

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE PART I COUNCIL MEETING
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE
ON TUESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 2024

Present: Councillor Ellis in the Chair
Councillors Atkin, Ball, Reeves, Sheridan (part of meeting) and Simcock
Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk/RFO – Mrs. C. Caddock
Administrative Assistant – Mrs. H. Thomas
1 resident

Apologies: Councillors Allman, Brereton (personal) and Price (work)

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 & Community Centre (Chair of Trustees)
Councillors Atkin and Simcock – Birchwood Carnival Committee
Councillor Reeves – One Community Trust (spouse is Chair of Trustees)

189/24-25 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule – (see pages 110 to 112 below).

Councillor Reeves **proposed** that the payment of accounts be approved; This proposal was **seconded** by Councillor Simcock **and** was **unanimously resolved** by those Members present.

190/24-25 **SEPTEMBER 2024 PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Simcock **proposed**, Councillor Ball **seconded**, and it was **unanimously resolved** that: the Minutes of the Part I Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting, held on 24th September 2024, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

191/24-25 **OCTOBER 2024 PRE-BUDGET AND PRECEPT WORKING PARTY MEETING NOTES**

(a) Councillor Atkin **proposed**, Councillor Ball **seconded**, and it was **unanimously resolved** that: the notes of the Pre-Budget and Precept Working Party Meeting, held on 8th October 2024, be approved as an accurate record and be signed by the Chair.

(b) To resolve to incorporate the Working Party Meeting Notes into the November Minutes.
It was **proposed** by Councillor Atkin, **seconded** by Councillor Reeves and **unanimously resolved** that the Working Party Meeting Notes be incorporated within the November 2024 Minutes of the Budget, Strategy and Precept Meeting (Minute 204/24-25).

192/24-25 **PROGRESS FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL ITEMS**

The majority of items previously discussed under this section will, at this meeting, be discussed under Budget and Precept Meeting part of this agenda.

193/24-25 **WEBSITE**

The RFO stated that the new website has gone ‘live’ and the .gov.uk email addresses are working.

194/24-25 **OAKWOOD NOTICE BOARD**

The RFO informed Members that the new notice board for Oakwood has been installed.

195/24-25 **CO-OPERATIVE BANKING**

The RFO asked Members to note that the Administrative Assistant has been added as a signatory on the Co-operative accounts. We will arrange for a token to be purchased for her use.

196/24-25 **DIGITAL ACCOUNTING**

The RFO reported that she is now using the Scribe Accounting Software package only, to present the accounts. From 30th September 2024, the accounts are no longer being input onto spreadsheets.

197/24-25 **LOCKING STUMPS PRIMARY SCHOOL – JOINT USER AGREEMENT FOR MUGA**

- (a) To note that a number of emails have been exchanged regarding this matter and issues that BTC have concerns about.

As mentioned earlier, during tonight’s main meeting (Minute 178/24-25(b)) we are waiting to receive a copy of the new lease agreement from the One Community Trust that they have with WBC

- (b) To note that the RFO has, so far, contacted seven different Solicitors to ask if they would be prepared to act on BTC’s behalf regarding the drawing up of a new joint agreement between the school and BTC (WBC is no longer involved, other than leasing the land to the school). Five have not replied, the other two have declined our invitation to quote.

198/24-25 **WORKNEST**

- (a) The RFO has spoken to WorkNest since the September 2024 meeting and negotiated the 5-year deal (£3,800.00 per year) with a ‘break clause’ at 36 months if necessary, with no financial penalty.

- (b) The RFO stated that we have received the formal contract for signing and asked Members if they are happy for this to be progressed.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Sheridan, **seconded** by Councillor Atkin and **unanimously resolved** that the five-year contract be signed by the RFO on behalf of the Council.

Action RFO to liaise with WorkNest regarding the signing of the contract.

- (c) Members were asked to consider the additional option of taking out Legal Expenses Insurance (LEI) with WorkNest. This would cover:

- Defence costs, representation and awards
- Protection against all types of claims, including unfair dismissal, discrimination and TUPE
- No self-insurance model, no conflict of interest
- Expert support from a dedicated Litigation Team throughout the claims process
- Legal representation from a barrister included in the cost

This would cost approximately an additional £230.00 per year.

The RFO stated that we made enquiries with Zurich, our current insurance provider. Zurich's LEI cover is with DAS Law, which would not work with WorkNest's Employment Law team, if a case ever went to an employment tribunal. It cannot be 'unpicked' from the overall insurance cover package that we have with Zurich. BTC can, however, take out additional insurance cover with WorkNest, if required.

The Council can be double-insured, as long as it only claims under one policy.

Members considered the above.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Sheridan, **seconded** by Councillor Atkin and **unanimously resolved** by those Members present that the Council take out the additional LEI with WorkNest.

Action RFO to liaise with WorkNest regarding adding the LEI to our new contract with them.

Councillor Sheridan apologised as she had to attend a prior engagement, and left the meeting.

NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

199/24-25 **BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION**

- (a) To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the accounting period 1st April 2024 – 30th September 2024.
- (b) To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the accounting period 1st April 2024 – 31st October 2024.
- (c) To note that the payroll figure for September 2024 was £15,244.77 (9) staff. For October 2024 it was £15,285.88 (9 staff).

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

Members **unanimously approved** the schedules.

200/24-25 **SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC)**

The RFO asked Members to note that the renewal information has been received from the SLCC for the 2025/2026 fee to renew the Clerk's membership. For 2025/2026 this will be £360.00.

The RFO asked whether Members are happy for the Council to continue to pay this membership fee for the Clerk.

Councillor Atkin **proposed** Councillor Reeves **seconded** and Members **unanimously approved** the payment of the SLCC renewal fee for 2025/2026.

Action Clerk's office to arrange for the payment of the SLCC renewal fee at the appropriate time.

201/24-25 **POLICIES FOR APPROVAL**

- (a) The RFO asked Members to consider for approval the draft Social Media Policy.

Members **unanimously approved** the adoption of this policy, with two amendments: that the reference to My Space be removed and that the reference to 'Twitter' be changed to 'X'.

- (b) The RFO asked Members to consider for approval the draft Sexual Harassment Policy. This needed to be considered in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities, and Bullying and Harassment Policies. Members were asked to consider all three policies for formal approval.

Members **unanimously approved** the adoption of these three policies.

Action Clerk's office to publish these policies on BTC's website and to circulate them to staff.

The Clerk informed Members that it is also now a requirement for staff to have training regarding sexual harassment awareness.

202/24-25 **GRANT APPLICATION**

The RFO asked Members to consider a grant application from Birchwood Lions, requesting £150.00 to support the annual Community Service of Remembrance, which took place on 9th November 2024. *Note: this application was received earlier, in October 2024, but as there was no October 2024 meeting, could not be formally discussed until now.*

It was **proposed** by Councillor Atkin, **seconded** by Councillor Simcock and **unanimously resolved** by those Members present that £150.00 be awarded to Birchwood Lions to help support the Community Remembrance Service.

Action Clerk's office to liaise with Birchwood Lions regarding the payment of this grant award.

This part of the meeting concluded at 7.15 pm

The rest of the items previously included in Finance Part I Minutes will be discussed during this evening's Budget and Precept Meeting section.

Payments of Account October 2024

6 November 2024 (2024 - 2025)

Birchwood Town Council
PAYMENTS LIST

This report includes one or more cost centres that have been marked as confidential. This means that only the totals are shown without any further detail.

Voucher Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
Staff	07/10/2024 - 16/10/2024				Confidential			24,300.30		24,300.30
287 Water	01/10/2024	156/24-25	The Co-operative Ba		Water and Wastewater service	Waterplus	Z	32.80		32.80
288 Town Council revenue	01/10/2024	156/24-25	The Co-operative Ba		Geotab Pro Plus (in advance)	LEVL	S	30.00	6.00	36.00
289 Subs/fees	01/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Scribe services	Starboard Systems Limited	S	89.00	17.80	106.80
290 Town Council revenue	02/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Fuel (vans & equipment)	Allstar	S	55.55	11.11	66.66
343 Town Council revenue	02/10/2024		Petty Cash		Maintenance repairs and other	DRB Car Spares	S	5.83	1.16	6.99
291 Insurance	04/10/2024	156/24-25	The Co-operative Ba		Insurance	Legal & General	E	161.09		161.09
344 Town Council revenue	07/10/2024		Petty Cash		Maintenance repairs and other	Asda	S	6.67	1.33	8.00
345 Town Council revenue	07/10/2024		Petty Cash		Maintenance repairs and other	Asda	S	5.00	1.00	6.00
346 Refreshments	07/10/2024		Petty Cash		Refreshments for office	Asda	Z	13.45		13.45
301 Town Council revenue	08/10/2024	156/24-25	The Co-operative Ba		IT Support etc.	labotek ltd	S	108.00	21.60	129.60
302 Town Council revenue	08/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Petty cash imprest	Fiona McDonald	X			
347 Town Council revenue	08/10/2024		Petty Cash		Maintenance repairs and other	DRB Car Spares	S	9.99	2.00	11.99
350 Petty Cash	08/10/2024		Petty Cash		Petty cash imprest	Fiona McDonald	E			
303 Town Council revenue	09/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Fuel (vans & equipment)	Allstar	S	117.91	23.57	141.48
310 Town Council revenue	10/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Stationery supplies	Eurooffice	S	2.92	0.58	3.50
304 Town Council revenue	10/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		PPE/workwear	E Siano	Z	119.90		119.90
305 Town Council revenue	10/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Mat cleaning services	Matco Direct Limited	S	268.08	53.61	321.69
306 Town Council revenue	10/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Garage services	Risley MOT & Truck Ltd	S	277.91	55.58	333.49
307 Water	14/10/2024	156/24-25	The Co-operative Ba		Water and Wastewater service	Waterplus	Z	102.07		102.07
308 Gas	14/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Gas for Parkers Farm	British Gas Limited	L	27.89	1.39	29.28
309 Town Council revenue	15/10/2024	156/24-25	The Co-operative Ba		Photocopier charges	Automated Systems Group	S	13.55	2.71	16.26
312 Town Council revenue	15/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Maintenance repairs and other	Tudor Environmental	S	365.00	73.00	438.00
311 Bank and FD Online charges	15/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Bank & FD Online charges	Birchwood Town Council	E	40.60		40.60
313 Town Council revenue	16/10/2024	156/24-25	The Co-operative Ba		Fuel (vans & equipment)	Allstar	S	47.85	9.57	57.42
314 Subs/fees	16/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		ICO Fees	Information Commissioner	E	35.00		35.00
318 Town Council revenue	17/10/2024	156/24-25	The Co-operative Ba		IT Support etc.	labotek ltd	S	93.90	18.78	112.68
319 Electricity	17/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Electricity - Locking Stumps ML	E-on Next	L	18.56	0.93	19.49
317 Town Council revenue	18/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		First Aid Supplies	Eureka (aka CHUK Visual S	S	17.70	3.54	21.24
320 Electricity	20/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Electricity - Parkers Farm	SSE Energy Solutions	L	152.02	7.60	159.62
321 Town Council revenue	21/10/2024	156/24-25	The Co-operative Ba		IT Support etc.	Wynchote Limited	X	80.00		80.00
322 Town Council revenue	21/10/2024		The Co-operative Ba		PPE/workwear	J&K Ross Ltd	S	67.09	13.42	80.51
348 Town Council revenue	22/10/2024		Petty Cash		Maintenance supplies	Asda	S	6.25	1.25	7.50

Birchwood Town Council PAYMENTS LIST

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Voucher Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
336	Town Council revenue	23/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Maintenance supplies	Direct2Publik Ltd	S	49.74	9.96	59.70
337	Town Council revenue	23/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		PPE/workwear	Dressmart London Ltd	S	7.08	1.42	8.50
338	Town Council revenue	23/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Fuel (vans & equipment)	Allstar	S	65.44	13.09	78.53
324	Town Council revenue	24/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		PPE/workwear	J&K Ross Ltd	S	75.00	15.00	90.00
339	Town Council revenue	24/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		O2 phone	O2 (Telefonica UK Limited)	S	32.00	6.40	38.40
323	Parkers Farm Cleaning Service:	24/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Cleaning Services	PremiClean	S	482.13	96.43	578.56
325	Town Council revenue	25/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		First Aid Supplies	Eureka (aka CMUK Visual S	S	261.35	52.27	313.62
340	Town Council revenue	25/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		BTC flags	AA Flags Ltd	S	378.50	75.70	454.20
341	Town Council revenue	25/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		PPE/workwear	J&K Ross Ltd	S	95.20	19.04	114.24
326	Gas	25/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Gas for Parkers Farm	British Gas Limited	L	1.88	0.09	1.97
327	Town Council revenue	28/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Photocopier lease	BNP Paribas Leasing Soluti	S	170.00	34.00	204.00
342	Town Council revenue	30/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Fuel (vans & equipment)	Allstar	S	71.52	14.30	85.82
328	Town Council revenue	30/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Stationery supplies	Viking	S	73.98	14.80	88.78
329	Town Council revenue	30/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Phone charges	Firstcom Europe	S	146.41	29.28	175.69
330	Town Council revenue	30/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Phone charges	Firstcom Europe	S	60.90	12.18	73.08
331	Subs/fees	30/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Payroll services	James Todd & Co.	S	65.25	13.05	78.30
334	Town Council revenue	31/10/2024	The Co-operative Ba		Geotab Pro Plus (in advance)	LEVL	S	30.00	6.00	36.00
349	Town Council revenue	31/10/2024	Petty Cash		General /miscellaneous (inc. In	Scrap Man Warrington	X	25.00		25.00
Total								28,763.26	740.54	29,503.80

Payments for approval ('Confidential' includes staff wages, associated costs and pensions):

6 November 2024 (2024 - 2025)

Birchwood Town Council
PAYMENTS LIST

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Voucher Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
Staff	15/11/2024 - 13/12/2024				Confidential			18,070.00		18,070.00
332 Town Council revenue	01/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		IT Support etc.	labdesk ltd	S	60.00	12.00	72.00
333 Subs/fees	01/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Scribe services	Starboard Systems Limited	S	89.00	17.80	106.80
335 Town Council revenue	01/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Photocopier charges	Automated Systems Group	S	35.00	7.00	42.00
354 Wailer	01/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Water and Wastewater service	Waterplus	Z	32.80		32.80
355 Town Council revenue	01/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		O2 phone	O2 (Telefonika UK Limited)	S	32.00	6.40	38.40
351 Town Council revenue	05/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		IT Support etc.	labdesk ltd	S	16.00	9.60	25.60
352 Town Council revenue	05/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Stationary supplies	Viking	S	21.09	4.22	25.31
360 Town Council revenue	05/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Fuel (vans & equipment)	Alldair	S	75.89	15.17	91.06
356 Insurance	10/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Insurance	Legal & General	E	180.59		180.59
353 Town Council revenue	11/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		IT Support etc.	labdesk ltd	S	93.90	18.78	112.68
357 Water	12/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Water and Wastewater service	Waterplus	Z	102.07		102.07
361 Subs/fees	15/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Scribe services	Starboard Systems Limited	S	89.00	17.80	106.80
362 Gas	15/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Gas for Parkers Farm	British Gas Lite	L	93.73	4.69	98.42
363 Electricity	19/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Electricity - Locking Stumps ML	E-on Next	L	19.81	0.99	20.80
364 Subs/fees	30/11/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Payroll services	James Todd & Co.	S	65.25	13.05	78.30
365 Town Council revenue	01/12/2024		The Co-operative Ba		Geolab Pro Plus (in advance)	LEVL	S	30.00	6.00	36.00
Total								19,138.13	133.90	19,271.63