

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL  
MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,  
HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE,  
ON TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

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

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

WBC Councillor Balding – attended in his capacity as a resident

**Apologies:** Councillor Allen (away), Councillor Atkin (health), Councillor Bowden (work)  
Councillor Evans (personal) and Councillor Reeves (away)

**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 Ellis – Birchwood Youth and Community Centre*

*Councillor Simcock – Birchwood Carnival Committee*

186/22-22 **SEPTEMBER 2022 PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Brereton **proposed**, Councillor Scott **seconded** and it was **resolved** that: The Minutes of the Part I Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting, held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

187/22-23 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule – (see pages 144 to 145 below).

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

**PROGRESS REPORT**

188/22-23 **LOCKING STUMPS – PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT**

The RFO gave Members a detailed update on the progress of the Locking Stumps play area refurbishment project. She advised Members that we have informed WBC of BTC's resolution to contribute £20,000 towards part-funding the project. The RFO added that we have been advised that Cllr Higgins, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Community at the Borough Council, has confirmed that WBC will be providing an additional £20,000 towards the project.

There may have to be some revision of the original proposals due to recent cost increases, particularly to oil-based products, such as the safety surfaces.

It has been suggested that previously proposed surface graphics, which would add another dimension of play to the area, might need to be removed from the initial plans.

The approximate cost of the proposed graphics was in the region of £3,000.

The RFO said that we have enquired what WBC's thoughts are on asking the children of Locking Stumps Primary School to suggest a formal name for the refurbished play area. She added that WBC Officers have indicated that they are open to the idea.

Cllr Brereton asked when the start date for this project was likely to be.

The RFO advised that there is no set start date so far.

WBC has already placed orders for some equipment, such as the new, inclusive roundabout, however, there are currently delays in the supply chain, which are beyond their control. This means that the lead time for obtaining the equipment is unknown, but is longer than it would normally be. In the meantime, weather conditions permitting, WBC may be able to undertake some preliminary ground and tree works.

The RFO said that weather conditions may also delay painting works and the pouring of safety surfaces, etc.

WBC has indicated they are hopeful that the refurbished play area will be open by Easter 2023. Conditions and supply chains permitting, they will work towards it being completed before that time.

#### 189/22-23 STREET LIGHTING

The RFO noted that we are still awaiting feedback from WBC regarding some street lighting queries that have been ongoing for several months and have been 'chased' several times.

Cllr Scott raised an additional issue regarding the lighting in Hamnett Court. He advised that he had not had any responses to emails he has sent to the landowner. It was noted that the issue is not just foliage blocking the lights; the lights are now not functioning.

#### 190/22-23 SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES

The RFO advised Members that BTC has now received a formal quotation from Elan City for the solar-powered speed indicator device (SID). The quote states the price of £2,972.32.

The quotation includes an additional mounting bar and solar panel mounting kit. Having mounting equipment pre-installed on an alternative post, at another site in the area, would be convenient if the Council wishes to potentially move the SID between two different locations

The quotation also includes an external battery charger, and an additional 2-year warranty.

Members discussed the quotation and **unanimously agreed** that they wished to include the additional mounting equipment, external battery charger and warranty.

A discussion took place regarding the proposed location of the first SID. It was noted that there are already some traffic calming measures along parts of Admirals Road, positioned either side of the pedestrian crossing, adjacent to Greenfinch Grove.

The RFO advised Members that the Town Council has to liaise with WBC regarding the positioning of the device, as they must approve the location and potentially check for underground services, etc. before any posts are installed.

The RFO stated that in order for an application for grant funding to be made to the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Community Action Fund by the closing date for applications, Members need to consider and approve the draft content.

The RFO reminded Members that a SID Working Party had been held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022. Notes of this meeting had been circulated to Members in their papers. At that meeting, draft answers to the questions in the grant application document were discussed and were presented for consideration at tonight's meeting (copies of these were also sent out in the papers).

As mentioned earlier in the evening, during the main meeting (see Minute 172/22-23 (a)) PCSO Palfrey has confirmed that support for the application will be provided by the local Police.

Members considered the notes of the SID Working Party Meeting and draft answers relating to the grant application document and **unanimously agreed** that the Clerk's office could finalise the document pack and submit the application.

**Action** Clerk's Office to finalise the application document pack and submit it to the PCC.

#### 191/22-23 **EXTERNAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS**

The RFO noted that, since the publication of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit (on our website and notice boards) no one has requested to inspect, in person, the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended March 2022.

The dates during which arrangements could be made for the AGAR to be inspected at the office were from 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 to 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022; however, they will remain available to view on BTC's website.

The RFO informed Members that the invoice from PKF Littlejohn LLP for their professional services regarding the external audit, has been paid (£800.00 +VAT).

#### 192/22-23 **MEMORIAL PLAQUE BIRCHWOOD FOREST PARK**

The RFO reported that the Clerk's office has contacted WBC to pledge a maximum contribution of £1,500 towards the proposed memorial plaque and information lectern, to honour the people who worked at the local Royal Ordnance factories in Risley during World War II. This will be funded from the earmarked Community Development reserves.

Arrangements for the supply and installation of the proposed memorial and lectern are being undertaken by WBC and are currently ongoing.

Members asked if there would be an unveiling ceremony for the memorial.

The RFO stated that although nothing has been formally discussed yet, she presumes that there will be some form of official unveiling.

#### 193/22-23 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING/NOTING**

- (a) The RFO advised Members that the HAVS, hearing and vision testing for the maintenance staff is booked to take place on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 (£378.00 +VAT).
- (b) As previously resolved, two poppy wreaths for Remembrance Day services were ordered (£100) and have been received.
- (c) The grant of £150.00 has been paid to Birchwood Lions to support the annual community Service of Remembrance. A note of thanks was received from the Lions.
- (d) To note that we have received confirmation of our annual renewal to the Information Commissioner's Office registry, and our certificate is being displayed accordingly.

## NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

### 194/22-23 BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account period 1st April 2022 – 30th September 2022.

The payroll figure for August 2022 (9 staff) was £11,602.38. The figure for September 2022 was £11,614.68.

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

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

### 195/22-23 GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING/NOTING

- (a) The RFO advised Members that we have received an early 'prompt' from Terrain – our specialist Health & Safety Consultants regarding services for 2023 (January to December). The amount quoted is £1,575.00 +VAT (total £1,890.00). This is the same amount paid for their 2022 services and includes the provision of several training courses for all staff.

The RFO asked Members to consider retaining the services of Terrain as BTC's specialist Health & Safety Consultants for 2023.

Members discussed the services offered by Terrain and **resolved** to retain their services as our specialist Health & Safety Consultants for 2023.

- (b) The RFO reported that ESI were called out to check our fire alarm system due to an intermittent 'general fault' (£85.00). The fault has now been rectified.
- (c) The RFO informed Members that BTC's stock of (139) stamps have been sent to the Royal Mail to swap them for the new versions. The replacement stamps are due to arrive within the next couple of weeks.

### 196/22-23 BUDGET, STRATEGY AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- (a) The RFO presented the estimated projections regarding the end of year balances for the 2022/2023 financial year and for 2023/2024 (sheet 1 – see following page 135).

The RFO advised that these projections include, and are based on, the earmarked reserves agreed for the 2022/2023 financial year (£161,456.00). The earmarked reserves differences for the 2023/2024 options (see sheet 3) are therefore compared against this amount.

The current projected expenditure (£326,600.00) remains as an estimated amount, based on half-yearly figures plus the expectation of agreed expenditure within this financial year on two community-based projects: the improvement of a play area in Locking Stumps and the installation of a memorial in Birchwood Forest Park, to remember the people who worked at the Royal Ordnance Factories in Risley during World War II. In addition, it is expected that, if resolved by Council, the boiler in Parkers Farm will be replaced prior to the end of the 2022/2023 financial year. This will be accounted for under the 'Parkers Farm Estate' budget line.

Sheet 1			
Oct-22			
<b>Birchwood Town Council</b>			
<b>Projection - Year End March 2023 Balances (rounded)</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
Balances B/F March 2022		£ 303,771.00	(Audited)
Precept 22-23		£ 367,625.00	
General Income		£ 1,660.00	
	Total:	£ 673,056.00	
<b>Expenditure</b>			
See Budget Schedule A			
Projected Expenditure 2022/2023		£ 326,600.00	
Balances C/F		£ 346,456.00	
6 months Cash flow		£ 185,000.00	
<b>Reserves /Earmarked:</b>			
Elections		£ 16,000.00	
Vehicles/Equipment		£ 75,000.00	
Community Development		£ 40,000.00	
Contingency fund (new)		£ 30,456.00	
		£ 161,456.00	
<i>Total cash flow plus earmarked reserves:</i>		£ 346,456.00	

- (b) Members were asked to receive and consider (sheet 2) Schedule A – Year-End Projected Outturn 2022/2023 and Financial Projection for 2023/2024 and 2024/2025.

The RFO asked Members to consider the estimated budget expenditure options for 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. The RFO stated that she has estimated what she thinks are realistic amounts of potential expenditure for the next two financial years. She added that given the current Consumer Prices Index (CPI) which rose by 10.1% in the 12 months to September 2022 and the overall uncertainty regarding the current economic climate, it is difficult to give more considered figures at the present time.

Members considered the figures presented and the RFO briefly explained the reasoning behind the increases or otherwise on each line, including the following:

The RFO advised that the increase proposed in the Item 3 line - 'Employment costs' is largely due to the rise in the Living Wage, as set by the Living Wage Foundation from £9.90 per hour to £10.90 per hour (if approved by Councillors for 2023/2024). BTC currently applies the Living Wage rate to the wages of six members of staff. It is proposed that an equivalent percentage rise will be applied to the Maintenance Team Supervisor's salary.

Negotiations remain ongoing between three unions regarding the local government pay offer for 2022/2023. The outcome of these negotiations will affect proposed wage rises for Officers for 2022/2023 (if approved by Council) which will be backdated to April 2022.

The local government pay offer for 2023/2024 will not be known, possibly until later in 2023. The amount in this budget line still also includes the potential for an additional member of the maintenance team.

Members were informed that the reduction in the 'Parkers Farm Estate' line, Item 9, was due to the fact that there are only 5 years left on the term of the mortgage and so the interest has reduced.

The proposed increase for Item 7 – Town Council Elections for 2024/2025 is because there will be elections taking place that year. An earmarked reserve for elections will still be maintained in case of any unexpected vacancies occurring.

Sheet 2						
Schedule A						Oct-22
BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL						
YEAR-END PROJECTED OUTTURN 2022/2023						
AND FINANCIAL PROJECTION FOR 2023/2024 AND 2024/2025						
ITEM NO.	EXPENDITURE ITEM	BUDGET 2022/2023	PROJECTED EXPENDITURE OUTTURN 2022/2023	BUDGET ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE 2023/2024	BUDGET ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE 2024/2025	
1	General and Water Rates/Gas/Electric	£ 6,500	£ 4,500	£ 7,000	£ 7,000	
2	Insurance/Subs/Fees/Car Tax/Bank Charges	£ 17,500	£ 17,000	£ 19,000	£ 20,000	
3	Employment costs (inc employer NI & superannuation)	£ 265,000	£ 220,000	£ 275,000	£ 285,000	
4A	Civic - Chairman's Allowance	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	
4B	Civic - Newsletter	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	£ 1,000	
4C	Councillors Allowances/Expenses	NIL	nil	NIL	NIL	
5	Town Council Revenue Expenditure (inc. cleaning services)	£ 40,500	£ 35,000	£ 45,000	£ 45,000	
6	Community Developments/Projects	* £ 5,000	£ 22,000	£ 5,000	£ 5,000	
7	Town Council Elections	£ 2,000	£ 2,000	£ 1,500	£ 6,000	
8	Grants	£ 5,000	£ 3,000	£ 5,000	£ 5,000	
9	Parkers Farm Estate/Maintenance/Equipment fund	£ 5,000	£ 1,000	£ 5,000	£ 5,000	
10	Loans inc. Mortgage Fund for Parkers Farm Estate	£ 20,000	£ 20,100	£ 19,300	£ 18,500	
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>£ 368,500</b>	<b>£ 326,600</b>	<b>£ 383,800</b>	<b>£ 398,500</b>	

\*£5,000 from budget & £17,000 from earmarked community development reserves

The RFO reminded Members that at this stage in the budget process, the figures in Schedule A are for consideration only, and can be amended as per Council resolutions.

The RFO asked Members to consider if there are any figures on Schedule A that they specifically wish to amend at this point in time.

Members did not have any immediate suggestions.

The RFO stated that if Members do have any suggestions prior to the Budget and Precept Meeting in November, to email them to her, so that they can be considered for possible inclusion in more up-to-date figures.

- (c) The RFO presented to Members (sheet 3) projections for 2023/2024 with precept options and their effects ranging from a 0% to 5% increase. A separate sheet circulated to Members (sheet 4) illustrated the potential effect on earmarked reserves of the various options. The RFO reminded Members that last year the Council increased the BTC portion of the precept by 2.5%.

The RFO said that projections on sheet 3 are based on the estimated 2023/2024 budget expenditure, from Schedule A, being in the region of £383,800.00. Five precept increase option illustrations have been calculated ranging from 0% increase to a 5% increase (with the exception of a 1% increase).

In all cases, the effect on earmarked reserves shows a reduction in the amount available to maintain in reserves, ranging from -£57,200.00 to -£38,173.75.

The local (BTC) portion of the precept for a Band D property is currently £117.19. A 2% increase would add an additional £2.34 per year. A 5% increase would be approximately an additional £5.86 per year – or around 11 pence per week.

OCT-22 - Sheet 3

Birchwood Town Council Projection - Year End March 2023 Balances		Projection for 2023 to 2024 if Precept is increased Five options 0% 2%, 3%, 4% or 5%				
Income		0% Increase	2% Increase	3% Increase	4% Increase	5% Increase
Balances B/F March 2022	£ 303,771.00	£ 303,771.00	£ 304,476.00	£ 304,476.00	£ 304,476.00	£ 304,476.00
Precept 22-23	£ 367,625.00	£ 367,625.00	£ 374,977.50	£ 378,653.75	£ 382,330.00	£ 386,006.25
General Income approx. (bank interest & other)	£ 1,660.00	£ 1,660.00	£ 1,600.00	£ 1,600.00	£ 1,600.00	£ 1,600.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£ 673,056.00</b>	<b>£ 673,056.00</b>	<b>£ 681,053.50</b>	<b>£ 684,729.75</b>	<b>£ 688,406.00</b>	<b>£ 692,082.25</b>
Expenditure						
See Budget Schedule A						
Projected Expenditure: 22-23	£ 326,600.00	£ 383,800.00	£ 383,800.00	£ 383,800.00	£ 383,800.00	£ 383,800.00
Projected March 2023 Balances C/F	£ 346,456.00	£ 289,256.00	£ 297,253.50	£ 300,929.75	£ 304,606.00	£ 308,282.25
Less 6 months Cash flow	£ 185,000.00	£ 185,000.00	£ 185,000.00	£ 185,000.00	£ 185,000.00	£ 185,000.00
Therefore projected Reserves / Earmarked funds available	£ 161,456.00	£ 104,256.00	£ 112,253.50	£ 115,929.75	£ 119,606.00	£ 123,282.25
Effect on current projected 23/24 Reserves/Earmarked funds available		0% -£ 57,200.00	2% -£ 49,202.50	3% -£ 45,526.25	4% -£ 41,850.00	5% -£ 38,173.75

OCT 22 - Sheet 4

Reserves /Earmarked: 2022/2023 Reserves		Effect on Earmarked Reserves of Various Precept Increases if Budget Estimate for 2023/2024 is £383,800.00				
		2023/2024 Reserves (examples - amounts can be shared differently)				
		0%	2%	3%	4%	5%
Elections	£ 16,000.00	£ 9,000.00	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00
Vehicles/Equipment	£ 75,000.00	£ 55,000.00	£ 55,000.00	£ 55,000.00	£ 57,000.00	£ 59,000.00
Community Projects	£ 40,000.00	£ 15,000.00	£ 22,000.00	£ 22,000.00	£ 22,000.00	£ 22,000.00
Contingency fund	£ 30,456.00	£ 25,256.00	£ 25,253.50	£ 28,929.75	£ 31,606.00	£ 32,282.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 161,456.00</b>	<b>£ 104,256.00</b>	<b>£ 112,253.50</b>	<b>£ 115,929.75</b>	<b>£ 120,606.00</b>	<b>£ 123,282.25</b>

The RFO commented that the distribution of reserves can be altered; these amounts are to be resolved by the Council.

- (d) The RFO asked Members whether they wished, at this point in time, to offer any guidance on a precept increase level option or options in order that more specific figures can be presented and a recommendation be made at the November 2022 meeting, with a formal precept decision required at the December 2022 meeting at the latest.

The RFO added that the Borough Council usually requires precept requirements from local Councils to be submitted to them around mid-January, which is before BTC's January 2023 meeting date.

The RFO reminded Members that we have not yet received the 2023/2024 Band D figures from Warrington Borough Council on which our tax base will be calculated.

The RFO has enquired when these might be received, but has not yet received a response.

The Band D figures, once received, may affect the amount available for budgeting and/or earmarked reserves going forward.

Members **unanimously resolved** to wait until the Band D figures have been received from WBC before further considering the options presented by the RFO at tonight's meeting.

Cllr Scott commented that it has now become more important to meet with the Maintenance Team Supervisor, prior to formally setting the budget and precept figures for 2023/2024, to understand what areas the Council may wish to prioritise in relation to funding environmental work.

The RFO reported that the Maintenance Team Supervisor has been on annual leave, but she will now arrange the meeting to take place as soon as possible.

**Action** Clerk's office to arrange a meeting with Councillors and the Maintenance Team Supervisor.

#### 197/22-23 **SPECIFIC ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION – EARMARKED RESERVES**

(a) **BTC Vehicles**

Although a decision has been made to defer the purchase of a second tipper, the RFO recommended maintaining the Vehicles/Equipment earmarked reserves at a realistic level.

The RFO advised Members that the current tipper has just had a full service.

The advisory note has indicated that the subframe requires replacing due to some damage. If the subframe is not replaced, the location of the damage will affect the ability to track the front tyres.

The RFO stated that the cost of this work is currently unknown. She added that she will make enquiries regarding this matter.

Members agreed with the RFO's recommendation that a relatively high level of funding needs to be maintained in the earmarked reserves for Vehicles/Equipment.

**Action** The RFO to make enquires regarding the cost of the work needed on the current tipper.



(b) **Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)**

See also minute 190/22-23 above.

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, the RFO had circulated the formal quotation from Elan City to Members. The cost quoted for a single solar-powered speed indicator device from Elan City is £2,972.32 (without any grant funding).

The RFO reminded Members that the quote includes the cost of an additional mounting bar and additional mounting kit for the solar panel and an external battery charger, and an additional 2-year warranty.

Members wished to continue with the inclusion of these additions within the quote.

The RFO stated that any SIDs could be funded, if necessary, from the earmarked Community Project reserves.

WBC has indicated that they will supply and install the post(s) free of charge.

Previously, the Council has indicated that its ongoing plan is for additional SIDs to be installed over the next few years, in a total of at least five locations in Birchwood. The RFO asked Members how many additional SIDs they wish to include in the budget for the 2023/2024 financial year.

Members **unanimously resolved** that one additional SID should be included in the budget figures for 2023/2024.

(c) **Benches**

The RFO reported that a desire for additional benches on the Brook Footpath and Ordnance Avenue has been noted from comments made by some residents. As it is likely that these would be located on WBC land, any benches would need to be installed with their permission and in line with WBC's preferred designs/materials, etc.

If there are any proposals for a bench on YHG land (parts of Ordnance Avenue on the Redshank Lane side of the road) these would have to be considered separately.

The RFO stated that a WBC Officer has advised that the cost of supplying and installing an 'ordinary' bench (with no memorial plaque) is in the region of £1,300. They must be installed adjacent to a 'solid' footpath and have an extended hard standing pad at one end of the bench, to enable people on mobility scooters, in wheelchairs, with prams, etc., to rest.

WBC has indicated that they would not approve installing benches close to any residential properties. This is due to the potential for a bench to become a 'gathering place'.

If proposed locations can be identified, marked on a map and sent to WBC, they will then be able to advise if they are too close to homes, whether there are underground services that might prevent the installation of a bench, or whether it is possible to install a bench at that location.

The RFO stated that the installation of any benches would probably need to be funded from the earmarked Community Project reserves.

Cllr Brereton asked if it would be possible for benches/picnic tables to be placed on the Village Green, off Ainscough Road.

The RFO advised that the landowner of the Village Green is YHG. If YHG was amenable to the installation of picnic benches on the Village Green, they would probably be required to conduct a consultation with the local residents because the benches would be situated close to residential properties.

(d) **Bus Shelters**

The RFO reported that Cllr Ellis has been liaising with WBC to try to obtain costs for replacing the two BTC bus shelters in Locking Stumps as part of a wider bus shelter replacement programme.

The RFO said that, having looked online, very basic small freestanding bus shelters without any seating, start in the region of £1,700. The cost of maintenance would also have to be factored in – replacement panel costs, cleaning graffiti, etc., if BTC were to purchase its ‘own’.

The RFO commented that bus shelters would need to be funded from the earmarked Community Project reserves.

It was noted that the replacement shelters currently being installed in the area are provided by a third party contractor and are funded by advertising on/in the shelters.

It was suggested that the two BTC bus shelters in Locking Stumps may require some significant maintenance in the near future.

(e) **Boiler**

The RFO confirmed that the Clerk’s office requested quotations from three different companies regarding a new boiler. The current boiler needs regularly re-pressurising and at the last service a replacement part was very difficult to find.

Two plumbers have advised that the current boiler will only be working at around 65% - 75% efficiency. A replacement will have to be (by law) a condenser boiler but will be 90% plus efficient.

Two companies submitted quotations, the third has not responded. There were four options submitted in total. These were presented to Members in an anonymised format.

Both companies independently quoted for Baxi combination boiler options and horizontal flue assembly (full details were circulated to Members for information via email). One company also quoted for a Main boiler (although the warranty was half that of the Baxi options).

The RFO commented that although Cllr Allen was unable to attend tonight’s meeting, he had sent an email stating that he, personally, would choose ‘Company A’ with the Baxi 630 plus both additional options, i.e. a magnetic filter (which includes an additional 3-year guarantee) and a wireless digistat controller.

The RFO added that, having made enquiries about the options and the difference between the Baxi 630 and 830, apparently, the addition of the two options to a Baxi 630 is the equivalent of purchasing the Baxi 830. Both options would have a 10-year parts and labour warranty.

Following consideration of the quotations, Members **unanimously resolved** that the Baxi 830 would be the better option, and asked that 'Company A' be invited to supply and install the boiler.

The total cost quoted was £2,030.00.

The RFO informed Members that if the boiler is replaced this year, funding is available within the Parkers Farm Estate budget line. The RFO advised that the prices are likely to continue to rise.

Members **unanimously resolved** that the boiler be replaced within this year's budget.

**Action** Clerk's Office to arrange the fitting of the new boiler.

(f) **Birchwood Carnival**

The RFO stated that although the Carnival Committee is committed to trying to make future events self-funding, BTC has previously supported this community event both financially, with grant funding, and with staff resources and time.

Previously BTC has funded the marquee, tables and chairs and portaloos (in the region of £2,000). A different marquee hire company was used for the 2022 carnival, which was more expensive, but offered a better service and better-quality furniture. The Carnival Committee has advised that additional portaloos may be required for the next event.

Members were asked to consider whether they wish to continue to support Birchwood Carnival with grant funding and, if so, if there would be a maximum level of funding they would potentially award. This will have to be taken into account when setting the grant budget for 2023/2024.

Members **unanimously resolved**, that if requested by the Carnival Committee, BTC would be minded to award grant funding towards next year's carnival, with a maximum limit set at £2,500 for the event.

(g) **Wildflowers**

The RFO reported that, mainly due to adverse weather conditions, the 2022 wildflowers had a very poor showing (as was the case in 2021). There has been some late flowering, but not all beds flourished.

The RFO suggested that perhaps the Council might wish to consider not funding a wildflower scheme in 2023 – but to leave the areas sown this year to 'rewild' and see if any may have self-seeded. This would mean not mowing the plots where they were sown this year. The RFO added that the quote for this year's scheme (2022) was around £730 +VAT.

Members discussed the options and decided that they would still like to see a few areas sown with wildflowers.

Members **unanimously resolved** that they would like wildflowers to be sown in three new locations, with a maximum spend of £600 on the scheme for 2023.

**Action** Clerk's Office to liaise with WBC regarding wildflowers for the 2023 financial year.

(h) **Rewilding**

The RFO informed Members that the plots that were left to 'rewild' this year did not appear to produce any flowering plants. It seemed to be mainly tall, scrubby grasses and non-flowering weeds that grew.

The removal of the arisings once WBC had flailed these areas was very time consuming and utilised a lot of staff resources for several days, during which time other work, such as litter picking, had to be delayed.

The RFO asked Members if they wish to leave these plots uncut again this year to see if there is a better result in year two.

Members **unanimously resolved** to continue with the current rewilding scheme to see if any native plants or wildflowers show any sign of having naturalised in these plots over the next year.

(i) **Staff Resources**

See also minute 195/22-23 (b) and 195/22-23 (d).

The RFO confirmed the decision made by the Council to defer the appointment of an additional Maintenance Team Officer given the current national economic climate, unless unexpected circumstances, such as a staff member leaving, arise, or it becomes necessary in order for the Council to continue offering a certain level of service (to be determined by the Council).

As resolved earlier in the meeting, the Clerk's office will arrange a meeting with Councillors and the Maintenance Team Supervisor.

(j) **Other Projects**

The RFO asked if Members have any other suggestions or projects in mind for consideration, e.g., some form of event to mark the Coronation of King Charles III, that will affect the budgeting and precept decisions for the 2023/2024 financial year.

The RFO stated that Members need to be mindful that any funding for such events, will have to be funded by earmarked Community Project reserves. There are already several 'projects' mentioned above, including speed indicator devices and benches, that are likely to require funding from the same reserve.

A suggestion was made that perhaps local children could be encouraged to make bunting.

Cllr Brereton enquired about £50 donations towards street parties.

A query was raised as to whether The Friends of Birchwood Forest Park might be arranging some form of event that BTC might wish to contribute to.

(k) **Elections**

The RFO recommended that, as WBC offers an option to pay for elections over a number of years, the Elections earmarked reserve could be reduced slightly. This reserve is in place mainly to cover the potential of unexpected casual vacancies, should they occur. She added that she would also recommend increasing the amount on the Income and Expenditure budget line for 2024/2025 which will be an election year.

Members **agreed** to the recommendations proposed by the RFO.

(l) **Room Hire – Meeting Room**

The RFO asked Members to consider the hiring out of the relatively small meeting room during working hours in relation to public use. The RFO advised that the money received in rent is minimal at £5 an hour. It was noted that having members of the public in the building can be a distraction for the Town Council office staff, it also prevents the Council or Officers from using the room for daytime meetings.

Members discussed the use of the community room.

It was **unanimously resolved** to retain the room for Town Council use only.

(m) **Tenancy Fees**

*Cllr Ellis declared an interest, as the Chair of the Trustees of Birchwood Youth and Community Centre (BYCC).*

The RFO asked Members if they were happy with the annual amount of £1.00 set as the ‘peppercorn’ rent for BYCC.

Members **unanimously resolved** that the peppercorn rent for BYCC should remain at the current level of £1.00 per annum.

198/22-23 **BUDGET AND PRECEPT MEETING**

- (a) To note that Finance Part I of the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 meeting will be mainly for further formal Budget, Strategy and Precept considerations and decisions.
- (b) Members were asked if they wish to have a December 2022 meeting, in order to formalise the precept decision. If not, the formal Precept decision will need to be made at the November meeting – the date of which could be pushed back by one week if necessary.

The RFO stated that if Members do wish to have a December meeting, in order to avoid Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2022, which is a Bank Holiday the date will need to be brought forward to either 13<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

Members **unanimously resolved** that they do wish to have a December meeting and to bring the date of the December meeting forward to the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

199/22-23 **PART II MATTERS**

Members of the public (including the press) are excluded from Part II of the meeting by reason of exempt information considered in the course of the following item of business being within a Category of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

As the Finance Part II meeting was to follow on from this point in the meeting and some of the business on the agenda would involve discussions that might affect the Administrative Assistant directly, she was asked to leave the meeting.

Cllr Balding also left the meeting. Members thanked Cllr Balding for attending.

**This part of the meeting concluded at 8.00pm**

**Payment of Accounts:**

**Resolved: that the following payments be approved as the residual July 2022, all of August and part of the September 2022 accounts**

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
15.07.2022	DD	Financial Direct Fees	Online banking charges (re: June 2022)	£ 41.20		£ 41.20
20.07.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers, equipment)	£ 161.55	£ 32.29	£ 193.84
20.07.2022	*	ChALC	Training course (HV)	£ 25.00		£ 25.00
21.07.2022	DD	E-on Next	Electricity - Locking Stumps MUGA	£ 8.85	£ 0.44	£ 9.29
22.07.2022	*	Risley MOT & Truck LTD	HK64 NNM - replaced O/S window regulator	£ 228.19	£ 45.64	£ 273.83
22.07.2020	*	S&S Marquees Ltd	Marquee, tables & chairs hire - Grant Birchwood Carniva	£ 1,675.50	£ 335.10	£ 2,010.60
(Local Government & Rating Act 1972 (Section 145) (Provision of Entertainment and Support of the Arts))						
25.07.2022	*	Viking	Stationery	£ 237.50	£ 47.50	£ 285.00
25.07.2022	*	PREMclean	Cleaning Services July 2022 (1 missed clean credited)	£ 412.60	£ 82.52	£ 495.12
27.07.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers, equipment)	£ 116.36	£ 23.27	£ 139.63
28.07.2022	DD	Firstcom Europe	Office phone charges	£ 71.51	£ 14.30	£ 85.81
29.07.2022	DD	Copyrite	Photocopying charges	£ 39.80	£ 7.96	£ 47.76
01.08.2022	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastew ater services (4083868280)	£ 26.72		£ 26.72
01.08.2022	DD	James Todd (Go Cardless)	Payroll services	£ 54.00	£ 10.80	£ 64.80
01.08.2022	*	HMRC	Tax £1,317.80 NI £1,905.62 (6 July 2022 to 5 August 20	£ 3,223.42		£ 3,223.42
01.08.2022	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Pension contributions Eee £811.46 Eer £2,867.90	£ 3,679.36		£ 3,679.36
03.08.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers, equipment)	£ 90.13	£ 18.02	£ 108.15
04.08.2022	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 93.45		£ 93.45
05.08.2022	*	F. McDonald	Reimburse - Petty cash float	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
08.08.2022	*	August 2022 Wages	9 staff	£ 11,602.38		£ 11,602.38
08.08.2022	*	Clr D Ellis	Part 2 of 2 Chair's Allowance	£ 250.00		£ 250.00
09.08.2022	DD	BNP Paribas Leasing	First payments re: New Photocopier lease	£ 515.00	£ 103.00	£ 618.00
10.08.2022	DD	BNP Paribas Leasing	Old photocopier end of lease owed	£ 40.00	£ 8.00	£ 48.00
12.08.2022	DD	Waterplus	Water/w astew ater services (4083867607)	£ 97.40		£ 97.40
12.08.2022	*	ESI	6-monthly fire maintenance service	£ 160.00	£ 32.00	£ 192.00
15.08.2022	DD	SWALEC	Electricity - Parkers Farm	£ 483.56	£ 24.17	£ 507.73
15.08.2022	DD	Financial Direct Fees	Online banking charges (re: July 2022)	£ 38.80		£ 38.80
16.08.2022	DD	Avoira	IT support, backups, internet services (4 x inv.)	£ 234.68	£ 46.94	£ 281.62
17.08.2022	DD	Avanti Gas	Gas - Parkers Farm (credit applied)	£ 1.10	£ 0.06	£ 1.16
17.08.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment)	£ 140.57	£ 28.11	£ 168.68
23.08.2022	DD	E-on Next	Electricity - Locking Stumps MUGA	£ 9.22	£ 0.46	£ 9.68
23.08.2022	*	Risley MOT & Truck	HK64 NNM - replace starter motor	£ 207.45	£ 41.49	£ 248.94
24.08.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment)	£ 83.85	£ 16.76	£ 100.61
30.08.2022	CHQ	Post Office Ltd	Vehicle Licence HK64 NNM (chq 501898)	£ 290.00		£ 290.00
30.08.2022	CHQ	Post Office Ltd	Vehicle Licence PO51 WLE (chq 501899)	£ 290.00		£ 290.00
30.08.2022	DD	James Todd (Go cardless)	Payroll services (July 2022)	£ 60.00	£ 12.00	£ 72.00
30.08.2022	DD	Firstcom Europe	Office phone charges	£ 71.51	£ 14.30	£ 85.81
31.08.2022	CHQ	J Shelley (Executor)	Estate of G Crowe back pay owed CHQ 501897	£ 112.20		£ 112.20
31.08.2022	DD	Copyrite	Photocopying charges	£ 70.93	£ 14.18	£ 85.11
31.08.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment)	£ 117.00	£ 23.39	£ 140.39
01.09.2022	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastew ater services (4083868280)	£ 26.72		£ 26.72
01.09.2022	*	HMRC	Tax £1,465.80 NI £1,903.33 (6 Aug 2022 to 5 Sept 2022	£ 3,369.13		£ 3,369.13
01.09.2022	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Pension contributions Eee £810.98 Eer £2,866.16	£ 3,677.14		£ 3,677.14
05.09.2022	DD	LEVL (now paid by DD)	Geotab Pro Plus (July monthly subscription)	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
05.09.2022	DD	LEVL	Geotab Pro Plus (August monthly subscription)	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
05.09.2022	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 159.87		£ 159.87
06.09.2022	*	St John Ambulance	3 x First Aid training courses (MA, IS & PT)	£ 740.00	£ 148.00	£ 888.00
07.09.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment)	£ 58.16	£ 11.63	£ 69.79
07.09.2022	*	Risley MOT & Truck	HK64 NNM - MOT	£ 55.00		£ 55.00
07.09.2022	*	September 2022 Wages	9 staff	£ 11,614.86		£ 11,614.86
12.09.2022	DD	Waterplus	Water/w astew ater services (4083867607)	£ 97.40		£ 97.40
12.09.2022	DD	Public Works Loan Board	Loan repayment re: PW487017	£ 10,090.00		£ 10,090.00
12.09.2022	*	C Caddock	Reimburse - re: flower wreath in Remembrance of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (laid at B/W Memorial)	£ 79.10	£ 15.90	£ 95.00
14.09.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment)	£ 30.18	£ 6.03	£ 36.21
14.09.2022	*	Arco	PPE and workwear (3 x invoices)	£ 336.15	£ 67.23	£ 403.38
15.09.2022	DD	Financial Direct Fees	Online banking charges	£ 42.00		£ 42.00
16.09.2022	DD	Avoira (formerly Yellow bus)	IT support, backups, internet services (4 x inv.)	£ 234.68	£ 46.94	£ 281.62
16.09.2022	*	PREMclean	Cleaning Services August and September 2022	£ 893.96	£ 178.80	£ 1,072.76
19.09.2022	DD	Avanti Gas	Gas - Parkers Farm	£ 15.87	£ 0.79	£ 16.66

Payments of Account since 20th September 2022

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
21.09.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment)	£ 70.84	£ 14.17	£ 85.01
21.09.2022	DD	E-on Next	Electricity - Locking Stumps MJGA	£ 9.53	£ 0.48	£ 10.01
22.09.2022	DD	Financial Direct Fees	Online banking charges (correct amount)	£ 39.00		£ 39.00
				£ -		
27.09.2022	*	Reimburse Mrs McDonald	Petty cash float	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
27.09.2022	*	Reimburse Mrs Caddock	Superdeal Imports Ltd - antibac w ipes	£ 11.86	£ 2.37	£ 14.23
27.09.2022	*	Reimburse Mrs Caddock	Amazon - duct tape	£ 3.91	£ 0.78	£ 4.69
27.09.2022	*	Reimburse Mrs Caddock	Amazon seller - anti slip, high traction hazard tape	£ 14.16	£ 2.83	£ 16.99
27.09.2022	*	Reimburse Mrs Caddock	Connect Distribution Services Ltd - fridge bulb	£ 3.77	£ 0.76	£ 4.53
27.09.2022	*	Reimburse Mrs Caddock	Amazon - handw ash x 12	£ 10.00	£ 2.00	£ 12.00
28.09.2022	*	Risley MOT & Truck Ltd	PO51WLE - MOTs, welding repairs, two new tyres	£ 699.06	£ 119.82	£ 818.88
28.09.2022	*	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Limited Assurance Review of Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year ended 31 March 2022	£ 800.00	£ 160.00	£ 960.00
				£ -		
28.09.2022	*	Elite Industrial Supplies (aka HiVis)	Workwear and PPE	£ 393.75	£ 78.76	£ 472.51
28.09.2022	DD	Firstcom Europe	Office phone charges	£ 71.51	£ 14.30	£ 85.81
29.09.2022	*	Birchwood Lions	Grant - annual community Service of Remembrance	£ 150.00		£ 150.00
29.09.2022	*	C Caddock	Contribution to glasses (VDU work) as per FR 19.1	£ 137.00		£ 137.00
30.09.2022	DD	James Todd (Go Cardless)	Payroll services	£ 60.00	£ 12.00	£ 72.00
30.09.2022	*	IDEA Current Account	Green Book - updated 2022 - pdf version	£ 83.33	£ 16.67	£ 100.00
03.10.2022	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 26.72		£ 26.72
03.10.2022	DD	LEVL	Geotab Pro Plus (July monthly subscription)	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
03.10.2022	*	HMRC	Tax £1,219.80 Nil £1,909.08 (6 Sept 2022 to 5 Oct 2022)	£ 3,128.88		£ 3,128.88
03.10.2022	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Pension contributions Eee £812.16 Eer £2,870.50	£ 3,682.66		£ 3,682.66
04.10.2022	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 159.87		£ 159.87
05.10.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment)	£ 63.33	£ 12.67	£ 76.00
05.10.2022	*	E Smith & Son	Hanging baskets, compost, summer plants for planters	£ 551.25	£ 110.25	£ 661.50
05.10.2022	*	Matco Direct	Mat cleaning Oct 22 - March 2023	£ 210.00	£ 42.00	£ 252.00
06.10.2022	*	Arco	2 x pair driving gloves size 9	£ 15.94	£ 3.19	£ 19.13
07.10.2022	*	October 2022 Wages	9 staff	£ 11,606.97		£ 11,606.97
12.10.2022	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans and equipment)	£ 50.26	£ 10.05	£ 60.31
13.10.2022	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 97.40		£ 97.40

Payments of accounts for approval at the October 2022 meeting

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
all tbc	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 159.87		£ 159.87
	DD	Telesis	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	tbc		
	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 26.72		£ 26.72
	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 97.40		£ 97.40
	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	tbc		tbc
	DD	Avoira	IT support, backups, internet services (4 x inv.) July 2022	£ 234.68	£ 46.94	£ 281.62
	DD	James Todd	September 2022 payroll fee	£ 54.00	£ 10.80	£ 64.80
	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 9.63	£ 0.48	£ 10.11
	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans and equipment)	tbc		
	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 14.23	£ 2.85	£ 17.08
	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Pension contributions re: Oct 2022 Eee £811.46 Eer £2,867.90	£ 3,679.36		£ 3,679.36
	*	HMRC	Tax £1,217.80 Nil £1,905.62 (6 Oct 2022 to 5 Nov 2022)	£ 3,123.42		£ 3,123.42
	*	Premiclean	Cleaning services October 2022	£ 446.98	£ 89.40	£ 536.38
	*	HiVis (Elite Industrial Supplies)	Workwear (2 x polo shirts from back-order)	£ 10.60	£ 2.12	£ 12.72
	DD	Information Commissioner	Annual Data Protection fee renewal	£ 35.00		£ 35.00
	DD	LEVL	Geotab Pro Plus (monthly subscription) September 2022	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 35.25	£ 7.05	£ 42.30
	*	Lexis Nexis	Arnold Baker - Local Council Administration - 13ED	£ 164.00		£ 164.00
	DD	Avanti Gas	Gas - Parkers Farm Sept 2022	£ 22.80	£ 1.14	£ 23.94
	DD	Screw fix (B&Q a/c)	Floor paint and paint rollers	£ 46.25	£ 9.25	£ 55.50
	*	Reimburse C Caddock	Poppy wreaths - supply and donation	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
	*	The Bas Group	6 x employee health screening - HAVS, hearing & vision	£ 378.00	£ 75.60	£ 453.60
	*	Broxap	6 x replacement bin covers + lock & key, 2 x bin liners	£ 822.00	£ 164.40	£ 986.40
	*	E Smith & Son	Winter planter plants and compost	tbc		
	DD	BNP Paribas	Photocopier Rental	£ 170.00	£ 34.00	£ 204.00