

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,**  
**HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE**  
**ON TUESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022, 6.00 PM**

**Present:** Councillor Ellis in the Chair  
Councillors Allen, Atkin, Ball, Brereton, Dempsey, Evans, Reeves, Scott,  
Sheridan and Simcock  
Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald  
RFO / Deputy Clerk – Mrs. C. Caddock  
Administrative Assistant – Mrs. H. Vout  
PCSO Palfrey  
1 Resident

**Apologies:** Councillor Bowden (Attending an LGA conference)

**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 Reeves – Birchwood High School*

068/22-23 **MAY 2022 ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Evans **proposed**, Councillor Dempsey **seconded** and it was **resolved** that: The Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

069/22-23 **MAY ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Reeves **proposed**, Councillor Atkin **seconded** and it was **resolved** that: The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

The Clerk asked Members if they were happy for the contents of the Annual Town Meeting Minutes and any recommendations to now be incorporated into the June 2022 main Minutes.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Reeves, **seconded** by Cllr Atkin and **unanimously resolved** by Members to incorporate the May 2022 Annual Town Minutes, including any recommendations for actions, into the June 2022 main Minutes.

070/22-23 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) **Resident's Questions**

The resident asked Members if there could be anything done in regard to the number of abandoned trollies around Birchwood. The resident advised that they had previously raised the issue with Warrington Borough Council but feels that nothing has been done to alleviate the issue.

The resident raised concerns that the abandoned trollies are a danger to vehicles; if a trolley is pushed out in front of a vehicle the outcome could be dangerous.

The Chair advised the resident that the Council has been working with the local supermarkets to arrange collection of the abandoned trollies. The supermarkets have partnered with collection companies that retrieve abandoned trollies and return them to the relevant stores.

The Chair stated that this is long-standing issue within Birchwood with many attempts made to alleviate the problem.

He noted that the shopping centre removed some of the preventative measures in recent years, such as the magnetic strip around the perimeter of the shopping centre car parks, which locked the trollies' wheels to prevent them from being taken out of the perimeter of the centre. Also, at one time, Asda removed the coin-operated locks. Both of these changes contributed to the issue of abandoned trollies increasing again.

A discussion was had by Members regarding the possibility of imposing fines on those who remove trollies from the centre.

The Chair advised that although the fine would be a good deterrent, there would be an issue regarding whose jurisdiction it would fall under to enforce.

**Action**

Clerk's office to write to the shopping centre and supermarkets regarding this issue.

The resident raised a second concern regarding speeding on Birchwood's roads and asked if there could more visibility around the outcomes of any speed enforcement sessions i.e. to indicate how many motorists were fined.

The Chair advised that the Council have been working on the issue of speeding for many years now and that it is on the agenda to be discussed again. The Chair also advised that the Council are looking into the option of purchasing a speed awareness device, like the ones that are currently on Warrington Road in Culcheth.

The resident asked if repeater signs could be put up on Ordnance Avenue.

Repeater signs cannot be installed in areas where the road is subject to a maximum speed limit of 30 mph and has a system of carriageway lighting where there are street lights not more than 200 yards apart.

Councillor Atkin advised that because the Police regularly carry out speed enforcement operations on Ordnance Avenue, it was possible to have some speed camera signs, which include notification of the speed limit, installed along the length of the road, as a reminder to motorists.

PCSO Palfrey advised that he is aware that there needs to be visibility around the TruCam sessions and said that in future he will aim to get the details on to the Birchwood Police Facebook page in a timely manner.

The resident raised another concern regarding broken glass on the floor of the underpass at Birchwood Forest Park that leads to Keyes Close.

The Clerk advised that once the maintenance team is made aware of any broken glass it is cleared up as soon as possible.

**Action**

Clerk's office to liaise with the maintenance team to investigate the issue of the broken glass reported as being in the underpass.

(b) **Police Monthly Update / Questions for the Police**

The following comprises information taken from the Police report to Birchwood Town Council for the month of June to date.

**Burglaries**

- 4 reported burglaries of private dwellings

**Criminal Damage**

- 2 reports of criminal damage

**Antisocial Behaviour**

- 6 reports of nuisance/antisocial behaviour

The Police have reported that they caught an offender on the 22/05/2022 regarding the spate of bike thefts within Birchwood. The Police have also been running bike marking events within the local area, including at the shopping centre and at Birchwood Carnival. They have also been working with Birchwood Shopping Centre and have set up a business watch.

This month a TruCam operation took place on Glover Road between Lords Lane and Locking Stumps Lane. No activations were made. This is seen as positive as drivers will naturally slow in these areas if they think the Police will re-visit.

Members asked if a TruCam session could be undertaken on Admirals Road, due to the speed that some vehicles are driven down this road.

PCSO Palfrey advised that if Admirals Road has a site code, then he will be able to conduct a speed enforcement operation. The PCSO then gave a brief explanation to Members as to what a site code is and why they are necessary.

The Chair asked if there could be more visibility from the PCSO with the area.

PCSO Palfrey stated that he is aware that there has been a reduction in visibility within the community and advised that he will try to improve this going forward. He informed the Council that he is currently covering four areas within Warrington East.

Members asked PCSO Palfrey if there are any actions that the Police can take regarding the dangerous / inconsiderate parking by drivers around Birchwood High School, particularly at drop-off and pick-up times. Members advised that they have seen many vehicles parked on double yellow lines and on the white zig zag markings, also on the grass verges at the side of the road.

*Cllr Reeves declared an interest as he is a Governor at Birchwood High School.*

Members commented that there are also severe parking problems being caused by people who are attending events (mainly at weekends) organised by Birchwood High School, which take place in the large sports hall at Birchwood Leisure & Tennis Complex. Local residents have been severely inconvenienced and put in dangerous positions, as they are struggling to negotiate footpaths that are blocked and cross roads where the sight lines have been compromised. This is also on a very busy bus route.

There are plenty of spaces where the attendees could park in the 'pay-and-display' car park on the opposite side of the shopping centre, just a short walk away.

Cllr Reeves said that he is due to attend a Risk Management Meeting at the high school and he will raise this matter, and report back to the Council at the next meeting.

**Action** Cllr Reeves to raise the events parking issue with the high school.

Cllr Brereton commented that it is not only car drivers who are at fault, but that coaches and buses (carrying attendees) have also been parking in inappropriate places.

PCSO Palfrey advised Members that he can only issue tickets to drivers that are either fully blocking a public footpath, or that are parked on the white zig zag markings. All other parking violations need to be addressed by WBC's Enforcement Officers.

Cllr Dempsey advised that he has some images of the parking problem in the area. PCSO Palfrey asked if he could possibly get copies of these images to show the Beat Manager. Cllr Dempsey agreed to forward the images to the PCSO.

PCSO Palfrey informed the Council that he had a meeting with Livewire today regarding the parking on event days.

He added that the tennis centre has agreed to email him when events are on. If he is on duty on the relevant days, he will be able to monitor the situation and take any appropriate action

See also Minute 073/22-23 below.

**Action** Cllr Dempsey to send the required photographs to PCSO Palfrey.

A Member raised a concern regarding some alleged antisocial behaviour in and around a local public house.

PCSO Palfrey stated that he would speak to the local Policing Team regarding this matter.

## 071/22-23 **ITEMS INCORPORATED FROM ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

The following items have been incorporated from the Annual Town Meeting which was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022. At the Annual Town Meeting, attendees, with the exception of the Chair, were classed as 'residents'. Whilst reporting the amalgamation of the Minutes into tonight's meeting, Members will now be referred to as Councillors.

### (a) **Oakwood Centre – maintenance of land**

At the Annual Town Meeting, Cllr Sheridan raised concerns regarding the state of disrepair of the car park and surrounding area at Oakwood centre. She said that some of the bollards on the carpark have fallen and are dangerous.

She added that the road surfaces (on Admirals Road) are uneven and in need of repair, along with the road markings, such as the zig-zag lines outside the school.

There is graffiti on the walls of the shops and the bin storage area at the rear of the shops is poorly lit and has become an area for alleged antisocial behaviour, including fly tipping.

Other Members echoed these concerns.

### (b) **Working with the local PCSO**

At the Annual Town Meeting, Cllr Brereton had asked whether the new PCSO would be making himself more visible to the public. The previous PCSO seemed to be more involved within the community and the residents had become accustomed to this.

This matter was addressed by PCSO Palfrey earlier in tonight's meeting (see Minute 070/22-23 (b) above).

### (c) **Working with Warrington Borough Council**

Cllr Atkin asked if there could be more done to improve the relationship with WBC as there seems, over the last year, to be a lack of engagement or communication from WBC in relation to working in partnership with BTC.

The Chair stated that this was of concern and will be something that the Council will continue to work on this year.

### (d) **Hamnett Court – lighting issue within this area.**

Cllr Scott commented about a lighting situation on a footpath just outside the fencing on Hamnett Court. He stated that three lights are not working. This is causing an issue at night for local residents.

Cllr Scott added that he thinks these lights are on private land but wondered if they could be adopted by WBC.

**Action** Clerk's office to raise this with WBC at the next partnership meeting.

072/22-23 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) – UPDATE**

- (a) The Clerk reported that YHG have apologised for the delay in starting replacement work on the bollards on the Village Green. YHG advised that the reason for the is due to supply chain issues being experienced by the contractor. YHG are looking at alternative options, but have advised that these would not be powder coated. The Clerk asked Members if they wanted to go ahead with alternatives or wait for the powder coated bollards that were originally requested.

Member discussed the matter and resolved to wait for the powder coated bollards as these are more aesthetically pleasing for residents. Powder coating also creates a hard finish that is more durable than conventional paint. It cannot be applied retrospectively.

The Clerk advised that concerns have been raised regarding the possibility of the Village Green being left susceptible to unauthorised access, if all the concrete blocks are removed at the same time; these concerns have been passed onto the contractor.

- (b) The Clerk reported that the YHG meeting for residents of Redshank Lane, with YHG representatives, took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Cllr Brereton and Cllr Scott attended the meeting on behalf of Birchwood Town Council. Cllr Scott stated that the meeting was well organised. Cllr Scott also commented that the representative from YHG was very approachable and open.

Cllr Brereton added that, due to the low turnout, those who were at the meeting received one-to-one time with the representatives to talk about their individual issues.

The Clerk said that there will be a follow up day of action by YHG on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022. This will consist of door-to-door visits to complete questionnaires with YHG customers. YHG advised that there will also be representatives present on the estate for customers to talk to. There will be two skips provided by YHG for removal of waste from communal areas. The Clerk and some of the BTC maintenance team will also assist with the removal of waste.

- (c) The Clerk stated that there will be further walkabouts taking place at 11 am on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022, the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 meeting at the main entrance into Redshank Lane from Ordnance Avenue.

The Clerk reported that there has been a CCTV camera installed on Nightingale Close to try to catch those who have been flytipping in front of the container. This is a temporary measure that has been put in place by WBC, due to number of complaints received about flytipping in this area.

073/22-23 **BIRCHWOOD LEISURE AND TENNIS COMPLEX**

*Cllr Reeves declared an interest as he is a Governor at Birchwood High School.*

See also Minute 070/22-23 (b) above.

The Chair informed Members that he had attended a meeting today with Livewire, regarding the issue of parking on days that large events are being held at Birchwood Leisure and Tennis Complex. The Chair advised that Livewire does not have responsibility for these events. The events take place in the large hall which is owned and managed by Birchwood High School.

Livewire has said that the school advises the organisers of events that their attendees can use the school car park (approximately 50 spaces). They also stated that the school hires out a section of the shopping centre car park on large event days for attendees to use. There is also the pay-and-display car park available on the opposite side of the shopping centre.

Members were surprised to hear that part of the shopping centre's car park is hired out for these events, as the Shopping Centre Manager has told the Clerk that the centre cannot allow the use of its car park for any of the events taking place at the leisure centre, because it is required to keep all its free spaces available for its customers.

Members are of the opinion that although there is some parking provision for these events more needs to be done to prevent the large numbers of vehicles parking inappropriately and causing issues for residents, other road users and pedestrians.

The Chair suggested writing to the school, to propose that they provide volunteers to marshal the parking on event days to alleviate the problem of inconsiderate parking.

Cllr Reeves will be attending a Risk Management Meeting at the high school and will express these concerns to the appropriate people.

074/22-23 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The next partnership meeting of BTC and WBC is due to take place on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

075/22-23 **PROPOSED PUBLIC MEETING**

Arrangements for a meeting to discuss traveller encampments within Birchwood are currently on hold. An alternative option was suggested, for an information document to be produced that can be published on the Town Council's website. Members approved this suggestion.

**Action** Clerk's office to work with WBC and the Police to produce an information document.

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

076/22-23 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL(WBC)**

- (a) Sent/Received - Various emails/ online reports / telephone calls following calls from residents re: flytipping, fallen trees, damaged pavements, etc.
- (b) Email sent to WBC regarding a temporary ramp on Powell Avenue. Concerns were raised regarding the safety of the ramp because the bolts keep coming loose which make the ramp unstable. It also has some damage. A query was also raised regarding some road markings around one of the temporary ramps on Powell Avenue.
- (c) The Clerk has reported a landscaping issue regarding an overgrown tree canopy that is blocking three streetlights near Keyes Close.
- (d) The Clerk's office has reported issues re: the upkeep of a footpath on Heather Close. The area is in need of general maintenance. There has been no response from WBC yet.

077/22-23 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP**

- (a) Sent/Received - Various emails / online reports / telephone calls re: fallen trees, overgrown shrubs, fly-tipping, etc.
- (b) Queries were sent to YHG regarding the maintenance of alleyways on Swallow Close and Chaffinch Close.
- (c) Cllr Brereton asked if it was possible to have a copy of YHG's cutting schedule for Birchwood.

**Action** Clerk's office to obtain the YHG Birchwood cutting schedule and forward it to Cllr Brereton.

078/22-23 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – Various update/information emails from Warrington Voluntary Action.
- (b) Received – Various LGC e-briefings.
- (c) Received- Email from a resident regarding Bee Orchids within the wildflower beds near Birchwood Forest Park.
- (d) Received – Email from a resident regarding reduced visibility on Gorse Covert Road due to overgrown shrubs.

The query has been forwarded on the landowner to be investigated.

Cllr Atkin commented that one side of the road has been trimmed by the landowner, but the other side still requires attention.

- (e) Received – Email from a resident regarding the disturbance of wildlife, specifically hedgehogs, possibly due to seasonal mowing.  
Members commented on the number of deceased wild animals that are currently being seen on the local roads.  
Members asked about obtaining some wildlife warning signage for the area.

**Action** Clerk’s office to investigate costs for the supply of such signs, and to enquire whether WBC might be able to supply and install them.

- (f) Received – Email from a resident regarding speeding vehicles on Ordnance Avenue.

079/22-23 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Various Neighbourhood Alerts.

080/22-23 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (CHALC), NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC), SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC)**

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

081/22-23 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) **Planning Appeals**

The Chair advised Members that he had attended the Development Management Committee (DMC) Meeting at which Application No. 2021/29954 - Car parking area adjacent to Kelvin Close, Birchwood, WA3 7PB was discussed.

The Chair advised that he had objected to the application on behalf of, and in his capacity as a Town Councillor, and Cllr Balding, in his capacity as a Borough Councillor, had also objected to the application.

The Chair stated that the decision was deferred by the DMC, whilst negotiations take place with the developer, with regard to potentially removing eight/nine tandem parking bays that are close to residential and the reinstatement of the landscaping that had been removed.

(b) **Planning Decisions**

There were no planning decisions for Birchwood available at the time of this meeting.

(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.

There were no planning applications for Birchwood available at the time of this meeting.

**This part of the meeting concluded at 7.20 pm.**