

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE
ON TUESDAY 26TH JULY 2022, 6.00 PM

Present: Councillor Ellis in the Chair
Councillors Allen, Atkin, Ball, Bowden, 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: None

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

Councillor Atkin – Incredible Edible Birchwood

098/22-23 **JUNE 2022 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Evans **proposed**, Councillor Scott **seconded**, and it was **resolved** that: The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 28th June 2022 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

099/22-23 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) **Police**

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

Burglaries

- 1 report of attempted theft from a business.
- 2 car/key burglaries from private residence.

Criminal Damage

- 5 reports of criminal damage

Antisocial Behaviour

- 9 reports of nuisance/antisocial behaviour

The PCSO advised that there have been no TruCam sessions done over the period of the report due to weather and staffing constraints. He informed the Council that the TruCam sessions are going to start again on Thursday (28/07/2022) if resources are available.

The PCSO stated that they have been continuing to conduct free bike marking sessions. These took place at Birchwood Shopping Centre and at the Birchwood Fire Station open day.

The PSCO apologised again for the lack of visibility within the community. He advised that the PCSO numbers have dwindled, and a recent intake comprised of PCSOs for the whole of Cheshire. A comment was also made that it seems the numbers will be reducing from 200 to 160 through natural wastage.

Cllr Dempsey informed Members that at the PCC meeting he attended in June, attendees were made aware that there are no plans to recruit any additional PCSOs at present.

Several years ago, there was one allocated PCSO per ward. Currently there is one PCSO covering several wards in Warrington East.

Cllr Dempsey said that the focus is moving towards online crime and cybercrime.

The Chair raised concern regarding the apparent lack of PCSOs within the community and asked Members if they concur.

After some discussion it was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner, on behalf of the Council, raising the Council's concerns.

Action The Clerk's office to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner on behalf of the Council.

The Police report also noted that the new Youth Hub, which has recently opened in the centre of Warrington, has created sessions that cater for teens (12-19yrs). These sessions are Monday and Wednesday 4pm - 9pm, also Friday and Saturday 4pm - 10pm.

The PCSO advised that he has spoken with other Parish Councils in Warrington East regarding the possibility of providing some funding towards a bus that can transport young people to the new Youth Hub in Warrington. He enquired if the Town Council would consider a contribution towards this fund.

The Chair advised the PSCO that this is something that the Council would consider, but it would need further information to allow it to do so.

The PCSO also raised concern regarding antisocial behaviour on the older footbridge over the railway at Birchwood Station. It has become a gathering spot for youths and there have been instances of items being thrown at passers-by and on to the track, which can be dangerous.

PSCO Palfrey enquired if the Council had any concerns regarding the use of 'mosquito devices' on the footbridge in an effort to stop youths from gathering. These devices emit a high-frequency noise that youths find irritating and acts as deterrent.

Although Members did not raise any specific issues regarding the device, they did comment that use of the device may be viewed as targeting a specific group and suggested that some clarification should be sought on this.

The Chair also advised that the footbridge is owned by Warrington Borough Council and is a public right of way. He commented that some maintenance/ improvement work is planned and that he would seek some clarification from the relevant Borough Council Officer.

Cllr Ball raised a concern with PCSO Palfrey regarding an incident at one of the local shops.

PSCO Palfrey advised that the matter is under investigation.

(b) **Questions Raised by a Resident**

Update

At the last Town Council meeting the resident had raised a concern about the number of abandoned shopping trolleys in the area and was requesting some form of intervention from the Town Council.

Although this matter is not with the Town Council's remit, Officers were asked to raise it with the Manager of Birchwood Shopping Centre.

The Clerk reported that she has been in contact with the Manager of Birchwood Shopping Centre regarding the issue of abandoned shopping trolleys. She advised that the Manager is currently working with the larger stores to alleviate this issue.

New Items

A resident enquired about who has responsibility for the landscaping around McCarthy Close, as there are shrubs that have become very tall and overgrown.

The Clerk advised that the vegetation around this area falls under the remit of Warrington Borough Council.

The Clerk advised the resident that they can report concerns via a 'My Warrington' account, which can be set up from the Warrington Borough Council website.

Action Clerk's office to look into this matter.

The resident brought the issue of Japanese Knotweed to the Council's attention. He stated that he believes there to be a patch of Japanese Knotweed currently growing near Mansfield Close.

The Chair thanked the resident for bringing this to the Council's attention. The Chair advised that this can also be reported to WBC directly via the Borough Council's website. There is a specific section in the 'My Warrington' report form that relates to invasive plants.

The resident raised concerns regarding the lack of buses in Oakwood. He advised that for the last year there have been numerous issues regarding the service that goes through Oakwood. There have been late or missing buses and some drivers have allegedly missed stops.

The Chair advised the resident to raise a complaint via the Warrington's Own Buses website. He added that there have been a number of new drivers that have joined the company recently who may not be fully familiar with the route.

The resident raised the issue of electric scooters and cyclists within Birchwood Forest Park. He stated that, in his opinion, some appear to have little or no regard for other footpath users.

The Chair acknowledged that the issue regarding electric scooters is of concern. He commented that, currently electric scooters are illegal and should not be ridden on public land.

Members advised that if the resident comes across another incident regarding an electric scooter, the best thing to do is to report it to the Police on 101.

The Chair stated that the paths within Birchwood Forest Park are for both pedestrians and cyclists.

The resident was informed that these matters do not fall within the Town Council's remit, but it was suggested that he should contact the Police outlining his concerns.

The resident gave thanks to the Council regarding the clearing of the underpass where he raised a concern about some broken glass.

The resident commented that the drains in/near the underpass need to be routinely cleaned in order to reduce flooding in the underpass after heavy rainfall.

Action The Clerk's Office to report the drains to Warrington Borough Council.

100/22-23 **OAKWOOD LOCAL CENTRE - MAINTENANCE**

The Clerk advised that a traffic notice had been issued, by Warrington Borough Council, for carriageway work to be carried out on Admirals Road.

Members were also advised that the Borough Council had been notified of other work needed such as replacing damaged bollards and some maintenance of the uneven surface. This may take some time due to the land being privately owned.

101/22-23 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) – UPDATE**

The Clerk advised that YHG conducted a tidy up day in the Redshank Lane area of Oakwood on the 14th July 2022. The day went well. Residents were encouraged to bring out any items of bulky waste for disposal by YHG. A full container of bulky waste was removed in addition to filling several tipper vans operated by Fix 360.

YHG sent an email of thanks to BTC for their assistance on the day.

The Clerk reminded Members that there will be further walkabouts taking place at 11 am on the 10th August 2022, the 7th September 2022 and 5th October 2022 meeting at the main entrance into Redshank Lane from Ordnance Avenue.

She also informed Members that YHG have advised that work to replace the bollards at the Village Green is scheduled to commence mid – end of August after delays in the supply chain.

102/22-23 **BIRCHWOOD LEISURE AND TENNIS COMPLEX**

The Clerk reported that she had contacted Birchwood Shopping Centre regarding the parking for large events held in the Sports Hall at the leisure complex.

The Shopping Centre Manager advised that they are unable to allocate spaces for events being held at the leisure complex. However, as a compromise, to ease the parking situation for local residents, the Shopping Centre Manager proposed that they may be able to reduce the price for pay and display parking in a specific area of the car park, if they are informed well in advance.

Cllr Reeves and Cllr Ellis have both spoken with Birchwood High School regarding the parking issues and have been advised by the school that they are revisiting venue hire.

- (a) The Clerk informed Members that an enquiry has been submitted to WBC regarding the request for wildlife signage.

WBC has advised that the use of such signage would have to be approved by the Department for Transport. WBC will make an enquiry.

- (b) The Clerk reported that she had raised concerns with WBC regarding the functionality of their online reporting form.

There is currently no progress tab to allow you view the current status of an enquiry. The system is also showing items as closed when the work has not been completed.

- (c) The Clerk also advised that the office had raised concerns with WBC about problems being experienced with invoicing.

- (d) The Clerk stated that WBC have been made aware that the surface of one of the footbridges, and the bearings of another require some attention.

- (e) The Clerk informed Members that we still await a response regarding the adoption of lighting columns located around Armstrong Close and Ainscough Road/Hamnett Court.

- (f) The Clerk said that dropped kerbs for Powell Avenue are being considered by WBC, but there is no immediate work planned.

The Borough Council is looking into the possibility of making the concrete bollards at the end of Powell Avenue look more aesthetically pleasing.

The dropped kerb access between Mansfield Close and Admirals Road is part of the planned work for this year.

- (g) Members asked if there is an update regarding the rebuilding of the observation tower at Risley Moss, which had been damaged by fire several years ago.

Cllr Ellis informed Members that it is in the WBC budget for this year but due to ground issues the scope of work has changed.

Councillors asked if an update could be made available for residents, some of whom had contributed towards the cost of the rebuild as it has been several years since the fire.

Cllr Bowden advised that the local community raised over £12,000 which Risley Moss Action Group (RIMAG) have ringfenced and are managing.

This funding from the community will be used to help fund the replacement structure.

- (h) There is currently no update available regarding the bus shelters on Glover Road.

- (i) The Clerk confirmed that she has contacted WBC regarding the request for a recycling bin for the Town Council office.

The office is still awaiting a response from WBC.

104/22-23 **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.

The Clerk advised that she had been in contact with Dawn Taylor the Manager of the Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team (CWTT). The Clerk received a document from CWTT which gives insight into the procedures regarding the eviction of Traveller encampments.

The Clerk stated that the document may now need updating due to the new Policing Bill before being made publicly available.

Action Clerk's office to liaise with partner organisations on this matter.

105/22-23 **MISCELLANEOUS**

- (a) The Clerk informed Members that work is in progress on some shrubbery in Gorse Covert owned by the Land Trust, although it has been stopped temporarily due to the discovery of a wasp nest.
- (b) The Chair advised Members that WBC, in partnership with all bus operators across Warrington launched a 'Super Summer Service' to reduce the cost of public transport for users during the evenings / weekends for the period of 25th July – 4th Oct 2022, and to enhance some timetables.

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

106/22-23 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL(WBC)**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/online reports/telephone calls following queries/contact from residents.
- (b) Received – Traffic Notices including several that affect some Birchwood Roads.
- (c) Sent email to WBC regarding a broken window at the old Birchwood Police station on Delenty Drive.

107/22-23 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP**

Sent/received – various emails/reports following queries/contact from residents.

108/22-23 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – various emails from Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA).
- (b) Received – various LGC e-briefings.
- (c) Received - email from resident requesting help from Councillors regarding the reinstatement of a bus service (8.10am) from Gorse Covert to enable Birchwood High School Learners to get to school in a timely manner.

The current service timings mean the Learners get to school either one hour early (07.33 from Gorse Covert, arriving at Birchwood Centre at 07.45), or several minutes late (08.37, arriving at 08.50 if on time).

The first bell rings at 08.45am for Form Time.

The Chair advised that he has written to the resident regarding this matter.

109/22-23 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Various Neighbourhood Alerts.
- (b) Members were asked if they wish to sign up to the Neighbourhood Watch Community Safety Charter. By signing up, the Council is making a commitment to take positive, concrete steps to contribute to making the area safer for everyone.

The aim of this initiative is to work together to reduce incidents of harassment, antisocial behaviour and intimidation in public spaces and ensure that those who are affected are given the reassurance and support they need.

Members agreed that the Council should sign up to this charter.

Action Clerk's office to progress.

110/22-23 **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 – NALC publications including the Chief Executive's Bulletins, events information, etc.
- (d) Received - NALC's Legal Topic Note LTN 80 – Members' Conduct and the Registration and Disclosure of their Interests (England) was updated on 6th May 2022. A copy is available to view in the office.

111/22-23 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) **Planning Appeals**

Cllr Ellis informed Members that the enforcement case regarding a gazebo that currently does not conform with regulations is still the subject of an appeal. He advised that the neighbours have provided evidence to support the removal of gazebo.

(b) **Planning Decisions**

- (i) **2022/41331** - Terberg Matec Uk, Leacroft Road, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6PJ - change of use of storage and distribution unit (use class b2/b8) to ambulance station and training centre with parking and associated works (sui generis use class), **Granted**
- (ii) **2020/3781** - 57 Deanwater Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6ER - Householder - Proposed Front and side double storey extension. **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/](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 2022/41540 - 29 Woodhouse Close, Birchwood, WA3 6QP – Proposed single storey extension and separate single storey rear extension.
- (ii) Application 2022/41495 – 22 Sandicroft Close, Birchwood, WA3 7LA – Proposed side extension above existing garage to form additional bedroom, bathroom, and utility.

This part of the meeting concluded at 7.20 pm.