

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE
ON TUESDAY 24TH JANUARY 2023, 6.00 PM

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

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

PC Danielle Goodwin – Cheshire Police
PCSO Tom Palfrey – Cheshire Police

Apologies: Councillor Atkin (away)

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

272/22-23 **DECEMBER 2022 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Simcock **proposed**, Councillor Brereton **seconded**, and it was **resolved** that: The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 13th December 2022 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

273/22-23 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) Police Report

PCSO Palfrey provided the following report for the period 24th December 2022 to 23rd January 2023:

Anti-Social Behaviour – 10 reports:

4 x Noble Close – youths knocking on the door, being loud and disruptive

4 x Shopping Centre – youths causing a nuisance

1 x Licensing Query

1 x Forbes Close – reports of an uninsured vehicle, blocking caller's driveway

Burglary – dwelling 0 reports

Burglary – other 0 reports

Vehicle Crime / Offences – 1 report - Birchwood Boulevard – parts of a vehicle stolen

Criminal Damage – 7 reports:

1 x Redshank Lane – window smashed

1 x Birchwood Forest Park – quad bike across football pitches

1 x Noble Close – electricity cupboard outdoors has been tampered with

1 x Birchwood Shopping Centre – damage in the toilets, unsure who has done this

1 x Layton Close – vehicle damage

1 x Behind Turf & Feather – people stating they are tree surgeons but are not

1 x Chaffinch Close – ongoing issues with neighbours causing damage.

PCSO Palfrey informed Members about a Crime Prevention Scheme called Business Watch which the majority of stores in Birchwood Shopping Centre have now signed up to. He is optimistic that this will substantially reduce incidents of ASB and added that the onus is on the businesses to work together with support from the Police.

He also talked about the ongoing matter of cars parking on Lords Lane and reports of illegal parking. PCSO Palfrey outlined the position of the Police in this regard and said that he would be talking to the Traffic Police to get some further advice.

Councillor Ellis commented that the problems continue as some vehicles park in such a way that it makes it very difficult for mobility scooters and people with prams to pass on the pavement and at certain times of the day there are tailbacks on the main carriageway as vehicles cannot pass each other.

Councillor Allen raised the matter of youths gathering at Birchwood Railway Station and stated that in recent weeks there had been obvious evidence of drug use. He was particularly concerned as this was at around 5 pm when a lot of people use the station.

PC Goodwin reassured Councillors that the area is still receiving attention.

Councillor Scott enquired about the crime statistics for Hamnett Court as a recent press article had stated that *'According to data released by Police.uk, Hamnett Court in Birchwood is responsible for reporting a high percentage of crimes in the area each month.'*

PCSO Palfrey was surprised at the report as he was not aware of any particular issues in that area of Birchwood.

PC Goodwin added that it might depend on the timeframe that has been used for the report.

PCSO Palfrey stated that the Police are also involved with a dispute involving neighbouring properties on Chaffinch Close.

A discussion then took place regarding the parking of vehicles in a 'blue badge space'.

Councillor Ellis enquired about the report of an electricity cupboard being tampered with as noted in the Police Report.

PCSO Palfrey stated that there was no evidence of it having been tampered with, but added that there are problems with youths in that area at present resulting in the area having a high Police presence.

274/22-23 WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)

Communication

The Clerk informed Members that she had emailed a Borough Council Officer directly regarding progress on a number of outstanding issues, to which she had since received a reply.

(a) Evening walkabout/ street lighting

The Clerk enquired if Councillors had any particular dates in mind for the evening walkabout to take place, together with preferred location(s).

After some discussion the 9th February was proposed by Members with Chatfield Drive, Fieldfare, Whinchat and behind the Oakwood Shops being highlighted as potential areas.

Councillor Allen said that the route from Locking Stumps shop over the walkway and past the Walled Garden, behind Birchwood High School is very dark and intimidating and enquired if this could also be raised as an area of concern.

Councillor Ellis asked Members to notify the Clerk's office regarding potential locations for additional walkabouts.

Action Clerk's office to contact WBC regarding dates and locations for the evening walkabout(s).

(b) Powell Avenue/Temporary Ramp

The Clerk informed Members that WBC had queried if the ramp on Powell Avenue, which is damaged, is necessary.

She added that she had informed the Borough Council Officer that without it those with prams or on mobility scooters would struggle to get around the concrete bollards.

The Borough Council Officer replied stating that it might be necessary to remove the ramps but increase the distance between the concrete bollards to allow access for prams and mobility scooters.

(c) Admirals Square (Oakwood Local Shops)

The Clerk stated that she had been informed that the queries relating to Admirals Square have been allocated to a WBC Highways Inspector.

Councillor Sheridan commented that Morrisons have now taken over ownership of the shop at Oakwood Mount and the lighting at the front of the shops was much improved as was the general housekeeping, but the paving and car park surface remain very uneven in places.

(d) Armstrong Close and Ainscough Road (potential adoption of street lighting)

The Clerk said that she has been informed that WBC will review the situation over the next few months and will advise once this review has been completed.

A monthly report had been received from Warrington Borough Council just prior to the meeting regarding some other outstanding issues.

- *Work throughout borough such as facing off plantings surrounding verges and weeds. Two pieces of work live to be completed in due course, pending ground conditions. **Live***
- *Flooded Subway at Lowes Farm Water main burst, work completed. **Closed***

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with WBC regarding outstanding issues.

Parish Council Liaison Meeting

The Clerk reported that she had attended an online Parish Council Liaison Meeting on Thursday, 18th January 2023 and gave a brief overview of the items discussed.

She added that one significant item will be the introduction of Voter ID which will require voters to show photo ID at polling stations before a ballot paper is issued. This is expected to be in place for elections from May 2023.

The Clerk confirmed that Officers had started to raise awareness of this change via social media.

275/22-23 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) – UPDATE**

The Clerk stated that she has emailed the Property Agents to enquire about some dates for estate walkabouts and is currently awaiting a response.

It had been suggested that the following streets: Miles, Lyster, Rawlings, Whinchat and Whitethroat Walk areas should be covered this time but other areas will be covered in future walkabouts.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with YHG regarding the next walkabout(s).

276/22-23 **INFORMATION REGARDING TRAVELLER ENCAMPMENTS**

The Clerk informed Members that the two informative documents; a briefing note regarding Police powers, together with a document entitled 'Gypsies and Travellers – A Cultural Awareness Guide' had been posted on the Town Council's website. In addition, an enquiry had been submitted to the Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team about awareness training for Councillors.

Previously Councillors Brereton, Dempsey, Sheridan and Simcock had expressed an interest in attending.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with the Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team about awareness training for Councillors.

277/22-23 **PLANNING UPDATE**

Planning Application 2021/40696 – Trident Business Park – Proposed demolition of existing premises and redevelopment of site.

Since the public meeting held in November the Clerk's office had sent a letter of objection to Warrington Borough Council. No further information or amended plans have been received by the Town Council.

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

278/22-23 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/online reports/telephone calls following queries/contact from residents regarding flytipping, lights not working, broken bollards, children playing on thin ice, etc.

A detailed response had been received from WBC regarding children playing on thin ice.

'Warrington has been working in partnership with the emergency services and schools to communicate the dangers of venturing onto frozen waterbodies to raise awareness and prevent further accident or loss of life. The provision of signage is unlikely to deter those intent on venturing onto ice particularly unsupervised children and the provision of such signage at regular intervals around all of Warrington's waterbodies is infeasible. Cheshire water safety Group (which cover a range of partners across Cheshire and is Fire Service led) will be working on this issue in a coordinated manner in the long term.

The Council has also received requests to break ice on open water courses to prevent Children playing on the surface. This request is beyond the resources available for the Council, and would require repeat and frequent visits as the water refreezes. The Council would not support or condone our staff walking on the ice because of serious Health and Safety concerns.'

- (b) Sent/received – emails re: the old footbridge at Birchwood Railway Station. Concerns include it not being registered as a public right of way, offensive graffiti, general cleansing, roof drainage and work that WBC has planned to cleanse and paint the bridge and install mesh to protect glazing from vandalism.

The Clerk informed members that work is scheduled to start towards the end of February to install mesh along the inside face of the glazing on the bridge to protect it from vandalism and damage. In addition, the bridge will be cleaned and painted and further investigation of the roof drainage will be undertaken to address the flooding.

The old footbridge is owned and maintained by WBC, so internally they are working on officially recording it as a public right of way.

- (c) Sent/received – emails and telephone calls re: ongoing flooding at Lowes Farm subway. It transpired that this had been caused by a water leak which was subsequently dealt with by United Utilities (UU). BTC cleaned the area once the work had been completed.
- (d) To note that we continue to send the daily playground inspection reports to WBC. If anything particular is noted, this is specifically flagged up to them.
- (e) We were copied into email correspondence between a resident and WBC regarding WBC's garden waste subscriptions for 2023. The resident was frustrated that they had received an automated email when they had already paid for the 2023 subscription.

279/22-23 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/reports following queries/contact from residents including issues with flytipping, shrubbery maintenance, damaged fencing, etc.
- (b) To note that the Clerk has been forwarding photographs and information to YHG regarding the significant amount of flytipped waste that is currently being retrieved from YHG land by the BTC team so that they are aware of the scale of the problem.
- (c) To note that we continue to send the daily playground inspection report for The Birches to YHG. If anything particular is noted, this is specifically flagged up to them.
- (d) A resident raised a concern via Councillor Dempsey regarding an issue they were having regarding repairs to a YHG property. The Clerk liaised with YHG regarding this matter.

280/22-23 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE/ISSUES**

- (a) Received – various emails from Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA).
- (b) Various pieces of information received, or articles noted in the local press that might be relevant for Birchwood residents, have been published/shared on our Facebook page; e.g. dates of motorway closures and free 'Arthritis Events'.
- (c) To note that BTC continues to report abandoned shopping trolleys for collection.

The Clerk informed Members that she had recently had a discussion with the Trolleywise representative who summarised some of the issues they experience when retrieving trolleys as well as outlining the various types of contract that exist for the retrieval of trolleys.

It was noted that people can report abandoned trolleys by using the Trolleywise App. If they send a report whilst they are at the actual location of the abandoned trolley, the App will use geo-location to create a report.

- (d) To note that we have shared information regarding electric vehicles/EV chargers with a local Parish Council which may be looking to replace one of their diesel vehicles with an electric alternative.
- (e) To note the publication of an article in the Warrington Guardian re: crimes in a particular area of Birchwood (see minute 273/22-23)
- (f) Received – further complaints re: cars parking illegally on Lords Lane. These have been shared with PCSO Palfrey (see minute 273/22-23)
- (g) Received – an update / information sheet re: the Liverpool John Lennon Airspace Change Proposal.

281/22-23 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

- (a) Various LGC e-mail correspondence/briefings.
- (b) Received – the December 2022 issue of Clerks & Councils Direct.

282/22-23 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Various Neighbourhood Alerts, and ‘Our News’ – January 2023 – the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter.
- (b) Received - Consultation re: ‘Residents’ views sought on Police budget’.

The Clerk reminded Members that it is the last day for submitting responses.

- (c) Received – Details of the PCC and Warrington Borough Council, Town and Parish Council Meeting (23rd January 2023).

Councillor Dempsey confirmed that he had attended this meeting as one of BTC’s Police representatives.

He reported that there was a lot of discussion about speeding and that Culcheth had been successful in its bid for an average speed camera.

Cllr Dempsey also reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner had said training is available for Road Marshalls, if required, for local events.

The Clerk added that neither the Carnival nor Remembrance Day have parades which take place on public roads.

- (d) To note that a Police Surgery will be taking place at Birchwood Shopping Centre on Wednesday, 25th January 2023 between 6 pm and 8 pm.

283/22-23 **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.

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

Documents were available on the WBC website for the DMC that took place on 11th January 2023.

The following item relating to Birchwood was discussed: Application No. 2022/42273 – Unit 722, Birchwood Park, Warrington. Proposal for the siting of storage containers in the service yard. **Recommendation to approve subject to conditions.**

(b) **Planning Decisions**

- (i) Application No. 2022/41425 Unit 722 (within Development Parcels 701 And 702), Daten Avenue, Birchwood Park, Warrington - Proposed discharge of Condition 2 (Materials), Condition 3 (Landscaping) and Condition 4 (Widening of Kelvin Street) on previously approved application 2022/41955 (Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans) and 3 (landscape scheme) on planning application 2021/40405 (Proposed construction of three general industrial and/or warehouse distribution (Use Classes B2 and/or B8) units (714, 715 and 716), access, parking and associated landscaping.)). **Discharged**
- (ii) Application No. 2022/42730 – Unit 722 (within Development Plots 701 & 702) Daten Avenue, Birchwood. Non-material amendment to application 2022/41954 to enlarge the size of the approved substation, the addition of 1 substation and to omit 2 van parking spaces. **Withdrawn**
- (iii) Application No. 2022/42728 - Land East of Kelvin Street, Warrington. Non-material application to rotate the approved substation and add a new substation to planning permission 2022/41955. **Withdrawn**
- (iv) Application No. 2022/42643 - Non-Material amendment to 2022/41955 for the formation of ramp within the demise of Unit 715 for forklift trucks to enable access between service yards of Units 712 and 715. This involves the slight regrading of an area of proposed landscape and the omission of 2 no. car parking spaces in Unit 715 yard and installation of low level armco barriers for fall protection and to provide impact protection for vehicles parked in the yard and the relocation of a fire escape door in the east elevation of Unit 715. **Granted**
- (v) Application No. 2022/42329 - Discharge of condition 8 (cycle details) on application 2022/41954 (Variation of condition 1 (plans) on application 2021/40399 (Application for approval of reserved matters (i.e. appearance, layout, scale, access and landscaping) pursuant to outline planning permission 2015/26044 (proposed industrial unit (Use Class B2) and associated application for approval of reserved matters (i.e. appearance, layout, scale, access and landscaping) pursuant to outline planning permission ancillary research and development office space) to allow for the addition of a pedestrian gate within service yard fencing and relocate the 2015/26044 (proposed industrial unit (Use Class B2) and associated ancillary research and development office space) gas storage compound to north-east corner of service yard. **Discharged**
- (vi) Application No. 2021/40725 – 47 McCarthy Close, Birchwood, WA3 6RS. Proposed single storey side extension. **Approved with conditions.**

(vii) Application No. 2021/40663 – 47 Harcourt Close, Birchwood, WA3 6PU. Change of use of land to residential garden area. **Refused**

(viii) Application No. 2022/41832 15 Ecclestone Close, Birchwood, WA3 7NL. Proposed front porch extension. **Granted**

(c) **Planning Applications** - *all plans can be viewed via:*

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. 2022/42766 16 Jay Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6QJ. Proposed demolition of rear conservatory and proposed erection of a single storey rear and side extension and a new porch below existing front canopy.

(ii) Correspondence received further to a previous letter with regard to Application No: 2022/42689: Application Type: Variation of Conditions Location: Unit 722 (within Development Plots 701 & 702) Daten Avenue, Birchwood. Proposal: Variation of condition 1 (plans) to allow for changes to louvres and drainpipes on the building, enlarge approved substation, add an additional substation and omit 2 parking spaces on application 2022/41954 (Variation of condition 1 (plans) on application 2021/40399 (Application for approval of reserved matters (i.e., appearance, layout, scale, access and landscaping) pursuant to outline planning permission 2015/26044 (proposed industrial unit (Use Class B2) and associated ancillary research and development office space) to allow for the addition of a pedestrian gate within the service yard fencing and relocate the gas storage compound to north-east corner of service yard).

A summary of the amendments is as follows: Amended description and plans - additional substation, amendment to existing substation and removal of 2 parking spaces. To view the application, you can search for it online.

Councillors had no comments to make.

This part of the meeting concluded at 6.45 pm