MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT BURNTWOOD LIBRARY, BRIDGE CROSS ROAD, BURNTWOOD ON THURSDAY 22 MAY 2025 COMMENCING AT 6.13 PM

PRESENT

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

In attendance
S Lightfoot, Town Clerk
Ms J Minor, Deputy Clerk
Ms A James, Finance Officer

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

COUNTY COUNCILLOR PLATFORM
Councillor D Ennis informed Members that the usual invitation had been extended to the newly elected County Councillors prior to the meeting however two had replied to say that they had prior commitments. He explained that the 'platform' would be kept on the agenda and it was hoped that in the future they would attend and answer Members questions.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

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

RESOLVED That Councillor Laura Ennis be elected Chair of the Town Council for the ensuing year.

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

Councillor L Ennis read out the following statement:

Thank you so much for electing me Chair of Burntwood Town Council, it is an honour to represent you, the community, and the town as a whole. I look forward to the coming year and all the different events that I hopefully can attend.

I would also like to thank Kathy for all the hard work she has done in the last year. It's been an honour to be your Vice-Chair and to watch how well you have handled everything you've been invited to. I have enjoyed all the events that I have been able to accompany you too, especially the Panto which was just great fun. It's been wonderful to watch and learn from you and hopefully I can bring your passion and enthusiasm that I've seen in you to my role as Chair. So thank you again Kathy for all you have done and now enjoy your rest.

Thank you all again for trusting me with this role.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

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

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

Councillor Woodward made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Flanagan (Personal Reasons)
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 any discussion referring to Burntwood Be A Friend as she is a Trustee.

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 24 March 2025 (Minute Nos. 80-99) be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

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

Councillor D Ennis pointed out to Members that there were only minor amendments to the current Committee structure namely that Councillor S Taylor is now Chair of the Planning and Development Committee and Councillor Flanagan is now just a Member of that Committee.

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

RESOLVED That the up to date Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of Committees be circulated to all Members following this meeting.

7. CHAIR'S REPORT

Councillor L Ennis read out the following statement:

Not much of a Chair's report I'm afraid as I've only just been elected. I will be going to the Bower on Monday with Kathy by the request of The Mayor of Lichfield to watch the Bower parade and to attend the Court of Arraye. Kathy and I are looking forward to our last official event together.

At our next Town Council Meeting I will announce my charity for the year and will hopefully have more things to talk about.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome my Vice-Chair Sue, I'm really excited to have Sue as my Vice-Chair. I'm look forward to working with you, learning from you, and sometimes leaning on you if needed. Sue has years of experience and knowledge that I can hopefully learn and use. I really appreciate that you were willing to take the role of Vice-Chair and I hope we have a wonderful year working together.

8. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

No questions were raised by Members.

9. MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Town Clerk explained that the next four items on the agenda were standard housing keeping.

Councillor D Ennis referred to Agenda Items 9, 10, 11, and 12 and said that a briefing report was needed. The report should highlight any information about a specific issue or topic that needed to be changed/reviewed. He stated that any policies that needed to be reviewed should be placed on the Policy and Resources Committee's Work Programme going forward.

The Town Clerk explained that not all of the documents needed reviewing just re-adopting.

Councillor Woodward felt that the 'house style' had been lost and Members felt that the costs associated with information available from the Town Council under the Freedom of Information Act Model Public Scheme were confusing as one column stated that there were no costs (free) whereas the Schedule of Charges - disbursement costs referred to actual costs incurred. The Town Clerk explained that the information was available via websites free of charge however if a hard copy were needed (and taken away) then the actual cost incurred would be payable.

RESOLVED That the Model Publication Scheme be received and re-adopted.

10. CODE OF CONDUCT

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

11. STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED That Standing Orders be received and re-adopted.

12. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Councillor Woodward referred to Terms of Reference for Committees dated 05 July 2023 and felt that these should be included with the Schedule of Delegation.

RESOLVED That the Scheme of Delegation be received and re-adopted.

Councillor Woodward felt that the Town Council should be progressing towards a paperless way of working and that agenda papers should be received electronically, if possible, with no presumption by Members that a hard copy will be provided. Hard copies need to be requested for by Members and collected from the Town Council offices in person or by their nominated person. She felt that Council staff should not be expected to hand deliver.

Councillor D Ennis made it clear that Members are not being denied access to a hard copy of the agenda papers however consideration needed to be given to the resources being spent.

Councillor Willis-Croft referred to the fact that District Councillors receive an annual allowance which can go towards offsetting, for example, IT provision at home and confirmed that he personally collects a number of agendas for his group from the office and delivers them himself.

Councillor Bacon referred to the printing of agenda papers and asked what other items the Town Council waste their money on. Councillor D Ennis stated that we are very efficient as a Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor D Ennis, and following a show of hands (13 For, 5 Against) it was

RESOLVED That if Members wished for a hard copy of agenda papers, then this needed to be requested and collected from the Town Council office.

13. BURNTWOOD PLACE MAKING AND CULTURAL STRATEGY

The Town Clerk explained that a comprehensive proposal had been submitted to Members for consideration initially at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 06 November 2024. He confirmed that representatives from Limitless had attended the Full Council meeting held in January 2025 and the proposal was further considered at the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 17 March 2025 where Members had debated the proposal in detail and voted to recommend that the proposal be declined. However, other options were now being offered to Members to consider.

Councillor Woodward felt that the detailed proposals by Limitless had been scrutinised and she proposed option d. Consider Phased Implementation – if full funding is not available, approve Phase 1 first and review results before committing to later phases. Members agree to fund the first phase, as described at a cost of £5,000.

Councillor Woodward explained that Phase 1 – Reflect is about looking inwardly. Limitless will work with staff and Members at Burntwood Town Council to gather insights on their goals, available spaces, and potential partnerships. Through sessions, interviews, and other methods, Limitless will collect and analyse this information to create a report. This report will capture Burntwood's cultural vision, values, and goals, providing a foundation for the entire strategy. This phase sets the direction and ensures the strategy aligns with Burntwood's strengths and aspirations for growth.

Councillor Wittstock referred to her previous comments and referred to the Town Council's Financial Regulations and asked what was the limit with regards to going out to tender. The Town Clerk confirmed that for contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the Council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts. The Regulations require Councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities. Councillor Wittstock stated that the Councillors had not sat down and discussed what we wanted and felt that we were being led by the Limitless representatives.

Councillor Evans seconded Councillor Woodward's proposal and Councillor Norman stated that initially he had agreed with Councillor Wittstock however this was a unique opportunity and Councillor D Ennis explained that he had had a change of mind and felt that Phase 1 was a small step forward which would give the Town Council a vision.

Councillor Tranter emphasised the fact that this was public money and following Phase 1, if the Town Council decided to proceed, the public must be consulted.

It was proposed by Councillor Woodward, seconded by Councillor Evans, and following a show of hands (13 For, 4 Against, 1 Abstention) it was

RESOLVED That Phase 1 be approved and that Members review the results before committing to later phases. Members agreed to fund the first phase at a cost of £5,000.

14. RISK ASSESSMENT REGISTER

Councillor Woodward referred to 4 – Democracy and in particular 4.1 and the 'red' high impact with regard to compliance with the Code of Conduct and 4.5 and confirmed that not all Members undertake monthly surgeries. The Town Clerk explained that this item was red before mitigation and that with the mitigating actions identified the risk dropped into an acceptable range.

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

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

15. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25 INCLUDING ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

Members noted that the Internal Auditor had answered 'No' in her report to Internal Control Objective H – Asset and Investments Registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained. The Finance Officer explained that although an asset register was held at the end of the 2023/24 financial year, it was not kept fully up to date during the 2024/25 financial year. A list of additions and disposals was subsequently compiled from the accounts system, to calculate the figure required for box 9 of the Accounting Statements 2024/25. These additions and disposals therefore need to be applied to last year's asset register.

The Finance Officer explained at end 2023/24 the Internal Auditor's detailed report to Council also identified that the asset value on the AGAR did not match exactly with the asset register, which included a lot of low value items. The report had suggested that the Council could consider a policy with a minimum value (reflecting the insurance excess) and add insurance values alongside. This policy and resulting updates still needed to be made.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this would be considered at the next Policy and Resources Committee meeting in July 2025.

15.1 Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

The Chair noted that the Internal Auditor, in her covering letter of 2 May 2025 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 2024/25 report be noted.

15.2 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

RESOLVED That Statement 7 should be answered No, taking account of the comments of the Internal Auditor, with an explanation being provided with the AGAR that the asset register needs some updating. 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.

5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.

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

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 2024/25 for the year ended 31 March 2025 be approved and the Chair and Clerk be authorised to sign the document.

15.3 Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25

RESOLVED That Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for the year ended 31 March 2025 be approved and the Chair be authorised to sign the document.

15.4 Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet reports for 2024/25

RESOLVED That the Income and Expenditure report for the year ended 31 March 2025 be received and noted and the Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025 be approved and the Chair be authorised to sign the document.

15.5 Exercise of Public Rights

RESOLVED That the Notice for the Exercise of Public Rights, to be published on Monday 2 June for an inspection period starting Tuesday 3 June and ending on Monday 14 July, be noted.

15.6 Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2024/25 financial year

RESOLVED That the appointment of Black Rose Solutions Ltd (Sandie Morris) as Internal Auditor for the 2025/26 financial year be noted.

16. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 17 MARCH 2025

Councillor Banevicius referred to Minute No. 51 – Burntwood Place Making and Cultural Strategy and in particular Page 33 (last paragraph) and asked if the word tangible could be used instead of 'see and feel'.

It was proposed by Councillor Galvin, 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 17 March 2025 (Minute Nos. 45-57) be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

17. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 02 APRIL 2025 AND 06 MAY 2025

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

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Planning and Development Committee held on 02 April 2025 (Minute Nos. 64-70) and 06 May 2025 (Minute Nos. 71-76) be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

18. COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE – 07 MAY 2025

As a point of accuracy, Councillor Evans referred to Minute No. 68 – Community Engagement and explained that even though Councillor S Taylor had referred to the Young Farmers Union it was meant to be the National Farmers Union.

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

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community and Partnerships Committee held on 07 May 2025 (Minute Nos. 64-74) be received and where necessary approved and adopted.

19. 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.

Councillor Woodward referred to Paul Holland, the Library Assistant and Library Attendant at Burntwood Library who would have been in the public gallery and it was only right that this Council recognised his contribution and commitment to the town.

20. COULTER LANE BURIAL GROUND WALL

See Confidential Minutes.

(The Meeting closed at 7.16 pm)

Signed …………………………………………

Date …………………………………………..