

**MINUTES OF THE JUNE PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING  
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,  
HELD AT PARKERS FARM  
ON TUESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022, 6PM**

**Present:** Councillor Ellis in the Chair  
Councillors Allen, Atkin, Ball, Brereton, Dempsey, Evans, Reeves, Scott,  
Sheridan and Simcock

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald  
RFO/Deputy Clerk – Mrs C. Caddock  
Administrative Assistant – Mrs H. Vout

**Apologies:** Councillor Bowden (attending LGA Conference)

**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.

*Councillor Atkin – Birchwood Incredible Edible*

082/22-23 **MAY 2022 PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Brereton **proposed**, Councillor Sheridan **seconded**, and it was **resolved** that: The Minutes of the Part I Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting that was held on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

083/22-23 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule – (see pages 68 and 69 below).

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

084/22-23 **INTERNAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR END 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2022**

- (a) The RFO reported that the internal auditor undertook the (remote) final end of year audit on 17th June 2022. As he was satisfied that all the documentation has been prepared in accordance with ‘proper practices’, he has signed and returned the Internal Audit Report section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

A copy of the year end Internal Audit Report can be found on pages 70 to 74 below.

We have a clean audit from the internal auditor, with one recommendation made:

*“1 The council did not evidence whether it carried out an annual physical verification of fixed assets recorded in the asset register as required by the following Financial Regulation:*

*14.6. .... The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the (Asset) Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.*

*The Financial Regulations for fixed assets should be complied with and evidence should be retained for the annual asset verification check for audit purposes.”*

The definition of tangible assets is that you can touch the asset. This includes equipment, machinery, buildings, vehicles, stock, land and cash.

A large batch of documents was circulated to Members in their papers. These are the documents sent to the internal auditor in relation to the 2021/2022 end of year audit.

The annually updated 'asset' and 'risk assessment' registers and various other related documents were included within these documents. An explanation from the RFO was also enclosed regarding the ongoing monitoring of tangible assets, including how any issues are raised with the Council throughout the year.

The RFO reminded Members that they are welcome to personally check these assets at any time throughout the year.

The RFO said that, previously, Members have been asked to consider the 'tangible assets' as part of the general documentation when they have been approved by Council. However, the internal auditor recommends that these are now evidenced separately.

The RFO asked Members to formally consider resolving that Council has seen and accepts the accuracy of the (several) lists of tangible assets, acknowledge that all tangible assets are monitored on an ongoing basis for any issues, damage, wear, etc. and confirm that action is taken if necessary to repair, replace, decommission or add any tangible asset to the Council's resources.

Councillor Reeves **proposed** the Council confirms that a physical verification of fixed assets is undertaken annually, including in 2021/2022, and these are recorded in the various asset lists/registers. Action is taken to repair, replace, decommission or acquire new assets when necessary. Councillor Evans **seconded** the proposal. This was unanimously **resolved** by those Members present.

The Chair will initial the relevant documents following the meeting.

- (b) The RFO reminded Members that the internal auditor had already undertaken an in-depth, on-site, interim audit, on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

The RFO stated that action has been taken regarding the internal auditor's advice from the interim audit for 2021/2022 - that:

*"1 Sample testing of payments identified that quotations for contracts as required by the Financial Regulations are not centrally held in a quotations file. As a result for some sample items individual searches of electronic/manual information were required to identify the relevant documentation.*

*A separate file should be maintained to evidence all contract procurement market testing exercises."*

- (c) Members were reminded of the continuing internal auditor appointment for 2021/2022 and method of working, including the 'remote' year-end audit process for 2021/2022.

The RFO asked Members to consider whether they are happy to continue with the services of our current internal auditor for 2022/2023.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Evans, **seconded** by Councillor Sheridan and **unanimously resolved** that the Town Council continues with our current internal auditor.

**Action** Clerk's office to contact our internal auditor regarding the above, to ask if he wishes to continue as our internal auditor for 2022/2023, and to request that, if so, he confirms his independence from the Town Council.

- (d) The RFO stated that, as mentioned above, a finalised pack of finance documents was circulated to Members in their papers. These, along with other information from the monthly reconciliation schedules, which are presented to Councillors at each monthly meeting, are used to create the final end of year accounts figures. These were part of the documentation circulated to the internal auditor, for final consideration and approval.
- (e) Members were asked to note that the balances for 31/03/2022 reflected finalised earmarked reserves of £303,771.11, and to formally approve these balances:

The balances for March 2022 reflect:			
(a)	Community Development Fund earmarked funds (£35,000.00).	(To increase to £40,000 in 2022/23)	
(b)	£92,771.11 earmarked funds towards general equipment in the near future		
	i.e. replacement vehicles, maintenance equipment/office supplies and computer equipment.		▲
(c)	£16,000.00 Election fees fund	(approx. £2,000 of reserves used in 2021/2022)	
(d)	£ NIL - Parkers Farm Repair/Maintenance fund (major works now completed)**		
(e)	£160,000.00 Working balances and general reserves (6 month)***		
The above proposed earmarked reserves/funds at 31/03/2022 are for Council's approval.			
The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the Town Council as at 31st March 2022 and reflects its income and expenditure during the year.			
** The Parkers Farm earmarked reserve fund was utilised to fund the majority of the remaining works during 2021/2022.			
▲ Slightly reduced as 2 x electric vans were purchased in 2021 utilising part of this reserve.			
*** This will increase to £185,000 in 2022/2023			
A contingency fund is earmarked for 2022/23 (approx £31,000) but was not required in 2021/2022			

Councillor Atkin **proposed**, Councillor Dempsey **seconded**, and it was **unanimously resolved** that Members approve the reserves and balances as at 31/03/2022, as listed above.

## 085/22-23 ANNUAL FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW

To comply with the financial year end requirements, specifically the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3 Members annually spend time going through the existing financial control mechanism; the present method of managing and reporting of the Council's financial information.

The RFO reminded Members that 'Appendix C – Annual Risk Assessment Review (Financial and Operational Processes)' was approved by Members at the April 2022 meeting (see Minute 027/22-23 (a)).

Members were reminded at the May 2022 meeting (Minute 060/22-23 (b)) that 'Appendix C' had been approved by Members at the April 2022 meeting and that this forms part of the documentation required to be approved by the internal auditor.

'Appendix C' is included in the May 2021 Part I Finance Minutes on pages 36 to 41 (pages 1-6 of the appendix); it is a list of all the health/safety and risk assessment issues considered by Council and/or dealt with by Council in 2021/2022.

The 'Annual Review of Internal Controls - Summary of Health and Safety Risk Assessment and Management/Budgetary Control Issues Considered and/or Dealt with During the 2021/2022 Financial Year'; referred to as 'Appendix A', can be found (pages 7 to 11) of 'Appendix C' on pages 42 to 46 of the May minutes.

(a) **Standing Orders and Financial Regulations**

The RFO reminded Members that the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, were discussed and formally approved during the main May 2022 Annual Council Meeting.

Members considered the amended Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (in May 2022) to be comprehensive and covered and safeguarded the management of the Council's finances and control information for the 2022/2023 financial year.

The amended Standing Orders (Minute 038/22-23) and the amended Financial Regulations (Minute 039/22-23) were formally approved at the May 2022 meeting. Members confirmed that they considered these amended Standing Orders and Financial Regulations to be comprehensive and will cover and safeguard the management of the Council's finances and control information for the 2022/2023 financial year.

The requirements of our Financial Regulations continue to be enhanced with the internal control via Council's monthly receipt of its Statement of Income and Expenditure and the monthly reconciliation with the bank account. All accounts for cheque payment (if any) each month are authorised and only Members sign cheques (no Officers are involved in cheque signing for the Co-Operative account).

The financial schedules also show all the regular direct debits/standing orders currently set up, which are for utilities or other regular monthly payments.

All transactions are shown on the monthly control and reconciliation sheets.

Online transactions are monitored monthly by Members. The process for BACS payments is included in the Financial Regulations (section 5.5).

The management and signatories for the Nationwide account continue to be vested to the Clerk, the Responsible Finance Officer and Councillor D. Ellis.

The Nationwide's account information continues to be presented to Council as part of the Council's regular monthly reconciliation at each monthly meeting.

Transactions can be made either over the telephone or by emailing a signed pdf document to the bank. The account is not currently set up to make any on-line transactions, although we understand that the Nationwide is currently beta-testing options for on-line transactions. It does not offer cheque book facilities.

Funds continue to be transferred from the Nationwide account to the Co-operative Bank account when necessary, to split the financial risk, keeping the amount in the Co-operative account to a maximum of around £85,000 (increased from £75,000 in January 2017).

This is the amount the Town Council would be able to recover under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).

The internal auditor confirmed, at the year-end audit for 2014/2015, which took place on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015, that they are satisfied with this level of control.

The Town Council continues to use the Co-Operative bank's online banking service; which the Co-Operative bank updates from time to time, keeping the same security protocols in place.

At the July 2021 Part I Finance meeting (see Minute 273/21-22 (d)) the Council resolved that Councillor Atkin be added as a processor for set-up and approval of payments, on the Co-operative Bank account, if required.

The comprehensive security aspects of operating the system have previously been formalised by the Town Council and involve a transaction authoriser and an approver; no one person may carry out online monetary bank transactions (see Financial Regulations, section 5.5). These remain the same with the 2022 updated online service.

The Chair or a member of the Finance Sub-Committee continues to undertake a monthly check of a random sample of around five payments to suppliers and countersigns the record of payment document.

When pay rates change, they are checked by the Chair of the Council to ensure the correct new rates have been applied.

(b) In addition, clear procedure detail is given within the Financial Regulations for the Council, its Clerk and Finance Officer to process the following activities:

- (i) Annual estimates
- (ii) Budgetary control
- (iii) Accounting and audit
- (iv) Banking, cheque processing and direct debits/standing orders
- (v) Payment of account
- (vi) Payment of salaries
- (vii) Dealing with income
- (viii) Loans and investments
- (ix) Orders for work, goods, services and any contract work and contract payment arrangements
- (x) Managing stores and equipment
- (xi) Properties, buildings, etc., and relevant insurance cover.

(c) Members have considered the previous interim reports from the internal auditor (regarding the 2020/2021 accounts systems and procedures) and noted that all the recommendations have been implemented

The Town Council received a clean year-end 2021/2022 internal report.

Members received the updated 2021/2022 advisory comments made by the auditor for the interim audit and the year end audit.

The RFO reported that the recommendation made during the interim audit (undertaken on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022) that a quotation file should be created, so that this information can be found easily, has been implemented.

Also, the recommendation made in the end of year audit report (undertaken on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022) that, “*The Financial Regulations for fixed assets should be complied with and evidence should be retained for the annual asset verification check for audit purposes.*” is being implemented (see Minute 084/22-23 (a) above). This is in order that tangible assets are separately approved, rather than being approved under a more general ‘umbrella’ heading.

(d) The RFO reminded Members that the Town Council received a clean report for the 2020/2021 External Audit.

There were no “*Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:*”.

(e) (i) For 2021/2022 we remained with our insurance provider (Zurich) with the level of £1 million pounds of fidelity insurance. We will remain with Zurich for 2022/2023. Fidelity insurance remains at the same level, i.e. £1 million pounds for 2022/2023.

- (ii) The RFO reported that Key Personnel insurance cover has been added to BTC's insurance policy for 2022/2023. This covers potential long-term absence of a member of staff following an accident or assault, to enable temporary staff to be hired to cover an absence, without incurring unmanageable costs.

The insurance covers the Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer/Deputy Clerk, Administrative Assistant, Senior Maintenance Operative, and Five Maintenance Operatives (all current staff).

- (f) After discussion and deliberation Members **unanimously resolved** that the Council:
  - (i) is satisfied and content with the current level of financial controls and information reporting procedures presently in existence
  - (ii) is content with the internal audit and risk assessment processes undertaken by the Clerk, RFO/Deputy Clerk and internal auditor
  - (iii) will again, in future years, review all the control processes as part of the year-end financial procedures
  - (iv) be involved in the selection and output reporting for the Council's audit and risk assessment activities
  - (v) after consideration of the internal audit report for 2021/22 that Members confirm the reappointment of the internal auditor to undertake the 2022/2023 audit function.
- (g) The RFO reported that the 'public notice' displayed regarding electors' rights to Review the accounts for 2020/2021 was published on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021 for a period from 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021 up to 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

The public notice for 2021/2022 accounts will be published on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to 'advertise' the period during which the public can arrange to inspect the accounting records in person as between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 to 11<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

The accounts are also published on our website.

### 086/22-23 APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2021/2022 – PART 3

- (a) The RFO reminded Members that Town and Parish Councils are now required to prepare and submit their Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) based primarily on the gross income and expenditure of a Council for a particular financial year.

Birchwood Town Council is within the group of local Councils which must complete Part 3.
- (b) After full consideration of the 2021/2022 accounts schedules produced by the RFO, in the Income and Expenditure format and with the extensive supporting schedules; all produced in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) as amended; Councillor Evans **proposed**, Councillor Dempsey **seconded** and Members **unanimously resolved**:
  - (i) That the annual accounts for 2021/2022 as prepared by the RFO and the supporting documentation including working documents, bank account statements, Public Works Loan statement, Section 137 awards, the asset and equipment registers, and list of Health and Safety risk assessment actions and internal controls be accepted.

- (ii) That these figures and statements become the source data for the completion of the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements for 2021/2022.
- (iii) The RFO presented to Members the completed AGAR for 2021/2022 with its summary income/expenditure headings reflecting the 2020/2021 accounts data – for Council approval and signatures.

Members considered the Section 1 Annual Governance Statement for the Annual Accounts for 2021/2022 including the ‘Yes/No’ answers to Section 1 of the AGAR which read as follows:

- **1** We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.  
**YES**
- **2** We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.  
**YES**
- **3** We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.  
**YES**
- **4** We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.  
**YES**
- **5** We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.  
**YES**
- **6** We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.  
**YES**
- **7** We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.  
**YES**
- **8** We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this smaller authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.  
**YES**
- **9** (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.  
**N/A**

After consideration of the Section 1 Annual Governance Statement for the Annual Accounts for 2021/2022 Councillor Evans **proposed** and Councillor Reeves **seconded** that to the best of the Town Council's knowledge and belief, with respect to the declarations for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 that these be accepted as accurate and that the Annual Governance Statement be approved.

Members **unanimously resolved** that the Annual Governance Statement 2021/2022 be approved, and signed as necessary.

- (c) After consideration of the of the Section 2 Accounting Statements for the Annual Accounts for 2021/2022 Councillor Sheridan **proposed** and Councillor Brereton **seconded** that to the best of the Town Council's knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 that these be accepted as accurate and that the Town Council's Accounting Statements 2021/2022 be approved.

Members **unanimously resolved** that the Section 2 Accounting Statements for the Annual Accounts for 2021/2022 be **approved**, and signed as necessary.

- (d) Councillor Dempsey **proposed** and Councillor Brereton **seconded** that Members of the Town Council formally approve the adoption of the 2021/2022 AGAR.

Members **unanimously resolved** that the AGAR for 2021/2022 be approved, and be submitted to the external auditor.

The relevant sections of the AGAR referred to above are attached (see pages 75 to 77 below).

**Action** The RFO to compile the necessary documents and to send them to the external auditor.

- (e) To receive, and approve for payment, the invoice from our internal auditor for his year end internal audit services for 2021/2022 (£378.00 +VAT).

Members approved this for payment.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL ITEMS**

#### 087/22-23 **LOCKING STUMPS – PROPOSED PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT**

To note that we are still awaiting further information from WBC regarding potential choices for two additional small pieces of play equipment to include as part of the refurbishment of the small play area, on Borough Council land, behind the Turf & Feather public house in Locking Stumps.

#### 088/22-23 **INCREDIBLE EDIBLE**

To note that we have advised Birchwood Incredible Edible that we would like to arrange another meeting with them, now that BTC has agreed that, in principle, it would like to support their proposed project.

#### 089/22-23 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

To note that Birchwood Carnival took place on 12th June 2022. By all accounts it was a very successful event. As previously resolved, BTC has received and paid the invoice for the portaloos as part of a grant award for the support of the Birchwood Carnival (Public Health Act 1936, s.87) £350.00 +VAT.

The RFO reported that we have now also received the invoice for the hire of the marquee, tables and chairs, which the Council has also previously resolved to pay for as a grant to support this community event (Local Government & Rating Act 1972 (Section 145) (Provision of Entertainment and Support of the Arts)) £1,675.50 +VAT.

## 090/22-23 GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING/NOTING

- (a) To note that the hanging baskets for the shopping centre and school/library have been collected and installed, as have the plants for the local planters. The RFO confirmed that the shopping centre pays for the supply and maintenance of their hanging baskets.
- (b) The RFO reported that the wildflower beds have now been prepared and seeded.
- (c) To note that we are still awaiting feedback following our request to WBC asking if they would consider adopting the two BTC owned lighting columns near the garages on Armstrong Close.

Officers challenged a WBC invoice reminder received for the lantern work to these two columns. In March 2022, we received two invoices for the same work, one was in the amount of £538.45 including VAT and the second for £996.00 including VAT.

We contacted WBC and were told to pay the lower invoice amount, as WBC had found some lanterns in stock, and therefore had not had to order any new ones. We were also informed that a credit note would be issued for the second invoice. We subsequently received two 'reminders' and on both occasions contacted WBC to inform them that a credit note was due to be issued.

We have since received a 'Notice of Intention to Commence Legal Action' – despite previously contacting WBC Revenue Enquiries regarding this matter. They were contacted about this notice, via a phone call and we have been advised that they will chase it up at 'their end'.

We are therefore not expecting any further action to follow. This matter will also be raised with WBC at the partnership meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

- (d) To note that we have received the refund (£17.00) from ChALC following the cancellation of the publication of LCR (Local Council Review) which we had subscribed to.
- (e) To note that the company that installed our EV charger points has attended our site to look into an intermittent issue that has been occurring in relation to one of our electric vans occasionally not completing a full charge. It does not appear to be an issue with the chargers. This is being investigated further.

The RFO reported that the grant for the EV chargers should be paid into our bank account in the next couple of weeks.

## NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

### 091/22-23 BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account period 1st April 2022 – 31st May 2022.

The payroll figure for April 2022 was £12,068.62 (9 staff) – this included some back-pay for two members of staff. The payroll figure for May 2022 was £11,415.72 (9 staff) – this reflects the reduction in hours of one member of staff from full time to two days per week, and another member of staff from four days to three days per week.

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

Councillor Sheridan **proposed**, Councillor Brereton **seconded** and Members **unanimously resolved** to approve the bank reconciliations.

## 092/22-23 CHESHIRE PENSION FUND

To note that Cheshire Pension Fund has started an awareness campaign for ‘My Cheshire Pension’, which is a self-serve portal for its members. The portal is due to launch in early 2023. This information has been circulated to staff who are in the pension fund.

## 093/22-23 MOBILE SPEED SIGN

The Administrative Assistant gave a presentation to Members regarding various options that are available for mobile speed signs:

### Summary

There have been many requests from residents for more to be done to help with the issue of speeding vehicles within the Birchwood area.

Within the Birchwood Town Council Strategy for 2021 one of the aims is to improve community safety (Birchwood Town Council Strategy, page 2, objective No 7).

### Current provisions

The Council has previously purchased a mobile speed awareness sign and there have been several ‘speed watches’ undertaken on various road in the area.

The original speed awareness sign purchased by BTC was a tripod-based sign that needed to be manned while in use as it could be easily tampered with or removed. The manning of the sign used to be done by the local PCSO. Unfortunately, while the device was in storage at the Police Station, some of the parts were misplaced and so the sign is not currently in full working order. The Police have undertaken to replace the missing parts and arrange for the sign to be serviced.

Regarding the manning of the sign, with the current demand within the Police force there is no available resource to take the sign out on site.

The Council has recently looked at ways in which it can help in reducing the ongoing issue of speeding on Birchwood’s roads.

### New speed awareness signs

The Council has indicated that they may wish to look at purchasing a sign or signs that better accommodates the community’s needs. There are many different types of Speed Awareness Signs on the market. Below are a few points to consider,

- Cost (is funding available?)
- Power options - battery/ solar?
- Manned or unmanned?
- Positioning?
- Data collection?

### Costs

As with any new purchase there will be a cost to incur. There are some potential avenues for funding to help facilitate the purchase of a new sign to explore.

- The PCC Community Fund
- National Lottery Awards for All fund
- Birchwood Town Council’s budget
- Local community groups
- Local businesses

Members were advised that with the PCC Community Fund, Birchwood Town Council will need to match fund any amount requested. If the Council wishes to consider the PCC Community Fund, then this will need to be agreed by the July meeting at the latest in order for the application to be completed before the September 2022 deadline.

There is also a possibility of working in partnership with local community groups to access funding for the speed awareness signs.

Members were asked to consider having a working party in order to complete the PCC Fund application. This will be confirmed at the July meeting.

#### Power options

There are options for mains, battery, or solar-powered signs. As the Council has been working towards becoming a greener Council, Members indicated that they would prefer the option for a solar-powered unit to be considered. The solar-powered options on the signs researched incur an additional cost (these are shown in a comparison table circulated to Members).

#### Manned or unmanned and positioning

As mentioned in 'current provision' the manning of sign(s) has become an issue, as the local Police force does not have the resources available.

All the signs in the comparison table have the option to be placed on already existing posts via brackets. This means that they can be located permanently in one place or can be taken down and moved around the area. This eliminates the need for a person to accompany the sign when in use.

If a sign is equipped with a data gathering option, the ability to move the sign to different locations would provide the Council with a better understanding of where the worst affected roads are and for providing evidence for future applications or proposals.

If the awareness signs are to be placed on WBC lighting columns, WBC might require that the specific columns be stress-tested.

#### Data Collection

The speed sign that the Council currently owns does not have the facility for collecting data, so just served as an awareness / reference point for drivers. All the new signs researched provide data collection. This function will allow the Council to gain a better understanding of when and where the most speeding incidents occur which will enable the Council to work on further potential plans for tackling this issue.

**Action** To make a decision at the July 2022 meeting re: submitting a grant application to the PCC, and the preferred specification of sign.

#### 094/22-23 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING/NOTING**

- (a) To note that Sharps Safety and Removal training has been booked for all the maintenance team, to take place on 12th October 2022 (£300 +VAT).
- (b) Received - various newsletters from SAS Daniels.
- (c) Received – from HMRC – Employer Bulletin: June 2022.

- (d) To receive the monthly reports from Yellowbus re: the BTC IT 'health' for May 2022. There are no issues to report. Officers will be having a 'catch-up' meeting with our account manager from Avoira on 27th June 2022.

We have received further notification from Avoira that the costs of hardware and software are continuing to rise due to the current economic climate.

- (e) To note that the monthly charges for our Waterplus bill a/c no. 4083867607 will increase in June 2022, from £81.32 to £97.40 (a rise of just over 19.77%).
- (f) To note that Officers have been looking into companies that can service our shredder. It is a high specification shredder that was purchased in May 2018, due to GDPR. It has been, and continues to be very well used.

A 'local' company has not replied, despite being chased.

A company based in Milton Keynes that has engineers established around the country has quoted £160.00 +VAT, plus parts. This company is recommended by the company that we purchased our shredder from, and it has good reviews.

To purchase a similar, replacement machine would cost in the region of around £680.00 +VAT. They will not part-exchange as, apparently, there is little value in second-hand shredders.

Officers would recommend having our current machine serviced – although we do not know if any replacement parts will be required.

Members discussed the options and **unanimously resolved** that the shredder should be serviced, rather than being replaced.

**Action** Clerk's office to arrange for the shredder to be serviced.

**This part of the meeting concluded at 7.55 pm**

**See additional document for pages 68-77**