

**MINUTES OF THE PART I FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL MEETING
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT
PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2017**

Present: Councillor Ellis in the Chair
Councillors Allman, Atkin, Breslin, Evans, Fitzsimmons, T. Hearldon, Nelson and Reeves

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

Apologies: Councillors Bowden, M. Hearldon, and Linney

Councillor Fitzsimmons proposed, Councillor Atkin seconded and it was resolved that:

The Minutes of the Part I Finance, Audit and Personnel Meeting of the Town Council which took place on Tuesday, 26th September 2017 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interests

The Chair reminded members of their responsibility to declare any personal interest or prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when the item is reached.

Councillors Breslin, Ellis and Nelson – the Youth & Community Centre Committee

Councillors Atkin, Breslin, Ellis, T. Hearldon and Nelson – Birchwood Carnival Committee

Councillor Allman – Oakwood Community Association and Spectrum Striders

Councillors Allman and Evans – Friends of Birchwood Forest Park

272/17-18 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule (see pages 145 and 146 below).

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

PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT ISSUES

273/17-18 BIRCHWOOD YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

See Minute 245/17-18 (c) from the earlier main meeting during which time the BAFO reiterated that he had not yet been able to find any documentation relating to the ownership of the Youth and Community Centre, and it has not yet been established how long the Lottery can claim control over the centre.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Lottery Commission if no documents can be found.

274/17-18 BIRCHWOOD BROOK FOOTPATH REGENERATION

The BAFO updated Members on progress made re: cutting of trees and shrubs along the footpath. Progress and liaison so far has been good with Officers and the Borough Council's tree team. The Town Council was asked to review the work, with the BAFO being able to offer a positive response. There is still some of the 'canopy effect' near the Dewhurst Road end of the path, but a lot of the canopy and side shrubbery has been opened up and cut back, with much more light and air movement coming in.

The Borough Council has allocated four weeks of resource time to complete the works to the Town Council's satisfaction. No costs will fall to the Town Council for this work.

The BAFO said that we will possibly ask the Borough Council to assess the regrowth every two to three years in order to undertake any necessary work to keep on top of what has been achieved.

275/17-18 BIRCHWOOD FOREST PARK – RECREATION SCHEME

(a) **Lighting**

The BAFO informed Members that we had received emails from Street Lighting with a technical update identifying the need for a survey prior to providing an estimate of costings for any new lighting work (these were copied to Members in their papers).

The hope is that a proposal for additional lighting could be made, to light the parts of the main circular path around the Forest park that do not currently have the benefit of lighting. This was one of the main issues raised by residents who responded to our recent community consultation.

Because the Street Lighting budget only applies to the adopted highway, which the path around the park is not, it is maintained by Parks and Gardens – which does not have any available budget to undertake the survey needed.

The BAFO asked Members to consider whether the Town Council would be prepared to fund the cost of the survey, approximately £350, in order to progress this matter. Once that has been done the Borough Council will be able to supply proper costings for the proposed installation of additional lighting in the park.

The Town Council would then be able to consider this scheme as a potential community project and establish if any other funding sources could be found.

Councillor Fitzsimmons **proposed** and Councillor Evans **seconded** that the Town Council approves £350 (approximate) funding for the necessary lighting survey. This was **resolved** by those Members present.

The BAFO stated that he does not have any idea what the costs to install new lighting will be. Previously Spectrum Striders, which uses the park on a regular basis, has indicated that they might be willing to put some funding towards the installation of additional columns.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Borough Council regarding the above.

(b) **Skateboard Park / BMX Track**

The BAFO reported that the Borough Council's bid to WREN for the installation of a pump track and improvements to the current skateboard/BMX track has been successful.

At present it is looking unlikely that the Town Council will be asked to put any capital investment into this phase of the redevelopment of the Forest Park.

(c) **Ranger's Centre / Observation Tower**

The BAFO stated that Officers had a meeting with Angus Lord on 12th September 2017 at which there was some discussion regarding the Ranger's Centre and the Observation Tower at Risley Moss.

Councillor Reeves enquired who is coordinating the potential rebuilding of the Observation Tower.

The BAFO replied that the Borough Council is coordinating the proposed project, but they will need a lot of technical advice. The Tower needs to be extremely robust and will need to comply with current building regulations.

Although the Town Council might be requested to make some minor financial contribution towards both the renewal of the Ranger's Centre and the future rebuilding of an Observation Tower in Risley Moss, the BAFO reiterated that it is not thought there will any significant capital expenditure required from the Town Council towards the other final elements of the Forest Park Refurbishment scheme or the Ranger's Centre, which are mainly covered by the WREN grant and/or current capital provisions already allocated from within the Borough Council.

276/17-18 **BANKING**

The BAFO stated that there is currently nothing new to report in relation to the Town Council's banking arrangements

277/17-18 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

The Clerk gave Members a brief update on the items discussed at the last Carnival Committee meeting. She ran through a list of potential acts that had been suggested and indicated those that were being / to be followed up for further information, with a view to possibly booking them for the event.

The Clerk stated that she had formally contacted the Carnival Committee to request the return of the unused portion of the grant awarded (£998.19). This will be returned to the Town Council's bank account, details of which have been supplied to the committee.

The committee had agreed that Councillors Atkin and Bowden will be new, additional, signatories on the Carnival Committee's bank account.

The Clerk updated Members on the current proposals for stall fees and the charging methods for vendors at the event, including obtaining a non-refundable deposit in advance of the event when they make a booking.

The Clerk stated that The Friends of Birchwood Forest Park would be running the café on the day.

Councillor Allman asked whether it would be possible to invite a representative of The Friends of Birchwood Forest Park to be on the Carnival Committee.

Members, who are also on the Carnival Committee, agreed to make this invitation.

Councillor Evans said that The Friends of Birchwood Forest Park are also raising funds via the café, to put towards projects in the park.

Action Clerk's office to contact The Friends of Birchwood Forest Park to ask if they wish to have a representative on the Carnival Committee.

278/17-18 DATA PROTECTION

The BAFO asked Members to note that we have received confirmation of renewal from the Information Commissioner's Office stating that the Town Council's entry has been renewed, with an expiry date of 16th October 2018.

Councillor Ellis stated that Councillors will have to ensure that they are aware of what the new GDPR regulations to be implemented in 2018, which have been discussed at previous meetings, will mean for them.

Councillor Fitzsimmons suggested arranging training in relation to the upcoming changes to data protection regulations.

Members agreed that this would be useful.

Action Clerk's office to look into the possibility of training courses regarding upcoming changes to data protection regulations.

279/17-18 GRANTS/DONATIONS

- (a) Members were asked to note that an official receipt has been received from the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal for the donation / purchase of two poppy wreaths (£100).
- (b) North West Air Ambulance – To note that a completed grant aid form has been received from the North West Air Ambulance Charity. At the September meeting, Members pledged to award a £150 donation to the charity on the proviso that a completed grant aid form is received from them.

The BAFO asked if Members now wish formally approve the donation for payment to the charity.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Atkin, **seconded** by Councillor Evans and unanimously **resolved** that a £150 award be made to the North West Air Ambulance Charity.

Action Clerk's office to contact the North West Air Ambulance Charity regarding the above.

280/17-18 GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING/NOTING

- (a) To note that all the Maintenance Team have undergone training in how to deal with Needles and Sharps and also Banksman/Signage training. Five members of the team undertook pole pruner training, re-arranged from 12th to 19th October 2017.
- (b) To note that a new direct debit instruction has been put in place regarding ongoing charges for the new photocopier lease.
- (c) To note that, as agreed at the September meeting, bulbs have been purchased for planting on the fire station roundabout (£293.50 +VAT). The Borough Council has given permission for them to be planted.

NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

281/17-18 BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION:

To receive from the BAFO the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the accounts period 1st April 2017 – 30th September 2017.

The payroll figure for August was £13,345.35 and £13,362.62 for September.

After consideration and approval by Members the schedules were signed by the Business and Finance Officer and the Chair.

282/17-18 GRANTS/DONATIONS

Birchwood Lions – To consider the Grant Aid application submitted by Birchwood Lions requesting a contribution towards the cost of the annual Birchwood Remembrance Service.

Members discussed the application.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Fitzsimmons, **seconded** by Councillor T. Hearldon and unanimously **resolved** that a £100 award be made to the Birchwood Lions Club to support the organisation of the 2017 Remembrance Service; organised by the Lions.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Birchwood Lions Club regarding the above.

283/17-18 CESHIRE CONSTABULARY

The BAFO asked Members to receive and consider correspondence received from Acting Chief Constable Janette McCormick regarding the future provision and funding of PCSOs.

At present there is no option to continue part-funding a PCSO. The Police are proposing that each ward in Cheshire will be allocated one PCSO – i.e. there will be one PCSO covering the whole of Birchwood.

Each additional PCSO will be 'charged' to local Town and Parish Councils at a cost of £33,280 which includes their full salary, pensions and 'basic on-costs'. Local Councils need to decide whether they wish to fund any additional PCSOs.

The BAFO stated that the information given does not explain what other 'on-costs' may be involved in addition to pension payments. No questions have been covered, such as who would cover sick pay or any other form of leave. We do not know if Local Councils would be expected to automatically increase this payment if PCSO pay rises are implemented. We have not been told how many years Councils would have to commit to. The BAFO thinks that there are too many unanswered questions and open-ended possibilities.

Although the Town Council would be able to make suggestions as to where they would like to see the PCSO deployed, the PCSO would still be operationally controlled by the Police; therefore if the Police needed them as a resource outside of Birchwood, they could be taken out of area.

The BAFO stated that to have one additional PCSO it is the equivalent of adding 6% to the Town Council's precept. The Town Council does not have huge reserves that it can dig into. In addition we do not yet know if we are to be 'hit' by the scrapping of the Council Tax Support Scheme, which would require the Town Council to find an additional £30K+ per year.

Councillor Ellis stated that responses to the community consultation indicate that the majority of respondents wanted to see more PCSOs. However, at that stage the Town Council did not know what the Police proposals would be and the high costs involved.

Councillor Breslin commented that the Police have failed to give proper responses or adequate information relating to the questions that Local Councils will need answers to. He asked whether the businesses could contribute to the cost of an additional PCSO.

Councillor Breslin also commented that for a 6% increase in precept, he thinks the local community would expect to see an additional Police Officer who would have more powers than a PCSO (even though we know the PCSOs do good work in the community).

It was stated by several Councillors that the businesses have been asked many times to help towards the part-funding of the Birchwood PCSO and not one has agreed to assist. They do not think they will be more inclined to help towards fully funding a PCSO – despite the PCSOs also covering the business areas when necessary.

Councillor Ellis commented that if the Business Improvement District goes ahead, it might be that businesses may reconsider their funding stance on PCSOs.

Members felt that the question would have to be put to the community again, with details of the proposed costs (even though full and final costs and possible further ‘on-costs’ are still not fully known). The issue the Town Council has specifically at present is that there is no time to do this before the budget has to be prepared for the 2018/2019 financial year.

The BAFO added that the Police are a precepting authority and could, therefore, increase their own precept to cover additional PCSOs, rather than place the burden on Local Councils.

Councillor Breslin noted that it will be the richest Councils that will be able to benefit from having additional PCSOs in the future. He believes they should be a Police funded resource and the Police should determine where the greatest need to deploy them is.

The BAFO stated that the Police have asked for an indication as to whether the Town Council wants to fully fund an additional PCSO.

Members discussed the matter further and **resolved** that the Town Council could not approve the full funding of an additional PCSO for the 2018/2019 financial year.

The BAFO said that due to the lateness in the budget cycle and the current ongoing uncertainty and unanswered questions, it is something that the Town Council may wish to reconsider for another financial year.

Action Clerk’s office to write to the Police informing them of the Council’s decision and highlight key reasons for the decision taken.

284/17-18 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING/NOTING**

- (a) To note that an invoice has been sent to Croft Parish Council (£90) for two attendees from their staff on the recent Needles and Sharps training course, organised by the Town Council.
- (b) To note that the Senior Maintenance Operative has been booked on a First Aid at Work requalification course in December 2017.
- (c) To note that, as agreed by Members (see Minutes 285/16-17 and 336/16-17 from previous meetings) £750 (+VAT) has been paid to Birchwood Forum as the Town Council’s contribution to the Business Improvement District (BID) feasibility study.

285/17-18 **CHRISTMAS SHUTDOWN**

The BAFO stated that some staff have enquired what the arrangements will be over the Christmas period, whether, as in previous years, maintenance and office operations will shut down.

This would involve the shutdown from ‘close of play’ on Friday 22nd December 2017, with the office and maintenance operations reopening on Tuesday 2nd January 2018.

Staff will use part of their allocated holiday entitlement to cover this break. Staff who work Monday to Friday will each use three days of their holiday entitlement.

The Clerk stated if there were any emergencies, staff understand they will be 'on call' to assist if necessary.

Members unanimously **resolved** that the Town Council will close over the Christmas period.

286/17-18 **FINANCE PART II**

To note that there were no Part II items on the agenda for consideration at tonight's Finance, Audit and Personnel Meeting.

This part of the meeting concluded at 7.50pm

Payment of Accounts:						
Resolved: that the following payments be approved as some of the residual July, August and part September 2017 accounts						
Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
19.07.2017	DD	Allstar business	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 92.08	£ 18.41	£ 110.49
21.07.2017	*	Acumen	July payroll services	£ 25.50	£ 5.10	£ 30.60
21.07.2017	*	Ultimate Invoice Finance	Stationery	£ 49.85	£ 9.97	£ 59.82
21.07.2017	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	(E'ee £683.54 E'er £2264.22)	£ 2,947.76		£ 2,947.76
21.07.2017	*	HMRC	Tax £1,512.20 NI £2,056.43)	£ 3,568.63		£ 3,568.63
24.07.2017	DD	United Utilities	Water and wastewater services	£ 67.24		£ 67.24
25.07.2017	DD	EMAP Business	Annual subscription renewal to LGC	£ 224.10		£ 224.10
26.07.2017	DD	Telesis	Phone charges	£ 54.50	£ 10.90	£ 65.40
26.07.2017	DD	Allstar business	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 169.13	£ 33.82	£ 202.95
28.07.2017	CHQ	Post Office Ltd	Vehicle Tax - NH57 CZV	£ 240.00		£ 240.00
31.07.2017	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 61.23	£ 12.25	£ 73.48
31.07.2017	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 144.92	£ 28.98	£ 173.90
01.08.2017	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083868280) (2x£24.38)	£ 48.76		£ 48.76
02.08.2017	DD	Allstar - fuel	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 157.32	£ 31.46	£ 188.78
02.08.2017	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 124.45	£ 8.39	£ 132.84
04.08.2017	*	David Webster& Sons	Final payment ref: Brook Footpath works	£ 34,665.00	£ 6,933.00	£ 41,598.00
04.08.2017	*	Elite Industrial Supplies	PPE and workwear	£ 235.78	£ 47.15	£ 282.93
04.08.2017	*	G Crowe	Reimbursements - Aug petty cash (£200) & annual renewal of Knowhow Cloud account (£79)	£ 279.00		£ 279.00
04.08.2017	*	Regal polythene	Refuse sacks (30 boxes) and paper hand towels	£ 361.38	£ 72.28	£ 433.66
07.08.2017	*	August wages	12 staff	£ 13,345.35		£13,345.35
09.08.2017	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 58.66	£ 11.73	£ 70.39
14.08.2017	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 17.28		£ 17.28
15.08.2017	DD	O2	Device Plan	£ 17.88	£ 3.57	£ 21.45
15.08.2017	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 39.60		£ 39.60
16.08.2017	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 62.44	£ 12.49	£ 74.93
16.08.2017	*	Acumen	Payroll Services (August)	£ 40.50	£ 8.10	£ 48.60
16.08.2017	*	Uniqwin	Alarm activation callout	£ 64.50	£ 12.90	£ 77.40
16.08.2017	*	Nationwide Marquee Hire	Grant re: Birchwood Carnival 2017 (hire of marquee/tables/chairs)	£ 1,035.50	£ 207.10	£ 1,242.60
18.08.2017	DD	E-on	Electricity, Locking Stumps MUGA	£ 7.79	£ 0.39	£ 8.18
23.08.2017	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 182.14	£ 36.41	£ 218.55
24.08.2017	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4032774195)	£ 67.24		£ 67.24
25.08.2017	DD	Telesis	Phone charges	£ 52.79	£ 10.56	£ 63.35
25.08.2017	*	CMUK - Visual Safety Ltd	First aid restock supplies	£ 59.25	£ 11.85	£ 71.10
25.08.2017	*	Risley MOT & Truck	MOT and service PO51 WLE	£ 141.50	£ 20.30	£ 161.80
25.08.2017	*	St John Ambulance	2 day First Aid at Work requalification (SJ)	£ 210.00	£ 42.00	£ 252.00
25.08.2017	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	(E'ee £654.68 E'er £2,302.68)	£ 2,957.36		£ 2,957.36
25.08.2017	*	HMRC	Tax £1,625.60 NI £2,106.99)	£ 3,732.59		£ 3,732.59
29.08.2017	CHQ	Post Office Ltd	PO51 WLE - vehicle licence	£ 240.00		£ 240.00
30.08.2017	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 81.57	£ 16.31	£ 97.88
31.08.2017	DD	Copyrite Digital	Photocopying services	£ 124.76	£ 24.95	£ 149.71
31.08.2017	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 42.56	£ 8.51	£ 51.07
01.09.2017	DD	Screwfix Direct Ltd	Plant food and kitchen cleaner	£ 14.12	£ 2.82	£ 16.94
04.09.2017	DD	SE Gas Limited	Gas - Parkers Farm	£ 124.02	£ 6.20	£ 130.22
04.09.2017	DD	Hydro-Electric	Electricity - Parkers Farm	£ 141.54	£ 7.07	£ 148.61
04.09.2017	DD	Legal and General	Ill Health Liability Insurance (July & Aug - 2 x £76.95)	£ 153.90		£ 153.90
06.09.2017	*	Arco	Safety boots for PT	£ 45.00	£ 9.00	£ 54.00
06.09.2017	DD	Allstar	Fuel	£ 52.87	£ 10.56	£ 63.43
06.09.2017	*	Risley MOT & Truck	2 x tyres for ND09 VNL	£ 163.35	£ 32.67	£ 196.02
07.09.2017	*	September wages	12 staff	£ 13,362.62		£13,362.62
11.09.2017	DD	Public Works Loan Board	PWLB Ref: 310 07982	£ 11,990.00		£ 11,990.00
12.09.2017	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 17.28		£ 17.28
13.09.2017	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 114.86	£ 22.97	£ 137.83
13.09.2017	*	C Caddock	Contribution to glasses (VDU work)	£ 106.06	£ 6.44	£ 112.50

