

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER COUNCIL MEETING
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE
ON TUESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 6PM

Present: Councillor Ellis in the Chair
Councillors Atkin, Ball, Reeves, Sheridan and Simcock

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

1 Resident

Apologies: Councillors Allman, Brereton (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 Reeves – One Community Trust (spouse)

Councillors Atkin and Simcock – Birchwood Carnival Committee

176/24-25 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) **Police Monthly Update**

Birchwood Police sent their Police Report from the period of 12th October – 12th November 2024 prior to the meeting.

‘Anti-Social Behaviour – x7

1x Pheasant Close – Suspicious activity

1x Redshank Lane – Incident involving animals

1x Whitethroat Walk – Neighbour related

1x Heather Close – Incident involving animals

1x Aurora Court – Youth ASB

1x Birchwood Forest Park – Youth ASB

1x Birchwood Train Station – NFD

Burglary Dwelling

N/A

Burglary Others

N/A

Vehicle Crime / Offences – Reports

N/A

Criminal Damage – x2

1x Halliday Close – Broken windows

1x Forbes Close – Vehicle window has been smashed'

Birchwood Police were not in attendance for this meeting, but sent over some comments relating to the Police Report. They said that ASB has dropped, possibly due to the fact that several regular offenders have moved out of the area.

The Clerk stated that, earlier in the evening when going towards the BP petrol station, she noticed two scooters which allegedly had no rear plates or lights, and the 'riders' had no helmets on. Two Councillors had also seen these bikes/riders.

Councillor Reeves asked if Officers could contact the Police to enquire what 'NFD' refers to, regarding the anti-social behaviour located at Birchwood Train Station.

Action Clerk's office to contact Birchwood Police for clarification on the above.

(b) **Public Participation**

There was one resident present at tonight's meeting. The resident asked several questions, including enquiries about land ownership and the potential for installing a rubbish bin on a footpath/'bridleway' that adjoins Rockingham Close.

The Clerk responded by noting that land ownership in Birchwood is complex and invited the resident to visit the Council office during working hours for a more detailed view of the land ownership map, showing where there is split ownership.

The Clerk also stated that the Council is currently evaluating potential locations for additional rubbish bins. However, the selection process involves considering various factors, such as proximity to residential properties, benches and bus shelters, and the actual need for a bin in each area.

There was also a discussion about littering and flytipping in Birchwood. The Clerk explained that at least two tipper loads of litter per week is collected from the streets of Birchwood and taken to the waste site for disposal. Dealing with flytipping is in addition to that.

177/24-25 **SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Simcock **proposed**, Councillor Reeves **seconded** and it was **unanimously resolved** that: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24th September 2024 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

PROGRESS

178/24-25 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

(a) **Meeting with WBC**

The Clerk reported that, after submitting the meeting notes and action list to WBC, she has followed up with them multiple times but has yet to receive an acknowledgement or a response.

(b) **Locking Stumps MUGA Joint Use Agreement**

The Clerk stated that we are currently awaiting a copy of the new lease.

179/24-25 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) - UPDATES**

The Clerk reported that since the September Council Meeting, she has had several walkabouts and meetings with YHG.

On 30th October, the Clerk and Senior Maintenance Operative participated in a walkabout with YHG's Grounds Maintenance Team Leader, two Tree Officers, and the Regional Housing Manager. The Clerk reported that YHG has acknowledged the need for change and is considering increasing the frequency of cuts to three times per year.

The Clerk also stated that YHG has granted permission for BTC operatives to address dangerous sightline issues when necessary. While we hope this will not become a regular practice, as it could divert BTC's resources away from other important tasks, it provides reassurance to residents that we can assist in critical situations.

The Clerk stated that she believes the working relationship with YHG's Grounds Maintenance Team is getting 'back on track'.

The Clerk reported that the gated area at Trefoil and Campion Closes has now been visited by YHG. A resident had contacted us to report that the area was being used for flytipping. Although the area is gated and belongs to YHG, they did not have a key to access the area. A resident provided a suitable key, and YHG now has copies of this. YHG will be removing the flytipping.

The drop-in session held on 26th September at the Encounter Centre was well-attended, with around 17 people participating. Four additional drop-in sessions are planned: two at the Encounter Centre and two at Thomas Risley Church. The Clerk suggested that YHG consider offering an evening session to accommodate those who are interested but work during the day.

180/24-25 **TROLLEYS IN THE AREA**

The Clerk informed the Council that there have been ongoing issues with trolley collections in the area, which are currently being addressed. She also noted that, due to the large number of trolleys still remaining over the bridge by Birchwood High School, the matter has now been reported to Environmental Crime for enforcement action to ensure their removal.

181/24-25 **STOPPING UP ORDER – BENSON ROAD**

The proposed Stopping Up Order for the highways on Benson Road has now been upgraded to a Made Order, having been authorised by the Secretary of State.

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

182/24-25 **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) Sent/received – email to WBC Environmental Crime Enforcement regarding abandoned shopping trolleys (see minute 180/24-25 above)
- (d) Sent – email regarding some areas in need of maintenance, including a land ownership query. The BTC maintenance team completed all tasks within their scope and forwarded remaining issues to WBC.

The Clerk explained that the maintenance issues are located in the Kelvin Close area, and as some of the land is privately owned, WBC has requested intervention from its Highways Department.

Councillor Ellis mentioned that he may be able to identify the landowner, based on previous enquiries.

183/24-25 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP**

Sent/received – Various emails/reports following queries/contact from residents including issues with flytipping, shrubbery maintenance, fallen trees, damaged bollards, etc.

184/24-25 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – various emails from Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA).
- (b) Sent/received – email from a resident regarding overgrown shrubs coming into residents' properties from Birchwood Golf Club. As the resident has tried numerous times to contact the club, BTC contacted the Golf Club on their behalf. We are still awaiting a response.

The Clerk advised that Officers have followed up on the matter again, however it may be a civil issue as it is on private land. BTC would have no authority in this case. Additionally, it is uncertain whether WBC has jurisdiction, given that the Golf Club is privately owned.
- (c) Received – email from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service containing a link to their Annual Report 23/24.
- (d) Received – an invitation for BTC to participate in a Christmas Tree Festival, which is fundraising for a group of local Scouts, on 7th December 2024. The invitation was circulated to Members for their feedback, and following multiple responses, BTC has confirmed its attendance with the organiser. There is a £10.00 'fee' to enter, which will be put towards a fundraising venture.

The Town Council is participating as it is a local event and potentially a good opportunity to talk to local residents.

- (e) Received – an invitation to the Annual Remembrance Service outside Birchwood Shopping Centre, hosted by Birchwood Lions.

The Clerk and eight Councillors attended, with Councillor Ellis, in his capacity as Chair, laying the wreath on behalf of BTC and the Birchwood community.

The Clerk reported that the event was well-attended, though it seemed quieter than in previous years. Officers and Councillors observed that the event had not been widely advertised this year, as several organisations contacted us to enquire whether it was taking place, and there had been limited promotion on social media. This may have contributed to the lower turnout.

The Clerk also noted that while the sound system was significantly improved this year, it still appeared to be somewhat quiet.

185/24-25 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

Received – Various Neighbourhood Alerts.

186/24-25 **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, etc.
- (c) Received – SLCC – various updates, briefings, news items, etc.

187/24-25 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

Various LGC e-mail correspondence/briefings.

188/24-25 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

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

- (i) DMC meetings took place on 3rd October 2024, 17th October 2024 and 7th November. There were no items of specific interest to Birchwood on the Agendas for these meetings.
- (ii) Information re: enforcement cases specific to Birchwood have been circulated to Members.

(b) **Additional Planning**

- (i) Received – an email from the Planning Inspectorate with correspondence relating to the proposed Intermodal Logistics Park North.

Councillors noted that this will have minimal impact on Birchwood, but requested that Officers add a link to the proposal on both BTC’s website and Facebook page for residents' information.

Action

Clerk’s office to publish link as above.

- (ii) Received – information re: stopping up of highway, ‘an irregular shaped’ southern part width of Benson Road. It commences 68 metres north west of the north western corner of the Aldi store and extends in a north westerly direction for a distance of 5 metres when measured along its northern boundary and having a maximum width of 1.5 metres.

(c) **Planning Decisions**

- (i) **Application No. 2024/01116/FULH** 71 Woolmer Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6TT. Part single, part double, rear extension. **Granted.**
- (ii) **Application No. 2024/00897/VARC** Heathfield House Day Nursery, Heathfield House Delenty Drive, Bichwood, Warrington, WA3 6AP. Variation of Condition 1 (Alteration to parking layout), Condition 2 (Increase to 68 Children), Condition 4 (Revised parking condition wording to reflect revised plan as per Condition 1) on 2019/35322 won on appeal. **Granted.**

- (iii) **Application No. 2024/01142/ADV** Petahotel, Pentahotel Aston Avenue, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6ZN. Installation of replacement signs to include 2x sets of totem panels fitted to existing steelwork, 1x illuminated projecting sign, 1x set of illuminated letters and logo, 1x illuminated fascia sign, and 3x set of replacement panels to existing framepost. **Granted.**
- (iv) **Application No. 2024/01157/FULH** 14a Keyes Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6RU. One and a half storey side extension and proposed front porch. **Granted.**

(d) **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. 202401237/CLDP** 42 Pennant Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6RR. Proposed single storey rear extension,
- (ii) **Application No. 2024/01308/DISCON** Unit 722 Birchwood Park, Warrington. Discharge of Condition 16 (Vibration) on previously approved application 2015/26044.
- (iii) **Application No. 2024/01333/ADV** BP, Oakwood Gate Service Station, Oakwood Gate, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6RW. 1 No. illuminated totem sign.
- (iv) **Application No. 2024/01371/DISCON** Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington. Discharge of Condition No. 27 (Badger Survey) attached to planning permission 2023/00333/VARC.
- (v) **Application No. 2024/01372/DISCON** Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington. Discharge of Condition No. 28 (Water Vole Survey) attached to planning permission 2023/00333/VARC.
- (vi) **Application No. 2024/01377/FUL** Heathfield House Day Nursery, Heathfield House Delenty Drive, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6AP. Extension to existing day nursery.

Following receipt of this planning application from WBC, the planning consultant acting on behalf of the applicant emailed BTC to explain the nature of this new application.

They stated that everything mentioned in this new application is the same as previously applied for in approved application 2024/00897/VARC. However, upon consideration, WBC concluded that the change to the number of children and the alterations to the building could not be covered by a single application, thus resulting in the need for submitting a second application.

Members had no further comments to add regarding this.

- (vii) **Application No. 2024/01388/VARC** Aldi, Unit D, Birchwood Shopping Centre Benson Road, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7PQ. Variation of condition 2 (approved plans), condition 6 (parking surfacing), condition 7 (parking provision) and condition 10 (cycle parking) to allow for amendments to the car park layout attached to planning permission 2024/00225/FUL.

It was noted that the car park amendments are being made due to an existing agreement between another occupier and the landlord, which the applicant was not aware of during the original planning application. The width of parking spaces is being reduced from 2.7 metres to 2.5 metres across the site, to maintain a similar number of spaces but still comply with national standards.

Councillor Atkin stated that it appears Aldi are proposing to position EV charging points to the parking area at the side of the supermarket adjacent to Benson Road which are often used by disabled visitors to the GP Surgery on the same road. He noted that, as this is the predominant use for this section of parking, it may be that EV charging stations will be blocked by GP users, and those wanting to charge vehicles will be unable to do so.

Councillors asked for an official comment, rather than an objection, to be made.

Action

Clerk's office to send comments on the above.

This part of the meeting concluded at 6.40 pm.