

**MINUTES OF THE MAY PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD AT BIRCHWOOD YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE
ON TUESDAY 18TH MAY 2021, 6PM**

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

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO – Mrs C. Caddock

1 resident

Apologies: Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe (health)

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 (Chair of Trustees)
Councillor Ellis – Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission

071/21-22 **APRIL 2021 PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Evans **proposed**, Councillor Ellis **seconded**, and it was **resolved** that: The Minutes of the Part I Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting that was held on Tuesday 27th April 2021 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

072/21-22 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule – (see pages 69 and 70 below).

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

PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL ITEMS

073/21-22 **BIRCHWOOD YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE (BYCC) – LAND OWNERSHIP DISCUSSIONS**

The Clerk stated that further discussions regarding BYCC land ownership will take place in the next few weeks.

074/21-22 **PARKERS FARM ESTATE**

- (a) The Clerk gave a brief verbal update regarding the works to Parkers Farm, and the snagging / decorating work that still needs to be completed.
- (b) To note the invoice from the contractor who has carried out the damp proofing / repair of water damage works inside the office building (£3,150 +VAT) has been paid.
- (c) To note the fourth invoice from Trinity Renovations (£10,510.87 +VAT) is set up for payment on 17th May 2021, with £1,217.90 retained until the final snagging and decorating works have been completed (as approved at the April 2021 meeting).

075/21-22 **2020/2021 INTERNAL / EXTERNAL AUDIT**

The Deputy RFO reported that work to satisfy the remote audit checklist from our internal auditor regarding our 2020/2021 end of year internal audit is ongoing, almost completed. She briefly explained the general process to Members.

Each year, the Council's financial accounts and statements must be examined by an independent internal auditor appointed by the Council. Birchwood Town Council has an interim internal audit in January, and the end of year internal audit, which takes place, usually around the end of May / beginning of June.

Along with the accounting figures and documents, the Council is also required to complete an Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) which includes the findings of the internal auditor, along with governance, and financial statements. The AGAR is then submitted to the independent external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission for examination.

Prior to sending the AGAR to the external auditor, the figures and documents for the end of year accounts, signed by the internal auditor, will be presented to the Council for their consideration / approval at the June 2021 meeting.

The deadline for submission of the AGAR to the external auditor for the 2020/2021 audit is Friday 2nd July 2021. They can be sent via email.

The Deputy RFO also explained, for the benefit of new Members, the reason for earmarked reserves, which can make it appear that the Town Council is holding unnecessarily large amounts of funds, when in fact there are specific reasons, such as 'saving' towards the purchase of a future fleet of electric vehicles, or to build a fund that can be used, for example, to improve local (public) recreation areas, as well as holding at least six months of working balance.

076/21-22 **REMOTE MEETINGS**

- (a) To note that as remote statutory meetings are currently no longer allowed, the Town Council continues to follow guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and local Public Health guidance to ensure, as far as possible, that we meet face-to-face in a Covid-safe way.

A risk assessment document re: holding Covid-secure face-to-face meetings has been circulated to Members.

- (b) The Clerk stated that we have been advised that the survey circulated by SLCC regarding the Town Council's opinions on continuing with remote meetings can also be completed by individual Councillors. Officers have already submitted the survey on behalf of the Town Council. The link to this call for evidence is: [Local Authority Remote Meetings - Call for Evidence - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Citizen Space - Citizen Space](#)

077/21-22 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING / NOTING**

- (a) The Clerk reported that work is ongoing following the request for the Town Council supply information relating to our members of the Cheshire Pension Scheme, to allow the Fund to enact the McCloud remedy. This is a legal requirement, to comply with legislative changes that will be made to the LGPS to remove unlawful age discrimination. The deadline for submitting the data is 30th June 2021.

- (b) The Clerk stated that the precept for 2021/2022 was paid, in one lump sum, into our Nationwide Account, by the Borough Council, on 20th April 2021 (£357,726.00).
- (c) To note the invoice for the annual Affiliation Fee to ChALC (£1470.04 plus £17.00 for the subscription to Local Council Review) has been paid.

NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

078/21-22 **BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION**

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account periods 1st April 2021 – 30th April 2021.

The payroll figure was £12,873.67 for March 2021 and £12,968.90 for April 2021

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

Councillor Ellis **proposed**, Councillor Evans **seconded** and Members **unanimously resolved** to approve the bank reconciliations.

079/21-22 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

The Clerk reported that, following discussions about the 2022 carnival initially being booked on a date that fell on an extended Bank Holiday in 2022, it has been agreed with Warrington Borough Council (WBC) to move the date back to 12th June 2022.

Some acts have agreed to transfer their bookings from 2020, when the carnival was first cancelled, without deposits being forfeited.

080/21-22 **WEBSITE / COUNCILLOR EMAILS**

- (a) The Clerk informed Members that we have received the Draft SLA and invoice (£720) from Wynchcote, for Joomla! CMS Support, domain renewal and Shared server hosting account on a Cloud Platform, covering 21 May 2021 to 20 May 2022.

The Clerk sent several queries to Wynchcote – including regarding the archiving of much older minutes on the website, and setting up Councillors' email accounts via the website (and additional costs to do this).

Our provider has sent detailed responses to the Clerk's questions.

The Clerk stated that Officers recommend renewing the contract for another full year, and for the new Council to consider how to go forward with the website from 2022.

Following discussion, Councillor Evans **proposed**, Councillor Scott **seconded**, and it was **unanimously agreed** to renew the contract with Wynchcote for another year.

Action Clerk's office to arrange to make payment of the renewal on the contract for another year.

- (b) The Clerk asked Members to consider an alternative option for Councillor email addresses. She explained the reasons for creating '. . . birchwoodtowncouncil.org.uk' email accounts for the Councillors. This option would also ensure emails are fully encrypted, with two factor authentications.

The costs to set this up with our specialist IT service provider is £5.40 + VAT per email address per month.

Following discussion, Councillor Reeves **proposed**, Councillor Evans **seconded**, and it was **unanimously agreed** for the new email accounts to be set up with our IT provider.

Action Clerk's office to liaise with our IT provider and Councillors to set up the new email accounts.

081/21-22 **POTENTIAL COMMUNITY PROJECT – LOCKING STUMPS PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT**

This item was deferred from the April 2021 meeting for formal discussion by the new Council in May 2021. The BAFO has exchanged emails with WBC regarding BTC's proposals to work in partnership to refurbish the small play area, on Borough Council land, behind the Turf & Feather public house in Locking Stumps. He proposed a preliminary starting figure of £20,000.

WBC has suggested that £20,000 will only fund minor works – “Potentially a paint refresh, vegetation clearance, safety surfacing repair, springy animal feature, new swing seats etc.”

Officers are of the opinion that as the land is owned by WBC, therefore the vegetation clearance and the safety surfacing repair, should normally be undertaken by WBC as part of their responsibilities for maintaining safe play areas, that any costs to undertake this work should not fall to the Town Council.

The Clerk reported that a meeting had been scheduled to take place with WBC on site earlier in the day, however, due to unforeseen circumstances this meeting is now having to be re-arranged.

Action Clerk's office to arrange an on-site meeting.

082/21-22 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING / NOTING**

- (a) To note that we have received our latest 'Anti-virus Health Report', 'Computer Health Standards' and 'Performance Review' from Yellowbus (1st May 2021), relating to our two office pcs and the laptop.
- (b) To note that four members of the maintenance team undertook pole pruner training on 13th May 2021; all passed.
- (c) To note the receipt of Employment Law newsletters from SAS Daniels – our current specialist employment law advisors.
- (d) To note that the next Pensions Consultative Forum (Cheshire Pension Fund) is currently scheduled to take place on 25th June 2021.
- (e) The Clerk said that the Council might wish to revisit bank account signatories, in relation to the Co-operative account, which is the one we use for our day-to-day banking needs. This can be put on the agenda for a Finance Sub-committee meeting.
- (f) The Clerk informed Members that tipper van NH57 CZV needs a repair to the driver's side door lock. The vehicle cannot be driven safely without the repair. In addition, the smaller transit van will require new brake pads within the next couple of weeks (previously noted as an advisory).

This part of the meeting concluded at 7.20 pm

| Payment of Accounts: | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-------------------------------|--|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Resolved: that the following payments be approved as the residual March 2021 and part of the April 2021 accounts | | | | | | |
| Date | Ref | Payee | Description | Net | VAT | Gross |
| 15.03.2021 | DD | Financial Direct Fees | FD online charges | £ 39.80 | | £ 39.80 |
| 15.03.2021 | DD | Yellowbus Solutions | IT support/backups/internet services - inc. for | £ 134.70 | £ 26.94 | £ 161.64 |
| 16.03.2021 | * | JDH Business Services Ltd | Interim Internal Audit 2020/2021 | £ 294.00 | £ 58.80 | £ 352.80 |
| 16.03.2021 | * | Cheshire Pension Fund | Re: Feb 2021 E'ee £780.95 E'er £2,805.48 | £ 3,586.43 | | £ 3,586.43 |
| 16.03.2021 | * | HMRC | Re:Feb 2021 Tax £1,399.60 NI £2,082.07 | £ 3,481.67 | | £ 3,481.67 |
| 17.03.2021 | DD | Allstar | Fuel (office vans, and equipment) | £ 151.23 | £ 30.24 | £ 181.47 |
| 22.03.2021 | * | Reimburse C Caddock | Amazon - 2 x boxes staples | £ 3.98 | £ 0.80 | £ 4.78 |
| 22.03.2021 | * | Reimburse C Caddock | Post Office - 2 x special delivery papers to GC | £ 15.30 | | £ 15.30 |
| 22.03.2021 | * | Reimburse C Caddock | Amazon - stapler | £ 5.44 | £ 1.09 | £ 6.53 |
| 22.03.2021 | DD | E-on | Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area | £ 10.02 | £ 0.50 | £ 10.52 |
| 24.03.2021 | DD | Allstar | Fuel (office vans, and equipment) | £ 74.17 | £ 14.83 | £ 89.00 |
| 26.03.2021 | * | James Todd & Co | Administration of SSP claim | £ 60.00 | £ 12.00 | £ 72.00 |
| 26.03.2021 | * | Arco | PPE - safety boots (JW) | £ 41.11 | £ 8.22 | £ 49.33 |
| 26.03.2021 | * | Reimburse C Caddock | Amazon - C4 Envelopes (box 100) | £ 9.16 | £ 1.83 | £ 10.99 |
| 26.03.2021 | * | James Todd & Co | Quarterly payroll Jan, Feb and March 2021 | £ 180.00 | £ 36.00 | £ 216.00 |
| 29.03.2021 | DD | Firstcom Europe | Phone charges | £ 57.46 | £ 11.49 | £ 68.95 |
| 29.03.2021 | * | Warrington Borough Council | Recharge - HK64 NNM - tyre repair | £ 15.00 | £ 3.00 | £ 18.00 |
| 29.03.2021 | * | RSL Northwest | Reinstatement Valuation of Parkers Farm for insurance purposes | £ 1,500.00 | £ 300.00 | £ 1,800.00 |
| | | | | £ - | | |
| 30.03.2021 | * | Cheshire Pension Fund | Re: March 2021 E'ee £780.95 E'er £2,805.48 | £ 3,586.43 | | £ 3,586.43 |
| 30.03.2021 | * | HMRC | Re: March 2021 Tax £1,400.00 NI £2,082.07 | £ 3,482.07 | | £ 3,482.07 |
| 31.03.2021 | DD | Allstar | Fuel (office vans, and equipment) | £ 69.12 | £ 13.82 | £ 82.94 |
| 31.03.2021 | DD | O2 | Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones | £ 45.62 | £ 9.12 | £ 54.74 |
| 31.03.2021 | * | Warrington Borough Council | Repairs to brake warning light HK64 NNM | £ 542.29 | £ 108.46 | £ 650.75 |
| 31.03.2021 | * | FDR Law LLP | Legal fees re: potential BTC/BYCC lease | £ 556.00 | £ 111.20 | £ 667.20 |
| 01.04.2021 | * | Warrington Borough Council | Final payment 4/4 for previous Locking Stumps by-election | £ 1,322.34 | | £ 1,322.34 |
| 01.04.2021 | DD | Waterplus | Water and wastewater services (4083868280) | £ 22.83 | | £ 22.83 |
| 01.04.2021 | * | Zurich Municipal | Annual insurance (inc. £ 633.28 IPT) | £ 5,910.53 | | £ 5,910.53 |
| 06.04.2021 | DD | Legal and General | Ill health insurance | £ 162.66 | | £ 162.66 |
| 07.04.2021 | DD | Allstar | Fuel (office vans) | £ 118.48 | £ 23.70 | £ 142.18 |
| 07.04.2021 | * | April wages | 10 staff | £ 12,968.90 | | £ 12,968.90 |
| 12.04.2021 | DD | Waterplus | Water/wastewater services (4083867607) | £ 87.07 | | £ 87.07 |
| 14.04.2021 | DD | Allstar | Fuel (office vans) | £ 52.97 | £ 10.59 | £ 63.56 |
| 14.04.2021 | * | Reimburse F McDonald | Petty cash float | £ 100.00 | | £ 100.00 |
| 14.04.2021 | * | Duttons Mowerworld | Mini Stihl chain, grease, oil and 5l green 2/stroke | £ 81.54 | £ 16.29 | £ 97.83 |
| 14.04.2021 | * | Arco | PPE - safety boots (PT) | £ 50.47 | £ 10.09 | £ 60.56 |
| 14.04.2021 | * | C Caddock reimb. 3 x items: | Ryder Imports Ltd - box small disposable gloves | £ 6.66 | £ 1.33 | £ 7.99 |
| | | (total £69.44) | Peppy Group (UK) Ltd - 6 x 480ml hand sanitiser | £ 12.46 | £ 2.49 | £ 14.95 |
| | | | Medicare Logistics Ltd - 60 x face visors | £ 38.76 | £ 7.74 | £ 46.50 |
| 14.04.2021 | * | Abel Occupational Health Resc | 2 x Occupational Health interviews / reports | £ 340.00 | £ 68.00 | £ 408.00 |
| 15.04.2021 | DD | Yellowbus Solutions | IT support, backups, internet services (3 x inv.) | £ 134.70 | £ 26.94 | £ 161.64 |

Payments of Account since 15th April 2021

| Date | Ref | Payee | Description | Net | VAT | Gross |
|------------|-----|--|--|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 15.04.2020 | DD | Financial Direct Fees | FD online charges | £ 42.60 | | £ 42.60 |
| 16.04.2021 | DD | E-on Next | Electricity - Parkers Farm | £ 192.83 | £ 9.64 | £ 202.47 |
| 21.04.2021 | DD | Allstar | Fuel (office vans, mowers, equipment) | £ 119.80 | £ 23.94 | £ 143.74 |
| 21.04.2021 | DD | E-on | Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area | £ 9.31 | £ 0.47 | £ 9.78 |
| 23.04.2021 | * | C Caddock reimburse | Amazon - 18 x antibac handwash & 10l anti-bac Fairy liquid | £ 34.70 | £ 6.94 | £ 41.64 |
| 26.04.2021 | * | The Helping Hand Company | 10 x Litterpicker Pro gel handle | £ 115.90 | £ 23.18 | £ 139.08 |
| 28.04.2021 | DD | Allstar | Fuel (office vans, mowers, equipment) | £ 159.42 | £ 31.86 | £ 191.28 |
| 29.04.2021 | DD | Firstcom Europe (previously t/a Telesis) | Phone/enhanced internet speed charges | £ 57.46 | £ 11.49 | £ 68.95 |
| 30.04.2021 | DD | Copyrite Systems | Photocopier charges | £ 93.45 | £ 18.69 | £ 112.14 |
| 30.04.2021 | * | Office Depot | Stationery (inc ring binders & punched pockets ref: new Council) | £ 27.80 | £ 5.56 | £ 33.36 |
| 04.05.2021 | DD | Legal and General | Ill health insurance | £ 162.66 | | £ 162.66 |
| 04.05.2021 | DD | O2 | Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones | £ 46.21 | £ 9.24 | £ 55.45 |
| 04.05.2021 | DD | Waterplus | Water and wastewater services (4083868280) | £ 22.83 | | £ 22.83 |
| 05.05.2021 | DD | Allstar | Fuel (office vans, mowers, equipment) | £ 257.45 | £ 51.48 | £ 308.93 |
| 06.05.2021 | * | Reimburse C Caddock | Amazon seller 'Shenzhen ...' - Non-contact thermometer | £ 10.37 | £ 2.08 | £ 12.45 |
| 06.05.2021 | * | Reimburse C Caddock | Amazon - 12 x extra wide 20 part file dividers | £ 21.34 | £ 4.20 | £ 25.54 |
| 06.05.2021 | * | C Caddock | Contribution to glasses (VDU work) | £ 100.00 | | £ 100.00 |
| 06.05.2021 | * | Cheshire Association of Local Councils | Annual membership renewal & subscription to LCR | £ 1,487.04 | | £ 1,487.04 |
| 07.05.2021 | * | ESI | Intruder alarm fault - 3 x activations - engineer reset | £ 75.00 | £ 15.00 | £ 90.00 |
| 07.05.2021 | * | ESI | Fire alarm fault - loose connection in loft optical | £ 120.00 | £ 24.00 | £ 144.00 |
| 07.05.2021 | * | CJ Auto Service | ND58 BZR - replacement of driver's side window switch | £ 153.10 | £ 30.62 | £ 183.72 |
| 07.05.2021 | * | May wages: | 10 staff | £ 13,037.92 | | £13,037.92 |
| 10.05.2021 | DD | BNP Paribas | Photocopier lease - 10/5/21 to 9/8/21 | £ 343.00 | £ 68.60 | £ 411.60 |
| 10.05.2021 | * | Gorman Restorations Ltd | Repair/treatment to interior damp/water damage PF | £ 3,150.00 | £ 630.00 | £ 3,780.00 |
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| 17.05.2021 | * | HMRC | Re: April 2021 Tax £1,469.60 NI £2,120.61 | £ 3,590.21 | | £ 3,590.21 |
| 17.05.2021 | * | Trinity Renovations | Fourth payment - works to Parkers Farm (£1,217.90 retained) | £ 10,510.87 | £ 2,102.17 | £ 12,613.04 |
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Payments of accounts for approval at the May 2021 meeting

| Date | Ref | Payee | Description | Net | VAT | Gross |
|---------|-----|-----------------------|---|----------|---------|----------|
| all tbc | DD | Legal and General | Ill health insurance (April 2021) | £ 162.66 | | £ 162.66 |
| | DD | Telesis | Phone/enhanced internet speed charges | tbc | | |
| | DD | Waterplus | Water and wastewater services (4083868280) | £ 22.83 | | £ 22.83 |
| | DD | Waterplus | Water/wastewater services (4083867607) | £ 87.07 | | £ 87.07 |
| | DD | Financial Direct Fees | FD online charges | £ 40.00 | | £ 40.00 |
| | DD | Yellowbus Solutions | IT support, backups, internet services (inc. for laptop) (4 x inv.) | £ 134.70 | £ 26.94 | £ 161.64 |
| | DD | O2 | Ref a/c 04760571 mobile phones | £ 46.21 | £ 9.24 | £ 55.45 |
| | DD | E-on | Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area | £ 8.07 | £ 0.40 | £ 8.47 |
| | DD | Allstar | Fuel (office vans, mowers and equipment) | £ 56.36 | £ 11.27 | £ 67.63 |
| | DD | CopyriteSystems | Photocopying charges | £ 93.87 | £ 18.78 | £ 112.65 |
| | * | HMRC | Re: May 2021 Tax £xxx NI £xxx | tbc | | tbc |
| | * | Cheshire Pension Fund | RE:April 2021 E'ee £7xxxx E'er £2xxxx | tbc | | tbc |
| | * | Wynchco Solutions | Annual domain renewal, Joomla! Support, server hosting | £ 720.00 | | £ 720.00 |
| | DD | E-on Next | Gas - Parkers Farm | tbc | | |
| | * | Office Depot | Stationery - dividers, punched pockets, ballpoint pens | £ 44.44 | £ 8.89 | £ 53.33 |
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