

**MINUTES OF THE PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING OF
BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE,
ON TUESDAY 25TH JULY 2023**

- Present:** Councillor Dempsey in the Chair
Councillors Ball, Bowden, Brereton, Evans, Reeves, Scott and Simcock

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO – Mrs. C. Caddock
Administrative Assistant – Mrs. H. Thomas
- Apologies:** Councillors Allen (away), Atkin (personal), Ellis (WBC Meeting) and Sheridan (Personal).

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.

135/23-24 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Members were asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts schedule – (see pages 80 to 81 below).

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

136/23-24 **JUNE 2023 PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Brereton **proposed**, Councillor Ball **seconded**, and it was **unanimously resolved** that: the Minutes of the Part I Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting, held on 27th June 2023, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

PROGRESS REPORT

137/23-24 **LOCKING STUMPS – PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT**

The RFO stated that WBC are still waiting to find out Councillor Higgins' availability before a formal opening date can be set.

138/23-24 **SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE (SID)**

- (a) The RFO informed Members that a WBC Officer has been contacted to ask if they could attend a meeting with the Clerk, RFO and PCSO Palfrey to finalise locations for the new SIDs.

Councillor Scott enquired whether a SID could be turned off during times that Police are conducting speed enforcements, as there was a concern raised by the Police that the SID could be calibrated differently to a speed camera, which might enable motorists who are ticketed for exceeding the speed limit by Police, to argue that they should not be fined as the SID showed them travelling within the speed limit. Councillor Scott was concerned that the Police should still carry out enforcement operations, even with a SID installed at a location. The SID should not replace the Police.

The RFO stated that she would put this question to the SID company or WBC when locations are being finalised, and the Council looks to order the devices.

- (b) The RFO said that PCSO Palfrey has advised us that BTC's original mobile SID is being repaired at present. It is understood that BTC's mobile SID was 'borrowed' from Police 'custody' regularly, for use in other local Parishes, and now is in need of repair.

139/23-24 **MEMORIAL PLAQUE BIRCHWOOD FOREST PARK**

The RFO stated that Councillor Ellis has provided feedback regarding an additional unveiling of the memorial. This was discussed earlier in the meeting. (*See minute 126/23-24.*)

140/23-24 **BENCHES**

The RFO stated that WBC have suggested that 'it might be prudent' for BTC to undertake consultations with adjacent properties (both residential and commercial) regarding the areas that BTC and Locking Stumps Primary School have indicated they would like the additional benches to be installed.

The RFO explained that benches can often be associated with anti-social behaviour, so the proposed location of Fisherfield Drive close to a number of residential properties, and similarly with the preferred location of the bench by Thomas Risley Church car park, would need to be the subject of a consultation.

The RFO asked the Members how they wish to proceed, and it was agreed that BTC will undertake consultations with adjacent properties in Gorse Covert. Locking Stumps Primary School will be asked to consult with the properties around the school, including the church, local businesses, and adjacent residents.

Action Clerk's office to arrange consultations.

141/23-24 **TIPPER HIRE / PURCHASE**

- (a) The RFO confirmed that, following resolution by Members, the tipper van SC19 TYF, has now been ordered. The changes as agreed have been undertaken and the vehicle has returned from the body shop. It will now be valeted and have an MOT and service.

The price included extras: led flashing beacon (supplied free of charge), side cages with doors to the rear of the cage (doors supplied free of charge saving an additional £800.00), removing rear seats and fitting a bulkhead and ply lining. The total cost was £24,655.00 plus VAT, plus road tax (£320.00).

The RFO said that the payment will be made in two parts due to a maximum amount limit on our Co-Operative Bank account.

- (b) The RFO stated that the vehicle will require signwriting once it has been valeted. The Clerk's office obtained two quotes, but although one was slightly cheaper, the graphics were not what we required. The company we decided to use has undertaken signwriting before on several of our other vehicles, and so far, we have been happy with their work. The quote was for £250.00 plus VAT, however, the Clerk negotiated the cost down to £200.00 plus VAT.

142/23-24 **TELEPHONE SYSTEM**

- (a) The RFO stated that Avoira came out to BTC's offices to discuss the possibility of a new telephone system. During the discussion it was clear that there was some miscommunication regarding what was included in the initial quote. The newer system would run off a 'Microsoft Teams' operating system, (which was briefly demonstrated to Officers) and therefore, we would need to purchase additional 'Teams' licensing at £30.00 per month.

Avoira acknowledged that they could not provide a telephone system for less than we currently pay.

Officers decided that the 'Teams System' was more than we needed at present.

Members ratified the decision of Officers to stay with our current phone providers at this present time.

- (b) The RFO stated that BTC's current telephone provider, Telesis, need to update our broadband network, this relates to the turning off of copper systems in 2025. The current cost would be £50.00 for the new broadband installation, and £75.00 for an engineer to come out. The Council is able to continue using the same router, and once this initial fee is paid, we will be paying £10.00 less per month for the basics we need.

The RFO added that the closer we get to 2025, the cost may increase.

The RFO asked if the Council is happy to proceed with this. It was **unanimously resolved** by those Members present to proceed with the upgrade.

Action RFO to arrange for the broadband upgrade to take place.

143/23-24 **STORAGE FOR THE NORTH WARRINGTON CAVY CLUB (NWCC)**

The RFO stated that she has exchanged several emails with the NWCC, as upon viewing items in storage, it appears that there are considerably more items than we first anticipated, which will require one additional cage. She said that she has measured the space allocated and there is room for three cages plus a flat bed trolley.

The RFO proposed that the Council agrees to the NWCC's usage of the space, provided that everything fits safely and securely, stacked within the cages, and nothing is out of the confines of this agreed location.

The RFO asked for Member's thoughts on the matter.

After a discussion, Members **resolved** that they are happy to continue with the contract as planned, (with the amendment of two cages to three), and will review the contract, including storage fees, for the next financial year.

Action RFO to liaise with the NWCC regarding the above.

144/23-24 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR NOTING/REPORTING**

- (a) Whilst Councillor Ellis was not in attendance at this meeting, he sent his feedback via email regarding his action to speak to an associate about the need for a Legionella Risk Assessment to the Clerk and RFO.

Councillor Ellis reported that the expert associate of his said that it is his view that it is unnecessary for BTC to obtain a Legionella Risk Assessment as our risks are low. The only issue could be the use of the bowser, which is used for watering plants. This would not be an issue if additional risk assessments were drawn up for the use of the bowser itself, making sure that it is fully emptied after each use.

Action

Clerk's office to liaise with our specialist health and safety contact and report back to Council with their response.

- (b) To note that between meetings, as requested, the RFO circulated information regarding the relevant sections in the Financial Regulations detailing the circumstances under which Officers are able to purchase items without the prior agreement of the Council or Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of the Council.
- (c) To note that the AGAR and end of year accounts documents were submitted on time to the external auditor. The Notice of Public Rights was published on our notice board and website on 30th June 2023 (the inspection dates for BTC is between 3rd July 2023 to 11th August 2023). The unaudited AGAR and relevant documents were also published on our website, as required, on 30th June 2023.
- (d) To note that a report and photos of the sensory play area that has been supported with a grant from BTC, has been received from Tommy Tots. Copies of receipts for the items have also been received.

NEW FINANCE, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL ITEMS

145/23-24 **BANK ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION**

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account periods 1st June 2023 – 30th June 2023.

The payroll figure for May 2023 was £11,047.59 (8 staff). The payroll figure for June 2023 was £13,422.92 (9 staff). The difference is because one new part-time member of the office staff was owed May and June's wages together, and one new full-time member of the maintenance team started work in June 2023.

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 resolved** that they are happy with the schedules as presented. These will be signed by the RFO and the Chair, following the meeting.

146/23-24 **GENERAL ITEMS FOR REPORTING/NOTING**

- (a) To note that the drains at the BTC offices are blocked again. Last time they were jetted, it was advised by the drain expert that should this problem reoccur, the Council may wish to consider diverting the blocked pipes into a different main sewer.

The RFO stated that the Clerk's office does not have a quote from the drain expert at present, but reminded the Council that this is something that needs to be resolved for health and safety reasons and that the Office would contact the Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of the Council with any further information and a request for approval, should a quote be received during recess.

- (b) To note that BTC's current tipper, HK64 NNM, has been having issues with the hydraulics. The RFO stated that it is due to go into the garage in the following week for this issue to be resolved.

The RFO said that the same tipper has had a bump to the driver's side mirror. The tipper requires a replacement mirror unit which will cost £378.09 plus VAT.

This part of the meeting concluded at 7.15 pm

Payment of Accounts:							
Resolved: that the following payments be approved as the residual May 2023 and part of the June 2023 accounts							
Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross	
12.05.2023	DD	Waterplus	Water/w astew ater services (4083867607)	£ 92.81	£ -	£ 92.81	
12.05.2023	DD	British Gas	Gas - Parkers Farm	£ 68.32	£ 3.41	£ 71.73	
15.05.2023	DD	Copyrite	Photocopying charges	£ 35.32	£ 7.06	£ 42.38	
16.05.2023	DD	Avoira	IT support, backups, internet services (4 x inv.) April 2023	£ 232.11	£ 46.42	£ 278.53	
16.05.2023	DD	FD Online	Financial Direct Fees (Co-Operative Bank Account)	£ 39.40		£ 39.40	
17.05.2023	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment, mow ers)	£ 87.72	£ 17.53	£ 105.25	
18.05.2023	*	Risley MOT & Truck Ltd.	HK64 NNM - investigate fault - n/s/f caliper loom repair	£ 72.50	£ 14.50	£ 87.00	
19.05.2023	*	Arco	Safety boots (JW and MA)	£ 108.74	£ 21.75	£ 130.49	
19.05.2023	*	Elas Occupational Health Ltd	New starter pre-employment medical (HT)	£ 250.00	£ 50.00	£ 300.00	
19.05.2023	*	Wynchco Solutions	1 year Joomla! Support/Domain renew al/hosting	£ 858.95	£ -	£ 858.95	
23.05.2023	*	Reimburse Mrs McDonald	Petty cash float	£ 100.00	£ -	£ 100.00	
23.05.2023	*	Bumblebee Plumbing	Supply and install new kitchen tap	£ 143.69	£ 28.74	£ 172.43	
24.05.2023	DD	E-on Next	Electricity - Locking Stumps MUGA	£ 9.21	£ 0.46	£ 9.67	
24.05.2023	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment, mow ers)	£ 85.14	£ 17.02	£ 102.16	
26.05.2023	DD	SWALEC	Electricity - Parkers Farm	£ 364.81	£ 18.24	£ 383.05	
30.05.2023	DD	James Todd (Go Cardless)	Payroll services (April 2023)	£ 52.80	£ 10.56	£ 63.36	
30.05.2023	DD	Firstcom Europe	Office phone charges	£ 68.14	£ 13.63	£ 81.77	
31.05.2023	DD	LEVL	Geotab Pro Plus (in advance - June monthly subscription)	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00	
31.05.2023	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment, mow ers)	£ 21.00	£ 4.20	£ 25.20	
01.06.2023	DD	Waterplus	Water and w astew ater services (4083868280)	£ 25.83		£ 25.83	
02.06.2023	*	ESI	Supply & commission 8 new fire extinguishers (& disposal of old)	£ 388.00	£ 77.60	£ 465.60	
05.06.2023	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 159.87		£ 159.87	
06.06.2023	*	PREMclean	Office cleaning services May 2023 (overpaid £41.25)	£ 378.22	£ 75.64	£ 453.86	
07.06.2023	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment, mow ers)	£ 114.89	£ 22.97	£ 137.86	
07.06.2023	*	June 2023 Wages	9 staff	£ 13,442.92		£ 13,442.92	
09.06.2023	*	Vans Northw est	MK71FUU replace damaged key and recode new key	£ 101.70	£ 20.34	£ 122.04	
09.06.2023	*	Arco	Safety boots (HT and SM) and safety glasses	£ 93.68	£ 18.73	£ 112.41	
09.06.2023	*	Elas Occupational Health Ltd	New starter pre-employment medical (SM)	£ 250.00	£ 50.00	£ 300.00	
09.06.2023	*	Duttons	Hedgetrimmer lines, grease and oil	£ 139.92	£ 27.98	£ 167.90	
12.06.2023	DD	Waterplus	Water/w astew ater services (4083867607)	£ 92.81		£ 92.81	
14.06.2023	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans and equipment)	£ 79.36	£ 15.87	£ 95.23	
15.06.2023	DD	Avoira	IT support, backups, internet services (4 x inv.) May 2023	£ 232.11	£ 46.42	£ 278.53	
15.06.2023	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 14.82	£ 2.97	£ 17.79	
15.06.2023	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	£ 39.40		£ 39.40	
16.06.2023	*	HMRC	Tax £1,290.40 NI £1,951.03 (6 May 2023 to 5 June 2023)	£ 3,241.43		£ 3,241.43	
16.06.2023	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Pension contributions re: May 2023 Eee £826.59 Eer £3,009.72	£ 3,836.31		£ 3,836.31	

Payments of Account since 16th June 2023

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
21.06.2023	DD	E-on Next	Electricity - Locking Stumps MUGA	£ 9.34	£ 0.47	£ 9.81
21.06.2023	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment, mowers)	£ 53.59	£ 10.71	£ 64.30
22.06.2023	*	M. Shallcross t/a Cheshire PAT Testing	Annual PAT testing 2023	£ 70.40		£ 70.40
23.06.2023	*	PREMIClean	Office cleaning services June 2023 (amended re: May overpay)	£ 412.60	£ 82.53	£ 495.13
27.06.2023	DD	British Gas	Gas - Parkers Farm 26/04/23 - 07/06/23	£ 65.38	£ 3.26	£ 68.64
27.06.2023	*	Birchwood Heating	Supply and fit isolation valve to repair leak to pipe work	£ 70.00	£ 14.00	£ 84.00
27.06.2023	*	Mrs F McDonald	Reimbursement for petty cash float	£ 100.00		£ 100.00
28.06.2023	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment, mowers)	£ 125.95	£ 25.18	£ 151.13
29.06.2023	DD	Firstcom Europe	Office phone charges	£ 69.44	£ 13.89	£ 83.33
29.06.2023	*	Mrs C Caddock	Reimburse re: ITP Packaging Ltd - 6 x 25 litre plastic 'jerry cans'	£ 41.66	£ 8.33	£ 49.99
29.06.2023	*	Mrs C Caddock	Reimburse re: Amazon seller - garden hosepipe connectors	£ 3.57	£ 0.72	£ 4.29
30.06.2023	DD	James Todd (Go Cardless)	Payroll services (May 2023)	£ 52.80	£ 10.56	£ 63.36
30.06.2023	*	JDH Business Services	Year end internal audit 2022/2023	£ 350.00	£ 70.00	£ 420.00
30.06.2023	*	Sw ift Loos	Grant Δ - portaloo for Birchwood Carnival 2023 (Δ Public Health Act 1936, s.87)	£ 600.00	£ 120.00	£ 720.00
				£ -		
30.06.2023	*	Regal Polythene	40 x boxes refuse sacks and 3 x boxes paper hand towels	£ 663.50	£ 132.70	£ 796.20
03.07.2023	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 25.83		£ 25.83
03.07.2023	DD	Direct365	Sanitary Hygiene Unit	£ 88.80	£ 17.76	£ 106.56
03.07.2023	DD	LEVL	Geotab Pro Plus (in advance - July monthly subscription)	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
04.07.2023	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 159.87		£ 159.87
05.07.2023	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment, mowers)	£ 70.32	£ 14.06	£ 84.38
07.07.2023	*	HMRC	Tax £1,277.80 NI £ 2,259.00 (6 June 2023 to 5 July 2023)	£ 3,536.80		£ 3,536.80
07.07.2023	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Pension conts. re: June 2023 Eee £995.60 Eer £3,668.19	£ 4,663.79		£ 4,663.79
07.07.2023	*	E Smith and Son	16 x hanging basket refills and plants for planters	£ 549.75	£ 109.95	£ 659.70
07.07.2023	*	July 2023 Wages	9 staff	£ 12,930.10		£ 12,930.10
11.07.2023	*	Risley MOT and Truck Ltd	PO51 WLE Replace contaminated clutch fluid / supply and fit new windscreen washer pump	£ 123.72	£ 24.74	£ 148.46
12.07.2023	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 92.81		£ 92.81
12.07.2023	DD	Allstar	Fuel (office vans, equipment, mowers)	£ 70.06	£ 14.00	£ 84.06
14.07.2023	*	HIVis	Workwear and PPE	£ 158.40	£ 31.68	£ 190.08
14.07.2023	DD	CopyriteSystems	Photocopying charges	£ 28.91	£ 5.79	£ 34.70
16.07.2023	DD	Avoira	IT support, backups, internet services (4 x inv.) July 2023	£ 232.11	£ 46.42	£ 278.53
16.07.2023	DD	Avoira	2 x Adobe Acrobat Pro licences for 1 year	£ 349.80	£ 69.96	£ 419.76

Payments of accounts for approval at the June 2023 meeting

Date	Ref	Payee	Description	Net	VAT	Gross
all tbc	DD	Legal and General	Ill health insurance	£ 159.87		£ 159.87
	DD	Firstcom Europe	Phone/enhanced internet speed charges	tbc		
	DD	Waterplus	Water and wastewater services (4083868280)	£ 25.83		£ 25.83
	DD	Waterplus	Water/wastewater services (4083867607)	£ 92.81		£ 92.81
	DD	Avoira	IT support, backups, internet services (4 x inv.) July 2023	£ 232.11	£ 46.42	£ 278.53
	DD	James Todd	June payroll fee	£ 59.40	£ 11.88	£ 71.28
	DD	E-on	Electricity - Locking Stumps multi-use games area	£ 8.85	£ 0.44	£ 9.29
	*	Premiclean	Cleaning services June 2023 (adjusted for May overpayment)	£ 412.60	£ 82.53	£ 495.13
	DD	LEVL	Geotab Pro Plus (monthly subs. - in advance) August 2023	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
	DD	Allstar	Fuel (equipment)	£ 7.42	£ 1.48	£ 8.90
	*	S&S Marquees Ltd	(Grant Δ) Hire of marquee/table/chairs 2023 Birchwood Carnival	£ 1,775.50	£ 355.10	£ 2,130.60
			Δ (Local Government & Rating Act 1972 (Section 145) (Provision of Entertainment and Support of the Arts))			
	*	Elan City Ltd	2 x solar-powered speed indicator devices & related equipment	£ 4,948.80	£ 989.76	£ 5,938.56
	DD	Financial Direct Fees	FD online charges	tbc		
	*	PremiClean	Cleaning services July 2023	£ 446.98	£ 89.40	£ 536.38
	*	HMRC	Tax £1,277.80 NI £2,259.00 (6 June 2023 to 5 July 2023)	£ 3,241.43		£ 3,241.43
	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Pension contributions re: July 2023 Eee £965.27 Eer £3,546.24	£ 3,836.31		£ 3,836.31
	★	The PSD Group	Tipper van plus extras (cage, beacon, painting rear body, remove rear seats, ply lining, etc. £24655.00 + vat + Road Tax (£320.00))	£ 24,655.00	£ 4,931.00	£ 29,586.00
				£ 320.00		£ 320.00
	DD	BNP Paribas	Photocopier lease	£ 210.00	£ 42.00	£ 252.00
	*	ASL (previously t/a Copyrite)	Photocopying charges	£ 83.56	£ 16.71	£ 100.27
	*	HMRC	Tax £1,274.60 NI £ 2,164.20 (6 July 2023 to 5 Aug 2023)	£ 3,438.80		£ 3,438.80
	*	Cheshire Pension Fund	Pension conts. re: June 2023 Eee £995.60 Eer £3,668.19	£ 4,511.51		£ 4,511.51
	DD	British Gas	Gas - Parkers Farm 8/6/23 to 7/7/23 (estimated)	£ 29.42	£ 1.47	£ 30.89
	*	HIVis	Workwear & PPE - disputed invoice should be approx £250+VA	tbc		
	*	TBC	Signwriting new van	tbc		

★ This payment will be made in two parts due to Co-op bank restriction on maximum payment amounts.