

**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL
MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT
PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 14TH JANUARY 2020**

- Present:** Councillor Reeves in the Chair
Councillors Atkin, D. Ellis, Fitzsimmons

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk – Mrs C. Caddock
- Apologies:** Councillors Bowden, J. Ellis, Evans, M. Hearldon, T Hearldon and Nelson
Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe

270/19-20 **DECEMBER 2019 PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Fitzsimmons proposed, Councillor Atkin seconded and it was resolved that: The Minutes of the Part I Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting held on 10th December 2019 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 interest or prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when the item is reached.

Councillors D. Ellis – Birchwood Youth & Community Centre Committee

Councillor Reeves – Birchwood High School

271/19-20 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule – (see pages 191 and 192 below).

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

Councillor Atkin commented that he has noticed in the accounts that the cost of maintaining the work vehicles sometimes seems quite expensive.

The Clerk said that the vehicles, the tippers, in particular, are heavily used. On top of the cost of MOTs and full services other repairs and maintenance are undertaken as necessary.

The Clerk added that we are currently planning to run the vehicles (that were all purchased second-hand) for as long as possible.

Councillor Reeves enquired about electric vehicles.

The Clerk replied that, at present, the majority of electric work vans available on the market are too small for our requirements and are very expensive. The larger vans are currently beyond the Town Council's realistic consideration due to their high costs.

The Town Council aspires towards changing to electric vehicles; which might become possible in future years. If electric vehicle market competition increases, prices might fall.

PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL ITEMS

272/19-20 BIRCHWOOD YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE (BYCC)

Councillor D. Ellis reported that BYCC currently has a balance of approximately £8,000 in its bank account. This is enabling the Trustees to approve spending on some smaller items that make the environment more pleasant for users, even though they are not absolutely necessary, such as a new hand drier, and soap dispensers.

Councillor D. Ellis informed Members that it is hoped a new group will be starting soon, on Monday mornings, possibly from around 10.30am to 12.45pm (although times are to be confirmed). The aim is to offer a discussion type group, maybe along the line of 'TED Talks' with refreshments available.

The Clerk commented that the timings of the group might need to be adjusted, depending on the number of people attending the group who will drive and want to park.

BYCC will need to take into account that the Town Council's car park needs to be available for Town Council staff and visitors, especially as the Walking Group uses our Community Room on a Monday morning and several of their members use our car park. There needs to be sufficient free space to allow the safe coming and going of the Town Council's vehicles during the day (and, in summer, the mowers) and access is required to the barn and compound at all times during working hours.

Councillor D. Ellis has previously said that he is arranging for some parking permits for BYCC users, to allow some to park on the road during 'Residents Only' hours.

Councillor D. Ellis said that the 'Christmas Spectacular' put on by Birchwood Acts before Christmas, at the high school, was very well received, with almost a full house attending.

The next performance for the group will be a murder/mystery, which will be performed at Cinnamon Brow Farm Club (due to the performance space layout required).

273/19-20 PARKERS FARM ESTATE

- (a) The Deputy Clerk reported that the Clerk has contacted a contractor, as requested by Members at the December 2019 meeting regarding the damp survey which needs to be undertaken. We are still awaiting a response.
- (b) The Deputy Clerk asked Members to note that the quote (requested for information following the December 2019 meeting) received for a potential second contractor's assistance re: the damp survey is approximately £250 + VAT.

Members **resolved** that this fee is acceptable should a second contractor's assistance be required.

274/19-20 CHESHIRE PENSION FUND

To note that we have been in contact with Cheshire Pension fund to ask if they could undertake some 'on site' training regarding the new Monthly Interface Scheme. We are awaiting a reply; although it is likely that we might have to arrange to attend the training events in Chester.

275/19-20 GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING / NOTING

- (a) To note that the annual renewal for the Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) has been paid.
- (b) To note that the payment from WBC of £140, for the use of the Community Room as a Polling Station for the General Election that took place on 12th December 2019, was paid into our Nationwide account on 24th December 2019.
- (c) To note that we have signed a four-year contract with E-on to supply electricity to the floodlighting at the multi-use games area at Locking Stumps Primary. The estimated annual cost (if we use the same amount of electricity as last year and continue to pay by direct debit) is £120.50.

As per Financial Regulation 11.1 (vii) "Where a favourable price is quoted by a supplier/provider for work or services (e.g. gas, electricity, water and telephone services) and a short time limit of acceptance prevails; the Clerk/RFO are given authority to proceed with placing an order. They will be expected to inform the Chair/Vice Chair of the Council of the action taken and the circumstances prevailing and report the action to the next appropriate Finance and/or Council Meeting."

The Chair and Vice Chair were notified of the actions taken and the reasons why.

NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

276/19-20 BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account period 1st April 2019 – 31st December 2019.

The payroll figure for November 2019 was £14,437.01 (11 staff - including notice pay and holiday pay for one staff member) and £12,679.74 for December 2019 (10 staff).

After consideration and approval by Members the schedules will be signed by the Clerk and the Chair.

Members **resolved** to approve the bank reconciliations.

277/19-20 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT 2019/2020

To note that our internal auditor will be attending our office on 23rd January 2020 to undertake the interim audit for the 2019/2020 financial year.

278/19-20 CHESHIRE PENSION FUND

- (a) To note a request from Cheshire Pension Fund to assist with testing their new website.
- (b) The Deputy Clerk reported that a Pension Consultative Forum Meeting is taking place on 24th January 2020. The BAFO would normally attend this meeting but will not be able to on this occasion. As discussions at these meetings are quite specialised regarding pensions and the incoming Monthly Interface Project, it is not something that the Clerk or Deputy Clerk could easily 'pick up' in his place at the present time.
- (c) To note the receipt of a data retention reminder and a ruling update that might involve the recalculation of some member's benefits (Officers need to look into this).

- (d) We have received notification of the new employer contribution rate for Cheshire Pension Fund, which will increase from 21.8% until March 2020 to 22.6%, payable from 1st April 2020, 2021 and 2022.

We will advise our payroll provider of this change.

- (e) Received – Funding Strategy statement – Consultation (closes 24th January 2020).

- (f) To note that Cheshire Pension Fund will be holding a series of roadshows during 2020.

We have asked for an update when a roadshow is to take place in Warrington.

279/19-20 **REQUEST FOR NEW PIECE OF EQUIPMENT**

The Clerk informed Members that the team needs to replace a long reach hedgecutter and has been looking at the possibility of buying a cordless version, which they have been to see.

The ‘package price’ for the HLA65 shell, 2 x AP300 batteries and 1 x AL500 charger was quoted at £540.83 plus VAT.

However, the company we usually purchase our equipment from has offered us trade in prices on seven pieces of our equipment that have been decommissioned. The company can either use the old equipment for parts or might be able to refurbish them to sell on.

The Town Council will not sell the equipment privately as there could then be a question of liability should anything go wrong with the equipment in the new owners’ hands.

The trade in price given to us was a total of £280 for a strimmer, 3 chainsaws, 2 blowers and a hedgecutter. Most of the items are more than ten years old and some do not meet the current HAVS requirements.

The total payable after trade-in would be £369 (including VAT).

The Clerk added that purchasing a cordless piece of machinery is a step towards reducing the Town Council’s emissions from fuel use.

Members considered the information and **resolved** that the Town Council will purchase the piece of equipment, with the decommissioned items being traded in as part of the purchase.

280/19-20 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING / NOTING**

- (a) The Deputy Clerk informed Members that the annual renewal invoice for the services of Terrain, the specialist Health and Safety Consultants we currently use, has been received. She asked the Council to consider if it wishes to renew this contract.

The quotation is the same as last year (£1,500 +VAT) and would run from 01/02/2020 to 31/01/2021.

Members **resolved** that they are happy to renew this contact.

Action Clerk’s office to contact Terrain regarding the above and to arrange payment of the invoice.

- (b) The Deputy Clerk reported that the annual renewal details for the services of SAS Daniels, the specialist Employment Law Consultants we currently use, has been received, and to ask the Council to consider if it wishes to renew this contract.

The quotation has increased slightly for the 2020/2021 financial year by 2%, from £1,350 +VAT to £1,377 +VAT and would run from 12/01/2020 to 11/01/2021.

Members **resolved** that they are happy to renew this contact.

Action Clerk's office to contact SAS Daniels regarding the above and to request a formal invoice prior to arranging payment.

- (c) To note that two invoices have been sent out:
- To Birchwood Youth and Community Centre - £4.00 for peppercorn rent to cover 2016/2017 to 2019/2020 (£1 per year).
 - To Birchwood Warrington Ltd - £2,800.00 for the 2019 hanging baskets at the shopping centre (purchase, collection, maintenance and removal).
- (d) The Deputy Clerk stated that we have made preliminary enquiries with WBC regarding the possibility of contracting our payroll services out to them.

At this stage, this is an exercise to find out if we can obtain payroll services at a lower cost, but would also be beneficial regarding administration, as we understand that WBC's payroll is already set up for the new Monthly Interface System (relating to members of staff who are members of the Cheshire Pension Fund).

WBC asked for some information, which we supplied. We are now awaiting a response from WBC as to whether they could offer this service and, if so, if they could link our payroll with the new Cheshire Pension Fund Monthly Interface system, and what the costs would be.

The Clerk stated that if it is a possibility and is financially prudent, we would have to undertake a staff consultation regarding the date of payment of wages. We currently pay wages on the 7th of the month (or nearest date if it falls on a weekend) whilst WBC runs its payroll for payment on the 15th of a month.

The meeting concluded at 6.50 pm

Payment of Accounts:						
Resolved: that the following payments be approved as some of the residual October, November and part December 2019 accounts						
Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
23.10.2019	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4032774195)	£ 68.03		£ 68.03
23.10.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 134.11	£ 26.83	£ 160.94
23.10.2019	*	CJ Auto Service	NH57 CZV - replace egr valve, batteries and gaskets	£ 538.91	£ 107.78	£ 646.69
25.10.2019	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	£ 71.54	£ 14.31	£ 85.85
28.10.2019	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 4.02	£ 0.56	£ 4.58
			(with adjustments credited ref: previous overcharge)	£ -		
29.10.2019	*	F McDonald	Petty cash float reimbursement	£ 200.00		£ 200.00
30.10.2019	DD	Copyrite	Photocopying charges	£ 23.78	£ 4.76	£ 28.54
30.10.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (equipment)	£ 9.76	£ 1.95	£ 11.71
31.10.2019	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 90.54	£ 9.11	£ 99.65
31.10.2019	*	CSE Electrical Ltd	Supply and fit 4 x LED emergency lighting units	£ 504.00	£ 100.80	£ 604.80
31.10.2019	*	Able Group	Repair damaged light switch in garage	£ 65.00	£ 13.00	£ 78.00
01.11.2019	DD	Water Plus	Water services Parkers Farm (4083868280)	£ 14.88		£ 14.88
01.11.2019	DD	Screwfix Direct Ltd.	Cement, limestone and sand	£ 19.26	£ 3.86	£ 23.12
01.11.2019	*	CJ Auto Service	MOT and full service ND58 BZR	£ 391.54	£ 68.32	£ 459.86
04.11.2019	DD	Legal and General	Ill Health Liability Insurance (inc. 'sweep-up' amount)	£ 483.83		£ 483.83
06.11.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 120.83	£ 24.15	£ 144.98
07.11.2019	*	November wages	Wages total this month (11 staff - including final wages and holiday pay for 1 employee)	£ 14,437.01		£14,437.01
11.11.2019	DD	BNP Paribas	Photocopier rental 10/11/201 to 09/02/2020	£ 343.00	£ 68.60	£ 411.60
12.11.2019	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 18.34		£ 18.34
12.11.2019	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Contributions (E'ee £757.53 E'er £2,796.95)	£ 3,554.48		£ 3,554.48
12.11.2019	*	HMRC	Tax (£1,379.80) and NI (£2,131.83)	£ 3,511.63		£ 3,511.63
12.11.2019	CHQ	Post Office Ltd	Vehicle Tax ND09 VNL	£ 260.00		£ 260.00
12.11.2019	CHQ	Post Office Ltd	Vehicle Tax ND58 BZR	£ 260.00		£ 260.00
13.11.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 65.83	£ 13.17	£ 79.00
13.11.2019	*	Telesis Ltd	Deposit for handsets for new phone system	£ 620.00	£ 124.00	£ 744.00
15.11.2019	*	Regal Disposables	Refuse sacks x 30 boxes and 3 x boxes paper hand tow	£ 361.38	£ 72.28	£ 433.66
15.11.2019	*	Arco	PPE - safety boots (JW)	£ 38.97	£ 7.79	£ 46.76
15.11.2019	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 40.40		£ 40.40
18.11.2019	*	CJ Auto Service	Brake test and fluid change and door weld NH57 CZV	£ 257.06	£ 51.41	£ 308.47
18.11.2019	*	CJ Auto Service	ND09 VNL - full service and MOT (inc new brake pads/di	£ 977.83	£ 169.53	£ 1,147.36
20.11.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 178.05	£ 35.61	£ 213.66
21.11.2019	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	IT support, backups, internet services (3 x inv.)	£ 113.60	£ 22.72	£ 136.32
25.11.2019	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 8.51	£ 0.43	£ 8.94
25.11.2019	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4032774195)	£ 68.03		£ 68.03
27.11.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 61.14	£ 12.23	£ 73.37
27.11.2019	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	£ 71.47	£ 14.29	£ 85.76
28.11.2019	*	Birchwood Acts	Start-up grant	£ 500.00		£ 500.00
28.11.2019	*	Birchwood Repair Café	Refund of payment made to Birchwood TC in error	£ 25.00		£ 25.00
28.11.2019	*	Telesis Ltd	Balance for supply/installation/set-up of new phone syst	£ 930.00	£ 186.00	£ 1,116.00
29.11.2019	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 35.82	£ 7.17	£ 42.99
02.12.2019	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 14.88		£ 14.88
03.12.2019	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 59.51	£ 8.90	£ 68.41
04.12.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 148.45	£ 26.69	£ 175.14
04.12.2019	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 170.02		£ 170.02
05.12.2019	*	E Smith and Son (nursery)	Winter bedding plants for planters and compost	£ 163.50	£ 32.70	£ 196.20
06.12.2019	*	December wages	Wages total this month (10 staff)	£ 12,679.74		£ 12,679.74

Payments of Account since 6th December 2019

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
11.12.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 130.85	£ 26.16	£ 157.01
12.12.2019	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 18.34		£ 18.34
16.12.2019	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 40.20		£ 40.20
16.12.2019	*	Aqua Solutions	Annual gas installation check/replace 1 radiator thermostat	£ 87.99		£ 87.99
16.12.2019	*	ESI	Check fault on fire alarm system/ replace EOL capacitor	£ 55.00	£ 11.00	£ 66.00
16.12.2019	*	Duttons	Hedge-trimmer grease tube	£ 27.50	£ 5.50	£ 33.00
16.12.2019	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	2 x Dell Optiplex 3060 Micro Form Factor PCs with Intel Core i5-8500T (processor) 8GB RAM (memory) 256GB SSD (hard drive) and 2 x Windows 10 Pro licences	£ 1,367.94	£ 273.59	£ 1,641.53
16.12.2019	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	SD card reader adapter	£ 5.80	£ 1.16	£ 6.96
16.12.2019	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	IT support, backups, internet services (3 x inv.)	£ 113.60	£ 22.72	£ 136.32
18.12.2019	DD	Npower	Electricity - Parkers Farm	£ 177.53	£ 8.88	£ 186.41
18.12.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 67.88	£ 13.57	£ 81.45
18.12.2019	*	HMRC	Tax (£1,327.40) and NI (£2,453.56)	£ 3,780.96		£ 3,780.96
19.12.2019	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 7.56	£ 0.38	£ 7.94
19.12.2019	*	Office Depot	Stationery	£ 41.59	£ 8.32	£ 49.91
19.12.2019	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Contributions (E'ee £757.54 E'er £2,775.44)	£ 3,532.98		£ 3,532.98
23.12.2019	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4032774195)	£ 68.03		£ 68.03
27.12.2019	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	£ 55.20	£ 11.04	£ 66.24
27.12.2019	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 205.76	£ 41.16	£ 246.92
27.12.2019	*	Society of Local Council Clerks	Annual renewal fee	£ 254.00		£ 254.00
31.12.2019	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 33.96	£ 6.79	£ 40.75
02.01.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 14.88		£ 14.88
02.01.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 63.33	£ 12.67	£ 76.00
02.01.2020	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones (Dec 2019)	£ 44.51	£ 8.90	£ 53.41
06.01.2020	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 170.02		£ 170.02
06.01.2020	DD	Npower	Gas - Parkers Farm	£ 382.28	£ 19.11	£ 401.39
07.01.2020	*	January wages	Wages total this month (10 staff)	£ 12,846.89		£ 12,846.89
08.01.2020	*	Cllr Reeves	Part Chair's Allowance	£ 400.00		£ 400.00
09.01.2020	*	F McDonald	Petty cash float reimbursement	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
13.01.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 18.34		£ 18.34
14.01.2020	*	Office Depot	Stationery (previously out of stock items) x 2 invoices	£ 7.34	£ 1.46	£ 8.80

Payments for approval at the January 2020 meeting

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
all tbc	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 170.02		£ 170.02
	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	tbc		
	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 14.88		£ 14.88
	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 18.34		£ 18.34
	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4032774195)	£ 68.03		£ 68.03
	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 39.60		£ 39.60
	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	IT support, backups, internet services (3 x inv.)	£ 113.60	£ 22.72	£ 136.32
	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones (Jan 2020)	£ 44.51	£ 8.90	£ 53.41
	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 9.84	£ 0.49	£ 10.33
	DD	Complete Roofing Systems Ltd	Gutter and downspout cleaning Parkers Farm/Barn and BYCC	£ 995.00	£ 199.00	£ 1,194.00
	*	James Todd & Co.	Quarterly payroll service fees	£ 192.00	£ 38.40	£ 230.40
	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 205.76	£ 41.16	£ 246.92
	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Contributions (E'ee £xxx E'er £xxx)	tbc		
	*	HMRC	Tax (£1,372.20) and NI (£2,129.75)	£ 3,501.95		£ 3,501.95
	*	Warrington Borough Council	Recharge for tyre repair NH57 CZV via Lodge Tyres	tbc		
	*	Terrain	Health & Safety Consultants (Feb 2020 - Jan 2021) - tbc	£ 1,500.00	£ 300.00	£ 1,800.00
	*	Warrington Borough Council	2019 Flower meadows	£ 626.37	£ 125.27	£ 751.64
	DD	Npower	Electricity - Parkers Farm	tbc		
	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 34.56	£ 6.91	£ 41.47
	*	Arco	Safety Boots (SJ and IS)	£ 98.00	£ 19.60	£ 117.60
	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office van)	£ 72.35	£ 14.47	£ 86.82