

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD ONLINE, ON TUESDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2020, 6PM**

Present: Councillor Reeves in the Chair
Councillors Atkin, Bowden, D. Ellis, J. Ellis, Evans, and Fitzsimmons

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk – Mrs C. Caddock
Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe

Apologies: Councillor M. Hearldon (dispensation)

209/20-21 **OCTOBER 2020 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 that was held on Tuesday 27th October 2020 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair, with one amendment to a typo error on a date on a line of the Payments of Account sheet where ‘2929’, should read ‘2020’.

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

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

210/20-21 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule – (see pages 149 and 150 below).

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

PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL ITEMS

211/20-21 **BIRCHWOOD YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE (BYCC) – LEASE DISCUSSIONS**

The BAFO reported that he has written to the solicitor to suggest a remote meeting be held with the solicitor, himself, and Councillor D. Ellis in his role as Chair of BYCC Trustees, to discuss some elements of the proposed new lease that require further clarification. The BAFO is unsure whether it needs to be as detailed as the current draft is. He and Councillor D. Ellis are still working through the document.

The solicitor has advised that the proposed lease she provided is based substantially on the standard form of lease of part of a property. There have been various developments to leases prior to the original one that was granted to BYCC. The detail is there to ensure that both parties are protected from any potential ‘disputes’ regarding the lease, in the future.

The solicitor is happy to arrange for a Teams meeting to take place with a view to going through the draft document and getting rid of any clauses we feel are surplus, or adding any that the Councillors feel are necessary.

Action BAFO to arrange a meeting with the solicitor

Councillor D. Ellis said that he is still trying to establish the current formal ownership of the BYCC building. He spoke to someone at the Lottery Commission, but as it is a relatively old application, they cannot find it in their active records. Councillor D. Ellis added that he has been advised he needs to find the reference number on the original grant documentation – which he doesn't have in the paperwork that he has.

The BAFO stated that he does not believe that the Town Council holds the original grant application (or even a copy). The Town Council played no part in the original grant application and had no dealings with the lottery administrators whatsoever. The people who worked on the original application held the documents at that time. They have since moved out of the area. The BAFO added that he would have to have a more in-depth search of other files, when he is able to access the office, to try to find any record of the grant reference number.

Councillor D. Ellis said that formally establishing that the Trustees of BYCC own the building is essential for protecting it for the community in future.

Action Clerks office/BAFO to try to find additional documentation in the office relating to the original grant application for BYCC.

212/20-21 **PARKERS FARM ESTATE**

(a) The BAFO reported that work has started on the external repairs to Parkers Farm and the project seems to be running on time. However, internal works cannot be completed on the ground floor, as the damp proof specialist cannot return until April 2021.

The BAFO has agreed with the internal damp contractor that all the internal work they were due to undertake, will be done in five working days from 16th to 20th April 2021. This means that the timing for some residual internal decoration that is to be undertaken by Trinity, as part of their contract, will have to be negotiated for a time after the internal damp proofing works have been completed.

(b) To receive an amended Schedule of Works for the Parkers Farm repairs. Some of this will have to be amended again, due to the timing of the damp proof works being delayed.

(c) To receive photographs of the site to illustrate the extent of the scaffolding in place, the steel beam that requires plating/bolting to another beam and the barn doors that require repainting.

(d) To receive notes from a site meeting that took place on 12th November with the Clerk, a representative of Cube, and a representative of Trinity Restorations.

(e) To note that a Works in Progress insurance policy has been arranged with our insurance company to cover the works to Parkers Farm for the duration of the project (£1,003.63 including IPT). No hot works are to take place on site.

(f) The Clerk reported that as the roof works commenced, it was noticed that there were more damaged tiles than had been originally expected. More tiles have been sourced, but numbers are not known at this point.

- (g) The BAFO advised that it has been agreed with the contractor that invoicing for the works will be presented in stages. Stuart Prescott, from Cube, who is project managing the works, will confirm the invoice is correct for the Council's consideration and approval, at each stage, prior to us making payment.

213/20-21 **IT / YELLOWBUS**

To note the quarterly Security & Compliance Check report was received from Yellowbus, with no issues to report.

214/20-21 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

Councillor Atkin stated that as we have not heard anything from WBC to advise us on its stance regarding planning events for 2021, he believes it would be very difficult to arrange at this stage, and thinks that we will have to assume that there will be no Birchwood Carnival, in its usual format, in 2021.

215/20-21 **INTERIM AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 2020 / 2021**

To note that we have booked our internal auditor, to undertake the interim internal audit for 2020/2021 on 26th January 2021. We hope that circumstances, re: Covid-19, will allow for him to attend our offices for this appointment.

216/20-21 **DATA PROTECTION / GDPR**

To note that the Clerk is continuing to liaise with our IT consultants and website provider for advice on some of the queries raised on a checklist received.

The Clerk stated that this is taking some time as it requires getting into the detail of how and, specifically where, servers/data centres of companies / organisations we work or do business with are based.

217/20-21 **CHESHIRE PENSION FUND**

To note the receipt of the Cheshire Pension Fund Administration Strategy document, and Minutes from the meeting held on 16th October 2020, along with slides from a 'Approach to Climate Change' presentation.

218/20-21 **BTC VEHICLES**

- (a) To note that ND58 BZR recently had a full service and MOT. We experienced similar issues as with our other transit van. It required significant repairs and welding, etc. before it could pass its MOT. The cost of £1,141.13 +VAT was approved by the Chair, and Leader of the Council.
- (b) To note that tipper HK64 NNM, had to be taken to the garage for repairs by a breakdown vehicle. The Clerk reported that this was at a cost of £60 (£50 plus VAT), but on safety grounds there was no real choice. The vehicle could not be moved – at that stage we did not know the extent of the damage, and it was deemed unsafe for our team to try to tow the tipper to the garage at Woolston, in rush hour, around all the roundabouts.

Members **resolved** that they approved the decision that had been made.

The Clerk asked Members to receive information about tipper truck HK64 NNM – and to consider the repair options and cost, for a failed gearbox and potential clutch replacement.

The Clerk reported that following assessment by the garage, an internal gearbox issue was discovered. The gearbox will have to be taken out of the vehicle and sent off for repair, prior to being reinstated. This lower cost option is around £1,233 (inc. VAT). However, it is recommended by the garage that we consider replacing the clutch at the same time as this could save labour costs further down the line. It is unknown how long the current clutch will last; it could be a few months, or a year or two. To repair the gearbox and replace the clutch would increase the cost to £2,005.25 inc. VAT (£1671.04 ex VAT).

The Clerk said that Members might prefer the garage to only repair the gearbox as that is the immediate problem; however, if the clutch does go in the next few months/year it would involve around 5.5/6 hours labour @ £75 per hour plus parts.

The Clerk stated that if we do not repair the vehicle, we could only sell it as scrap as it is not running; it cannot be moved other than by pushing it.

The Clerk said that, with the £60 in breakdown removal costs and the fee for diagnosing the fault, in addition to the £2,005.25 (shown on the estimate) it is estimated that the overall cost to bring the vehicle back into use would be approximately £2,173.25 inc. VAT (£1,811.04 ex VAT).

It is likely that we would be without the vehicle for a few weeks; and, as staff cannot currently share vehicles, due to social distancing, they have agreed to take one day a week off for a couple of weeks, from their annual leave. This arrangement cannot be sustained for a longer term. We already have one member of staff on foot each day, working the closest roads to the offices. The majority of areas need a van for the team to be able to fulfil the work on the schedule, plus the additional work that arises from time to time.

The Clerk said that she has told the garage not to commence any work until the Council has decided and approved the course of action it wishes to take.

Following discussion, Councillor Fitzsimmons **proposed**, Councillor Atkin **seconded** and it was **unanimously resolved** that both the gearbox and clutch should be repaired / replaced at the same time.

Action Clerk's office to advise the garage accordingly.

NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

219/20-21 **BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION**

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account periods 1st April 2020 – 31st October 2020.

The payroll figure for September 2020 was £12,779.64 and £13,570.99 for October 2020 (including wage increase for 3 x staff backdated to April 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 Fitzsimmons **proposed**, Councillor D. Ellis **seconded** and Members **unanimously resolved** to approve the bank reconciliations.

220/20-21 **GRANT APPLICATION**

The BAFO asked Members to receive and consider a grant application from the CPR Group C.I.C, requesting grant aid assistance in the amount of £897.00. They are working with the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

The grant would be used for the installation of billboards in local schools, showing a step by step guide of CPR.

We requested additional information prior to presenting the application to Members, including asking whether local schools have been consulted, and do they wish to have these billboards, and how (apart from size) the boards differ from information freely downloadable from the NWAS website? Also, do schools have enough display space to put these billboards on long-term display?

The response was included in Members' papers:

The company has not undertaken any consultation. They say this is because they have not come across a school to date which has declined their offer.

Regarding space, if limited they do a slightly smaller billboard which costs £250.00. However, the Clerk noted that this would raise the grant required for the four schools to £1,000.

The company stated that the intention with the NWAS videos and billboards is that they actively encourage people to download videos and also encourage others to download them. They say that the billboards stand out and draw the attention of people to read and learn.

They also stated that although there are lots of videos online people have to actually think, "I want to learn CPR" and go and search for them.

They conclude that the end result is that although there are alternative learning tools only 1 in 10 people know how to do CPR. They say that they are putting tools into the public eye in a much higher profile, and their information differs as it will be seen by hundreds of people every day.

Members considered the application. They were concerned that there had been no consultation with the local schools, therefore it could not be formally confirmed that any grant awarded would go towards benefitting the Birchwood community directly.

In addition, as the information is readily and freely available, and downloadable, it was considered that local schools could be encouraged to download and print out the posters themselves and create their own display if they wish to.

Although Members appreciated the reasoning and purpose behind the initiative, they did not consider that it represented a 'good value for money' use of the Town Council's resources.

Councillor Fitzsimmons **proposed** that this application be declined. This was **seconded** by Councillor D. Ellis and **unanimously resolved** by those Members present.

Action Clerk's office to advise the applicant of the outcome of their application.

221/20-21 **CHESHIRE PENSION FUND**

The BAFO reported, for noting, that we have received the date for the Pension Consultative Form Meeting on 22nd October 2021.

222/20-21 **HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTANT SERVICES**

The BAFO asked Members to note we have received an invoice from Terrain for the renewal of services from January 2021 to December 2021. We are currently on an annual contract with them, for specialist Health and Safety services.

The Clerk said that these services include the undertaking of annual risk assessments, some staff training, and they provide expert advice when necessary. She asked whether the Council wished to renew its contract with Terrain. Officers are happy with the services they provide.

The cost quoted is the same as last year - £1,500 +VAT.

Members **unanimously resolved** that they are happy to retain the services of Terrain for another year and approved the payment of the invoice.

The meeting concluded at 7.00pm

Payment of Accounts:						
Resolved: that the following payments be approved as the residual September and part of the October 2020 accounts						
Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
21.09.2020	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 9.13	£ 0.46	£ 9.59
23.09.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 89.27	£ 17.86	£ 107.13
28.09.2020	*	Arco	Safety Boots (SJ)	£ 53.89	£ 10.78	£ 64.67
28.09.2020	*	CMUK Visual Safety (Eureka)	Disposable gloves (20 boxes) eyewash pods & dressings	£ 177.60	£ 3.52	£ 181.12
29.09.2020	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	£ 57.46	£ 11.49	£ 68.95
29.09.2020	*	Signs Unlimited	New acrylic panel for BTC memorial plaque	£ 85.00	£ 17.00	£ 102.00
29.09.2020	*	Reimburse C Caddock	Amazon re: 96 rolls toilet paper	£ 28.18	£ 5.64	£ 33.82
29.09.2020	*	Reimburse C Caddock	Royal British Legion 2 x poppy wreaths & donation	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
30.09.2020	DD	Copyrite Systems	Photocopier charges	£ 23.66	£ 4.73	£ 28.39
30.09.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 190.10	£ 38.01	£ 228.11
01.10.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 22.83		£ 22.83
01.10.2020	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 45.62	£ 9.12	£ 54.74
05.10.2020	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 170.02		£ 170.02
05.10.2020	*	CMUK Visual Safety (Eureka)	Disposable gloves (30 boxes)	£ 238.50		£ 238.50
05.10.2020	*	Arco	PPE (ES) Specialist medical safety boots	£ 125.00	£ 25.00	£ 150.00
05.10.2020	*	Office Depot	Stationery	£ 48.32	£ 9.66	£ 57.98
07.10.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 89.55	£ 17.90	£ 107.45
07.10.2020	*	October wages	Wages total this month (10 staff). Including wage increase	£ 13,570.99		£ 13,570.99
09.10.2020	*	Cube Property Services	Professional services-additional time charge re: re-submission of LBC application, revised schedule of works & contractor negotiation	£ 700.00	£ 140.00	£ 840.00
09.10.2020	*	Williams Garage Services	ND09VNL - 2 x tyres	£ 163.70	£ 32.74	£ 196.44
09.10.2020	*	Williams Garage Services	NH57CZV - 1 tyre	£ 73.95	£ 14.79	£ 88.74
12.10.2020	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 87.07		£ 87.07
14.10.2020	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 159.23	£ 31.84	£ 191.07
15.10.2020	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 40.40		£ 40.40
15.10.2020	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	IT support/backups/internet services - inc. for laptop (4 x inv.)	£ 137.41	£ 27.48	£ 164.89
15.10.2020	*	Reimburse C Caddock	GGN INT Ltd - 4 x boxes (50) disposable face masks	£ 29.80		£ 29.80
15.10.2020	*	Reimburse C Caddock	Amazon - 12 x lg packs (126) anti-bac wipes	£ 33.74	£ 6.76	£ 40.50
15.10.2020	*	Reimburse C Caddock	Amazon - 12 x lg packs (126) anti-bac wipes	£ 33.74	£ 6.76	£ 40.50
15.10.2020	*	PKF Littlejohn	Professional services re: Limited assurance review of AGAR for year ended 31 March 2020	£ 800.00	£ 160.00	£ 960.00
16.10.2020	DD	Information Commissioner's Office	Data protection renewal fee	£ 35.00		£ 35.00
16.10.2020	*	James Todd & Co. Ltd.	Quarterly payroll service fees	£ 180.00	£ 36.00	£ 216.00
16.10.2020	*	HMRC	Re:Sept. 2020 Tax £1,357.60 NI £2,046.62	£ 3,404.22		£ 3,404.22
16.10.2020	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	RE: Sept. 2020 E'ee £773.75 E'er £2,781.00	£ 3,554.75		£ 3,554.75

Payments of Account since 21st October 2020

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 (SJ)	£ 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 telephone 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, welding	£ 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, welding	£ 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 year 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 for approval at the November 2020 meeting

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
all tbc	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 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	tbc		
	DD	Yellowbus Solutions	IT support, backups, internet services (inc. for laptop) (4 x invs.)	tbc		
	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 46.02	£ 9.20	£ 55.22
	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	tbc	£ 0.51	£ 10.62
	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 108.61	£ 21.72	£ 130.33
	*	Arco	PPE - safety boots (IS)	£ 49.00	£ 9.80	£ 58.80
	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 25.84	£ 5.17	£ 31.01
	*	HMRC	Re: Oct. 2020 Tax £1,582.60 NI £2,314.03	£ 3,896.63		£ 3,896.63
	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	RE: Oct. 2020 E'ee £828.43 E'er £2,968.00	£ 3,796.43		£ 3,796.43
	*	Office Depot	Stationery	£ 37.97	£ 7.59	£ 45.56
	*	Arco	PPE - safety boots (SJ) and 3 x white safety helmets (office staff) to use during building works	£ 87.99	£ 17.60	£ 105.59
	*	ESI	Replacement of zone-46 contact and resistors re: intruder alarm	£ 55.00	£ 11.00	£ 66.00