

January 2025 Birchwood Town Council Meeting:

(1 to 3) Apologies, Declarations of Interest, Public Participation (including the Police Report).

(4) The approval of the December 2024 Council Meeting Minutes.

Clerks Report to the Council

(5) Progress Report - Copies of the main correspondence sent out/received since the Council Meeting in December 2024. **(6)** New Items for the consideration of the Council not otherwise raised in the Progress Report.

(7) Members' Referrals. **(8)** Planning Matters. **(9)** Accounts for Payment. **(10 and 11)** Part I Finance; including approval of Minutes, main correspondence sent /received since the December 2024 Meeting (progress). **(12)** New items received since the December 2024 Meeting. **(13)** Part II Finance, Audit and Personnel, including approval of December 2024 Minutes.

Clerks Report to the Council & Part I Finance Agenda

6 New Items

6.1 Warrington Borough Council (WBC) *(details already circulated and/or available in the office)*

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/online reports/telephone calls following queries/contact from residents regarding flytipping, tree/shrubbery issues, flooding, muddy paths, gritting etc.
- (b) Received – various traffic notices, including one for Daten Avenue in Birchwood, which was shared on our Facebook page.

6.2 Your Housing Group (YHG)

- (a) Sent/received – emails/reports following queries/contact from residents regarding various issues.
- (b) Sent – an email enquiring if YHG would be gritting in any YHG areas. A response was received confirming that YHG would not be gritting any areas.

6.3 Miscellaneous Correspondence (majority not in papers – already circulated / available in the office)

- (a) Received – various emails from Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA).
- (b) Received – a query from a resident regarding a planning application for Spring Lane Traveller Site, Croft. The Clerk responded to the resident that BTC are not a statutory consultee in this case, so BTC has not received copies of the planning application, and directed the resident to the respective Parish Council (Croft), or to email the Chair, Cllr Ellis, to discuss the matter prior to the BTC meeting as it is time sensitive.
- (c) Received – Multiple enquiries from Councillors regarding email addresses not working. **To ask which Members are currently having issues with their BTC email addresses?**

6.4 Cheshire Police – Various Neighbourhood Alerts received (already circulated).

6.5 Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC), National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) *(already circulated – copies available in the office)*

- (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.
- (d) Received – ChALC – an email regarding 'VE Day 80' encouraging Town and Parish Councils to take part in celebrating the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

6.6 Publications Received - Various LGC e-mail correspondence/briefings.

6.7 Urgent /Time Sensitive Matters

To receive any urgent and/or time sensitive matters that have been received since the publication of the Clerk's Report for noting and/or action.

7 Members' Referrals - None for this meeting.

8 Current Planning Applications for Comment and Observation and Other Related Planning Issues

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

A meeting of the DMC is scheduled to take place on 23rd January 2025. There are no items specific to Birchwood on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

- (b) Received – an email from Savills Properties regarding previous planning application reference: **2024/00312/FULM** – Proposed redevelopment of land adjacent to Spencer House, Dewhurst Road, Birchwood, WA3 7PG. The Town Council submitted an objection, following determination by WBC the application was refused. Savills have now been appointed to work on a new proposal, which allegedly this addresses the concerns previously raised. They have requested a Teams Meeting with Members. **Do Members wish to schedule a meeting or await a formal planning application?**

- (c) Information re: enforcement cases specific to Birchwood have been circulated to Members.

8.2 **Planning Decisions**

- (a) **Application No. 2024/01430/ADV** The Turf And Feather Glover Road, Birchwood, WA3 7PH. Replacement signage to include double sided panel to existing single post completed with 2x corex holders fitted below, lantern, welcome panel, fascia sign, 1 set of sign written house name and logo, and 1 single sided post mounted corex sign. **Granted.**
- (b) **Application No. 2024/01377/FUL** Heathfield House Day Nursery, Heathfield House Delenty Drive, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6AP. Extension to existing day nursery. **Granted.**
- (c) **Application No. 2024/01333/ADV** BP, Oakwood Gate Service Station Oakwood Gate, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6RW. 1 No. illuminated totem sign. **Granted.**
- (d) **Application No. 2024/00963/REMM** Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway. Approval of reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout, scale) pursuant to ref. 2023/00333/VARC for Phases 1 (Enabling Works) and 2 (Hotel and Facilities Buildings) comprising creation of development platforms, earthworks inc. diversion of Silver Lane Brook, creation of Peat Habitat Zone, strategic landscaping, internal site circulation, vehicle parking inc. Electric Vehicle Hub, foul & surface water drainage feature; Facilities Building inc. commercial units, seating areas, associated amenities and management suite; 100-bed Hotel & associated facilities; landscaped external areas inc. outdoor seating areas & play equipment; internal & external plant areas; associated infrastructure inc. service yard, external bin store areas, photovoltaic panels, LV panels & substations, lighting & fencing. **Granted.**
- (e) **Application No. 2024/01494/PA14J** Birchwood Warrington, Car Park, Genesis Centre Garrett Field, Birchwood, Warrington. The proposed works is for the installation of a roof mounted solar PV system generating 331.8 kWp, comprising of 568 x Astro N5 585W panels or similar. **Prior Approval is Required and Granted.**
- (f) **Application No. 2024/01388/VARC** Aldi, Birchwood Shopping Centre, WA3 7PQ. Variation of condition 2 (approved plans), condition 4 (CHEMP), condition 6 (parking surfacing), condition 7 (parking provision), and 10 (cycle parking) to allow for amendments to the car park layout attached to planning permission 2024/00225/FUL. **Granted.**
- (g) **Application No. 2023/00947/DISCON** Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington. Discharge Condition no.21 (Details of the installation and maintenance of the underground storage tanks), Pursuant to LPA reference number 2023/00333/VARC. Attached to Outline Planning Permission Reference no. 2019/35726. **Discharged.**

8.3 **Planning Applications (Already circulated – not copied in papers) - all plans can be viewed via:**

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport_planning_and_environment/Planning/Searchplanning_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 are received for information only.

- (a) **Application No. 2024/01548/NMA Land at Junction 11 Of The M62 Motorway, Warrington.** Proposed amendments to the wording of Conditions 1 (reserved matters details), 13 (CHEMP), 18 (construction plan), 21 (underground tanks), 22 (surface water) and 31 (BCEMP) on previously approved application 2023/00333 (Motorway Service Area).

- (b) **Application No. 2024/01061/FULH** 4 Elton Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6NB. Double rear and side extension, and replacement of the first-floor roof on the existing extension.
- (c) **Application No. 2024/01603/DISCON** Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington. Discharge of condition 30 (Invasive Species) on application 2023/00333/VARC.
- (d) **Application No. 2024/01604/DISCON** Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington. Discharge of condition 34 (Landscape and Habitat Management Plan) on application 2023/00333/VARC.
- (e) **Application No. 2024/01605/DISCON** Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington. Partial Discharge of Condition 31 (Biodiversity Construction Environmental Management Plan) in relation to Phase 1a only on 2023/00333/VARC.
- (f) **Application No. 2025/00040/DISCON** Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington. Discharge of Condition 22 (surface water drainage and oil and petrol inceptors) on application 2023/00333/VARC attached to Outline Planning Permission Reference no. 2019/35726.
- (g) **Application No. 2025/00041/DISCON** Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington. Discharge of Condition 35 (Archaeological written scheme of investigation), pursuant to LPA reference number 2023/00333/VARC. Attached to Outline Planning Permission Reference no. 2019/35726.
- (h) To consider any time sensitive planning applications received after publication of the Clerks Report.

PART I FINANCE

9 Payment of Accounts - Members are asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts.

- 10 (a) To receive the Minutes and recommendations of the Part I Finance, Audit and Personnel Meeting held on 10th December 2024: for formal ratification/approval.**
- (b) To receive the Minutes and recommendations of the Budget, Strategy & Precept Meeting held on 10th December 2024: for formal ratification/approval.**

11 Progress - Finance, Audit & Personnel Items

11.1 Worknest

- (a) To note that initial ‘onboarding’ meetings, and considerations of draft documentation have commenced with WorkNest.
- (b) To receive a quote from Worknest regarding payroll services.

11.2 Ongoing Items for Noting/Considering

- (a) **Benches** - the three new benches for Birchwood have now been installed. Due to underground utility issues at the preferred location, Locking Stumps School agreed with an alternative location proposed by WBC adjacent to the Town Council notice board on Glover Road. The school has a £500 Nisa grant to allocate to part fund this bench, which will have a plaque added to it. The total cost of the work (not including the installation of the plaque on the Locking Stumps bench) will be £4,020 plus VAT, minus the £500 grant.
- (b) **Litter Bins** - To note that, as resolved at the December meeting (Minute 233/24-25 (b)) the RFO has contacted WBC regarding the proposed installation of new litter bins in the 2025/2026 financial year:
 - On the Brook Footpath close to the Dewhurst Road end of the path.
 - On Rockingham Close, behind the fence where the footpath meets the ‘bridleway’ and
 - On Admirals Road, near Jay/Dove Closes.
 We are currently awaiting a reply.
- (c) **Election Costs** - To note that we have been advised that the cost of the May 2024 local elections to be charged to BTC is £2,972.04 to be paid over four years; at an annual amount of £743.01.
- (d) **Cover for tipper** – to note that, as resolved at the December 2024 meeting (Minute 235/24-25) a cover to contain waste on the back of tipper HK64 NNM (£280.50) has been purchased and fitted to the van.
- (e) **Van signage** - to note that the signage on the Maxus vans has been changed to read ‘.gov.uk’. Signs Unlimited undertook this work free of charge.

11.3 Precept Requirement – to note that the letter confirming the Town Council’s Precept requirement of £381,044 (rounded) for 2025/2026, and a breakdown of expenditure which, as a Council with a precept of over £140,000, the Town Council is required to include, was sent to WBC on 17th December 2024. A ‘read receipt’ was sent from WBC.

12 New Finance, Audit & Personnel Items

12.1 Bank Account Reconciliation

- (a) To receive the Town Council’s Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the accounting period 1st April 2024 – 31st December 2024.
- (b) To note that the payroll figure for November 2024 was £15,244.77 (9) staff. For December 2024 it was £16,385.43 (9 staff) including back pay to April 2024 for the Clerk and RFO/Deputy Clerk.

After consideration and approval by Members, the schedules will be signed by the Clerk or RFO, and the Chair, as soon as is practicable.

12.2 Replacement lighting – to note that two outdoor security lights (to the side and rear of the Mess Room) require replacing as they are only working intermittently. They are due to be replaced on 23rd January 2025 with LED units. At the July 2024 Meeting (Minute 131/24-25) it was resolved that the outdoor, motion-activated security lights, ‘*will be replaced as and when they cease working.*’ This was also identified as a health and safety issue for staff and the cleaner as they would be accessing the area when it is dark, i.e. before 8 am and after 4 pm.

In addition, the bulb in the lighting column behind the notice board at Parkers Farm has failed and requires replacing. This work will be undertaken on the same day. The total for all work will be £200.00 +VAT.

12.3 Training

- (a) **To ask Members to consider** the quote received for Neurodiversity Awareness Training for 21 people (12 Councillors and 9 staff) of £330.00 +VAT. This course can be accessed for 12 months, on a mobile, laptop or pc and attendees will receive a training certificate on their successful completion of the course.

Alternatively, ChALC is potentially offering a ‘Neurodiversity’ training course at £30.00 per head – they are currently asking for interested parties, prior to committing to a time/date. **To consider** whether this training should be undertaken by the Clerk and RFO, if it takes place.
- (b) To ask Members to consider some proposed costs relating to the setting up of training costs. This is to enable to maintenance staff team to be set up with BTC email addresses in order to be able to set up their personal WorkNest training accounts. The most cost effective option that has the flexibility of including ‘Teams’ would be 6 x £1.75 per month (annual commitment) - £126.00 per year.

12.4 Data Protection Update and IT Access Control Policy

To receive an updated Data Protection document and **to ask Members to consider** a draft IT Access Control Policy, produced by our Data Protection Officer.

To note the receipt of the annual invoice from our Data Protection Officer, in the amount of £1,149.00 +VAT for approval.

12.5 Cleaning Services

To note that since 1st May 2024 the weekly price of the cleaning services has been £111.26 per week. This price stands until 1st April 2025. The first contract with PremiClean started in January 2022. We are currently on a three-monthly rolling contract with them

Officers continue to remain happy with the level of service we receive from PremiClean. We will advise Members if we receive any notification of an increase in charges.

12.6 Interim Internal Audit

The RFO has submitted the documents required by the internal auditor, to complete the 2024/2025 interim internal audit, which is undertaken within the first few weeks of January. This has also entailed giving the internal auditor ‘read only’ access to our Scribe account. A copy of the checklist is included in Members’ papers for information. The bundle of 107 pages of documents referred to in the list is available in the office for any Councillor to view, if they wish to see it.

Additional documents will be sent to the internal auditor as and when he requests them.

12.7 Insurance

To note that as BTC's current insurance contract is due to expire on 31st March 2025, the RFO has made enquiries with two additional insurance companies in order to obtain quotations.

12.8 Grant Aid Application

Birchwood Community Brass Band – **to ask Members to consider** the application made by the Band in the amount of £1,000.00. A detailed explanation of why the Band is applying for grant aid, along with their financial documents, is included in Members' papers. Several members of the band are residents of Birchwood.

A total of £3,561.36 has been spent so far from BTC's 2024/2025 grant budget of £5,000.

12.9 Christmas 2025

Several members of staff have already put in holiday requests that cover the Christmas/New Year 2025/2026 period, as well as other holidays throughout the year. As staff are trying to allocate their annual leave allowance, **to respectfully ask Members** whether they would consider, much earlier than usual, the arrangements for a potential Christmas/New Year 2025/2026 shutdown.

If Members are minded to follow previous years' arrangements and close during this holiday period, as 2nd January 2026 falls on a Friday next year, **to ask would Members consider** also remaining closed on Friday, 2nd January 2026 – rather than recommencing maintenance and office services for one day that week? Staff would then take four days rather than three from their holiday entitlement for 2025/2026.

12.10 General Items for Noting/Reporting

- (a) To note the receipt of the invoice from WBC for the 2024 rechargeable works for the wildflowers, in the amount of £574.75 plus VAT.
- (b) To note the receipt of correspondence from Cheshire Pension Fund asking BTC to ensure that all the data supplied to them is up to date, in order that it will have accurate information for the 2025 Valuation.
- (c) To note that confirmation has been received from the Co-operative Bank that it is now 'part of the Coventry Building Society Family'.
- (d) To note that the checks on our fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, fire alarms and intruder alarm systems are due to take place during the week commencing 24th February 2025.

12.11 Urgent /Time Sensitive Matters

To receive any Finance/Audit/Personnel urgent and/or time sensitive matters that have been received since the publication of the Clerk's Report for noting and/or action.