

**MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD ONLINE,
ON TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2020, FOLLOWING THE MAIN MEETING**

- Present:** Councillor Reeves in the Chair
Councillors Atkin, Bowden, Breslin, D. Ellis, J. Ellis, Evans and T. Hearldon
Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk – Mrs C. Caddock
Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe
One resident
- Apologies:** Councillors Fitzsimmons and M. Hearldon (dispensation)

247/20-21 **NOVEMBER 2020 PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Bowden proposed, Councillor D. Ellis seconded, and it was resolved that: The Minutes of the Part I Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting that was held on Tuesday 27th October 2020 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interests

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to declare any personal or prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when the item is reached.

Councillors Atkin, Bowden, D. Ellis and Reeves – Birchwood Carnival Committee

Councillors Breslin, D. Ellis and J. Ellis – Birchwood Youth & Community Centre Committee

248/20-21 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule – (see pages 174 and 175 below).

Councillor Atkin **proposed** the Payment of Accounts be approved; Councillor Bowden **seconded** the proposal. This was **resolved** by those Members present.

PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL ITEMS

249/20-21 **BIRCHWOOD YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE (BYCC) – LEASE DISCUSSIONS**

The BAFO reported that not much additional progress has been made in the short time since the last meeting. He added that we have not yet been able to find any information regarding a grant reference number in the office, relating to the lottery application. He reminded Members that the Town Council did not play any part in the grant application to the Lottery for the BYCC building.

Councillor D. Ellis said that without the grant reference number, he is unable to find out who legally owns the building, as the Lottery's computer records do not go back far enough. He added that Land Registry searches only show who owns the land, not the building.

Councillor Evans commented that he believes it is up to the Lottery to look through their own records, even if they are not on computer, as they should hold the original documents relating to the application and the grant awarded.

The original Trustees of the building have long since moved out of the area, and no one has any contact details for them.

The BAFO said that the next stage would involve BYCC appointing a solicitor on their behalf. We will look again to see if we can find any further documents relating to the lottery grant for the original building of what is now Birchwood Youth and Community Centre (BYCC).

Action Clerk's office/BAFO to continue to try to find additional documentation in the office relating to the original grant application for BYCC.

250/20-21 **PARKERS FARM ESTATE**

(a) The BAFO reported that work is progressing well. We have received three progress reports from Cube, these were received on 27/11, 3/12 and 11/12 2020.

The BAFO stated that there will be some snagging work to be completed, such as ensuring any windows 'stuck' after painting are freed and that some painting work is redone, where we are not happy with the finish. Also, the work on the metal beams in the barn is still to be undertaken.

(b) The BAFO asked Members to consider, and approve for payment, the first invoice received from Trinity (£13,946.64 + £2,789.33 VAT).

Councillor D. Ellis **proposed**, Councillor Evans **seconded** and it was **unanimously resolved** that this invoice be approved for payment.

251/20-21 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

Councillor Atkin and the Clerk reported that a conversation had taken place with Angus Lord from WBC. Due to Covid-19, and the currently unknown problems this could continue to cause, WBC cannot say at this stage whether any events, such as Birchwood Carnival, will be able to go ahead on their usual scale, or even if smaller events could be planned.

The Clerk said that if we are allowed to organise any smaller events later in the year, it might be possible to use acts that were booked for the 2020 Carnival, which had to be cancelled.

252/20-21 **BTC VEHICLES**

To note that tipper HK64 NNM is now back in service. The gearbox, clutch and flywheel have been replaced. The final invoice (including the towing charge) was £2,077.25 (£1,731.04 + £346.21 VAT).

253/20-21 **GRANT APPLICATION**

To note that a letter was sent regarding the Council's decision re: a grant application from the CPR Group C.I.C requesting grant aid assistance in the amount of £897.00.

A response has been received from the CPR Group – which is not happy with the Council's decision, requesting a reconsideration.

Members were shocked by the tone of the response; and will not reconsider their decision.

They cannot, for at least six months, reconsider any decision, unless in exceptional circumstances (see Standing Order 36 (a)):

“Rescission of Previous Resolution

36. (a) *A decision (whether affirmative or negative) of the Council shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least four members of the Council, or by a resolution moved in pursuance of the report or recommendation of a committee.”*

NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

254/20-21 **BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION**

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account periods 1st April 2020 – 30th November 2020.

The payroll figure was £13,570.99 for October 2020 (including wage increase for 3 x staff backdated to April 2020) and £12,679.74 for November 2020.

After consideration and approval by Members the schedules will be signed by the Clerk or BAFO, and the Chair, as soon as is practicable.

Councillor D. Ellis **proposed**, Councillor Atkin **seconded** and Members **unanimously resolved** to approve the bank reconciliations.

255/20-21 **MEMORIAL PROPOSAL**

The BAFO asked Members to note and consider correspondence regarding a proposed memorial for Councillor Nelson.

The Clerk briefed Members on the discussions that had taken place with Dave Hazlehurst, WBC Ranger.

Councillor Bowden offered to liaise with Councillor Nelson's family to ask if they have any specific views relating to a memorial for Councillor Nelson.

Action Councillor Bowden to speak to Councillor Nelson's family.

256/20-21 **POLICE FUND**

Members discussed the new fund launched by the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) David Keane. We understand that Police Officers and PCSOs can bid for £1,000 for each ward, to work with local residents on projects which make their area safer, by addressing community safety issues.

The BAFO reminded Members that Sgt Stuart Gibbard had emailed the Clerks in Warrington East to gauge opinion re: purchasing a new "Tru Cam" speed enforcement device to be used solely in four Wards of Warrington East and be located at the new Police Office at Birchwood Fire Station. This would involve each of the parishes in Warrington East bidding for 'their' £1,000 – and if successful, then also covering the remaining balance between them. If a new Tru Cam costs approximately £9,500, and if each parish agrees, they will also have to contribute around £1,000 each.

We received a 'follow-up' email from PCSO Stefan Titans, asking for the Council's thoughts.

Members discussed this suggestion in some detail, and had some additional questions, and some comments to make at this stage.

It was noted that the Town Council's budget has already been set for 2021/2022, and this request had not been accounted for when the figures were being worked out. The Town Council's financial resources are extremely tight at present.

It was also noted that when the Town Council has applied to the PCC's fund in the past, with a view to using any grant awarded to assist the Town Council in the purchase of road safety signage (the type that flashes the speed at which vehicles are travelling) to improve local community safety issues, we were turned down.

Councillors questioned how the Tru Cam would be shared between the parishes. Would it be equal – or would it be a case of which parish expresses a greater need? If all parishes wanted it in their area at the same time, how would that be addressed? Would the parishes have any say at all in its deployment? What if another 'local-ish' parish asked to 'borrow' it - would that be 'allowed' – even if they have had no financial input?

Councillor Bowden reminded Members that the Town Council purchased a mobile speed sign for use by the Police, many years ago, and for various reasons, it ended up not being regularly deployed in Birchwood.

Councillor Bowden commented that the Town Council would not normally fund anything that is for use by another precepting authority, which has its own precept to raise funds for resources, which would include equipment. The Town Council has many demands on the funding raised through our precept and the request should be carefully considered.

Members wondered what the other parishes that this has been suggested to think about the proposal. What happens if any of them do not wish to use their potential £1,000 grant in this way – plus the additional money that would be required of them? Would the Police then ask for a larger contribution from the parishes that might express an interest? They also wondered what the exact cost of a Tru Cam is.

Members did acknowledge that having a more locally based camera that could be used for speeding enforcement, rather than just raising awareness, would be a good thing, as would potentially being able to deploy one more regularly in the area.

Councillor D. Ellis informed Members that he has been contacted by PCSO Titans, regarding Community Speed Watch.

Members asked if we could request clarification on whether the Police might, in future, ask the Town Council for funding for another 'radar gun' mentioned in the email to Councillor D. Ellis, or whether this is the same 'Tru Cam' that funding may be requested for from the Police Fund. If it is a different type of equipment, but one that can also be used for enforcement, what is the cost of a 'radar gun'?

Members have discussed the potential for Community Speedwatch in the past, and worked with the PCSO at that time, to ask the community for their thoughts, via social media. We had a couple of people who 'might be' interested, but it never went any further.

Members are not convinced that Community Speedwatch is the correct way to enforce speeding in the area. They have concerns about the safety of any local residents who might be taking part.

One Councillor stated that he thinks that the Police should be enforcing speed limits, not residents.

Councillor Atkin stated that if there is more chance of enforcement being carried out, he would probably be in favour of part-funding a camera that can be used in that manner, rather than one that can only be used as an awareness raising tool. He added that in the Strategy document, reducing speeding traffic was one of the issues raised during a community consultation, and improving community safety is one of the Town Council's objectives.

For the various reasons and questions above, Members did not feel able to make any decision at the December meeting. They would like answers to the questions they have posed before being able to make a more considered decision at a future meeting.

Action Clerk's office to contact PCSO Titans with the above comments and questions, with a view to the request being reconsidered at a future meeting.

257/20-21 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING / NOTING**

(a) Received from Zurich – link to a Risk Management Guide produced by the Local Community Advisory Service (LCAS). This is a 129 page document; we can send the link to any Member who would like to read / have access to the document.

(b) To note the annual fee membership renewal invoice for the Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks has been received (£262.00).

Members **unanimously resolved** that this invoice be paid by the Council, as has been the case in previous years.

(c) The BAFO stated that we have received formal notification that our electricity and gas accounts are now being transferred over to 'E-on Next'. There will be no change to our prices, contract end dates, etc.

The BAFO said that he has spoken to an agent who looks at utility prices on our behalf (free of charge). We are in the final year of our current gas/electricity contract for Parkers Farm. He has asked the agent to ensure that the companies he looks at have 'green credentials', which both Npower and E-on have.

Councillor D. Ellis suggested that the Town Council considers using 'Bulb', which is currently used by BYCC.

The BAFO said that we have looked at a few smaller, alternative companies in the past, but the Town Council did not fulfil the criteria for being a customer for some of these companies. We can look again at Bulb.

(d) To note we have received our 'Anti-virus Health Report', 'Computer Health Standards' and 'Performance Review' from Yellowbus, relating to our two office pcs and the laptop.

The only issue noted is that the pcs are running at 1980 MHz rather than the 2200 MHz standard. This is not perceptibly affecting the performance of the pcs.

(e) The BAFO reported that the annual Data Protection Services renewal invoice re: GDPR has been received (£1,000 +VAT). This is an additional service offered by our internal auditor. The BAFO asked if Members wished to continue utilising these services, as GDPR issues can be quite technical if an issue arises.

Members discussed the proposed renewal of this contract.

Councillor Atkin **proposed**, Councillor J. Ellis **seconded** and Members **unanimously resolved** to approve the renewal of this service, and the payment, for another year.

- (f) Received – LexisNexis for ‘Arnold Baker Local Administration 12ED’ and the associated invoice - £149.99. This was approved for purchase earlier in the year.
- (g) Received – Employer Bulletin – December 2020.
- (h) To note that Officers have agreed to look at an accounts package sometime in the New Year, to see if it would be beneficial to Town Council administrative operation, or whether we prefer to continue with our own processes; and, if it is a useful package, whether the cost (currently unknown) could be justified.

The meeting concluded at 7.20pm

Payment of Accounts:						
Resolved: that the following payments be approved as the residual October and part of the November 2020 accounts						
Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
21.10.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 180.30	£ 36.04	£ 216.34
22.10.2020	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 10.11	£ 0.51	£ 10.62
23.10.2020	*	Reimburse F McDonald	Tesco - Bleach, kitchen roll, coffee	£ 19.52	£ 1.52	£ 21.04
23.10.2020	*	Reimburse F McDonald	Reimburse re: 1 month Zoom licence for 1 machine	£ 11.99	£ 2.40	£ 14.39
23.10.2020	*	Phoenix Electrical	Replaced outdoor security light	£ 80.00	£ 16.00	£ 96.00
23.10.2020	*	C. Caddock	Reimburse re: St John Ambulance - First Aid Requalification (S	£ 230.00	£ 46.00	£ 276.00
28.10.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 193.28	£ 38.64	£ 231.92
29.10.2020	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges/annual telephon system maintenance charge	£ 157.46	£ 31.49	£ 188.95
02.11.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 22.83		£ 22.83
02.11.2020	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 45.62	£ 9.12	£ 54.74
03.11.2020	*	Reimburse F McDonald	Petty cash float	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
03.11.2020	*	Reimburse F McDonald	Zoom licence - annual subscription	£ 117.19	£ 23.44	£ 140.63
03.11.2020	*	CJ Auto Service	PO51 WLE - replace driver's airbag unit	£ 410.42	£ 82.08	£ 492.50
04.11.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, and equipment)	£ 59.46	£ 11.90	£ 71.36
04.11.2020	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 170.02		£ 170.02
05.11.2020	*	CJ Auto Service	ND09 VNL - MOT, full service, engine diagnostic, repairs, weldin	£ 1,419.91	£ 273.99	£ 1,693.90
06.11.2020	*	Uniqwin UK Ltd	Alarm call out 29/10/2020	£ 48.00	£ 9.60	£ 57.60
06.11.2020	*	E Smith & Son	Bedding plants and compost - for planters	£ 219.00	£ 43.80	£ 262.80
06.11.2020	*	Regal Polythene	30 x cases balck refuse sacks & 4 x boxes paper hand towels	£ 371.04	£ 74.21	£ 445.25
06.11.2020	*	November wages	Wages total this month (10 staff) - inc. back pay for 3 x staff	£ 12,874.07		£12,874.07
06.11.2020	*	Zurich	Works in Progress Insurance 08/11/2020 - 24/12/2020 (including £107.53 in Insurance Premium Tax (IPT))	£ 1,003.63		£ 1,003.63
09.11.2020	*	Arco	PPE (PT) safety boots	£ 49.00	£ 9.80	£ 58.80
10.11.2020	DD	BNP Paribas Leasing	Photocopier lease - 10/11/2020 - 09/02/2021	£ 343.00	£ 68.60	£ 411.60
11.11.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, and equipment)	£ 81.56	£ 16.31	£ 97.87
12.11.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 87.07		£ 87.07
13.11.2020	*	CJ Auto Service	ND58 BZR - MOT, full service, brake fluid change, repairs, weldin	£ 1,141.13	£ 220.73	£ 1,361.86
16.11.2020	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 40.60		£ 40.60
17.11.2020	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	IT support/backups/internet services - inc. for laptop and two ye warranty extension re:2 x Dell OptiPlex (5 x invs.) (No accident cover)	£ 480.30	£ 96.06	£ 576.36
17.11.2020	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 8.69	£ 0.43	£ 9.12

Payments of Account since 17th November 2020

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
18.11.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, and equipment)	£ 108.61	£ 21.72	£ 130.33
19.11.2020	*	HMRC	Re:Oct. 2020 Tax £1,582.60 NI £2,314.03	£ 3,896.63		£ 3,896.63
19.11.2020	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Re: Oct. 2020 E'ee £828.43 E'er £2,968.00	£ 3,796.43		£ 3,796.43
20.11.2020	*	Office Depot	Stationery	£ 37.97	£ 7.59	£ 45.56
20.11.2020	*	Williams Garage Services	HK64NNM - new tyre	£ 74.75	£ 14.95	£ 89.70
25.11.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, and equipment)	£ 202.55	£ 40.51	£ 243.06
26.11.2020	CHQ	Post Office Limited	Vehicle Tax ND09 VNL	£ 265.00		£ 265.00
26.11.2020	CHQ	Post Office Limited	Vehicle Tax ND58 BZR	£ 265.00		£ 265.00
27.11.2020	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	£ 57.83	£ 11.57	£ 69.40
27.11.2020	*	Arco	PPE - safety boots (IS)	£ 49.00	£ 9.80	£ 58.80
27.11.2020	*	ESI	Replace worn door contact and resistors (following alarm activation)	£ 55.00	£ 11.00	£ 66.00
30.11.2020	DD	Copyrite Systems	Photocopier charges	£ 25.84	£ 5.17	£ 31.01
01.12.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 22.83		£ 22.83
02.12.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, and equipment)	£ 57.67	£ 11.53	£ 69.20
02.12.2020	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 46.02	£ 9.20	£ 55.22
03.12.2020	DD	Npower	Electricity - Parkers Farm	£ 195.15	£ 9.76	£ 204.91
04.12.2020	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 70.73		£ 70.73
04.12.2020	*	Cheshire Association of Local Councils	Training course (Budgeting - CC)	£ 30.00		£ 30.00
07.12.2020	*	December wages	Wages total this month (10 staff)	£ 12,878.97		£12,878.97

Payments for approval at the December 2020 meeting

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
all tbc	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance (January 2021)	£ 162.66		£ 162.66
	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	tbc		
	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 22.83		£ 22.83
	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 87.07		£ 87.07
	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 41.20		£ 41.20
	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	IT support, backups, internet services (inc. for laptop) (4 x inv.)	£ 134.70	£ 26.94	£ 161.64
	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 46.02	£ 9.20	£ 55.22
	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 10.74	£ 0.54	£ 11.28
	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 57.67	£ 11.53	£ 69.20
	*	CJ Auto Service Ltd	Re: HK64NNM - replace gearbox, clutch & dual mass flywheel	£ 1,731.04	£ 346.21	£ 2,077.25
	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 20.03	£ 4.01	£ 24.04
	*	HMRC	Re:Nov. 2020 Tax £1,399.60 NI £2,082.07	£ 3,481.67		£ 3,481.67
	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	RE: Nov. 2020 E'ee £780.95 E'er £2,805.48	£ 3,586.43		£ 3,586.43
	*	Office Depot	Stationery (awaiting back order for blue paper)	tbc		tbc
	*	Arco	PPE - safety boots (SJ) and 3 x white safety helmets (office staff) to use during building works	£ 87.99	£ 17.60	£ 105.59
	DD	Npower	Electricity - Parkers Farm	£ 195.15	£ 9.76	£ 204.91
	*	Infotone	Brother Drum Unit	£ 40.90	£ 8.18	£ 49.08
	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 45.92	£ 9.18	£ 55.10
	*	Elite Industrial Supplies Ltd	Workwear and PPE	£ 162.69	£ 32.54	£ 195.23
	*	Cube	Interim project management fee	£ 1,500.00	£ 300.00	£ 1,800.00
	*	Cheshire Association of Local Councils	Training Course Fee (Budgeting - CC)	£ 30.00		£ 30.00
	*	Society of Local Council Clerks	Clerk's annual membership fee	£ 262.00		£ 262.00
	*	Trinity Renovations	Payment 1 re: Parkers Farm - roof and associated works	£ 13,946.64	£ 2,789.33	£ 16,735.97
	*	SLCC	Annual renewal of Clerk's membership	£ 262.00		£ 262.00
	*	TBC (FMc, or CC, or GC)	Petty cash float reimbursement	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
	*	JDH Business Services Ltd.	Data Protection Services 2020/2021	£ 1,000.00	£ 200.00	£ 1,200.00
	*	Aqua Solutions	Annual boiler service, inspection of gas installation and issue of gas safety certificate	£ 75.00		£ 75.00
	*	ESI	Annual fee - intruder alarm monitoring and maintenance	£ 162.00	£ 32.40	£ 194.40