MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE ON TUESDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2026 AT 6.00 PM

Present:

Councillor Brereton in the Chair
Councillors Balding, Ball, B. Dhillon *(arrived at 6.15 pm)*, K. Dhillon, Price, Reeves and Simcock

Mrs Fiona McDonald Clerk
Mrs Hannah Thomas Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO

Apologies:

Councillors Ellis (personal), Allman (personal) and Sheridan (personal)

Councillor Balding signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk prior to the meeting.

117/26-27 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

Councillor Breton welcome everyone to the meeting and congratulated Cllr Balding on becoming the newly elected Councillor for the Gorse Covert Ward.

118/26-27 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Allman, Ellis and Sheridan due to personal commitments/reasons.

119/26-27 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS

Members were invited to declare their pecuniary and other interests.

Councillors K. Dhillon and Price declared an interest in Agenda Item 8 – Planning Matters.

120/26-27 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

a) Police Report

There were no Police present at this meeting.

b) Public Participation

There were four members of the public in attendance at this meeting.

A resident reported that the Locking Stumps Friends Group had written to the Town Council on 5th October but had not received a reply.

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO will look into this and respond accordingly.

A resident enquired about the way Borough Councillors had voted at the Warrington Borough Council DMC regarding a specific planning application.

Councillors K Dhillon and Price confirmed that they will respond to the resident direct.

Another resident thanked the Town Council for facing off a footpath he had previously reported as a matter of concern. He further commented that the hedge on the corner of Locking Stumps Lane/Lords Lane and Redvales Court is very high and overgrown

which negatively impacts pedestrian access and sightlines. He added that, in his opinion, it is a road safety issue.

Residents also commented that the public footpath near the Golf Course is a mess and that the surface of the Mill Lane footpath is very uneven because of raised tree roots.

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO informed residents that the Town Council has reported these areas to Warrington Borough Council and to Birchwood Golf Club, very often receiving no response. She commented that the Borough Councillors can also chase these matters up with Borough Council officers.

She added that the Town Council Maintenance Team have been told by WBC that they cannot reduce the height of vegetation which becomes more problematic as it grows.

To undertake work in some areas, particularly on road junctions, traffic management is necessary which would need to be provided by the Borough Council.

Residents were informed that Warrington Borough Council officers can write to residents to ask them to cut a hedge back if it belongs to a privately owned property.

Cllr Balding added that when he was a Borough Councillor he met with the Director of the Environment and had regular briefings. Sometimes the outcome was positive and sometimes not, but at least the matter(s) had been raised directly with WBC.

Cllr Balding suggested that it may be possible to request some information regarding the level of service provision from the Chief Executive or current Head of Service.

A resident raised the matter of inconsiderate parking outside the Birchwood Medical Centre. He commented that it had been referred to as nuisance parking and suggested that some of those commenting may have a limited knowledge of people with a genuine disability, he then asked what options disabled people had for parking, particularly as there is a lack of dedicated disabled parking in general and added that people had been taking photographs of cars parked on the pavement outside the surgery. The resident said that the pavement is very wide and added that some vehicles could perhaps park on the pavement if there were allocated spaces and bollards to manage the parking.

Cllr Simcock said that signage has been put on the fence of the surgery regarding parking and added that people were more annoyed about people parking on the actual tactile paving/dropped kerb.

A resident talked about the Medical Centre having a Patient Participation Group of which Cllr Ellis had previously been a Member.

Cllr Brereton said that she would make some enquiries about becoming a member of this group.

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO said that she had written to the Police (PCSO) regarding the parking problems being experienced but has not, as yet, received a response.

A discussion then ensued regarding vehicles parking on double yellow lines near the shopping centre, particularly Warrington Borough Council vehicles on a Tuesday. It

was noted that this is 'bin day' in Birchwood and they are probably parked up during break time.

Continuing with the subject of parking, a resident said that there has been a gradual reduction in the number of parking spaces available at Birchwood Shopping Centre. He believes that this is mainly due to the number of planning applications being granted for retail outlets sited within the car park as well as designated parking spaces for businesses. This is reducing the number of parking spaces available for people using the shopping centre.

Councillors Price and K Dhillon reported that applications presented to the Development Management Committee sometimes make it impossible/difficult for Members to object, particularly if Planning Officers and planning guidelines advise that there is sufficient parking and there are no other specific grounds for objection.

A resident commented that the Town Council should be seeking more Section 106 contributions for such things as disabled access and parking.

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO said that the Town Council had requested litter management in relation to the drive through coffee shop application under a Section 106, but this had been refused.

Cllr Price responded saying that developers are encouraged to go through the pre-application process where matters such as Section 106's can be discussed in detail. However, for some applications a Section 106 is not an option.

A resident said that there appears to be a managed decline of facilities and that the same subjects come up time after time. He suggested that historic reasons for objecting to planning applications are minuted.

Cllr Balding responded that there is a lot to learn regarding the planning process and it is good to have a forum to talk about it. He informed the resident that the records are stored and are available online adding that he doesn't see how the current discussion could go any further at this meeting.

The residents left the meeting.

121/26-27 **BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

- **WBC Finance/Services Update**

Councillor Price informed Members that the Borough Council now has a second set of proposed savings which includes a much smaller team; losing 22 staff from the environmental team which will hopefully be achieved, at least in part, from natural wastage and voluntary redundancy.

He said that the Borough Council is currently in deficit and has to balance its budget within three to four years.

He added that some additional work will undoubtedly fall to parish councils through neighbourhood working and asset transfers although he believes this is not being forced upon parishes.

- **Social Care**
  Cllr Price then reported that he had attended a Social Care briefing at Warrington Hospital where the focus was on working together as the cost of ongoing care has to land somewhere; either the NHS or Warrington Borough Council.

Cllr Balding enquired about the level of ongoing maintenance Birchwood will receive in future, i.e. how many man days and the frequency of grass cutting and litter picking? He said that for the Town Council to look at its budget some specifics are needed from the Borough Council.

122/26-27 **COUNCIL MINUTES**

Members received and considered the draft minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on the 22nd September 2026.

RESOLVED: That the draft minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on the 22nd September 2026 are approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

123/26-27 **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Members were asked to receive and note the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 10th October 2026.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be formally received and noted.

124/26-27 **PLANNING MATTERS**

a) Planning Decisions

i. **Application No. 2026/01010/FUL** Arne Clo, 602 Aston Avenue, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6ZN. Proposed erection of a raised platform, clear panels and lighting in association with the installation of 2 no. padel courts. **Granted.**

ii. **Application No. 2026/00507/FUL** Unit T45 Trident Way, Warrington, WA3 6AX. Vehicle repair centre including roof mounted extraction equipment (chimneys and flues), additional Solar PV roof mounted panels, ancillary enclosure, layout amendments, new foul drainage, new gate, and refuse storage. **Granted.**

b) Planning Applications

i. **Application No. 2026/01354/FUL** Birchwood Golf Club, BIRCHWOOD GOLF CLUB Kelvin Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7PB. Proposal for an additional 33 car parking spaces.

ii. **Application No. 2026/01327/DISCON** Portsmouth City Council, 2 Leacroft Road, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6NN. Discharge of conditions 4 (Construction, Highways and Environmental Management Plan(CHEMP)), Condition 5(Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan), BNG Design Stage Report and Statutory Biodiversity Metric Ecological Impact Assessment, Condition 19 ((Precautionary Working Method Statement)), and 22 (Ecological Impact Assessment),Condition 20 (Invasive Non-Native Species Method Statement), Condition 21 (Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) on application 2025/01425 (Construction of a 9,112sqm warehouse unit (Use Classes B8))

c) Other Planning Matters & Enforcement Issues

To note that the October meeting of the DMC was held on 15th October 2026. There was one item specific to Birchwood on the Agenda:

2026/01010/FUL - Arne Clo, 602 Aston Avenue, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6ZN. Proposed erection of a raised platform, clear panels and lighting in association with the installation of 2 no. padel courts.

This application was subsequently granted.

Enforcement Cases Received:

ENF/26/11302	74 Bramshill Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6TZ	Alleged change of use from dwelling to commercial let		Rachel Hunt
ENF/26/11279	26 Dunnock Grove, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6NW	Change of dwelling to a mixed use including siting of caravan on drive for residential use		Rachel Hunt

Enforcement Cases Closed:

ENF/26/11171	33 Woodhouse Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6QP	Change of use of land from amenity space to residential garden incorporating adopted highway	Other	Rachel Hunt

125/26-27 **DEPUTY CLERK'S REPORT & PROGRESS**

a) Warrington Borough Council (WBC)

The Deputy Clerk reported that she was still awaiting information from WBC with regards to the enquiry regarding mowers.

She advised that the Environmental Services Manager of WBC had informed her during a recent meeting that WBC will undergo a lot of changes, including a lot less resource. He informed her that the two Rangers who had recently retired would not be replaced and that going forward there will be a total of 4 Rangers for the whole of Warrington. As Rixton Clay Pits and Risley Moss are classified as SSSI's they will require more resource. She also reported that the Ranger Service would not be able to support any future Carnivals.

It was also reported that there is currently limited information available regarding other potential cuts other than there will need to be a significant reduction in cutting work, including grass cutting with major routes being affected. In order to undertake maintenance on these routes traffic management is required costing in the region of £25k each time.

It was commented that arboriculture, hedge cutting and grass cutting would all be affected by the cuts as well as community events.

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO reported that the Carnival AGM will take place shortly so she may have further information after that meeting. Councillors B Dhillon, Price and Simcock are members of the Carnival Committee.

She also added that a lot of Rangers help with the Carnival and there is a concern that future events in their current format might not be possible. Past events have resulted in

the field being damaged which has cost WC around £3k to repair. A lot of questions have been asked but there are still currently many unknowns.

Cllr Balding enquired if an event could still take place as many charities and organisations enjoy it and rely on it for fundraising activities. He added that the Cadets are still based on site.

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO said that there is an oversubscription of teams wanting to use the sports facilities.

Cllr Ball commented that many volunteers are needed to run an event and that there had been interest many years ago from a music entrepreneur about using the facility to host events.

It was noted that the park is not fenced and that the Friends of Birchwood Forest Park have raised a lot of money through the café and other initiatives to improve and maintain the park.

Members commented that when more details are known representatives of local community groups should be approached to attend a meeting to talk about potential ways forward.

126/26-27 **REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES**

a) Your Housing Group (YHG)

The Deputy Clerk informed Members that YHG had requested a further walkabout with BTC. However, this had not been possible at present due to staffing constraints.

Cllr Brereton commented that she is concerned that the communication with YHG is not as good as it once was.

b) Birchwood Carnival Committee

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO reported that the AGM will be taking place on 5th November 2026.

c) Friends of Birchwood Forest Park

Cllr Simcock reported that the Café will close the second week of December, re-opening Easter 2027.

127/26-27 **LOCKING STUMPS MUGA – JOINT USE AGREEMENT**

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO stated that there are no updates for this at present.

128/26-27 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

a) Bank Reconciliation

Members received and considered the bank reconciliation statement for September 2026 together with the Scribe transaction report.

- Petty Cash as of 27/05/2026 - £62.51
- The Co-Operative Business Select Account as of 30/09/2026 - £10,610.85
- The Co-Operative Charity Account as of 30/09/2026 - £96,792.29
- Nationwide Business Instant Saver as of 30/09/2026 - £251,142.98
- CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund as of 30/09/2026 - £200,000.00
- **TOTAL BALANCES: £558,608.63**

RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliation statement for September 2026 together with the Scribe transaction report be received and noted.

b) Payments Schedule

Members reviewed the Payments Schedule, which detailed all payments made under delegated authority, including pre-authorised payments, direct debits, internal bank transfers, and income received.

RESOLVED: That the payments for October 2026 are approved (attached as an appendix to the minutes).

c) Employment Costs

Members received the salary, pension and HMRC payments for the month of October 2026 which were paid in accordance with employment contracts. The pay date for employees is the 7th of the month, covering the pay period for the whole month.

Payroll Period	Total	Details	Take-Home Pay	PAYE	Pension
07-Oct	£27,120.33	8 Employees: (2 Admin & 6 Maintenance Staff)	£15,986.52	£5,570.79	£5,409.34

There is a variance of £153.68 which is an authorised payment.

RESOLVED: that the payroll for October 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair.

d) Health & Safety - DSE

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO reported that a payment has been made towards the cost of the Clerk's glasses under H&S DSE guidance. She also informed Members that the Financial Regulations should be amended to reinstate the contribution towards glasses for those using DSE equipment to a maximum of £150 or the cost of the glasses if lower that £150 as it appears to have been removed in error.

RESOLVED: Members authorised this adjustment to the Finance Regulations as it is a health and safety matter.

129/26-27 **GRANT APPLICATION – BIRCHWOOD LIONS**

Members were asked to consider the grant application from Birchwood Lions for £150.00 towards the cost of the Annual Service of Remembrance held in Birchwood. The Deputy Clerk added that Councillors are invited to attend the event on 7th November 2026 and to lay a wreath on behalf of the community.

RESOLVED: Members resolved to award a grant of £150 to Birchwood Lions.

130/26-27 **NOTICE OF UNCONTESTED ELECTION**

The Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO reported that a Notice of Uncontested Election had been received informing the Town Council that Nigel Balding has been elected to the role of Councillor for the Gorse Covert Ward.

The Clerk informed those present that Cllr Balding has signed his Acceptance of Office and completed a Register of Members Interests.

131/26-27 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, agenda item 17 be considered in Part II due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, including staffing matters and information prejudicial to the public interest.

132/26-27 **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE UPDATES & EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

Councillor Ball, as the Chair of the Personnel Committee confirmed that the Committee met prior to the main Town Council Meeting and has reached a conclusion regarding an ongoing HR matter.

He also stated that as this matter is being brought to a conclusion, the committee do not consider the need for standalone Personnel Committee Meetings unless required.

133/26-27 **ITEMS FOR A FUTURE AGENDA**

- Resident Survey

134/26-27 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Meeting of the Town Council will be held on Tuesday, 24th November 2026 at 6.00pm.

This meeting concluded at 7.20pm.

Signed……. Chair Dated: ……..

Appendix A

Birchwood Town Council

PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

27 October 2026 (2026-2027)

Vouche	Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Payment Ref.	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
214	Water	01/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Water and Wastewater service:	Waterplus	X	38.28		38.28
215	Finance Software	01/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Scribe Finance Software - Octo	Starboard Systems Limited	S	89.00	17.80	106.80
216	Bins & Waste Collection	01/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Fuel Surcharge - Hygiene Wast	Direct365Online Ltd	S	1.00	0.20	1.20
217	PPE - Workwear-Uniform	01/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		PPE/workwear	J&K Ross Ltd	S	199.90	39.98	239.88
218	Vehicles-Maint & Repairs	01/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		2x new tyres and wheel alignm	Risley MOT & Truck Ltd	S	286.95	57.39	344.34
219	Janitorial Supplies & Mat Cleani	01/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Mat cleaning services	Clean Linen & Workwear	S	298.39	59.68	358.07
220	Cleaning Contract Services	01/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Cleaning Services	PremiClean	S	546.00	109.20	655.20
221	Training - Staff & Councillors	02/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Staff training - Appraisals x3	Cheshire Association of Loc	X	240.00		240.00
222	IT Support & Equipment	05/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Microsoft 365 Subscriptions	labdesk ltd	S	88.74	17.75	106.49
223	Insurance Ill Health Liability LG	05/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Ill Health Liability Ins Cover - C	Legal & General	X	232.08		232.08
224	HR & H&S Support Services	06/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Worknest - PAYG Support	Worknest	S	1,778.00	355.60	2,133.60
226	Staffing Costs	07/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Direct Earnings Attachment for	Department for Work and F	X	153.68		153.68
227	Staffing Costs	07/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Payroll - October	Birchwood Town Council	X	15,986.52		15,986.52
229	HMRC PAYE Contributions	07/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		HMRC PAYE - October	HMRC (PAYE)	X	5,570.79		5,570.79
230	Water	09/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Water Cooler Replenishment	Aquacool Limited	S	19.49	3.90	23.39
225	Fuel for Van & Equipment	27/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Fuel	Allstar	S	105.41	21.08	126.49
228	Pension Contributions	27/10/2026		The Co-operative Bai		Pension October Contributions	Cheshire Pension Fund	X	5,409.34		5,409.34
								Total	**31,043.57**	**682.58**	**31,726.15**

Signed…… Chair Dated: ……..