

**MINUTES OF THE JULY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,**  
**HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE**  
**ON TUESDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JULY 6PM**

**Present:** Councillor Ellis in the Chair  
Councillors Allman, Atkin, Brereton, B. Dhillon, K. Dhillon, Evans, Reeves,  
Sheridan and Simcock.

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

PC Tom Shevlin and PCSO Tom Palfrey – Birchwood Police

**Apologies:** Councillors Ball (personal) and Price (work)

**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 Sheridan – Chaffinch Close*  
*Councillor Reeves – One Community Trust (spouse)*

110/24-25 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) **Police Monthly Update**

PCSO Palfrey sent his Police Report from the period of 23<sup>rd</sup> June – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 prior to the meeting.

*‘Tru Cam has been deployed to areas around the East and Birchwood, we have caught a number of drivers and the highest [speed] being 41 MPH on Admirals Road.*

***Anti-Social Behaviour – x5***

*1x Chaffinch – issues with youths*

*1x Harcourt Close - issues with dogs*

*1x Birchwood Forest Park – off-road bikes*

*1x Admirals Road – off-road bikes*

*1x possible youths at old Risley Police Station*

***Burglary Dwelling***

*N/A*

***Burglary Others***

*N/A*

## ***Vehicle Crime / Offences – Reports***

*N/A*

## ***Criminal Damage***

*Ongoing issues with damage to bus stops*

*Birchwood Rail Station – possible youths throwing stones at passing vehicles’*

Councillor Sheridan enquired about the item on the Police Report relating to Chaffinch Close and the alleged ongoing anti-social behaviour in the street.

PCSO Palfrey explained that intel is being received which is helping Officers build a clearer picture of the alleged incidents. He also stated that the Police work in partnership with the ASB leads from the housing trusts, if those involved are residents of social housing.

PCSO Palfrey presented a poster for the ‘Resident Voice Survey’. He explained that the Police encourage residents to anonymously complete the survey, either by following the link or by using the QR code supplied on the poster, and any information or intelligence received will go directly to the Birchwood beat team. He stated that it will highlight areas of most concern or high importance from a resident’s perspective.

PC Shevlin emphasised that this was not for emergencies or issues that required more immediate attention, and 999 or 101 should still be called in those cases. It is to raise awareness for certain issues which the Police may not be aware of.

PCSO Palfrey mentioned that a new youth club has opened in Birchwood, and he has spoken to several youths in the area and tried to direct them to the club to deter them from the possibility of committing any anti-social behaviour.

The Administrative Assistant enquired about an alleged incident on Forest Park.

PC Shevlin confirmed that the Police have taken appropriate action regarding this.

The Chair asked whether there have been any further problems relating to youths allegedly taking drugs. PCSO Palfrey stated that they believe this issue has improved. They do not know if the problem is solved, due to not being able to monitor it daily, but that whenever they are on shift, they have not noticed any issues.

The Chair also mentioned that off-road bikes are a big issue affecting Birchwood.

PC Shevlin responded that often there are noisy bikes, but they are not necessarily being ridden illegally, and sometimes, although the bikes sound close and as though they are being used off-road, the noise may be coming from the motorway or nearby roads. PC Shevlin stated that it is a risk to chase bikers as it could be dangerous for Officers, the bikers and pedestrians, so sometimes technology such as drones, and also roadblocks are used. He added that they are intelligence-led and the more information they receive, the more their resources can be effectively directed.

PCSO Palfrey stated that in Locking Stumps, child cut-outs and pavement signs have been used to try to combat inconsiderate parking. He reported that this has been effective.

PCSO Palfrey also stated that the Police team have been to Gorse Covert to look at parking issues there, but most parking offences appear to be more anti-social and not illegal, and Police powers will only allow them to issue a ticket when illegal offences are committed. Traffic Enforcement Officers need to enforce issues such as parking on double yellow lines or over the zigzags unless an illegal obstruction is being created.

PC Shevlin stated that Birchwood and Warrington East have a strong, new team of Officers dedicated to it, many of whom are from the response teams. Their main priorities will focus on disrupting the supply of drugs to the area, violent crimes including weapons, and dangerous dogs, but stressed how important the 'Resident's Voice' survey is to help them prioritise residents' issues.

PCSO Palfrey handed BTC Officers a 'Resident's Voice' and a 'Hollie Guard' leaflet which will be displayed on noticeboards and on our Facebook page.

The Chair thanked PCSO Palfrey and PC Shevlin for their attendance, and both Police Officers left the meeting.

(b) **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public at this meeting.

111/24-25 **JUNE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Sheridan **proposed**, Councillor Brereton **seconded** and it was **unanimously resolved** that: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**PROGRESS**

112/24-25 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

(a) **Information Board for Cross Lane South Cemetery**

The Clerk stated that, despite multiple attempts to liaise with WBC about this matter, there has still been no update from WBC.

(b) **Wildflowers**

The Clerk stated that the wildflowers which have been planted are now starting to flower.

(c) **Meeting with WBC**

The Clerk confirmed that a meeting has been arranged with WBC representatives on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024. The Clerk and Councillor Ellis as Chairman will represent BTC.

113/24-25 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) - UPDATES**

- (a) The Clerk stated that she received a response regarding the signage at Mosslands. A YHG representative will be visiting the site to assess if anything can be done regarding signage, and will advise when this has been completed. The representative did mention that there is signage once inside Mosslands, but did confirm that some addresses are on Gorse Covert Road.

Councillors noted that they struggled to find some of these addresses whilst out canvassing during the local elections.

Councillor Atkin stated that it appears to be the same few cars that he notices parking on Gorse Covert Road, so he does not believe this is just delivery drivers parking inconsiderately.

- (b) The Clerk reported that, following the June meeting, she arranged a meeting with the CEO of YHG, but due to annual leave and other commitments, the earliest this can be arranged to take place is 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

The Clerk stated that she sent the pictures of Harcourt Close that Councillor Brereton obtained to show the severity of the issues being faced by residents. She added that prior to the meeting, the BTC maintenance team had come across overflowing bins, several discarded sharps, and vegetation so overgrown that bin lorries could not gain access to the road, all in YHG owned estates.

The Clerk said that when the YHG grounds maintenance team were contacted regarding the overgrown vegetation, they allegedly had no knowledge of the estate named.

The Clerk reported that the bin store at Layton Close remains an ongoing problem. BTC operatives tidied this up to support the residents, but the Clerk noted that this cannot be something that BTC operatives commit to on a regular basis as it takes them away from other duties.

Councillor Sheridan stated that some flytipping outside YHG properties has been there for several years.

The Clerk said that the team also believes that many areas have been missed during the current round of shrub cutting.

The Clerk added that all of the above mentioned will be fed into the meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

- (c) The Clerk stated that she received a cutting schedule from YHG after enquiring multiple times. However, the schedule given does not give us much information, and is similar to that sent by Councillor Brereton following the June Council Meeting which was received by all YHG tenants.

114/24-25 **MEMBER'S REFERRAL – THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY'S CONSULTATION ON THE 'MANCHESTER LOW LEVEL ROUTE'**

Following the June Council meeting, as resolved, Councillor Atkin formally responded on behalf of BTC in support of the proposed flying route.

**NEW ITEMS RAISED UNDER THE CLERK'S REPORT TO THE COUNCIL**

115/24-25 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- (a) Sent/Received - Various emails/online reports/telephone calls following queries/contact from residents regarding flytipping, tree/shrubbery issues, grass cutting, etc.
- (b) Received – various Traffic Notices.
- (c) Received – response from Environmental Crime regarding dog fouling stickers stating once they become available, BTC can obtain some.

116/24-25 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/reports following queries/contact from residents including issues with flytipping, shrubbery maintenance, land enquiry, damaged barriers, etc.
- (b) Received – email from YHG informing us of a broken grid on Pheasant Close, which they are looking into re: land ownership, etc.
- (c) Received – email from YHG suggesting another walkabout in the Chatfield estate area to check on progress from May walkabout.
- (d) Sent/received – emails between Officers, Cllr Brereton and YHG informing them of a leak at a house on Ramsay Close which has allegedly been a concern for several months. YHG have now rectified the problem.

117/24-25 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

Received – Various emails from Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA).

118/24-25 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Received – Various Neighbourhood Alerts.
- (b) Sent – an email to Birchwood Police informing them of several incidents of bus stop vandalism on Admirals Road, which resulted in smashed glass. This was also reported to 101.
- (c) Received – an email with a link to complete the ‘Cheshire Priority Survey’, which helps Cheshire Police make decisions about local policing. This was sent to Members and published onto BTC’s Facebook page.

119/24-25 **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, consultations, etc.
- (c) Received – SLCC – various updates, briefings, new items, etc.
- (d) NALC – Advice on hedgerow management rules for cutting and trimming during bird nesting season.

120/24-25 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

Various LGC e-mail correspondence/briefings.

121/24-25 **AUGUST RECESS**

The Clerk reminded Members that, as has been the case in previous years, the Council normally takes a short recess during August.

If anything particularly ‘pressing’ arises that might require significant consideration, a (remote) Working Party Meeting could be called to discuss the matter(s) or, if necessary, an in-person Extraordinary Meeting of the Council.

Members **unanimously resolved** for the Council to take a recess for the month of August and that if necessary, the Clerk, RFO/Deputy Clerk be authorised, in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of the Council, under delegated powers, to take any emergency action that may arise, for example, in regard to planning matters or payment of accounts.

The next full meeting of the Council will take place in September 2024.

#### 122/24-25 **LOCKING STUMPS MUGA CONTRACT RENEWAL**

The Clerk stated that WBC Estates Department have been in contact to confirm Locking Stumps Primary School’s intention to join the ‘One Community Trust’, and therefore, an agreement which was drawn up 22 years ago regarding the MUGA at Locking Stumps Primary School needs to be revisited.

The Clerk said that Locking Stumps Primary School have stated they would like to keep the same agreement in place, which allows the school to have exclusive access to the area during school hours, and the wider community to be able to use it when school is not in session.

The Clerk stated that, although there have been some issues with anti-social behaviour, the agreement in place appears to work well. The agreement is between Locking Stumps Primary School, WBC and BTC.

The Clerk stated that she believes the agreement will need to be revised during recess, and therefore, will require delegated powers. There may be a requirement for BTC to ask for a solicitor to review any revised agreement.

Members **unanimously resolved** that in principle, BTC is happy to maintain the current agreement between Locking Stumps Primary School, WBC and BTC, and to give the Clerk and RFO delegated powers to complete the agreement.

#### 123/24-25 **MEMBER’S REFERRALS**

##### (a) **Councillor Ellis – Dropped kerb proposal for Kelvin Close**

The Chair, Councillor Ellis, stated that on Kelvin Close, from the golf club up to the entrance of the roundabout, there is a footpath, which does not have any dropped kerbs. This makes it difficult for those with wheelchairs or pushchairs, etc. to access.

The Chair said that with WBC’s budgets, he understands that this may not be actioned imminently, but would like the support of the Council to make it a priority for BTC.

Members **unanimously agreed** to support Councillor Ellis with this request.

**Action** Councillor Ellis to write to WBC regarding this request.

##### (b) **Councillor Atkin – Social Media**

Councillor Atkin stated that recently, many residents have made comments on local Facebook groups regarding the lack of maintenance around the area, which they believe to be the responsibility of BTC.

Councillor Atkin said that he, Councillor Ellis and Councillor Brereton are some of the Councillors who respond on behalf of BTC and let residents know the reasons why certain work has not been undertaken. Many residents are not familiar with the different land ownerships in the area and the responsibilities associated with that.

BTC has no responsibility for the maintenance of any land, shrubbery, etc., with the exception of its offices, car park, and a small piece of land to the side and rear of Parkers Farm Complex. Any work BTC undertakes has to be with permission from a landowner. We do not undertake work in business areas and only limited work in YHG areas as YHG pays their own contractors to do the work.

Councillor Atkin said that, apart from advertising meetings and occasional notices, our Facebook page is not utilised. He believes this means Councillors are being reactive instead of proactive when discussing, online, the work that BTC does.

Councillor Atkin proposed that Officers make posts highlighting work that the Maintenance Team have done, stating that the team already take before and after pictures of most cutting jobs for their records, so this would not be an extra job for them. He proposes that these posts include factual information, and that comments are restricted or turned off to prevent hostility and because Officers will only be able to manage the Facebook page during office hours.

Members **unanimously resolved** to trial the introduction of showing the type of work that BTC does in the community, on social media. They agreed that if it does not have the desired outcome, we will revisit it at a later date.

**Action** Officers to post more content to BTC's Facebook page.

124/24-25 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) **Warrington Borough Council – Development Management Committee (DMC)**

- (i) A DMC meeting took place on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024. There were no items of specific interest to Birchwood on the Agenda for this meeting.
- (ii) Information re: enforcement cases specific to Birchwood have been circulated to Members.

(b) **Planning Decisions**

- (i) **Application No. 2024/00443/VARC** N/A Land at Trident Business Park, Warrington. Removal of Conditions 1, 8, 9 & 10. Variation of condition 2 (approved plans with landscape plan) on planning application 2021/40696 to allow the inclusion within the scheme of two substations, and minor layout changes and variation of wording of conditions 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 34, 35 & 36. **Granted.**
- (ii) **Application No. 2024/00312/FULM** Spencer House, Dewhurst Road, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7PG. Proposal for 11 no. small industrial units contained within 2 no. buildings to be located on land adjacent to Spencer House 81A Dewhurst Road, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7PG. **Refused.**

(c) **Planning Applications**

*All plans can be viewed via:*

[http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport\\_planning\\_and\\_environment/Planning/Search\\_planning\\_applications/](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport_planning_and_environment/Planning/Search_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. 2024/00798/CLDP** 51 Fisherfield Drive, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6TX. Single storey rear extension.
- (ii) **Application No. 2024/00502/ADV** EE Stanford House Garrett Field, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7BH. Replacement signage for 4 no. totem signs and 2 no. “EE” logo signs.
- (iii) **Application No. 2024/00828/DISCON** Aldi, Unit D, Birchwood Shopping Centre Benson Road, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7PQ. Discharge of Conditions 4 (Construction, Highways & Environmental Management plan) on previously approved plan 2024/00225.

**This part of the meeting concluded at 7.00 pm.**