

**MINUTES OF THE MAY PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING OF
BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD ONLINE ON TUESDAY 12TH MAY 2020**

- Present:** Councillor Reeves in the Chair
Councillors Atkin, Breslin, D. Ellis, J. Ellis and Nelson
Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk – Mrs C. Caddock
Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe
1 guest from another Local Council
- Apologies:** Councillors Fitzsimmons, M. Hearldon (dispensation) and T. Hearldon
Councillor Bowden was unable to attend due to urgent Borough Council business.

022/20-21 **FEBRUARY 2020 PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor D. Ellis proposed, Councillor Atkin seconded, and it was resolved that: The Minutes of the Part I Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting held on 25th February 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 interest or prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when the item is reached.

*Councillors Breslin, D. Ellis and J. Ellis– Birchwood Youth & Community Centre Committee
Councillors Atkin, Breslin, D. Ellis and Nelson– Birchwood Carnival Committee*

023/20-21 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule – (see pages 28 and 29 below).

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

PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL ITEMS

024/20-21 **BIRCHWOOD YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE (BYCC)**

(a) **Water Bills**

Councillor D. Ellis said that BYCC is closed at present, so there are no ‘outgoings’. He is, however, currently in correspondence with the water company as he believes that BYCC is being overcharged. They are being charged as a Band 3 property, which is for properties with up to 1,000 sqm of surface water drainage. As a large area of the BYCC footprint is the garden, Councillor D. Ellis believes that they should only be charged as a Band 1. Their Band 3 charges are currently around £750 per year; if they were on Band 1 it would be around £135 per year – a significant difference.

Councillor D. Ellis wonders if there might be some duplication of billing with BYCC and the Town Council land (as BYCC is adjacent to the Town Council offices). He asked if Members would agree to the Town Council allowing him, as a Trustee of BYCC, to see our billing information, to try to find out whether BYCC is being overcharged.

Members are happy for BYCC to be given access to the Town Council's water bills.

Action Clerk's office to arrange for water bill information to be copied to Councillor D. Ellis.

(b) **Lease Agreement**

Councillor D. Ellis reported that BYCC is currently corresponding with the Charity Commission, in order to obtain charitable status. One of the items that requires confirmation for them is the existing/ongoing lease arrangements that BYCC has with Birchwood Town Council, which owns the land that BYCC stands on. The Town Council currently charges a peppercorn rent of £1 per year for the lease of the land to BYCC.

The BAFO reminded Members that this was initially discussed in October 2019 (as recorded in Minute 203/19-20 (c)):

"BYCC Leasehold - The BAFO gave Members a brief history on the formal leasehold arrangements regarding the land that BYCC is situated on. The current lease arrangements run out at the end of November 2019.

The BAFO said that the Town Council will remain as landlords and there are no plans in place at present to increase the peppercorn rent of £1 a year that we currently charge. However, he proposed that a new formal lease arrangement should be put in place and that this should be done using the services of a local solicitor.

*Members **unanimously resolved** that a new lease be drawn up by a solicitor.*

***Action** BAFO to arrange for a new lease arrangement between the Town Council and BYCC trustees to be drawn up by a solicitor and signed by both parties."*

The BAFO confirmed, that, as detailed above, the Town Council has agreed and is committed to producing a new long-term lease via a solicitor, which will give the Birchwood Youth and Community Centre continued long-term security. This process has been affected substantially by the current lockdown situation caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Members **unanimously resolved** that the BYCC existing arrangements and permissions will remain in place for the interim period, until the new formal lease agreement can be put in place with Birchwood Town Council, for a new long-term lease.

Action BAFO to continue to make arrangements with a solicitor, as soon as possible (taking into account the current circumstances) for a formal lease agreement to be put in place and signed by all parties.

Action BAFO to write a letter to BYCC confirming the above agreements, to enable BYCC to continue with their application for Charity status; it will also assist with an application by BYCC to the water company, to try to reduce their surface water drainage fees.

The BAFO asked Members to note that a structural inspection report (damp survey) has been received following the survey which was undertaken on 9th March 2020. The invoice for £975.00 plus VAT has been paid, following consultation with, and approval from, the Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of the Council. (The survey was copied to Members in papers.)

The BAFO stated that the survey makes no reference to the tiled roof on the main building, except for the removal of moss from the roof over the mess room to the rear of the property. There seems to be a very different position in this survey compared to the original specifications from the first survey carried out.

One example is that the latest survey refers to the need for ‘mechanical ventilation’ and ‘mechanically changing natural air’. However, we do not yet understand what this entails, or what the costs might be. It might be the installation of extractor fans which, because it would entail making an adjustment in the fabric of the building, would require listed building consent.

The BAFO said that we seem to be at a ‘start again point’. There do not appear to be any significant structural defects noted in the latest survey.

The Clerk said that we do not know what our budget will be next year, especially as the Coronavirus might have a knock-on effect on our precept requirements. We cannot currently even make a ‘best-guess’.

The BAFO stated that we do not know where we currently stand with a contractor who was going to undertake remedial work inside the building to rectify some damp issues in the downstairs office (following work originally undertaken by his company) with some additional work in the community room, and in the hallway to the skirting boards.

The Clerk said that if we leave it too long, he might consider that it is now outside of the timeframe for remedial work to be undertaken, under the terms of the guarantee.

The BAFO said that the work to replace mortar, e.g. around windows, does need to be undertaken in the not too distant future.

The BAFO suggested that he could start making enquiries, initially to understand what the requirements would be regarding ventilation issues in the building.

This was **unanimously resolved** by those Members present.

Action BAFO to start making enquiries relating to issues raised in the latest damp survey.

The Clerk has been liaising with Christine Carruthers at WBC regarding the potential next steps. We are unable to speak to CUBE at present as their staff have been furloughed.

Ms Carruthers said that it would make sense to withdraw the current application as the Town Council would not be implementing what it had applied for, following advice from the structural engineer. Instead, re-applying once a decision has been made as to how to proceed based on the result of the damp survey.

The BAFO asked Members if they are happy for the previous planning application to be formally withdrawn.

Members **unanimously resolved** that the current application be formally withdrawn.

Action Clerks’ office to inform the Planning Department that the Town Council wishes to withdraw the current planning application.

026/20-21 **CHESHIRE PENSION FUND**

To note that the Clerk has been submitting the monthly figures, as now required, in the new Monthly Interface (MI) format. We still must submit the monthly Pension Return Form, in addition to the MI scheme figures.

027/20-21 **PROPOSED CHANGE OF PAYROLL PROVIDER**

To note that the process of changing our payroll provider and contracting our payroll services out to WBC has been postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

028/20-21 **STANDING ORDERS (SOs)** *(Circulated to Members prior to the cancelled March meeting.)*

The BAFO asked Members to consider, for approval, the draft revised SOs that have been slightly amended, with Members' comments, since they were initially circulated at the February meeting.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Breslin, **seconded** by Councillor J. Ellis and **unanimously resolved** by those Members present that the amended SOs be approved.

Action Clerk's office to publish the amended SOs on the Town Council's website.

029/20-21 **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (FRs)** *(Also circulated prior to the cancelled March meeting.)*

The BAFO asked Members to consider, for approval, the draft revised FRs that have been slightly amended, with Members' comments, since they were initially circulated at the February meeting.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Atkin, **seconded** by Councillor Breslin and **unanimously resolved** by those Members present that the amended FRs be approved.

Action Clerk's office to publish the amended FRs on the Town Council's website.

030/20-21 **ANNUAL RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW (FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL PROCESSES)/ANNUAL REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROLS (APPENDIX C)**

The BAFO asked Members to consider, for approval, the draft revised Annual Risk Assessment Review (Financial and Operational Processes)/Annual Review of Internal Controls (Appendix C) (see pages 30 to 39 below) that have been slightly amended, since they were initially circulated to, and considered by Members.

Following further discussion, it was **proposed** by Councillor Breslin, **seconded** by Councillor D. Ellis and **unanimously resolved** by Members that the amended Appendix C be approved.

031/20-21 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY / DIGNITY AT WORK/ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY** *(Also circulated prior to the cancelled March meeting.)*

(a) At the February meeting, Members were asked to consider whether the Town Council wishes to adopt a formal Equality and Diversity Policy.

Members requested that some minor changes be made to the proposed model policy – which was done, and the document was circulated to Members in their (cancelled) March meeting papers.

Some Members had already indicated via email that they are happy with the proposed changes.

The BAFO asked whether any other Members wish to comment, and if the Council wishes to adopt the policy with amendments.

It was **proposed** by Councillor D. Ellis, **seconded** by Councillor J. Ellis and **unanimously resolved** by those Members present that the Equality and Diversity Policy be approved.

- (b) The BAFO asked Members to consider, for approval, the proposed Dignity at Work/Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy, which is referred to within the Equality and Diversity Policy (also circulated in the March meeting papers).

It was **proposed** by Councillor Atkin, **seconded** by Councillor Breslin and **unanimously resolved** that the Dignity at Work/Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy be approved.

032/20-21 **EMERGENCY LIGHTING AND PAT TESTING**

To note that the replacement of the emergency lights that failed their three-hour soak test (with led versions) and the annual PAT testing, was scheduled to be undertaken on 2nd April 2020. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic the replacement of the emergency lighting (which requires two people to work together) will be rescheduled for a future date. The PAT testing will now take place on 9th June 2020.

033/20-21 **NOTICE BOARDS**

To note that the notice board ordered for Parkers Farm was being held by the supplier until we were ready to take delivery. We have now asked for it to be delivered.

034/20-21 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

Councillor Atkin confirmed that at the last meeting of the Carnival Committee, the decision was taken, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, to cancel the 2020 Carnival. He added that, as long as there were no non-returnable deposits paid, that there will be no costs incurred.

We understand that the grant award from BTC for the hire of the marquee, table, chairs and portaloos will therefore no longer be required for the 2020 carnival.

035/20-21 **STAFF TRAINING**

To note that the two staff training courses (brushcutter refresher and ride-on-mower) booked for 18th and 19th March 2020 (as agreed by Members at the February meeting) have been postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. These will be re-arranged for future dates.

036/20-21 **INSURANCE**

To note the renewal fee for our annual insurance with Zurich, our current providers, to cover from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, was paid on 1st April 2020 (£5,616.08).

037/20-21 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING / NOTING**

- (a) To note that, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Shopping Centre management has reluctantly decided that they do not want to have the hanging baskets for the 2020 season. There is no guarantee that there will be the staff available to maintain/water the baskets due to COVID-19.

This will reduce the income to the Town Council for 2020/2021 by approximately £2,800.00. However, resources that would have been spent during the installation, maintenance and removal of the baskets can be otherwise deployed.

The Clerk reported that the flower nursery had already made a financial commitment regarding plants that we had ordered and they had already purchased for the baskets before the lockdown began. There will therefore be a payment of £213.70 +VAT, plus the cost of compost for these plants, which can be used in the BTC planters. The shopping centre has agreed to share the cost of the plants, if there are too many for BTC to use. They will use the extra in their flower beds.

- (b) To note that various items of enhanced PPE have been purchased to protect the staff from dust/particulates whilst emptying bins, litter picking, removing flytipping, etc. as well as some 85% alcohol hand gels, in response to the potential additional hazards during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Officers were asked whether the Maintenance Team had access to plastic visors.

The Clerk said they did not have visors. They do have face masks and safety glasses, disposable gloves, hand sanitisers, anti-bacterial wipes, and there are two half-mask respirators currently available (we are awaiting the receipt of two more). Flexible working has been put in place in order for the team to stagger start and finish times, which gives more opportunity for social distancing. They are taking their breaks at home and have their 'own' van to work from – which they have the responsibility for cleaning at the end of every day.

The Clerk said that if Members were happy to authorise spending for plastic visors, we could purchase some of those as well.

Members **resolved** that plastic visors could be purchased for the Maintenance Team.

Action Clerk's office to purchase some basic plastic visors.

NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

038/20-21 **BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION**

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account period 1st April 2019 – 29th February 2020 and 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020.

The payroll figure for January 2020 was £12,846.89 (10 staff) February 2020 was £12,696.14 (10 staff) and £12,703.60 for March 2020 (10 staff).

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

The April 2020 reconciliation will be circulated to Members as soon as possible (awaiting receipt of Nationwide account statement for completion).

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

039/20-21 **END OF YEAR INTERNAL AUDIT**

To note that we have asked our internal auditor, John Henry, what the situation will be with regard to him being able to attend our offices to undertake our end of year internal audit (if the country is still in 'lockdown').

Due to lockdown, John has set up a remote year end internal audit option for councils that have had an interim audit of income, expenditure and payroll (which we have). We need to send to him documents on a year-end checklist of information that he sent to us (in the papers for information) which is quite brief. We just need to upload one folder with all the information or individual folders or individual documents to his secure file sharing facility. We need to have completed all the figures for the AGAR to send to John (this will be completed by the BAFO).

We will need a signed copy of the AGAR from John, with a 'wet' signature on it (once he has approved the figures) to send to our external auditor, and have the relevant Minute numbers available from Town Council meeting at which this is formally approved by Council. If possible, we would like to bring this to the June 2020 meeting for approval.

040/20-21 **EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR END 2019/2020**

- (a) To note that the Government has published regulations extending accounts and audit deadlines in England for 2020.

The period during which public rights of inspection may be exercised is now a period of 30 days commencing no later than Tuesday 1 September 2020. The rule that the period must include the first ten working days in July is disapplied. This in turn means that sections 1 and 2 of the unaudited AGAR must be approved and published on a freely accessible website, along with a notice advertising public rights, no later than Monday 31 August 2020. External auditors will provide templates as they have in previous years. Councils can approve and publish, and advertise public rights, at an earlier date.

There is no change to the procedure for approval and signature of sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, so there must still be a Full Council meeting (which can be held remotely if the Council has procedures in place for this and the regulations permitting this are still in force). The signatures must, however, be 'wet signatures'.

- (b) To note that the preparation of figures for the end of year audit is almost complete.

041/20-21 **CHESHIRE PENSION FUND**

To note the receipt of some forms, to be completed and returned, to confirm authorised signatories regarding communication with Cheshire Pension Fund. Also received – an Employer Questionnaire and a Discretion Policy Template.

Members were asked whether they wish to continue with two signatories (the Clerk and BAFO) or do they wish to add the Deputy Clerk as a third potential signatory?

It was **proposed** by Councillor Atkin, **seconded** by Councillor Breslin and **unanimously resolved** for the Deputy Clerk to be added as a third signatory.

Action Clerk's office to confirm authorised signatories with Cheshire Pension Fund.

042/20-21 **GRANT APPLICATION** (*held over from cancelled March 2020 meeting*)

The Church of the Transfiguration – in relation to the EAT Community Café.

This was submitted prior to lockdown - they are asking for a £150 grant to support this volunteer led lunch club that is open to the whole community. Opening the café over the summer months will also help to support vulnerable families in the community.

The Clerk stated that, given the current circumstances, it is not certain that this will now take place.

Councillor Nelson said that the café is unlikely to open, but that they will probably continue with their community work somehow, supporting vulnerable people. She mentioned that they might work with Churches Together to put something in its place.

The Clerk said that, as we would normally ask for a grant to be returned, if it was awarded and then could not be used for the purpose for which it was given, it would be inappropriate to award a grant, only to ask for it back.

Members discussed the proposal. They **unanimously resolved** to support the EAT Community Café **in principal**, if a suitable 'event' that we know will go ahead could be identified.

Action Clerk's office to liaise with the applicant regarding the above.

043/20-21 **STAFFING COSTS (MAINTENANCE TEAM AND CARETAKER)**

At the December 2019 meeting the Clerk asked Members to note the 3.3% increase to £9.30 per hour in the National Living Wage – as set by the Living Wage Foundation. Members resolved that they would like the Town Council to continue to mirror the National Living Wage, from 1st April 2020.

The BAFO asked Members to formally ratify this resolution, to enable increases to be implemented (backdated) from the April 2020 wage cycle, re: the start of the new financial year.

Councillor J. Ellis **proposed**, Councillor Atkin **seconded** and it was **unanimously resolved** that the 3.3% increase be applied to the Maintenance Team and Caretaker's wages (back dated to 1st April 2020).

The BAFO respectfully informed Members that regarding a proposed salary increase for other local government employees - a revised offer has been tabled by the Local Government employers to the Unions. This is for:

- A 2.75% increase from 1st April 2020 and
- An additional day's leave, which would increase the minimum entitlement to 22 days

However, the Unions have said that they are very disappointed that this still falls short of their claim and that this needs further discussion.

Members **resolved** to await the final outcome of the discussions before further considering potential wage increases for Officers.

Action Clerk's office to liaise with our payroll service provider regarding the above.

044/20-21 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING / NOTING**

- (a) To note that a VAT claim for March 2020 (£751.73) was made to HMRC and was paid on 08/04/2020.
- (b) To note that the latest 'Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration 12th Edition' will be published on 20/09/2020, price £149.99. Due to time constraints, this has been ordered under delegated powers.
- (c) Received – Business Rates bill for 2020/2021 - the Town Council does not have to pay business rates.
- (d) Received – notification from O2 that the monthly tariff on the mobile phone Business Essentials tariff is increasing by 56p per month excluding VAT (to £21.56 plus VAT).
- (f) To inform Members that, due to time constraints, the MSP Renewal proposal for Birchwood Town Council from Yellowbus, our specialist IT providers/consultants was approved, under delegated powers, in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of the Council. The contract was revised to remove the hardware disposal element for the time being.

The BAFO asked Members to formally ratify this decision.

It was **proposed** by Councillor J. Ellis, **seconded** by Councillor Breslin and **unanimously resolved** that the MSP Renewal proposal for Birchwood Town Council from Yellowbus be accepted.

- (g) To note that, as our 'usual' garage is currently closed, in consultation with and agreement of the Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of the Council, we asked WBC to quote for and undertake repairs that are needed on our vehicles, in order to enable staff to be able to work in separate vans, to ensure social distancing.

The Clerk said that the difficulty in having WBC undertake any work on our vehicles, is that they cannot always give us a time frame during which we will get them back. If any of their vehicles develop a fault, they take priority over ours.

- (h) Website and Domain - We received an invoice regarding the renewal of the Joomla! CMS Support for one year (website) plus Shared Server Hosting Account on a Cloud Platform in the UK for one year - 2 GB Disk Space. The total amount is £720.00. In consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of the Council, this was renewed, with a review being undertaken in the next 12 months.
- (i) Received – Employer Bulletin – April 2020.
- (j) Received – details of when a Covid-19 related incident is required to be reported to RIDDOR.
- (k) Received – reminder of some first-aid refresher training that is due later in the year for a member of staff (dependent of the Covid-19 situation at that time).
- (l) The Clerk reported that the precept had been received into our Nationwide account.

- (m) The Clerk informed Members that we have bought one licence to enable us to hold Zoom meetings, that are longer than 40 minutes. This is a month to month contract.

Members asked about the purchase of webcams for Officers, as the Clerk and Deputy Clerk do not have them and were 'present' via headsets and microphones. They said they would prefer to see the Officers as well.

Members were also asked whether they would consider the purchase of a laptop, which could be used by any Officer at home, should the need arise. It could also serve as a third computer at work.

The Chair said that he thinks it would be justifiable to spend funds on these items.

Councillor J. Ellis **proposed**, Councillor Breslin **seconded** and it was **unanimously agreed** that the Clerk's office should look into options for webcams and a laptop and purchase them, if reasonably priced.

Action Clerk's office to look into the options for webcams and a laptop, and to purchase them under delegated powers.

045/20-21 **CORONAVIRUS**

- (a) To note that we have sought out information from various sources for guidance in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic and how it may affect the operations of the Town Council.
- (b) To note the receipt of news releases from WBC regarding Coronavirus in Warrington.
- (c) To note that community room bookings were cancelled from 20th March 2020, in order to minimise the potential risk to staff re: Covid-19. This will have a minimal impact on our income (approximately £30 per month at recent regular usage rates).
- (d) To note that all staff have been given guidance as issued by various sources, including the NHS and Public Health England. They receive updated information as it is issued.
- (e) To note that, in light of the pandemic, Officers have updated our Business Continuity Plan (a draft was copied to Members in their March papers). This document is in an ongoing working draft format.
- (f) To note that, although we have business continuity insurance, which includes insurance for notifiable diseases, as Coronavirus is new, it is not specifically listed in our insurance documents, therefore we have been advised by our insurers that we are not covered if the Town Council is financially adversely affected by the new Coronavirus.
- (g) To note that WBC are not offering the wildflower meadow schemes for the 2020 season. This will mean there will be an approximate 'saving' to BTC for this year of £630 +VAT.
- (h) To consider that there may be some potential financial implications to the Town Council's budget for 2021/2022 due to the currently unknown effect that the Coronavirus pandemic might have regarding the economic impact on our residents and community; specifically in relation to Council Tax Support Allowance (CTSA).

From 2019/2020 the reduction in the tax base has been passed down to Local Councils. Residents in receipt of CTSA are exempt from paying Council Tax. Each Parish's tax base is reduced by the number of Band D equivalents within that Parish related to CTSA. There could potentially, therefore, be a negative financial impact if the numbers of people claiming CTSA increases.

- (i) Following the reduction, in March 2020, of interest rates by the Bank of England to 0.1% we have received details of interest rate changes to both our Co-operative Bank Corporate PSR and Nationwide Instant Saver accounts. The Nationwide Instant Saver account rate will reduce from 0.60% to 0.05%. The Co-operative Bank Corporate PSR was 0.12% and is now NIL.
- (j) To note that additional tech (headsets/software) has been purchased to enable Officers to host and 'attend' remote Council meetings during the 'lockdown'.
- (k) **Council Operations**
 - (1) To note that Officers have been working mainly from home. They have visited the office, separately, usually once a week, to check for post, to undertake the weekly checks of the defibrillator, fire alarms and emergency lighting, and to pick up/drop of any documents, stationery, etc. that are required to continue their work at home.
 - (2) To note that maintenance operations have, wherever possible, continued, taking into consideration the health and welfare of both staff and residents and adapting work and working patterns to enable social distancing. This has been, and is, under continuous review. Additional PPE has been purchased in order to protect staff.
 - (3) To note that due to the 'lockdown', there may be some small financial saving during this period on utilities and incidentals, and fuel for the vans (as only 2 vans maximum a day were going out for a period of time).

046/20-21 **FEBRUARY 2020 PART II FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Breslin proposed, Councillor Atkin seconded, and it was resolved that: The Minutes of the Part II Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting held on 25th February 2020 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

There were no additional Part II items discussed at tonight's meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.05 pm

Payment of Accounts:						
Resolved: that the following payments be approved as the residual February 2020 and part March 2020 accounts						
Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
25.02.2020	*	Williams Garage	Supply and replace tyre HK64 NNM	£ 73.75	£ 14.75	£ 88.50
26.02.2020	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	£ 58.25	£ 11.65	£ 69.90
26.02.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 167.26	£ 33.45	£ 200.71
27.02.2020	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 32.72	£ 6.54	£ 39.26
02.03.2020	*	Millhouse Training	Ride on Mower training x 4 staff + Lantra Reg.	£ 659.00	£ 131.80	£ 790.80
02.03.2020	*	Millhouse Training	Brushcutter refresher training x 6 staff + Lantra Reg.	£ 721.00	£ 144.20	£ 865.20
02.03.2020	*	CJ Auto Service	ND58 BZR - Renew d/s lower suspension and track	£ 249.22	£ 49.84	£ 299.06
			rod end and both front tyres inc. tracking	£ -		
02.03.2020	DD	Screwfix Direct (B&Q)	Cement/bucket/sand/pointer pack	£ 17.66	£ 3.53	£ 21.19
02.03.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 14.88		£ 14.88
03.03.2020	*	F. McDonald	Reimbursement for petty cash float	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
03.03.2020	*	ESI	Supply/Commissioning of Diglair transmission equipment	£ 200.00	£ 40.00	£ 240.00
			to Intruder Alarm & annual remote monitoring fee to 31/12/20			
04.03.2020	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 170.02		£ 170.02
04.03.2020	*	C Caddock	Reimbursement for hand gel orders: Aspil Safety	£ 53.44	£ 10.68	£ 64.12
			and Excalibur Hygiene Ltd (t/a Hand-cleaners.co.uk)	£ 105.85	£ 21.17	£ 127.02
04.03.2020	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 44.51	£ 8.90	£ 53.41
06.03.2020	*	March wages	Wages total this month (10 staff)	£12,703.60		£12,703.60
10.03.2020	DD	Public Works Loan Board	Loan repayment re: PW487017	£11,040.00		£11,040.00
10.03.2020	DD	Npower	Electricity - Parkers Farm	£ 237.70	£ 11.89	£ 249.59
10.03.2020	*	F McDonald	Petty cash reimbursement	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
10.03.2020	*	C Caddock	Contribution to glasses - vdu work	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
11.03.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 188.67	£ 37.73	£ 226.40
12.03.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 51.01		£ 51.01
12.03.2020	*	Arco	PeltorLumberjackCombiUnit - head/ears/eye protection (£ 39.94	£ 7.99	£ 47.93
12.03.2020	*	Arco	Safety boots (PT)	£ 49.00	£ 9.80	£ 58.80
16.03.2020	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Contributions (E'ee £757.41 E'er £2,618.62)	£ 3,376.03		£ 3,376.03
16.03.2020	*	HMRC	Tax (£1,555.80) and NI (£2,129.75)	£ 3,685.55		£ 3,685.55
16.03.2020	*	Uniqwin	Annual key holder charge	£ 375.95	£ 75.19	£ 451.14
16.03.2020	*	Duttons Mowerworld	Connector pipe x 4 for Stihl blowers	£ 75.80	£ 15.16	£ 90.96
16.03.2020	*	Office Depot	Stationery	£ 62.32	£ 12.46	£ 74.78
16.03.2020	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	IT support, backups, internet services (3 x inv.)	£ 113.60	£ 22.72	£ 136.32
16.03.2020	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 40.00		£ 40.00
18.03.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 130.72	£ 26.14	£ 156.86
19.03.2020	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 10.20	£ 0.48	£ 10.68
23.03.2020	*	CJ Auto Service	ND09 VNL - install new d/s window switch	£ 81.77	£ 16.35	£ 98.12

Payments of Account since 23rd March 2020

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
27.03.2020	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	£ 57.46	£ 11.49	£ 68.95
30.03.2020	*	CMIUK Visual Safety Ltd	First aid supplies/disposable gloves	£ 40.50	£ 8.10	£ 48.60
30.03.2020	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Contributions (E'ee £758.12 E'er £2,621.13)	£ 3,379.25		£ 3,379.25
30.03.2020	*	Office Depot	Stationery (previously out of stock items)	£ 2.28	£ 0.46	£ 2.74
30.03.2020	*	HMRC	Tax (£1,358.40) and NI (£2,132.85)	£ 3,491.25		£ 3,491.25
31.03.2020	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 77.92	£ 15.58	£ 93.50
31.03.2020	*	James Todd & Co. Ltd	3 monthly payroll service charges	£ 198.00	£ 39.60	£ 237.60
01.04.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 14.88		£ 14.88
01.04.2020	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 44.51	£ 8.90	£ 53.41
01.04.2020	*	Warrington Borough Council	Third of four (annual) payments for Locking Stumps by-election	£ 1,322.34		£ 1,322.34
01.04.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 26.90	£ 5.38	£ 32.28
01.04.2020	*	Zurich Municipal	Annual insurance (inc. £ 615.93 IPT)	£ 5,748.59		£ 5,748.59
06.04.2020	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 170.02		£ 170.02
07.04.2020	*	C Caddock reimb. 3 x items:	(UK Meds) - FFP2/N95 face mask - PPE	£ 32.98		£ 32.98
		(total £95.32)	(Amazon) - 3 x Sundstrom SR5 10 P3 face mask filters	£ 19.56	£ 3.90	£ 23.46
			(The Safety Supply Company) - 3 pairs 3M P3 face mask filters	£ 32.40	£ 6.48	£ 38.88
07.04.2020	*	Blackett-Ord Conservation Engineering	Conservation engineering services - damp survey	£ 975.00	£ 195.00	£ 1,170.00
07.04.2020	*	April wages:	10 staff	£ 12,578.79		£12,578.79
15.04.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 51.01		£ 51.01
15.04.2020	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 41.80		£ 41.80
16.04.2020	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	IT support, backups, internet services (3 x inv.)	£ 113.60	£ 22.72	£ 136.32
16.04.2020	DD	Npower	Gas Parkers Farm	£ 486.64	£ 24.33	£ 510.97
21.04.2020	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 9.80	£ 0.49	£ 10.29
23.04.2020	*	Reimburse CC re: UK Meds	50 x surgical face masks (with discount off gross price)	£ 38.40	£ 7.08	£ 45.48
23.04.2020	*	Reimburse CC re: Microsoft	2 x Microsoft Lifechat LX-3000 headsets	£ 49.98	£ 10.00	£ 59.98

Payments for approval at the May 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	£ 57.79	£ 11.56	£ 69.35
	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	tbc		
	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 51.01		£ 51.01
	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4032774195)	£ 68.08		£ 68.08
	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 39.20		£ 39.20
	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 (Feb 2020)	£ 45.62	£ 9.12	£ 54.74
	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 8.86	£ 0.44	£ 9.30
	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 188.67	£ 37.73	£ 266.40
	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 78.32	£ 15.66	£ 93.98
	*	F McDonald	Petty Cash reimbursement	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
30.03.2020	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Contributions (E'ee £758.35 E'er £2,724.03)	£ 3,482.38		£ 3,482.38
30.03.2020	*	HMRC	Tax (£1,302.60) and NI (£1,973.37)	£ 3,275.97		£ 3,275.97
	*	UK Safety Store (reimburse CC)	100 disposable face masks	£ 93.00	£ 18.60	£ 111.60
	*	Wynchco Solutions	Website and Domain services - one year renewal	£ 720.00		£ 720.00
	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 59.40	£ 11.88	£ 71.28
	*	Arco	2 x reusable half mask respirator	£ 30.92	£ 6.18	£ 37.10
	*	Eureka	20 x boxes disposable vinyl gloves	£ 173.00	£ 34.60	£ 207.60
	*	Amazon (reimburse CC)	A4 white copier paper 5 x reams	£ 17.49	£ 3.50	£ 20.99
	*	Premium Products 16 Ltd (reimburse CC)	Hammerite paint	£ 18.75	£ 3.75	£ 22.50
	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 40.66	£ 8.13	£ 48.79
	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 83.59	£ 16.72	£ 100.31
	*	Matco Direct	Mat maintenance x 3 mats (for 6 months)	£ 194.45	£ 38.89	£ 233.34
	DD	BNP Paribas	Photocopier rental (10/5/2020 to 9/8/2020)	£ 343.00	£ 68.60	£ 411.60

Appendix C

(April 2020)

BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Annual Risk Assessment Review (Financial and Operational Processes)

Risk assessment is a systematic general examination of working conditions, policies and operational procedures together with workplace activities and environmental factors that will enable the Town Council to identify any and all potential inherent risks. The Town Council, based on a recorded assessment, will take all practical and necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the risks, insofar as is practically possible.

This document has been produced to enable Birchwood Town Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps to minimise them.

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT

Subject	Risk(s) identified	Probability 1/3/9	Impact of Risk 1/3/9	Risk Rating	Management/control of Risk	Review/Assess/Revise
Precept	Adequacy of precept in order for the Council to carry out its Statutory duties	1	3	3	<p>To determine the precept amount required, the Town Council regularly receives budget update information monthly.</p> <p>The Town Council plans its expenditure and income requirements over a three-year financial period (detailed income/expenditure) for the forthcoming financial year and an estimated/projected picture for two further financial years. Income is raised only to meet budget needs/adequate cash flow and to raise progressive income for earmarked projects. No money is raised or used just for investment purposes.</p> <p>At the precept meeting Council receives a budget report from the RFO/Deputy RFO, including actual position and projected position to the end of year and indicative figures or costings obtained by the RFO. With this information the Council maps out the required monies for standing costs and projects and applies specific figures to budget headings, the total of which is resolved to be the precept amount to be requested from Warrington Borough Council. The figure is submitted by the Clerk/RFO in writing. The Clerk/RFO informs the Council when the monies are received.</p>	Existing procedure adequate.

Subject	Risk(s) identified	Probability 1/3/9	Impact of Risk 1/3/9	Risk Rating	Management/control of Risk	Review/Assess/ Revise
Financial Records	Inadequate records Financial irregularities	1 1	9 9	9 9	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. Indications/advice of need by internal auditor are included. The Financial Regulations are reviewed annually at the May Council meeting. An additional review was undertaken in March 2020 by BTC, following the updating, by NALC, of their Model Financial Regulations (which the Town Council uses as a basis for its Financial Regulations, with some differences).	Existing procedure adequate. Review the Financial Regulations when necessary.
Bank and banking	Inadequate checks – transactions/transfers/balances Banks mistakes Bank stability/liquidity	1 1 1	3 3 9	3 3 9	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out banking requirements and process instructions. The Council holds two bank accounts to spread risk to meet FSCS compensation claims. Periodic consideration made on bank risks and their viability. Monthly reconciliation.	Existing procedure adequate. Ongoing review of 'banks' standing/risk with Council. Existing procedure adequate.
Reporting and auditing	Information communication	1	3	3	Financial information is a regular agenda item (Finance Report) and discussed/reviewed and approved at each meeting. Detailed financial issues or plans are discussed at a Finance, Audit and Personnel Sub-committee session.	Existing procedures adequate.
Grants	Receipt of grant	1	1	1	Town Council does not presently receive any regular grants.	Procedure would be formed, if required.
Charges-rents / receivable	Payment of rents /room charges	1	1	1	Other than precept income, the Town Council only receives additional regular income for room hire at our Council premises. The level of income from room bookings is negligible and is handled via the Town Council's Facilities Caretaker/Cleaner Officer who agrees room availability and issues invoices and receipts for income relating to room hire. Lettings income is banked speedily once received and checked.	Existing procedure adequate.

Subject	Risk(s) identified	Probability 1/3/9	Impact of Risk 1/3/9	Risk Rating	Management/control of Risk	Review/Assess/ Revise
Grants and support payable	Power to pay Authorisation of Council to pay	1	1	1	All such expenditure goes through the required Council process of approval, minuted and listed accordingly if a payment is made using S137 or other powers of expenditure.	Existing procedure adequate.
Contractor or external work ordering	Work awarded incorrectly.	1	3	3	Normal Town Council practice would be to seek, if possible, more than one quotation, or as set out in Financial Regulations for any substantial work to be undertaken. For major work competitive tenders would be sought. If problems encountered with a contract the Clerk/RFO would investigate the situation and report to the Council.	Detailed rules for procurement procedure are adequate via Financial Regulations.
	Overspend on services.	1	3	3		Include when reviewing Financial Regulations.
Salaries and assoc. costs and invoice payments	Salary paid incorrectly.	1	1	1	All staff appointments are authorised by Council via delegated Clerk/RFO recruitment activities.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Unpaid Tax to Inland Revenue.	1	3	3	Wage/salary payments are made via payroll bureau (currently James Todd & Co.) and in full compliance with HMRC/Pension procedures. Annual pay changes verified by the Chair and thereafter quarterly. Monthly wage figures are reported each month to full Council.	Existing procedure adequate.
	Payment of invoices	1	3	3	Payroll process reviewed/checked by Clerk/RFO and external auditor. All payments are certified by Chair of Council on a monthly basis. The Chair also countersigns monthly a (random) sample of invoice payments made by Officers.	Existing procedure adequate.
Employees	Fraud by staff	1	9	9	Requirements of Fidelity Guarantee insurance adhered to with regards to fraud. Currently £1 million fidelity cover via Zurich. Internal auditor has reporting of fraud responsibility.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Health and safety	1	3	3	Employees are provided with adequate direction, training and safety equipment/PPE needed to undertake their roles. Training log and certificates kept. External specialists used for HR, Health & Safety, Insurance and Fire Risk Assessments. Advice on contractors from Association of Local Councils.	Monitor health and safety requirements and insurance annually.

Subject	Risk(s) identified	Probability 1/3/9	Impact of Risk 1/3/9	Risk Rating	Management/control of Risk	Review/Assess/ Revise
VAT	Reclaiming/charging	1	3	3	The Council has Financial Regulations which set out the requirements. VAT reclaims usually made quarterly. Audited.	Existing procedures adequate
Annual Return	Submit within time limits	1	3	3	Employers Annual Return is completed and submitted within the prescribed time frame by the Clerk/RFO. Annual Return completed and signed by the Council, submitted to internal auditor for completion and signing then checked and sent to external auditor within given time frame.	Existing procedures adequate.
Legal Powers	Illegal activity or payments	1	9	9	All activity and payments within the powers of the Town Council to be resolved at full Council Meetings, including reference to the power used under the Finance section of agenda and Finance report monthly. Checked by internal auditor.	Existing procedures adequate
Minutes/agendas/ Notices Statutory Documents'	Accuracy and legality	1	1	1	Minutes and agenda are produced in the prescribed manner by the Clerk/Deputy Clerk and adhere to the legal requirements.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Business conduct	1	3	3	Minutes are approved and signed at the next Council meeting. Agenda displayed according to legal requirements. Business conducted at Council meetings should be managed by the Chair	Members adhere to Code of Conduct.
Members interests	Conflict of interests	1	3	3	Declarations of interest by members at Council meetings.	Existing procedures adequate.
	Register of members' interests	2	3	6	Register of members' interests forms reviewed regularly.	Members take responsibility to update register.
Insurance	Adequacy Cost Compliance Fidelity Guarantee	1 1 1 1	3 3 3 9	3 3 3 9	An annual review is undertaken of all insurance arrangements. We have in recent times, moved our overall insurance requirement to be placed with a specialist provider, Zurich Municipal and have achieved significant reductions in insurance costs and superior cover for the Council. Employer's and Employee liabilities are a necessity and within policies. Ensure compliance measures are in place. Fidelity checks in place.	Existing procedure adequate. Insurance reviewed annually.

Subject	Risk(s) identified	Probability 1/3/9	Impact of Risk 1/3/9	Risk Rating	Management/control of Risk	Review/Assess/ Revise
Data protection	Policy provision	1	3	3	The Town Council is registered with the Data Protection Agency and has a Data Protection Policy.	Ensure annual renewal of registration. Monitor any requests made under FOI.
Freedom of Information	Policy Provision	1	1	1	The Council has a Model Publication scheme in place. Publication will be on line where practical. The Town Council is aware that if a substantial request came in it could create a number of additional hours work. The Town Council can request a fee to supplement the extra costs to comply with a Freedom of Information request.	
Staffing Resources	Loss of key employee	2	9	18	The Council should periodically review staff structures and resources and assess risk of key personnel loss.	To be reviewed

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT OR AREAS

Subject	Risk(s) identified	Probability 1/3/9	Impact of Risk 1/3/9	Risk Rating	Management/control of Risk	Review/Assess/ Revise
Assets	Loss or damage Risk/damage to third party (ies) property	1 1	3 3	3 3	An annual review of assets is undertaken for insurance provision. The review is presented to Council at the time of the year end accounting timetable.	Existing procedures adequate.
Maintenance	Poor performance of assets or amenities	1	3	3	All assets owned by the Town Council are regularly reviewed and maintained. All repairs and relevant expenditure for any repair is actioned/authorised in accordance with the correct procedures of the Town Council. Assets are insured.	Existing procedures adequate.
Notice Board	Risk of damage	3	1	3	The Town Council currently has several notice boards. No formal inspection procedures are in place but any reports of damage are faults are reported to the Clerk and dealt with in accordance of the correct procedures of the Council.	Existing procedures adequate.
Meeting locations	Adequacy Health & Safety	1 1	1 3	1 3	Following a review of the condition of the notice boards in January 2020, a new notice board has been ordered for Parkers Farm (March 2020); with a view to ordering two more in the 2020/2021 financial year. for Gorse Covert and Locking Stumps. The Town Council meeting is held in a venue considered to have appropriate facilities for the Clerk, members and the general public.	Existing procedures adequate.
Council records – paper	Loss through: Theft Fire damage	1 1 1	9 9 9	9 9 9	The Town Council records are stored at the Town Council premises. Records include historical correspondences, minutes, insurance, bank records. Key documents are stored, where possible in a lockable cabinet (with some fire resistance) and in the safe.	Damage (apart from fire) and theft is unlikely and so provision is adequate.
Council records –electronic	Loss through: Theft, fire damage or corruption of computer	1 2	9 9	9 18	The Town Council electronic records are stored on the Council's two main solid-state drives at our offices. Electronic data is continually backing up to the 'Cloud' (see point 37 on attached schedule).	Existing procedures considered adequate.

In addition, the Town Council (via operational activities delegated to Officers) undertakes the following general Risk Assessment actions and processes on an ongoing basis (see following pages 7 to 10):

APPENDIX A

ANNUAL REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

Summary of Health and Safety Risk Assessment and Management/Budgetary Control Issues Considered and/or Dealt with
During the 2019/2020 Financial Year

- 1 Annual review of Internal Financial Regulations Scheme covering goods ordering, cash receipting, accounts processing controls, payment of accounts, cheque management and VAI recording and claims.
- 2 Continuing monthly submission of Income/Expenditure and Bank Reconciliation to Town Council and Finance Sub-committee.
- 3 Payroll bureau and B/ACS wage payment scheme continues with key data entry controls between Clerk, RFO and Deputy Clerk.
- 4 Review Annual Council Standing Orders.
- 5 Ongoing daily inspections of locally funded play areas in partnership with Warrington Borough Council which carries the Public Liability Insurance.
- 6 Working with Zurich Municipal we continue to review all insurance policies and vehicle and buildings cover have been increased or amended where necessary.
Combined policy (with cost savings) improves efficiency of cover on policies covering fire/theft/public liability and fidelity.
A Council Business Continuity Plan has been drafted and will be enhanced over the 2020/2021 municipal year.
- 7 Membership of the Local Council Advisory Service (LCAS) in 2015/2016 allowed access to their service; dedicated to helping Local Councils manage risks, offering up-to-date and accurate risk management advice.
- 8 Monitoring gas boiler maintenance schedule (carbon monoxide warning device fitted in room with boiler). Room not used as an office; only storage.

- 9 All vehicles and premises fire extinguisher systems and signage serviced/validated and replaced where necessary. Fire extinguishers, etc. are checked on an annual basis. (The latest check was undertaken by ESI on 14th January 2020.)
- Signage, emergency lighting and smoke/heat detection devices are installed in the Town Council's premises and are checked on a regular basis by ESI (Contractors). (The latest check was undertaken on 14th January 2020.)
- Emergency lights that fail the 3-hour 'soak test' are replaced as soon as possible, by an electrical contractor.**
- 10 All first aid kits are checked on a regular basis by staff and replenished as and when necessary.
- 11 All Maintenance Team Operatives have undergone first aid training, **several are** appointed persons.
- 12 All Council vehicles undergo regular checks by operatives (see attached sheet).
- 13 Annual Health & Safety Audit carried out by Terrain HR covering general operational risk assessments and the Fire Risk Action Plan (the last check was undertaken on **4th February 2020 for the 2020/2021 period**).
- 14 Fire Risk Assessment statutory requirements undertaken and documents prepared by professionally retained consultant.
- 15 ESI to verify (14) (also see items 8 and 9 **and 25**).
- 16 Review all employee risk assessments in conjunction with H&S Consultant. Re-issue to employees where necessary. **An updated Health & Safety Policy and Handbook was issued to employees in February 2020.**
- Health and Safety meetings **take place with employees to review/discuss risk assessments in more detail when necessary**. Refreshers take place periodically. An employee health screening exercise was undertaken in 2018, via ELAS Health and Safety Group re: audiometry testing, HAVS Tier 2 and vision testing.
- 17 Review of PPE carried out **regularly** and new work boots with steel mid sole and toe cap issued **when necessary**. Any other PPE/workwear replaced as and when necessary.
- 18 Operatives are issued with any necessary PPE for their job role, e.g. face masks, overalls, gloves, appropriate hi vis, appropriate footwear, head, face, ear protection, etc.
- 19 Asset Register kept and, **where appropriate**, serial numbers recorded.

- 20 Regular anti-virus and security processes continue for internal computer equipment.
- 21 Continue to offer eyes tests for all relevant employees and make contribution when spectacles are needed.
- 22 Maintenance Operatives undergo periodic HAVS assessment.
- 23 Reduce access to upper floors/stairs due to narrow step treads and low handrail in listed building.
- 24 Continue to monitor employee absence and carry out return to work health interviews. Make any reasonable adjustments to work if necessary, e.g. light duties.
- 25 Security alarm system maintained regularly, and **specialist** key holding service retained to reduce or eliminate the need for staff to attend out of hours should the alarm be activated.
- 26 **A new "Digialir" alarm monitoring system was fitted on 28th January 2020, due to the changeover of our telephone lines from copper to a fibre-optic network. ESI will now be called as our alarm monitoring company if the intruder alarm is activated. ESI will then contact our specialist key holding company (with a password to identify them as a legitimate contact).**
- 27 Weekly testing of the fire alarm and (from 4th March 2016) emergency lighting. Also fire evacuations are carried out without warning.
- 28 Booking in system for all visitors to Council offices continues.
- 29 Annual Portable Appliance Testing carried out. Any PAT test failures are decommissioned. The next tests **were due to be undertaken on 2nd April 2020. These were postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic and will be undertaken on 9th June 2020.**
- 30 Electrical Installation tests carried out every five years. (Latest Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) – fixed wire testing was undertaken over 6th/7th March 2017, by local contractor MC-ES Electrical Services Ltd).
- 31 New main fuse board installed by the Electricity Board 26th February 2014 following electrical fault investigation by local contractor MC-ES Electrical Services Ltd.
- 32 Personal attack alarms issued to all staff.
- 33 Introduced procedure and spoke with the Facilities Caretaker regarding lone working.
- 34 Employee training needs are regularly reviewed and training courses scheduled as and when necessary.

- 34 The Town Council utilises (via an annual advice service contract) SAS Daniels (employment law specialists) to guide us on all and any employment issues arising with employees.
- 35 The Town Council has a robust set of policies and procedures (internal auditor comment 2015/2016) which are used to comply with and enforce the above and other activities of the Council. Additions are made as new procedures or regulations dictate, e.g. GDPR
- 36 The Town Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of its data records to comply with GDPR (May 2018) utilising an external Data Protection Officer service via our internal auditor (JDH Business Services Ltd.).
- 37 A comprehensive review of our IT processing has been completed as part of the GDPR preparation and a company has been appointed as our IT advisors for compliance with data storage and confidentiality.
- 38 A comprehensive review of Council policies has taken place to ensure we can comply with GDPR and these policies **were** embraced into existing Council policy documents, with effect from the Annual Council Meeting: held on 22nd May 2018.
39. Bank account signatories were updated with effect from January 2019. Two previous Councillors' names were deleted, and two new Councillors were added to the authorised signatories list.

40. The Town Council will make necessary adjustments to working practices, if necessary, during extreme weather events, national/local health emergencies, etc. The Town Council will follow advice from governing bodies, and in line with any emergency legislation, as necessary, in case of such an event.