

**MINUTES OF THE PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT
PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 24TH APRIL 2018**

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

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

Apologies: Councillor Bowden

Councillor Fitzsimmons proposed, Councillor Atkin seconded and it was resolved that: The Minutes of the Council Part I Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting held on 27th March 2018 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 Allman and Evans – the Friends of Birchwood Forest Park

Councillors Allman and Evans – Oakwood Community Association

Councillors Allman, D. Ellis and Nelson – the Youth & Community Centre Committee

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

021/18-19 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule (see pages 17 and 18 below).

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

PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL ITEMS

022/18-19 **BIRCHWOOD YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE**

As noted during the main meeting, the Birchwood Youth and Community Centre has still not had any further feedback from the high school regarding their previous interest in hiring the centre to run some alternative courses.

023/18-19 **BIRCHWOOD FOREST PARK RECREATION SCHEME/PROPOSED LIGHTING SCHEME**

The BAFO reported that the Clerk has spoken to a representative of Spectrum Striders regarding the Forest Park lighting proposals and has sent them a copy of the lighting plan proposal that we received from the Borough Council.

There has not been any formal meeting with the Striders regarding this matter, but it has been indicated that they might be able to consider putting between £500 and £1,000 towards the scheme.

The BAFO said that the total cost of the scheme is expected to be around £35,000; this is not something that the Town Council could fund at present, particularly with a potential £52,000 'loss' next year with the Borough indicating that it will be passing Council Tax Support costs on to Local Councils from 2019/2020.

Members discussed the cost implications and **resolved** to put the scheme 'on hold' for the time being.

024/18-19 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

The BAFO informed Members that the monthly Birchwood Carnival Committee Meeting took place on 17th April. He added that arrangements for the attractions, stall bookings and other items are progressing well.

The Shopping Centre has offered to display posters for the event and to make a contribution of £250 towards the cost of the Carnival and Birchwood Park Estates are offering a potential grant of £400. The BAFO said that additional funding has been awarded from Warrington Borough Council - £2,000 Sellafield - £400 and Asda - £450; a total of £3,500.

The BAFO gave a brief overview of the Carnival Committee's finances and how they should stand once all the Carnival income and expenditure has been accounted for.

The invoice for the Llamas has been received. A 25% deposit (£325) will be paid to secure the act for the event.

Councillor Nelson indicated that Network Warrington has agreed for posters to be displayed on local buses.

025/18-19 **INTERIM AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS – YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2018**

The BAFO asked Members to note that the internal auditor's interim report has been published as part of the March Part I Finance Minutes.

026/18-19 **CONDITION 10 ON GRANT AID TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

To note that Condition 10 on the Grant Aid Application Form has been updated as agreed.

027/18-19 **GRANT AID**

Birchwood Community High School – Sports Pitch

The BAFO reported that a letter of support has been sent to Birchwood Community High School relating to their application for funding towards the refurbishment of the 3G pitch.

The £500 grant pledge from the Town Council has been acknowledged and we have been advised that a decision on their main grant application is expected by the end of July 2018.

028/18-18 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)

- (a) To note that John Henry, our appointed Data Protection Officer (DPO), has sent some Data Protection Policy templates for our consideration. He has also sent guidance relating to the use of photographs taken at events and potential GDPR implications. John has suggested discussing using Microsoft 365 with any potential IT specialist support providers, following a review he has undertaken of systems used by some other larger Councils.
- (b) To note that some information received from SurveyMonkey re: changes that they are making to their Privacy Policy and Terms of Use was sent to our DPO for his consideration in relation to the upcoming GDPR changes. Our DPO has confirmed SurveyMonkey is covered by the EU:US privacy shield.
- (c) To receive, from Warrington Borough Council, an 'Introduction to the General Data Protection Regulation Guidance for Parish Councillors April 2018'.
- (d) To receive a statement from the Information Commissioner's Office (11th April 2018) regarding GDPR.
- (e) The BAFO reported that he and the Clerk had a second meeting with two potential IT specialist support providers on 16th April 2018 to further discuss a number of issues raised at the initial meeting and to try to 'equalise' the expectations regarding the quotations received for their services. (Three companies had initially been approached, but only two had responded).

The BAFO informed Members that Councillor Atkin had also considered the information received from both companies and that the Clerk had sent the information to our DPO (anonymising the company names) to ask for their opinions on the information received.

The BAFO gave Members an overview on the merits of and differences between the two companies. The BAFO, Clerk, Councillor Atkin and our DPO had all come to the same opinion regarding the company they believe would best serve the needs of the Town Council as our IT Specialist Support Consultants.

Members discussed the options presented and also agreed with the BAFO, Clerk, Councillor Atkin and our DPO.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Evans, **seconded** by Councillor Nelson and **agreed** by all Members present that the Town Council should arrange a two year contract with Yellowbus Solutions to be our IT Specialist Support Consultants.

Resolved: Clerk's office to contact Yellowbus Solutions regarding the above.

The BAFO stated that both Yellowbus and the other company had suggested that the Town Council should upgrade to Microsoft Office 365 (as previously suggested by our DPO).

The BAFO told Members that in order to make progress towards complying with GDPR, there are a lot of old documents and paperwork that need shredding. The volume there is requires a shredding company to be involved.

The BAFO gave Members some details about Ecoshred, a company which offers this service, and added that Officers suggest a proposal received from Ecoshred be accepted. They undertake work for a lot of 'big name' companies – some of which the BAFO listed to Members. There will be a cost implication for this work, which at the present time can only be a 'guesstimate', but it could be in the region of up to £1,000.

In addition, a new shredding machine needs to be purchased for the office, which will be GDPR compliant, so that once the bulk has been shredded by Ecoshred, Officers can continue to shred documents, to the required standard, when necessary.

Resolved: That arrangements be made for Ecoshred to deal with the bulk of the documents that require destroying and disposal and that a new shredder be purchased for office use.

- (f) Received – From the Information Commissioner's Officer; the April newsletter; which includes ongoing updates regarding GDPR matters.

029/18-19 **WILDFLOWERS 2018**

The Clerk/BAFO confirmed that arrangements have been made with Warrington Borough Council for them to prepare and seed five locations with wildflowers for the 2018 season.

Councillor D. Ellis commented that the Friends of Birchwood Forest Park have also raised funds and are arranging, with the Borough Council, for several areas of the park to have wildflowers seeded on them.

030/18-19 **CHESHIRE PENSION FUND**

The BAFO reported that the preparation of the LGS50/LGS50a documentation, regarding pension contributions is underway' with completion required by 27th April 2018.

031/17-18 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING/NOTING**

- (a) To note that the Shopping Centre has confirmed that it does wish the Town Council to supply and maintain hanging baskets at the centre for the 2018 season. In order to cover increased costs, the charge for this service has been increased to £2,800 for 2018.
- (b) To note that an invoice relating to the installation of the new security light has been paid (£102 inc. VAT).
- (c) To note that we have contracted a different electrical company to undertake our annual PAT testing on 30th April 2018. Their prices are lower than we have paid for the previous few years.
- (d) To note that the sale of the tractor was completed (£9,500) and it was collected on 17th April 2018.

A partial refund on the insurance for the tractor will be received.

- (e) Received – notification that the Town Council’s subscription to SurveyMonkey ends on 2nd June 2018.

Members discussed whether to renew the subscription for 2018 to 2019 (£408).

Resolved: Not to renew the subscription until the Town Council has a new survey to carry out (as the annual membership will start from that date and will then allow more time for additional surveys to be undertaken if required by the Council).

The above resolution has a caveat – that if access to current survey data cannot be saved or downloaded somehow – the subscription may require renewing. Councillor D. Ellis said that he would double check.

NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

032/18-19 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 – 31st March 2018.

The payroll figure for February was £13,031.96 and £13,133.36 for March.

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

033/18-19 CHANGE OF GAS AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER

The BAFO reported that, under delegated powers, arrangements have been made to enable our energy broker to administrate a change of gas and electricity supplier at the completion of our current 3-year fixed rate contract dates with SSE, which expires in August 2018.

Every Aspect Ltd. (a broker recommended by ChALC) has indicated that Npower is the supplier that will be able to offer the Town Council the best rates for new 3-year fuel contracts. The latest 12 month costs for electricity from SSE were £800 and the expected cost for similar usage from Npower over 12 months will be £818. The latest annual cost for gas from our current supplier has been £1,197 and the projected cost with Npower would be £1,253.91.

These moderate increases of £74 per annum for another three year fixed price contract on both utilities is recommended as good value by our utility broker and letters of authorisation to our broker to complete the services transfer have been processed.

Councillor Allman **proposed**, Councillor Evans **seconded** and all Members present **resolved** to formally ratify the actions taken by the BAFO under delegated powers with regard to administrating the change of gas and electricity supplier.

034/18-19 SECTION 137 LIMIT FOR 2018/2019

To note that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has advised that the sum for the purpose of Section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for Parish and Town Council in England for 2018/2019 is £7.86.

035/18-19 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

To note that an article written in Localgov.co.uk on 13th April 2018 reports that: *“The Government has written to billing authorities urging them to reconsider passing local council tax support on to parish and town councils.*

The letter has been welcomed by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) who warned that some billing authorities were failing to pass on funding.

The letter states: ‘The government's clear expectation is that billing authorities will work with parish and town councils to pass down funding so that increases in their precepts can be avoided.

‘However, some billing authorities are still not passing local council tax support funding on to parish and town councils and would urge them to reconsider.’”

Members briefly discussed the section of the article noted above.

Councillor Fitzsimmons said that Borough Councils will no longer have the money to pass on to Local Councils as they will no longer be receiving the subsidies from Central Government.

The BAFO suggested the Town Council should write to ChALC to try to obtain further clarification regarding the Council Tax Support issues – as to try to attain the same level of funding that the Town Council currently requires to operate (and to keep reserves as directed by auditors) would require around a 12% to 15% precept increase from 2019/2020.

036/18-19 GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING/NOTING

- (a) To note the receipt of the HMRC Employer Bulletin – April 2018
- (b) Received - information from the Co-operative Bank re: changes to the Community Directplus tariff.
- (c) To note information received from O2 regarding how the upcoming changes to GDPR will affect their terms and conditions.

037/18-19 PAYROLL SERVICE SUPPLIER

The BAFO asked Members to note the receipt of a letter notifying the Town Council that our current payroll service supplier has decided to stop offering payroll services and a new company will be taking over. Our current supplier will work with the new company for a few months to ensure a smooth transition of services.

Members **resolved** to transition our payroll requirements to the new company.

038/18-19 WEBSITE PROVIDER

The BAFO reported that we had received a renewal invoice from our current website provider. This includes shared server hosting on a Cloud platform in the UK, domain renewal and Pro Joomla! CMS support. The fee for the next 12 months is £720.

The BAFO reminded Members that prior to the previous renewal of our provider’s services, the Town Council had undertaken a comprehensive review of the services he offers and costs, compared to other providers and had decided to stay with his company.

Members **resolved** to continue with the services of our current provider.

The meeting concluded at 7.35 pm

Payment of Accounts:						
Resolved: that the following payments be approved as some of the residual February 2018 and part March 2018 accounts						
Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
23.02.2018	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4032774195)	£ 67.24		£ 67.24
26.02.2018	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 19.19		£ 19.19
26.02.2018	DD	Telesis	Phone charges	£ 53.13	£ 10.63	£ 63.76
26.02.2018	DD	Telesis	Annual maintenance charge for the phone system	£ 161.05	£ 32.21	£ 193.26
28.02.2018	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 80.98	£ 16.18	£ 97.16
01.03.2018	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 19.19		£ 19.19
02.03.2018	*	Acumen	February payroll services	£ 43.00	£ 8.60	£ 51.60
02.03.2018	*	Warrington Borough Council	Flail repairs (awaiting a full invoice breakdown)	£ 202.00	£ 40.40	£ 242.40
02.03.2018	*	Uniqwin	Annual Key holding charge	£ 365.00	£ 73.00	£ 438.00
02.03.2018	*	HMRC	(Tax £1,700.40 NI £2,040.95)	£ 3,741.35		£ 3,741.35
02.03.2018	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	(E'ee £640.67 E'er £2,251.83)	£ 2,892.50		£ 2,892.50
05.03.2018	DD	O2	Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones	£ 42.25	£ 8.45	£ 50.70
05.03.2018	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 76.95		£ 76.95
07.03.2018	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 53.96	£ 10.79	£ 64.75
07.03.2018	*	March wages	Wages total this month £13,133.36 (12 staff)	£ 13,133.36		£ 13,133.36
07.03.2018	*	Cllr D Ellis	Part Chair's Allowance	£ 400.00		£ 400.00
12.03.2018	DD	Public Works Loan Board	Loan payment PWLB Reference - 310 07982	£ 11,800.00		£ 11,800.00
12.03.2018	*	Warrington Borough Council	Tractor repairs	£ 2,022.91	£ 404.58	£ 2,427.49
14.03.2018	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 135.84	£ 27.16	£ 163.00
15.03.2018	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 40.20		£ 40.20
16.03.2018	DD	SSE Scottish Hydro	Electricity - Parkers Farm	£ 167.77	£ 8.38	£ 176.15
19.03.2018	DD	SSE Southern Electric	Gas - Parkers Farm	£ 639.52	£ 127.90	£ 767.42
20.03.2018	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 8.40	£ 0.42	£ 8.82
21.03.2018	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment)	£ 63.91	£ 12.79	£ 76.70
22.03.2018	*	HMRC March	(Tax £1,713.40 NI £2,056.43)	£ 3,769.83		£ 3,769.83
22.03.2018	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	(E'ee £644.13 E'er £2,264.22)	£ 2,908.35		£ 2,908.35
22.03.2018	*	Acumen	March 2018 payroll services and year end filing	£ 103.00	£ 20.60	£ 123.60
22.03.2018	*	Infotone	5 x HP laserjet toner cartridges	£ 100.70	£ 20.14	£ 120.84
23.03.2018	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4032774195)	£ 67.25		£ 67.25
26.03.2018	*	McLennan	Security Light	£ 85.00	£ 17.00	£ 102.00
27.03.2018	DD	Telesis	Phone charges	£ 51.33	£ 10.27	£ 61.60

