. I am always in awe of how hard she works and so I think that we will be learning together. If I make mistakes, please remember that I have L plates on.

Many of you will know that I have, for over 30 years, been involved with Pathway Project, a charity which supports adults and children who experience domestic and sexual abuse. It will come as no surprise that I am choosing Pathway as my charity of the year. We deliver drop ins in Burntwood and additional funding will allow these to be developed further.

I have been so proud of all of the great things that Burntwood Town Council did over the last year, and you can find out more about these from a report that Councillor Darren Ennis has produced. I am sure that we can keep up the good work during the coming year and I am looking forward to being part of what we manage to do. It is an exciting time for Burntwood and I am so proud to be a small part of it.

8. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

No questions were raised by Members.

9. CHASE TERRACE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Councillor D Ennis thanked the staff who had helped to put the bid together to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. He confirmed that this was part of the process. Councillor Woodward stated that this project was close to her heart and that the building had been purchased prior to Christmas.

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

RESOLVED That the offer made by Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of a grant of £180,131 from the Community Opportunities Fund to refurbish the Chase Terrace Community Centre and the match funding of £45,035 from general reserves be approved.

10. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

Following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That from 23 May 2024 until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council, that having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965 the Parish Councils [General Power of Competence] [Prescribed Conditions] Order 2012, the General Power of Competence be adopted.

11. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24 INCLUDING ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

11.1 Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

The Chair noted that the Internal Auditor, in her covering letter of 03 May 2024 wrote "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".

RESOLVED That the satisfactory assessment of the Internal Auditor in her 2023/24 report be noted.

11.2 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

RESOLVED

That Statement 5 should be answered No, taking account of the comments of the Internal Auditor, with an explanation being provided with the AGAR that the risk assessment is to be considered at item 16 of this meeting. The following statements be agreed, thereby confirming that the Council has a sound system of internal control in place:

1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.

2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.

4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.

8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events, or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.

and the Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 for the year ended 31 March 2024 be approved and the Chair and Clerk be authorised to sign the document.

11.3 Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24

RESOLVED That Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for the year ended 31 March 2024 be approved and the Chair be authorised to sign the document.

11.4 Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet reports for 2023/24

RESOLVED That the Income and Expenditure report for the year ended 31 March 2024 be received and noted and the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024 be approved and the Chair be authorised to sign the document.

11.5 Exercise of Public Rights

RESOLVED That the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights, to be published on Friday 31 May for an inspection period starting Monday 03 June and ending on Friday 12 July, be noted.

11.6 General and earmarked reserves

RESOLVED That the release from the Earmarked Reserve and put into General Reserves to be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee on 17 July 2024.

11.7 Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2024/25 financial year

RESOLVED That appointment as Internal Auditor for the 2024/25 financial year be offered to Black Rose Solutions Ltd (Sandie Morris).

12. INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council's Financial Regulations state that all items of expenditure over £5,000 must be determined by Full Council. He stated that the nearly 8% increase included extra cover for debt recovery and contract disputes.

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

RESOLVED That the annual insurance from 09 June 2024 in the sum of £5,657.03 be renewed.

13. MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Town Clerk explained that the Model Publication Scheme is a standard format produced by the ICO [Information Commissioner's Office] and confirmed that the Town Council's had not been updated since 2009.

Following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Model Publication Scheme be received and adopted.

14. CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor Woodward informed Members that following discussions at Policy and Resources Committee meetings it had been decided that a small working group would be set up to go through the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Risk Assessment Register and following their comments the documents would be considered and approved by Full Council. Councillor Woodward pointed out that It does not state whether these have not changed since last time they were adopted by the Town Council or if they have changed, what those changes are. Simple highlighting would be the standard way of showing that. There is also no reference to the work of the working groups that considered the policies.

Councillor Woodward asked if there was a "Calendar" for re-adoption of policies and referred to the comments made by the Finance Officer regarding the Risk Assessment. She said that the policies were living documents and should be fit for purpose. The Town Clerk confirmed that there was a Forward Plan.

Following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Code of Conduct be received and re-adopted.

15. STANDING ORDERS

Following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That Standing Orders be received and re-adopted.

16. RISK ASSESSMENT REGISTER

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

RESOLVED That the Town Council's overarching Risk Register be approved.

17. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

It was proposed by Councillor D Ennis, seconded by Councillor Norman, and following a unanimous show of hands it was
RESOLVED That the Scheme of Delegation be received and re-adopted.

18. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS – UPDATE FROM NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council update their policies and regulations from time to time and he has been keen to review the Financial Regulations, one of the Town Council's key policies. The National Association of Local Councils produce a model document which includes statutory provisions, and most town and parish councils adopt them. NALC have been reviewing them and have just published the latest 2024 document. He stated that having spoken to the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee that the new Financial Regulations will go to their next meeting on 17 July with recommendation to Full Council in September. He confirmed that all Members had already been emailed a copy of the new Regulations.

Councillor D Ennis stated that he would have preferred to see one overarching document/report [one agenda item] which included all of the policies which would also include all changes in legislation etc.

19. COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE – 06 MARCH 2024 AND 08 MAY 2024

It was proposed by Councillor Evans, seconded by Councillor Coe MBE, and following a unanimous show of hands it was

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community and Partnerships Committee held on 06 March 2024 (Minute Nos. 52-64) and 08 May 2024 (Minute Nos. 65-74) be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

20. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 11 MARCH 2024 AND 07 MAY 2024

Councillor Woodward referred to Minute No. 60 – Larks Rise Community Woodland [07 May 2024] and asked if the Deputy Clerk could circulate to all Members the report which went to Full Council on 16 November 2021 and in particular 4.1 - The sponsorship offer covers the maintenance of the woodland planting over the five[1]year establishment period. During this period, the trees will be weeded and watered, and any losses replaced. The details of the sponsorship offer are provided in a letter of intent from Mercian Labels which is provided in Appendix 1. She explained that the original sponsorship offer was that the Town Council would have no financial responsibilities whatsoever.

Councillor Woodward referred to Minute No. 61 – Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect Policy and Procedure [07 May 2024] and in particular the DBS clearance of staff and the out-of-date policy as this was a matter of urgency. It was **agreed** that the policy, once updated, would be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

Councillor Woodward referred to Minute No. 62 – Dementia Awareness Action Plan [07 May 2024] and asked if the Deputy Clerk could circulate to all Members the work carried out so far regarding Dementia Friendly Burntwood [list produced by the Community Development and Engagement Officer]. She explained that the wrong document had been presented to the Policy and Resources Committee meeting and that there had been no covering report to provide context.

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 11 March 2024 (Minute Nos. 46-55) and 07 May 2024 (Minute Nos. 56-68) be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

21. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 18 MARCH 2024 AND 22 APRIL 2024

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

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Development Committee held on 18 March 2024 (Minute Nos. 60-66) and 22 April 2024 (Minute Nos. 67-72) be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

22. 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.

23. COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE – 06 MARCH 2024 AND 08 MAY 2024

See Confidential Minutes.

24. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 11 MARCH 2024 AND 07 MAY 2024

See Confidential Minutes.

25. PROCUREMENT OF A CONTRACTOR TO UNDERTAKE WORKS TO CHASE TERRACE COMMUNITY CENTRE

See Confidential Minutes.

[The Meeting closed at 7.32 pm]

Signed …………………………………………

Date …………………………………………..