

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE**  
**ON TUESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6.00PM**

**Councillors Present:**

Cllr Nigel Reeves (Chairman)	
Cllr Ian Atkin	Cllr Tim Price
Cllr Balbir Dhillon	Cllr George Simcock
Cllr Kuldeep Dhillon	

**Absent Councillors:**

Cllr Barry Allman	Cllr Mike Evans
Cllr David Ball	Cllr Julie Brereton
Cllr David Ellis	
Cllr Jacquie Sheridan	

**Also Present:**

Ms Safia Kauser	Locum Clerk/RFO
Mrs Hannah Thomas	Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO (minute taker)
Police (x2 representatives)	
Three members of the public	

**317/25-26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and noted from Councillors.

**318/25-26 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of pecuniary or other interests were declared.

**319/25-26 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**a) Police Monthly Update**

PCSO Palfrey gave a verbal Police Report, stating that Youth ASB has been relatively low due to the commencement of the new Youth Club over at BYCC which is operated by Warrington Youth Zone. He said that the only other reports of ASB have been confined to the shopping centre, which is not uncommon.

A resident reported to the Police that a bus stop on Admirals Road has become vandalised. The Police said that they would look into this.

PC Shevlin stated that there has been an uptake in theft surrounding motor vehicles. He explained that they are robberies of chance and will try car doors until they can find any that are open. He said that the items taken from inside the vehicles are usually bank cards and other belongings and has been happening more often in the Locking Stumps and Oakwood areas of Birchwood. PC Shevlin advised Members to spread the word to keep all vehicles and houses locked, and valuables out of view. He stated that there have been reports of this throughout the whole of Warrington.

A resident enquired about a recent incident which had been publicised in the local press which saw a road closure occur. PC Shevlin reported that the incident was isolated and dealt with on the day.

The Chair thanked the Police for attending, and they left.

Signed..... Chairman

Dated: .....

**b) Public Participation**

The Chair welcomed residents to the meeting and invited them to raise any concerns.

A resident raised concerns regarding uneven paving slabs and footpaths in the vicinity of Whittlewood Close. She advised that the matter had been reported to WBC; however, she was informed that the Council is not the landowner.

The Chair explained that land ownership within Birchwood is complex. Officers will make enquiries where possible; however, if the land is privately owned, BTC is unable to determine the identity of the private landowner.

A resident asked the Council if they are aware of any update regarding the building works at the proposed Service Station on Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway.

Councillor Atkin responded that they are currently adapting the road for pedestrianisation, which was a condition of the build. He said that other than that, BTC has no timeline or information regarding the works.

A resident stated that there is a lot of vandalism and graffiti around the area particularly on benches, street signs and on/under bridges.

The Deputy Clerk advised that if the resident provides the office with the precise location and any additional relevant information, she will liaise with the BTC Maintenance Team to determine whether they are able to remove the graffiti. Any instances they are unable to address will be reported to the appropriate landowner.

Prior to the meeting, the above resident had sent an email for Councillors to read regarding abandoned trolleys. The Chair informed the resident that if he would like to speak about this topic, which is due to be raised later in the meeting under 'Members Referrals', that he will have to do so within the allotted Public Participation time and will be unable to speak later in the meeting. Councillors took several minutes to read the printed email before discussion began.

For summary, the resident submitted a formal representation alleging that the Council had failed to take appropriate action in relation to reported environmental issues involving supermarket trolleys. The submission referenced relevant legislation and requested that the Council formally escalate the matter to the Borough Council, issue notices to the retailers concerned, and provide an explanation as to why previous reports had not resulted in formal action.

Councillor Atkin explained that BTC has liaised with WBC numerous times regarding abandoned trolleys, and is unsure why they have told the resident that this issue has not been reported to them.

The Chair thanked the resident for the informative email and stated that the Council will need to explore this topic further to determine which powers BTC hold.

**320/25-26    PROGRES REPORT - DECEMBER 2025 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

The Deputy Clerk reported that there has been no relevant progress to report since the December Meeting.

Signed..... Chairman

Dated: .....

**321/25-26 CLERKS REPORT & NEW MATTERS ARISING SINCE DECEMBER 2025 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**(a) Warrington Borough Council**

- (i) Sent/Received – various emails/online reports/telephone calls following queries/contact from residents regarding a variety of local issues on WBC land.
- (ii) Received – a slideshow presentation from the Boundary Commission briefing regarding the ongoing consultation on the Borough Ward Boundaries.
- (iii) Received – Emergency 21-day Traffic Notice for Birchwood Way effective from Tuesday 10th February 2026, as and when the signs are in place.

**(b) Your Housing Group**

Sent/Received – emails/reports following queries/contact from residents regarding various issues including landscaping and flytipping.

**(c) Miscellaneous Correspondence**

Sent/Received – various emails regarding ‘day-to-day’ queries from residents.

**(d) Cheshire Police**

- (i) Various Neighborhood Alerts received (circulated to Members).
- (ii) Received – a link to a survey giving residents the opportunity to comment on the Police budget.
- (iii) Received – information inviting community members to apply for the Independent Custody Visitors volunteer role.

**(e) Cheshire Association of Local Councils (CHALC), National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)**

- (i) Received – NALC publications including the Chief Executive’s Bulletins, events information, etc.
- (ii) Received – ChALC weekly e-bulletins with various attachments, details of training sessions, etc.
- (iii) Received – SLCC – various updates, briefings, news items, etc.
- (iv) Received – ChALC – a link to a survey for local Councils on future plans and the impacts of devolution.
- (v) Received – SLCC – an email prompting membership renewal.

**(f) Publications Received**

Various LGC and WVA email correspondence/briefings received. Emails circulated.

**322/25-26 MEMBERS REFERRALS**

All Council – Trolleys

Members discussed various thoughts on tackling the issue of abandoned trolleys in the area, and decided that this matter should be discussed between a smaller number of

Signed..... Chairman

Dated: .....

Councillors.

The Locum Clerk suggested that either an informal group of selected Councillors explore the issue and undertake research on the subject, or delegate authorities to the Deputy Clerk in conjunction with a group of Councillors, who will liaise with the local supermarkets, collection agencies and the Local Authority and report back to the Council at future meeting.

**RESOLVED:** Members Unanimously Resolved to delegate authority to the Deputy Clerk in consultation with Councillors Atkin, Simcock and Price to explore the issue relating to the abandoned trolleys, liaise with the supermarkets, authorities and agencies and to bring forward recommendations for council consideration.

**Action:** Deputy Clerk to Liaise with appropriate organisations and report back at a future Council meeting.

Councillor Ellis shared his intention to be included with this group when sending his apologies, and other absent Councillors will be consulted following the meeting to gauge interest in their inclusion.

### **323/25-26 PLANNING MATTERS**

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

- (i) A meeting of the DMC took place on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026. There was one item of interest specific to Birchwood on the Agenda.

**Application No. 2025/01250/FULM** Washington House Birchwood Park Avenue, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6GR.

BTC objected to the proposed development and Councillor Atkin attended the meeting of the DMC on behalf of BTC and spoke to the committee, with Councillor Price also in attendance. Councillor Atkin reported that ultimately, the application was granted.

- (ii) The next meeting of the DMC is scheduled to take place on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026.
- (iii) Information regarding any enforcement cases specific to Birchwood have been circulated to Members.

#### **(b) Planning Decisions**

- (i) **Application No. 2025/02501/FULH** 22 Deanwater Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6ER. Retention of fencing in new position. **Refused.**
- (ii) **Application No. 2025/01635/HPA** 22 Hamsterley Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6UF. Proposed single storey rear extension to extend beyond the rear wall by 5.02m, height of 4.00m and height of the eaves by 2.60m. **Prior approval is not required.**
- (iii) **Application No. 2025/01652/FULH** 126 Armstrong Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6DJ. Proposed single storey side extension. **Granted.**
- (iv) **Application No. 2025/01666/TPO** Cedarwood Kelvin Close, Birchwood, Warrington. Remedial works to x10 trees and fell of x9 trees, remedial works to x3 groups of trees. **Granted.**
- (v) **Application No. 2025/01536/FUL** Birchwood Retail Properties, Birchwood Shopping Centre Dewhurst Road, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7PG. Proposed

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external alterations. **Granted.**

**(c) Planning Applications**

*All plans can be viewed via:*

<https://online.warrington.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=search>

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. 2026/00084/PA3MA** Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS, 81a – 81b Spencer House Dewhurst Road, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7PG. Proposed change of use of existing offices to 4 no. apartments.
- (ii) **Application No. 2025/01728/FULH** 44 Fern Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7NU. New entrance door with sloped access path to side elevation.
- (iii) **Application No. 2026/00062/FUL** 81a Spencer House, Warrington, WA3 7PG. 3 new external doors.
- (iv) **Application No. 2025/01827/FULH** 11 Sandicroft Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7LY. Demolition of existing rear conservatory. Proposed two storey rear extension.
- (v) **Application No. 2026/00066/FULH** 1 Roberts Fold, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6AJ. Proposed rear, side and front single storey extension, and proposed rear 2 storey extension.
- (vi) **Application No. 2026/00080/CLDP** 21 Hawkshaw Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7NF. Garage conversion and internal layout changes.
- (vii) **Application No. 2025/01540/FUL** Tenement Farm Mill House Lane, Warrington, WA3 7ET. Proposed conversion of existing agricultural building to form new Dog Boarding Kennels including external run area and secure corridor extension and parking.
- (viii) **Application No. 2026/00091/FULH** 104 Keyes Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6RX. Proposed garage conversion and single storey rear extension.

**RESOLVED:** That no comments are submitted on any of the above applications.

**324/25-26 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Members received and considered the receipts and payments list for December circulated with the agenda pack.

**RESOLVED:** That the list of receipts and payments for the period of December be approved.

**325/25-26 PROGRESS REPORT ON PART I FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL DECEMBER 2025 MINUTES**

**(a) Training**

The Deputy Clerk informed Members that the 'Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Work' mandatory training from WorkNest expired on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025. She

Signed..... Chairman

Dated: .....

stated that she will undertake further research to arrange a different training for those Councillors who did not complete the training within the timeframe.

**Action:** Clerk's office to find an alternative training course for Councillors.

**(b) Assertion 10**

The Deputy Clerk reported that work is still continuing, with limited progress being made since January due to other priorities within the office. She reported that the contract for the large recycling bin ended on 31st January 2026, and there is no need to renew this contract.

The Deputy Clerk asked Members if they would like to renew the contract for the smaller recycling bin, which will renew on 31st March 2026 at a cost of £11.15 per fortnightly collection. She explained that this bin is well-used and BTC do not have another way of recycling.

**RESOLVED:** That the mixed recycling contract with Warrington Borough Council be renewed.

**Action:** Clerk's office to confirm renewal with WBC.

**(c) Tree Survey**

It was noted that the quotation of £1,325.00 plus VAT for urgent tree works was approved at the Part II meeting held on 27th January 2026. Officers have arranged for Treetops to undertake the works on Monday 2nd March 2026. Birchwood Youth and Community Centre have been notified that there may be some disruption in the vicinity of the site on that day. Treetops have advised that the works may extend into the following day if required.

Treetops have provided copies of their method statement, risk assessments and insurance.

**(d) 2026/2027 Precept**

Members noted that the RFO wrote to WBC on 8th January 2026, prior to WBC's deadline of 23rd January, detailing BTC's Precept requirement of £394,284 for 2026/2027 (as resolved). The RFO also sent a breakdown of projected expenditure which, as a Council with a Precept of over £140,000, the Town Council is required to do. WBC have confirmed receipt of this.

**(e) Grant Aid Application**

The Deputy Clerk reported that an email had been from Warrington Open Door at Christmas (WODAC) following the grant awarded by BTC in the amount of £400.00 to provide various forms of support to people who were struggling over the Christmas period. Receipts had been provided, as requested by BTC, from WODAC to share with Councillors how the grant was used. One receipt related to items used at their craft table, and another for items used in food parcels which were given to each guest.

Councillors B. Dhillon and Price reported that they attended the event.

**(f) General Items for noting/reporting**

- (i) Litter Bins – To note that we are still awaiting a response from WBC's 'Technical Support' regarding the proposed installation of new litter bins in the 2025/2026 financial year.

Signed..... Chairman

Dated: .....

- (ii) To note that we have now received a payment in relation to an insurance claim regarding accidental damage to a pc. We accepted the amount of £437.00 (£687.00 minus £250.00 excess).
- (iii) To note that the draft lease agreement between BTC and BYCC is still in the process of being 'tweaked'.
- (iv) **BTC & Birchwood Youth and Community Centre Contract**

The Deputy Clerk asked Members if they would consider sharing the cost of appointing a solicitor (if one can be found) to review the draft document, prior to bringing it to the Council for formal approval, bearing in mind that BTC and BYCC are both working to protect the interests of the community over the longer-term future of BYCC.

**RESOLVED:** Members unanimously resolved to share the cost of appointing a solicitor.

**Action:** Clerk's office to look into appointing a solicitor.

- (v) Members noted that, as previously approved for purchase by the Council, the Fourteenth Edition of 'Arnold- Baker on Local Council Administration', had been received. The Deputy Clerk shared that she is already using the book in relation to the ILCA course she is undertaking.

**326/25-26 REPORT TO THE COUNCIL ON NEW FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL – PART I & ITEMS FOR NOTING SINCE THE DECEMBER 2025 MEETING**

**(a) Bank Account Reconciliation**

- (i) To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the accounting period 1st April 2025 – 31st December 2025.

The Locum Clerk reported that she had started carrying out a review of the finances on the Scribe software and initially, some issues were identified with the budget on the software that did not match the approved budget and required a further review to address any issues. Members noted this update.

**RESOLVED:** That the budget monitoring report and bank reconciliation reports be received and noted.

- (ii) To note that the payroll figure for November 2025 was £15,710.25 (9 Staff). The figure for December 2025 was £15,193.88 (9 Staff).

**RESOLVED:** That the payroll for the period of November and December be approved. The schedules to be signed by the Clerk and RFO and the Chairman.

**(b) Grant Applications**

- (i) Members received a report from Birchwood Community Brass Band regarding how the £864.00 grant awarded to them in January 2025 was spent.
- (ii) Members were asked to consider a new grant application from Birchwood Community Brass Band in the amount of £399.00, which they are requesting to help fund the purchase of a new Eb Tuba.

Signed..... Chairman

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Members noted that funding had recently been allocated to Birchwood Community Brass Band and expressed a preference for any further funding to be directed to other organisations.

Members also raised concerns regarding the proposal to use potential funding to purchase a single instrument. Reference was made to the grants terms and conditions, which state: "*Grants cannot be awarded to individuals or for individual benefit.*" Members considered that the purchase of one instrument would primarily benefit a single individual rather than the wider group or community.

**RESOLVED:** It was unanimously resolved not to award grant funding at this time.

**Action:** Clerk's office to inform Birchwood Community Brass Band of the outcome of the Grant Aid Application.

**(c) Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)**

The Deputy Clerk reported that the next PWLB payment is due on 10th March 2026 (£8760.00). There are three additional payments to be made over the next two years. The final payment is due in September 2027.

**(d) iHasco Renewal**

The Deputy Clerk reported that iHasco had advised that access to the Neurodiversity Awareness Course for both staff and Councillors is due for renewal on 2nd March 2026. She noted that most staff and Councillors have already completed the training and therefore recommended that the access not be renewed.

**RESOLVED:** Members unanimously agreed not to renew the service.

**Action:** Clerk's Office to confirm the above decision with iHasco.

**(e) General Items for Noting/Reporting**

- (i) To note that the SLCC renewal fee for the Clerk's membership for 2026/2027 (£379.00) has been paid.
- (ii) To note that we have been notified of a decrease in interest rates on both the Nationwide and Co-operative bank accounts.
- (iii) To note that the defibrillator battery and adult defibrillator pads are due to expire on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2026. The RFO had attempted to source replacement items from various suppliers; however, an email has since been received confirming that these products are being discontinued. Officers will continue to seek available stock, but it may become necessary to consider the purchase of a replacement defibrillator should suitable consumables no longer be obtainable.
- (iv) Councillors recommended that Officers contact the Oliver King Foundation, who were responsible for the original installation of the defibrillator, to determine whether they could provide any further information on the matter.

**PART II ITEMS - [EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC]**

*\*Members of the public left the meeting.*

**327/25-26 FINANCE, AUDIT & PERSONNEL MATTERS**

- a) **To consider and approve the minutes of the Part II Finance, Audit & Personnel meeting held on 27th January 2026**

Councillor Simcock proposed, Councillor Price seconded, and it was **RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Part II Finance, Audit & Personnel Meeting, held on 27th January 2026 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

- b) **To consider and approve the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on the 17th February 2026**

Councillor K. Dhillon proposed, Councillor Atkin seconded, and it was unanimously **RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council, held on 17th February 2026 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

**(a) Progress (Confidential Notes retained on File)**

**(i) Confidential Item 1**

Members received a verbal update relating to this ongoing matter.

**RESOLVED:** That the Locum Clerk be delegated authority to liaise with WorkNest to implement the agreed actions as per confidential notes and that the additional costs as per quotation for the hourly rates of a consultant and a minute taker be authorised.

**Action** Clerk's office to confirm the choices with WorkNest.

**(ii) Confidential Item 2**

Members received and considered the latest correspondence and agreed the next steps to progress this matter.

**RESOLVED:** That the Locum Clerk is delegated authority to work with Worknest and resolve the confidential matters within the limits and scope of the agreed actions as per confidential notes.

**(iii) Subject Access Request (SAR)**

The Deputy Clerk reported that the SAR was delivered to the individual on Friday 20th February 2026. A delivery confirmation receipt was signed.

**(iv) Confidential Item 3**

**RESOLVED:** That the update relating to an occupational health report be received and noted.

**(v) Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO's Wages**

Members were requested to consider and ratify a proposed salary to reflect the increased responsibilities associated with the above role.

**RESOLVED:** That the uplift in the NJC Pay point for the Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO role be agreed and implemented as per confidential notes.

**Action:** Clerk's office to implement wage change and backdate this to 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026.

**(b) New Part II Items**

**(i) Recruitment of a Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)**

The Deputy Clerk asked Members if they would consider the hiring of an RFO, giving delegated powers to the Officers in conjunction with agreed Councillors to progress and complete the appointment process.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillors Atkin, Ellis and Reeves review the job profile for recruitment.

**(ii) Overtime Extension**

Members were requested to note the approval of overtime for Officers, as resolved at the June 2026 Meeting (Minute 114/25–26), expired on 31 January 2026.

Members were asked to consider whether the approval for overtime should be extended, if required, in light of the current workload. Any authorised overtime would be paid at standard time rates.

**RESOLVED:** Members unanimously agreed to extend the approval of overtime for Officers.

**(iii) Email from North Warrington Cavy Club (NWCC)**

The Chair suggested that this item be deferred to another meeting.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at **7.50pm**