

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE
ON TUESDAY 26TH MARCH 2024, 6.00 PM

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

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
RFO / Deputy Clerk – Mrs. C. Caddock
Administrative Assistant – Mrs. H. Thomas

3 members of the public

Apologies: Councillors Allen (away), Ball (Personal), and Dempsey (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.

352/23-24 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) **Police Monthly Update**

There were no Police present at this meeting and no Monthly Police Report had been received.

(b) **Public Participation**

Councillor Sheridan welcomed the three members of the public to the meeting and explained that there is an allocated time of up to 30 minutes for this section of the meeting.

All members of the public stated that they wished to only observe tonight's Council meeting.

353/23-24 **JANUARY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Evans **proposed**, Councillor Ellis **seconded** and it was **unanimously resolved** that: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27th February 2024 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

PROGRESS

354/23-24 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)**

Communication

(a) **Dog Waste**

The Clerk stated that she had contacted WBC to ask for an update on the stickers that had been promised to be displayed on lampposts asking residents to remove dog waste. WBC have replied that the stickers are currently being updated as there is new legislation being introduced regarding this matter and new stickers are being produced. Once they are ready, they will be rolled out across the borough.

(b) **Abandoned Trolleys**

The Clerk reminded Members that Enforcement at WBC had contacted the stores for comment in order to collate a coordinated response.

Both Asda and Aldi have responded to the email. As far as we are aware, Home Bargains have not responded. We are yet to receive the coordinated response from WBC.

The Clerk stated that when she was in the area yesterday, she noticed a large collection of Aldi trolleys in the railway station side of the car park.

Action

Clerk's office to contact Trolleywise to report Aldi trolleys in the station side of the car park.

(c) **Lords Lane Flooding**

The Clerk stated that the matter is still ongoing and BTC has had no clear response from WBC regarding how they plan to rectify the problem. She said that she has escalated this once again to the Operations Manager who will in turn take the matter up with Highways.

Councillor Ellis said that the drains at this location had been fully cleared out several years ago and the problem persists. It is thought that there may be a partially collapsed drain causing the flooding.

(d) **Information Board at Cross Lane South Cemetery**

The Clerk stated that she has emailed WBC to enquire about the progress of this matter. She is yet to receive an update.

(e) **Wildflowers**

Following the February Council Meeting, Officers have been in contact with WBC who have confirmed that the 2.9m width clearance at the Locking Stumps Play area location is not sufficient for the agricultural machinery which will need access to prepare the ground.

The Clerk stated that WBC has suggested three alternative areas for wildflowers to be sown in Locking Stumps; Copperfield Close, Havisham Close and Locking Stumps Common.

Councillors **unanimously resolved** that Locking Stumps Common was their preferred option.

Councillor Ellis enquired if taller flowers could be planted in the BTC planters on Risley Road.

The Clerk said that when the plants are taller, we run the risk of affecting visibility for motorists. She also stated that these are usually higher value plants and often encourage anti-social behaviour when placed in the planters.

The Clerk added that the flowers chosen for these planters are also picked for their ability to withstand the conditions of being placed near the roadside.

355/23-24 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) – UPDATES**

(a) **Container at Kingfisher Close**

The Clerk stated that the container has now been emptied, and mud had been cleaned up from the surrounding area. However, it appears that when the mud was scraped up, it was placed beside the container in a heap, and machinery has then driven over it, creating further issues with mud spreading over the road.

Action The Clerk to email YHG regarding this.

(b) **Rubbish Bin at ‘The Birches’ Play Area**

The Clerk said that she has been in contact with YHG regarding the waste bin that was removed by YHG, due to damage, and she enquired if there are plans to replace this. Officers have asked if YHG will fund two new bins, one to replace the receptacle which was removed, and another to be situated on Redshank Common.

BTC is still awaiting a response regarding this.

(c) **Vegetation on Chatfield Drive / Admirals Road**

Councillor Ellis stated that he has written to WBC asking if there is just cause to have traffic lights installed near this location, to replace the zebra crossing, following an alleged incident which occurred between a vehicle and a child.

(d) **General Issues Raised with YHG**

The Clerk stated that she has chased up the emails which were sent regarding vast amounts of flytipping pre- and post-hedgecutting and is still awaiting a response from YHG.

The Clerk also informed Members that there are multiple bags of waste left near Locking Stumps shop. We have not been asked to remove them by any local group and the Clerk will investigate whether YHG or WBC have been requested to move them.

Action Clerk’s office to enquire about removal of rubbish bags.

NEW ITEMS RAISED UNDER THE CLERK’S REPORT TO THE COUNCIL

356/23-24 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/online reports/telephone calls following queries/contact from residents regarding flytipping, tree/shrubbery/hedge issues (including ownership), flooding, etc.
- (b) Received – Notice of Election posters – these have been placed on our notice boards and published on our website and Facebook page.
- (c) Sent – an email to WBC Environmental Crime Enforcement, requesting an update on when milk bottles and milk crates will be removed from BTC’s premises.

The Clerk stated that these have now been collected. She spoke to the representative from the dairy who was surprised they had been left around Birchwood.

357/23-24 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/reports following queries/contact from residents including issues with flytipping, shrubbery maintenance, trees blocking light from street lamps, waste removal etc.
- (b) Sent/received – an email requesting that the container on Kingfisher Close be emptied or exchanged.
- (c) Sent – an email to YHG Regional Housing Manager with several unresolved queries relating to Birchwood estates, with a request for feedback. YHG have informed us that there have been several staff absences recently, which is why feedback and responses are delayed at present.

358/23-24 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE/ISSUES**

- (a) Received – various emails from Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA).
- (b) Received – email from a resident asking for clarification regarding the height barrier at Birchwood Forest Park so that she could access the park with her wheelchair accessible vehicle. This question was put to the Park Ranger at the Forest Park and the answer was forwarded onto the resident.
- (c) Received – email from 12th Warrington East Scout Group advertising their 2024 Bedding Plant Sale fundraiser. This was forwarded to Members.

359/23-24 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Received – Various Neighbourhood Alerts.

360/23-24 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (CHALC), NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC), SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC)**

- (a) Received – NALC publications including the Chief Executive’s Bulletins, events information, etc.
- (b) Received – ChALC weekly e-bulletins with various attachments, details of training sessions, etc.
- (c) Received – SLCC – various updates, briefings, news items, etc.

361/23-24 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

Various LGC e-mail correspondence/briefings.

362/23-24 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

- (a) **Warrington Borough Council - Development Management Committee (DMC)**
 - (i) A DMC Meeting was held on 14th March 2024. There were no items specific to Birchwood on the main agenda for discussion. The next DMC is scheduled to take place on 10th April 2024. There are currently no documents available for this meeting.

- (ii) Information re: enforcement cases specific to Birchwood have been circulated to Members.
- (iii) An email was sent to the Senior Enforcement Officer querying if there are conditions put in place to ensure the residential area surrounding the development 2019/34700, 3 Delenty Drive, be kept clear of mud and debris. An Enforcement Officer visited the site and confirmed that the contractors are complying with the CEMP by ensuring the road is cleaned regularly. A resident has raised concerns regarding the oak trees assigned TPOs. This has been raised with WBC.

(b) **Planning Decisions**

- (i) **Application No. 2023/00895/FUL** G&J Greenall, Melbury Park, Clayton Road, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6PH. Proposed semi-permanent storage building with external concrete ramp and extension to external hardstanding. **Granted.**
- (ii) **Application No. 2024/00134/HPA** 9 Jay Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6QJ. Proposed single storey rear extension to extend beyond the wall by 4.95m, height of 3.15m and height of the eaves 3.00m. **Prior approval not required.**
- (iii) **Application No. 2024/00078/FULH** 34 Gilderdale Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6TH. Demolish existing garden wall, new garden wall and outbuilding. **Granted.**
- (iv) **Application No. 2024/00081/FULH** 14a Keyes Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6RU. Two storey side extension and changes to porch. **Refused.**

(c) **Planning Applications**

All plans can be viewed via:

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport_planning_and_environment/Planning/Se arch_planning_applications/

Certain applications are not Planning Applications; therefore, there is no statutory opportunity to allow 21 days for comments, e.g.: Non-material amendment applications, Lawful development certificates (S192) and 28 day prior approval/determination applications. These types of applications are received for information only.

- (i) **Application No. 2024/00225/FUL** Unit D, E and F Birchwood Shopping Centre, WA3 7PQ. Proposed external alterations to existing retail units to facilitate their operation as a single foodstore (use Class E); modifications to vehicular access and car parking; relocation of mechanical plant and associated site works.

Although Councillors did not have any objections to the proposed application, they did have some comments they would like included in a response to the planning team.

These comments included, making sure the car park data recorded was accurate as it appears that the monitoring took place during a school holiday, which could impact the true results as the car park is often used to drop off and pick children up from the nearby high school.

Another comment made was regarding the footpath outside the store, as it is very narrow and impeded by bollards. Members are concerned this will become a pinch point for foot traffic.

It is noted in the planning application that the existing car park area is to be split, and there is an estimated loss of around 23 car parking spaces. Members would like to ask the reasonings for this considering it is one of the most popular car parks in the shopping centre which is used for a variety of reasons, and often is at full capacity.

Another main concern was regarding trolleys, which is an ongoing issue being discussed by BTC. Members would like to know the plans for trolley storage, as they are currently stored in the undercroft making it difficult and awkward to get out.

The concern is that with a bigger shop, and likely more trolleys, this will create a bigger issue. Similarly, the issue of abandoned trolleys in Birchwood is considerable at the moment, with the store in question being one of the key retailers whose trolleys are dumped in and around Birchwood.

Members would like to ask for a written trolley management plan which would outline how trolleys will be secured on site, how shoppers will be deterred from removing them and how any abandoned trolleys will be returned to the retailer. Members would also like to see the implementation of appropriate signage, of a significant size, informing people that the removal of trolleys from the shopping centre is not only anti-social behaviour, but is also theft.

Action

Clerk's Office to write to WBC's Planning Team to feedback Councillors' comments.

- (ii) **Application No. 2024/00303/FULH** 9 Montcliffe Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7LX. Single storey side extension, new roof over entrance lobby, material changes to front elevation.
- (iii) **Application No. 2024/00359/FULH** 27 Stonecrop Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7PD. Single storey side extension.
- (iv) **Application No 2024/00357/FULH** 15 Palliser Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6RT. 2 storey side extension with single storey rear extension. Front porch with smooth off white render.

This part of the meeting concluded at 6.25 pm.