

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT
PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 27TH MARCH 2012**

PRESENT: Councillor Bowden in the Chair
Councillors Evans, Fitzsimmons, M. Hearldon, T. Hearldon, Hepworth and Nelson

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk – Mrs. C. Caddock
Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe

PCSO Jon Williams

12 residents

Apologies were received from Councillors Higgins, Ratcliffe and Spencer

It was RESOLVED THAT:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council which took place on Tuesday, 28th February 2012, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

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.

126/2012 **RECESS**

(a) **Travellers on Kinsale Drive**

A number of residents attended tonight's meeting to express their concerns over the ongoing incursion of members of the travelling community on Kinsale Drive.

A lively and detailed discussion took place with residents raising concerns over issues including environmental health matters, fear of intimidation, noise, trespass of children and dogs from the travellers' site into local gardens, blocking of the footpath, obstruction of the highway and littering.

One resident presented a petition to the Town Council requesting that action be taken to prevent unauthorised vehicular access both immediately and in the future.

The resident said that he had contacted the Town Council over five years ago with the suggestion that bollards could be put in place to restrict access to the area. He reported that he had also written to the Borough Council and had received a response stating that his neighbours had been contacted and it was only he who had been concerned about the matter. Having spoken to his neighbours, they all said that they had not been contacted by the Borough Council and they did, in fact, share his concerns.

Residents also stated that they had recently received a letter from the three Birchwood Borough Councillors which had implied that legal action had been taken and the travellers would be leaving by Friday 23rd March, but as the travellers were still on site, they felt this had been sent just to placate them.

Councillor Bowden thanked residents for the petition and reassured them that the Town Council, the Borough Council and the Police were taking the matter very seriously and shared their concerns. He reported that the Borough Council is currently doing all that it can within the legal framework it has to work to, to try to move the travellers on.

Councillor Bowden gave the resident a copy of a statement we had received just prior to the meeting from the Borough Council outlining the procedures that are undertaken when travellers move into an area that is not a designated site (of which there are none locally).

The first step is to act under 'Common Law', whereby the landowner may serve notice on a trespasser and request them to leave a site by a certain timescale.

This is the legal action that had been referred to by the Borough Councillors in their letter to residents to try to keep them updated the previous week, after they had been reassured that discussions had been held between the Borough, with the assistance of the Police, and the travellers, who had confirmed that they would leave by Friday. The letter to residents was sent in good faith in the belief that the site would be clear by Friday evening.

Obviously, although some did move on, not all had and since then other vans have arrived.

Councillor Fitzsimmons confirmed that since this course of action has not worked, we have been told that the Borough Council was taking the next step, which is for an application to be made to either the Crown and/or Magistrates Courts for notice to be served. This is a more formal procedure and, unfortunately, can take up to two or three weeks. This method is more costly, but has the benefit of preventing the same group of travellers from returning to the same site within a three month period; it does not, however, prevent incursions by different travellers to the same site within that period.

Councillor Fitzsimmons said that there are 'regular' travellers to Warrington that are known to Officers of the Borough Council and are mostly obliging; and when asked to move on they do so within a negotiated and agreed period of time. The current group of travellers appear to be new to the area and are currently proving difficult to negotiate with.

Councillor Fitzsimmons said that he would be grateful if he could have copies of the correspondence with the Borough Council, if the resident still had them, regarding his first request several years ago for bollards to be put in place.

The resident said that if he did not have them, the Borough should have copies on file.

With reference to the bollards, Councillor Bowden stated that we understood that this suggestion had been previously dismissed by the Borough Council on the advice of the emergency services. But said that the suggestion can be revisited and the emergency services contacted again to see if there is any way they can be accommodated.

In addition, with a view to the long term, the Borough Councillors are trying to work with Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council, to look into the possibility of providing designated sites within the local authorities' boundaries.

This would allow the Police to use a Section 62 a-e power, which is an immediate power where the Police can direct travellers to a suitable vacant pitch within the local authority boundary. Failure to comply is then an offence and if they refuse to move, the travellers cannot return to a local authority within three months.

PCSO Williams was asked whether the traveller's vehicles had been checked and whether there were any Police reports relating to the site.

PCSO Williams replied that all the vehicles had been checked and were road legal, with tax and insurance. The only reports he could find on the Police system were regarding a couple of the travellers' dogs that had been running loose and appeared to be a bit aggressive.

Councillor Bowden stated, in response to questions regarding environmental health matters, that the senior Borough Council Officers who deal with these matters had already been contacted on a number of occasions regarding these issues and that that we will be contacting them again to see what their strategy is, given that there is not only litter being strewn about, but animal and human faeces, some of it very close to residents' properties and the public footpath. He added that he knows that a number of Borough Council Officers have already visited that site and have a 'first hand' awareness of the issues being raised.

Action Councillor Bowden to contact the Borough Council to ask for an update on the traveller situation and to impress on the Borough Council the need for urgent action to be taken, particularly regarding environmental concerns.

Action Councillor Bowden to contact the Borough Council regarding options for restricting future unauthorised access to this site.

It was also suggested requesting that an Officer or Officers of the Borough Council meet with one or two of the residents at their properties to further discuss the issues with them. Two residents said that they would be pleased to meet with Borough Council Officers regarding this matter.

Action Clerk's office to write to the Borough Council outlining the residents' concerns and to ask if Borough Council Officers can arrange to meet the nominated residents regarding the above.

(b) **Powell Avenue Underpass**

At the February meeting a resident had attended to give an account of an accident her husband had when he slipped at night on black ice near the Powell Avenue underpass. She had expressed her concerns that the subway needed attention regarding the drainage to make it a safer route. Water, when it runs off the embankment, flows diagonally across the underpass to the nearest drain, which silts up and blocks frequently. The resident had asked if the Town Council could do everything within its power to encourage the Borough Council to address her concerns as a matter of urgency.

The Clerk had stated that some people climb the embankment, cross Birchwood Way and then climb down the other side when the underpass is flooded; a dangerous course of action.

The resident attended tonight's meeting to inform Members that although she had, by coincidence, met an Officer of the Borough Council who was surveying the site around the underpasses, she had not received any formal correspondence from the Borough regarding her initial correspondence with them after her husband had fallen. The resident made it clear that her only objective in pursuing this matter is that she does not want something similar to happen to someone else in the future.

The resident stated that she had spoken to the Officer and was unhappy with his interpretation of the situation. She felt he did not appreciate that it is not the number of gullies and keeping those flowing freely that is the issue she is most concerned about, but the fact that the water has to flow diagonally across the underpass to reach those drains, which gives the potential for black ice to form in freezing conditions. She believes that if there was a drain on both sides, the water would not need to flow across, reducing the risk significantly.

In addition, the Officer had spoken to the resident about the possibility of planting additional shrubbery between the two subways to help reduce the flow of water and catch leaves and silt, but the area where the black ice caused her husband's accident was not at this point.

The resident reported that the Officer had made a comment stating that the public needs to exercise care in icy conditions. She added that she and her husband had been taking great care, but what they thought was simply water, was in fact black ice. If the water had not flowed across to the other drain and then frozen, it would not have been there to slip on.

The Clerk stated that we had received an interim letter from the Officer, but had not yet received a formal report regarding the matter.

The resident asked that when the Town Council receives a report from the Borough Council about this matter, that Members scrutinise it carefully. She believes that the Borough is trying to make the case that three drains is adequate especially now that that arrangements have been made for the gullies to be cleaned regularly on a two weekly cycle; but reiterated that it will not stop the water flowing across the underpass and potentially freezing in cold conditions.

Members unanimously agreed that the Town Council should continue to liaise with the Borough Council regarding this matter with a view to solving the matter permanently.

Councillor Bowden asked the Clerk to continue to liaise with the Borough to keep pressing them for additional drainage on the opposite side of the underpass to those already in place; and to ask that the Borough contacts the resident formally with any updates and reports.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with the Borough Council regarding the above and update the resident regarding this matter when we can.

(c) **Birchwood Way Roadworks and Ivy Screening**

A resident enquired as to what was happening on a stretch of Birchwood Way as he had seen some temporary works being undertaken.

Councillor Fitzsimmons informed the resident that it is just a temporary measure as part of the resurfacing work that is being carried out on the stretch of Birchwood Way from College Roundabout to the 'dog bone' roundabout; as traffic will be redirected onto the current outbound from Birchwood to Warrington side, making the dual carriageway into two-way traffic during the daytime whilst work takes place. The 30mph limit is also temporary whilst the work takes place.

The resident also stated that he believes the ivy screening, meant to be a traffic calming measure, is extremely dangerous and asked why the Town Council had not objected.

Councillor Fitzsimmons replied that unfortunately the screening is not technically within the Birchwood boundary and we were therefore not consulted. The first anyone from the Town Council knew about the screening was when it was actually being installed.

(d) **Telecommunications Mast on Admirals Road**

A resident came to tonight's meeting to represent local residents regarding a telecommunications mast installed in February 2012 on Admirals Road. She brought a petition with 159 signatures, objecting to the mast. She stated that a sign had since appeared on the mast giving an address to write to with any objections, which she had done.

Councillor Bowden informed the resident that when the initial application had been made, the town Council, as a statutory consultee, had strongly opposed the application. When the application went to committee it was refused by the Borough Council. However, the applicants then won on appeal.

Councillor Bowden added that Councillor Fitzsimmons had even offered to work with the applicants to find a more suitable site, but had not been taken up on his offer.

The resident stated that on the appeal documents the proposed site of the mast had been unclear.

Councillor Bowden assured the resident that when representatives of HM Planning Inspectorate had visited the area, they had gone to the correct site and had made the decision that the impact on local residents, in their opinion, is considered to be acceptable.

With regard to the notice that has now appeared on the mast, Councillor Bowden stated that it is part of the mandatory legal process, whereby the installer is required to affix a notice to the equipment where the equipment is more than 3m high. It offers an additional complaints route.

The resident stated that she did not really understand the purpose of the notice and asked if someone could read the letter of objection she had written and advise her if there is anything she should have written differently.

Councillor Bowden stated that he would read the letter and advise the resident if there is anything further she might want to consider including in its content.

Action Councillor Bowden to consider the resident's letter and advise accordingly.

(e) **Trees on Land at the Rear of Council Offices**

A resident who lives on Renown Close enquired as to the ownership of some trees to the rear of his property. He said that after 5pm there is no sun reaching his property due to the trees.

The Business and Finance Officer (BAFO) stated that the Town Council had purchased this land last year and had already had some tree maintenance undertaken. He said that if the resident could come round to the office and highlight the trees that are of concern, we will be able to ascertain whether or not they are on the land that is now owned by the Town Council.

The resident asked who owned the trees at the front of his property.

The BAFO replied that it is likely that those would be owned by Frontis.

Action Resident to come to the office during opening hours to point out which trees are of concern to him.

(f) **Parking on Renown Close**

Another resident who lives on Renown Close came to ask for the Town Council's assistance with regard to parking issues on Renown Close. He stated that people who live in other areas of the small estate, who already have garages and additional parking spaces, are still parking their cars outside his and his neighbours' properties, leaving them with nowhere to park.

Councillor Bowden said that parking is an issue throughout many areas of Birchwood, but that the town Council could possibly ask Frontis if it would be possible to allocate spaces for their residents.

The resident stated that Frontis had already created two new parking spaces on Renown close, but these are being used by residents from other areas of the estate. He added that when he has tried to speak to Frontis regarding the issue they have not appeared to want to address the matter.

Councillor Fitzsimmons suggested a walkabout on this estate, with Frontis (which residents are informed by Frontis will be taking place). The resident could raise the issue then.

Councillor Bowden said that we could also contact Frontis regarding this matter.

Action Clerk's office to ask contact Frontis about the parking issue and to ask if a walkabout could be arranged on this estate, which will have to take place after the May elections.

(g) **Encounter Statue**

A resident asked why the Encounter statue at Junction 11 of the M62 remains unlit.

The reason for this is that the statue was built, installed and maintained by private companies (it did at one point have radio antennae installed – but the telecommunications company no longer has equipment installed in the statue). The lighting system used was apparently highly technical and impractically expensive to keep maintaining. The Town Council does not know, despite trying to find out over several years, who now has the responsibility for the upkeep of the statue or its lighting system.

(h) **Police Monthly Pledge Meeting and Update**

PCSO Williams gave Members an update on policing activity in the area since last month and reported some of the statistics for the Birchwood area.

He said that there had been an increase in the use of mini motos in the area, especially on the Brook Path.

Priorities

PCSO Williams asked whether Members had any particular issues that they would like to be considered for priorities for the coming month.

Councillor Nelson asked for the issue of double parking on Ordnance Avenue close to the junction with Redshank Lane to be monitored, as raised with us by residents.

Councillor Bowden added that the particular area is close to the entrance to Redshank Lane, where it seems people are leaving their vehicles, then using the nearby footpath that leads to the business park.

PCSO Williams said that he has not personally seen any double parking in that area, but that it can be dealt with if it is observed.

A copy of an email sent to the Police regarding this matter was also copied to the Borough Council, asking if they have any suggestions on how to deal with this matter, but we have not yet received a response.

Councillor Bowden asked whether there is any update regarding speeding traffic.

PCSO Williams stated that he has been speaking to Traffic Management at the Borough Council regarding the possibility of having a permanent vehicle activated speed sign installed on Locking Stumps Lane.

The Clerk stated that there are certain criteria that have to be met for a permanent flashing speed sign to be considered. The Borough Council have only been able to send us data up to the end of 2012, which showed just one collision on Locking Stumps Lane in 2009. Average speeds on this road were in the mid-30s mph. The Clerk has passed this data on to the Police. The Borough will probably be able to put in traffic management ribbons (which obtain traffic data for the Borough Council) on Locking Stumps Lane in the new financial year.

PCSO Williams said that he has noticed traffic management ribbons near Chatfield Drive, but was not aware of the reason for them.

PCSO Williams also informed Members that the speed sign has been in use on Gorse Covert Road and Admirals Road recently.

Councillor Fitzsimmons asked if the issues regarding the travellers could be made a priority whilst they are in the local area, and if there could be hourly patrols as a minimum around their caravans near to Kinsale Drive.

He added that as the businesses do not pay anything towards the part funding of the PCSOs, whether they could concentrate more on the residential areas, rather than the shopping centre.

PCSO Williams stated that he would speak to Inspector Tomlinson about the policing of the shopping centre. With regard to patrolling around the travellers caravans, he informed Members that several of the PCSOs already travel past the site regularly on their way to and from the areas that they patrol.

Councillor Fitzsimmons asked if a member of the Police could be in place particularly around the times that children are using the route to travel to and from school.

The most recently available information regarding local Policing priorities can be found on the Cheshire Police Website: <http://www.cheshire.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/warrington-east/birchwood/priorities.aspx>

The Chair thanked the residents and PCSO Williams for attending the meeting.

127/2012 **PROPOSED BIKE MARKING EVENT**

At the February meeting the Clerk asked PCSO Davies if she knew whether any SmartWater had yet been acquired for the bike marking event proposed by PCSO Williams at the January 2012 meeting and PCSO Davies had replied that the SmartWater was not yet available for this event, but she had received some property marking kits which could be used to mark up bicycles.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk reported that we have not yet received any further information regarding this proposed event.

128/2012 **PARKING ON AINSCOUGH ROAD**

At the February 2012 meeting PCSO Davies stated that she had spoken to Betfred and asked them to email all their staff to warn them about parking on the pavements. Some warning notices had been put on vehicles and in future PCSO Davies will put fixed penalty notices on the cars that continue to park inappropriately.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk stated that we had not received any more complaints recently.

129/2012 **PARKING ON ORDNANCE AVENUE**

This was discussed earlier during Recess (see Minute 126/2012 (h))

130/2012 **RECENT LOCAL TIDY UP EVENTS**

The Clerk reported that she had organised a tidy up event that took place on 20th March, along the footpath that runs behind Locking Stumps Primary School. Frontis had worked alongside the Town Council, along with their contractors Sodexo, to clear not only litter, but a lot of shrubbery, landscape arisings and builders' rubble that had been left in the area.

Frontis also recently arranged a clean up event, which was assisted by around 50 volunteers from a Preston company, around Whitethroat Walk and Miles and Rawlings Close.

The Clerk also updated Members regarding the path from the underpass to Chadwick House, which is on private land. We have asked the Borough Council to help us find out who the land belongs to, but are still awaiting a reply. In the meantime our team have put it on a two weekly litter picking cycle.

On their last clean up of this path, they collected 20 bags of waste, a settee and a television!

Action Clerk's office to continue to try to ascertain who owns the land.

131/2012 **POWELL AVENUE UNDERPASS**

This was discussed earlier during recess (see Minute 126/2012 (b) above).

132/2012 **RISLEY LANDFILL LIAISON MEETING**

The Clerk reported that the next Risley Landfill Liaison meeting is scheduled for 14th June 2012.

Minutes received from the previous meeting indicate that another time extension may be sought via the planning process in order to allow time to properly complete the landscaping and restoration of the site to a high standard.

133/2012 **UPDATE RE: TRAFFIC RELATED QUERIES**

(a) Puffin Crossing to the Forest Park from Gorse Covert

The Clerk reported that work is almost completed on the installation of the puffin crossing.

(b) Birchwood Park Avenue – reduction in speed limit

The Clerk, as requested, has contacted the residents who asked about the signage.

134/2012 **PLAY EQUIPMENT IN BIRCHWOOD**

The Clerk reported that she and the BAFO had met with two representatives of Warrington Borough Council regarding some proposals about enhanced/new play equipment in and around Birchwood Forest Park. They had agreed, in principle, to working towards the implementation of the proposals, dependent of many factors, including finding funding and consultation with the local community.

It was suggested that any additions/enhancements be implemented in four separate phases:

- 1 Fit additional equipment for junior play near the Rangers Cabin in the Forest Park
- 2 Woodland management; making the area around the skateboard park/BMX track less intimidating and more open
- 3 Improvements to the multi use pitch – possibly adding an open air table tennis table
- 4 Enhancements for teenagers – basket swings, etc that prove popular with this age group

It was also suggested that at some stage it would be good if the cricket strip could be refurbished and the skateboard park updated.

The Borough Council will now prepare some overlays with the suggestions that have been made and these will then be used to consult with the Birchwood Community.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with the Borough Council re: the above.

135/2012 **JOINT POLICE/TOWN COUNCIL SURGERY**

These surgeries take place, the third Saturday of each month (except August) in the Community Corner in the Encounter Café, from 10.30am to 12 noon.

Councillor Nelson had attended the surgery held on 17th March 2012. She stated that a resident had enquired whether 'give way' marking could be installed at the junction of Killingworth Lane with Ashdown Lane, due to ongoing 'near misses' at this junction.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Borough Council regarding this query.

Councillor Evans will be available to attend the next surgery on 21st April 2012.

136/2012 **TOWN COUNCIL FLAG**

The Clerk reported that this matter remains ongoing. She is still trying to arrange a meeting with the shopping centre to discuss this and other matters.

Action Clerk's office to continue to try to arrange a meeting with the shopping centre.

137/2012 **FRONTIS WALKABOUTS**

The Clerk reported that, as requested, she has asked Frontis to arrange a walkabout to take place around Trefoil Close, Strawberry Close and Violet Close. This will take place on 30th April 2012.

Action Clerk's office to send a reminder to Councillors.

The Clerk reported that she has sent yet another reminder to the Borough Council regarding the missing nameplate for Swallow Close.

138/2012 **BULKY WASTE COLLECTIONS**

The Clerk informed Members that she had met a representative of the Borough Council regarding our bulky waste collections, which are becoming increasingly expensive to undertake.

The Borough is looking at whether the Town Council can 'bolt on to' their collection service in some way. We are awaiting their suggestions regarding this matter.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with the Borough Council regarding the above.

139/2012 **PLANTERS**

The Clerk reported that we are still awaiting the receipt of our licences from Warrington Borough Council before the new planters can be installed.

140/2012 **WASTE BINS**

The Clerk reported that, as requested, she has written to McDonald's to ask whether they might be able to fund the purchase of some additional waste bins for the area.

She has the name and telephone number of a contact, but the lady has, so far, been on a different shift when the Clerk has telephoned.

Action Clerk's office to continue to try to make contact with the representative of McDonald's.

141/2012 **LIGHTING ISSUES ON THE ‘SPINAL PATH’**

The Clerk reported that the Borough Council has said that they have done all the work they can to prepare for the lights to become operational again. Norweb now need to complete the process.

Action Clerk’s office to continue to keep the residents updated, who have contacted us regarding this matter.

142/2012 **ALLOTMENTS**

At the January meeting Councillor Bowden informed Members that a Task Group had been set up at the previous Borough Council Executive Board meeting and Councillor Fitzsimmons had stated that it would be worth reminding the Task Group about the Borough Council’s portion of the old Oliver Plunkett School site, which is already fenced off and there are utility services still running to the site.

At the February meeting the Clerk stated that we had heard nothing further from the Borough Council regarding this matter; but she presumed that the Birchwood Borough Councillors would be bringing up the matter with the Task Group, as agreed at the January meeting.

At tonight’s meeting, the Clerk stated that we still have nothing further to report on this matter.

143/2012 **UPDATE ON PLANNING MATTERS**

- (a) **Application No. 2011/18954 Land adjacent to Carrington Close, Birchwood. Application to establish land as Village Green.**

Councillors Fitzsimmons declared an interest

The Clerk reported that we have not received any update regarding this application which is still going through the relevant application process. She has checked the Borough Council’s website and there has been no further update on the system.

- (b) **Application No. 2011/19009 Prospect Farm, Prospect Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook. Proposed change of use to provide target shooting club with associated parking.**

- (c) **Application No. 2011/19014 Prospect Farm, Prospect Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook. Retrospective application for upgrade of existing track surface.**

Councillor Bowden reported he spoke against applications relating to Prospect Farm at the Development Management Committee that took place on 8th March 2012.

A decision has been deferred by the Borough Council’s planning committee on applications relating to Prospect Farm until a full application for the use of the site has been received, so that it can be properly considered in its entirety, rather than one piecemeal bit at a time.

144/2012 **QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIAMOND JUBILEE**

At the December 2011 meeting, the Clerk reported that a consultation item has been published in the winter issue of Birchwood Community News; asking residents whether they would like the Town Council to mark this occasion somehow.

We have still not received any feedback from residents; however, we are looking at running a ‘red, white and blue’ theme through some of the planting in Birchwood over the summer months in recognition of the Jubilee.

145/2012 **WILDFLOWER MEADOWS**

The Clerk reported that we are awaiting a response from the Borough Council regarding an email sent to them following the mowing down of some orchids by the Borough’s grass cutters.

146/2012 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

Councillors Nelson, M. Hearldon and T. Hearldon declared an interest.

The Clerk informed Members that another Carnival committee meeting will be taking place tomorrow afternoon at Parkers Farm.

147/2012 **WINTER RESILIENCE SCHEME**

The Clerk reported that the Borough Council has given permission to put identifying Birchwood Town Council logo stickers on our grit bins and they will be put on over the next few days.

148/2012 **REMOVAL OF RECYCLING BAYS AT BIRCHWOOD SHOPPING CENTRE**

Some Members commented that they were surprised that the 'development of the site' that we were told would be replacing the recycling bays appears to be a hand car wash, which doesn't look particularly attractive.

149/2012 **CHESHIRE FIRE**

The Clerk reported that we have received a 'briefing note' from North West Fire Control, based on the presentation given to the forum of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils in February 2012.

The note states that the '... move away from a single control room in Winsford to a new centre in Warrington will not have any impact upon 999 response times, which will continue to be set and managed locally by individual Fire Authorities.'

150/2012 **ESTATE AGENT SIGNS**

At the February meeting it was reported that email correspondence with Development Control had been sent and received regarding 'For Sale' and 'To Let' signs being displayed inappropriately in several areas of Birchwood.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk reported that the signs are being investigated and for those that do not have permission, the agent will be contacted by Warrington Borough Council and told to remove them.

151/2012 **LITTER AROUND LEACROFT ROAD**

The Clerk reported that following a number of complaints about the amount of litter around Leacroft Road, we have asked the Borough Council to assist us in trying to establish who the landowner(s) of the affected areas is/are.

In the meantime, our team will do an occasional litter pick, but we are reluctant to keep doing this as it is within a business area and none of the businesses pay any precept to the Town Council. Their business rates go to central Government.

152/2012 **MOBILE FOOD VANS**

At the February meeting the Clerk stated that we had received notification of two street trader licence applications, one for a mobile food van on Clayton Road and one on Risley Road.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk reported that, as requested, she had sent a letter to the Borough Council stating that Members did not have any concerns or comments to make regarding these two applications.

153/2012 **LAND OWNERSHIP/GRITTING OUTSIDE GORSE COVERT SPAR SHOP**

At the February meeting the Clerk reported that we had received a copy of a letter sent by a resident to the Borough Council asking for clarification regarding responsibility for the pavements outside the shop at Gorse Covert.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk reported that we had received a copy of the letter sent by the Borough Council to the resident.

The letter states that the area identified by the resident is not part of the adopted highway and is privately owned by the Spar shop – as a result this area is not maintained by the authority and not subject to any gritting.

The letter confirms that a grit bin has been provided by the Town Council for the use of residents, and is unlocked for the benefit of the community during the winter period.

The Clerk stated that we remain confused by the contents of this letter. The Deputy Clerk received a telephone today call from a representative of the Borough Council's Highways Department explaining that they do not own the land around the Spar, but they do own part of the footpath.

However, when the Deputy Clerk asked about the ownership of the land the Spar stands on, the gentleman said that it is owned by another section of Warrington Borough Council – not by the Spar. He thinks that the Borough's Property and Finance Services department owns the perimeter of the shop, the forecourt and the parking bays.

The Deputy Clerk reported that she has sent an email asking if someone could provide the Town Council with a map/diagram detailing the Spar shop in Gorse Covert and the surrounding area, with the ownership of each different section of the relevant Borough Council department marked on to it.

We are still awaiting a reply.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Borough Council again regarding this matter.

154/2012 **BIRCHWOOD PARK AVENUE LANDSCAPING**

At the February meeting, the Clerk reported that an email had been received from a resident concerned about trees being cut down along a stretch of Birchwood Park Avenue and that we had contacted the Borough Council regarding this matter.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk reported that we have been informed that the trees had been removed as part of a landscaping programme being undertaken by MEPC, which has signed a long term lease with the Borough Council relating to this stretch of land.

155/2012 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - PROPOSED AREA MEETINGS**

At the February meeting, the Clerk reported that we had been asked by ChALC to take part in a consultation requesting views on the proposal for Area Working – there is currently no Area Meeting in Warrington.

Members discussed the proposal, but as elections are to be held shortly in May, they agreed that any decision should be made by potential new Council Members after the elections. As this is later than the deadline for comments to the consultation Councillor Fitzsimmons suggested that we let ChALC know that the Council will be able to comment after the May elections.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk confirmed that she had contacted ChALC and asked if they would accept comments after the May elections and Jackie Weaver has replied, stating that it will be acceptable for us to defer our comments until after the elections.

Action Item to be considered at the May meeting.

156/2012 **UPDATE BY WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ON PLANNING MATTERS**

At the February meeting, the Clerk was asked to contact Mr. John Groves to invite him to a Town Council meeting following the May elections in order to provide General Updates for Planning Policy, Development Control & Planning Enforcement.

At tonight's meeting the Clerk reported that she had written to Mr. Groves to ask if he would be able to attend a future meeting, but we are still awaiting a reply.

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

157/2012 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- (a) Received – Invitation to the Chair to attend the Anniversary of Anzac Day Service – Sunday, 22nd April 2012.

Councillor Bowden stated that he would be delighted to attend.

Action Clerk's office to reply to the invitation.

- (b) Received – Details of a Mersey Ports Master Plan presentation (19th March).
- (c) Received – Neighbourhoods Monthly Bulletin – March 2012.
- (d) Received – Details of the Red Routes Launch; 29th March – 'aimed at making road users take more responsibility for their own safety by informing them about the risk of a route through signage'. None of the new 'Red Routes' will be in Birchwood.
- (e) Received – current events list for Warrington East 2012.
- (f) Received – Poster regarding the Mobile Youth Base that will be in Oakwood on Wednesdays, 6.45pm to 9pm from March 7th to May 9th 2012. *Posters were displayed on our notice boards*
- (g) Received – Details of the new website for the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board: www.warringtonlscb.org
- (h) Received – Details of the Impact Warrington Project, administered by Warrington Voluntary Action – aimed at matching up companies wishing to fulfil their corporate social responsibilities with community groups that need help or advice.
- (i) Received – Details of a Sensory Awareness Day taking place on 17th April from 10am to 4pm at Warrington Disability Partnership's centre on Beaufort Street in Warrington.
- (j) Received – Link to 'The Wire' that has been re-launched as an online magazine. It can be viewed at <http://thewire.warrington.gov.uk/>
- (k) Received – Details of Cancer Research UK roadshows – March/April 2012.
- (l) Received – Details of a company that is looking for a desk based volunteering opportunity on 4th May 2012.

The Clerk stated that unfortunately as we are such a small office, there would not be any suitable work for a volunteer to undertake.

- (m) Received – Consultation on the first draft of 2012-15 Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. The deadline for comments is 5th April 2012.
- (n) Received – Golden Gates Housing Trust – Spring 2012 News and Views Magazine and their e-bulletin for March 2012.
- (o) Received – Positive Future Newsletter – March 2012.

- (p) Received – Details of a vacancy for a Time Banking Development Officer with Warrington Voluntary Action.
- (q) Received – Details of some family learning classes (displayed on our main board).

158/2012 **BIRCHWOOD FORUM**

- (a) Received – Request to respond to an online survey regarding a proposed Business Improvement District. The email states that a response is ‘crucial’ and gives an email address to reply with any ideas or concerns.

Councillor Bowden stated that as this is specifically related to the business community, he believed that it would be inappropriate for the Town Council to make any comment.

The other Members present agreed with Councillor Bowden.

- (b) Received – Notification that the March meeting date will be moved to later in the month – this has now been confirmed as 27th March, at Atkins in Chadwick House and the agenda has been received. The April meeting has been postponed.
- (c) Received – RED HEALTH ALERT regarding bracelets made from the Jequirity bean. The bracelets are made of red and black beans and have been sold at the Eden Project in Cornwall and 36 other retailers across the UK. People who have bought the bracelets are urged to bag them, then wash their hands and avoid touching their eyes. The beans are highly toxic. If possible return the (bagged) bracelet to the retailer it was purchased from. For further consumer advice you can telephone Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06
- (d) Received – Details of the Warrington Business Awards Launch 2012.

159/2012 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – E-bulletins ‘Parklife’ – March 2012.
- (b) Received – Invitation to Great Sankey Parish Council’s Civic Service.

Unfortunately the Chair will not be available to attend this service.

Action Clerk’s office to reply to the invitation.

160/2012 **RECENT iCAN ALERTS**

Full details regarding the following iCAN alerts and details of free membership to the service can be found at <http://www.tswarrington.co.uk/ican>

- (a) Several residents have been telephoned by a trader claiming to be able to set up a ‘family prosperity trust’; in order to avoid your house being sold to cover your care needs in later life. Sales staff attempt to convince residents to sign up by taking advantage of a situation that can be of great concern to pensioners. Arrangements are then made for a trust document to be drawn up to ‘protect’ the resident; costing between £1000 and £3500. The document may not be as watertight as marketed, potentially leaving the householder’s property still at risk to the problem the trust is supposed to guard against.

If you have recently received an unsolicited call from a trader regarding this matter, please contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06

- (b) A number of residents have been targeted by imposters claiming to be from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The caller claims to be able to offer debt consolidation. CAB has confirmed that no one connected with CAB, would ever phone or text someone out of the blue and ask for bank details.

If you are cold called or receive a text offering a loan, help with debt problems or claiming to be from your bank – it is almost certainly a scam. DO NOT give or confirm personal information. Report the call immediately to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or online at www.actionfraud.org.uk/report_fraud

If you are facing financial difficulty there are many free credit advice services available for help and advice:

CAB: www.citizensadvice.org.uk Warrington 01925 246994 Birchwood 01925 824952

The Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS): <http://www.cccs.co.uk/>
FREEPHONE 0800 138 1111 open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday.

Debt Advice Network: www.debtadvicenetwork.org Tel. 0300 011 2340

National Debtline: FREEPHONE 0808 808 4000

Pay Plan: www.payplan.com FREEPHONE 0800 716 239 8am -9pm

For advice on loan scams or any other consumer issues call Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 or visit www.direct.gov.uk/consumer

Telephone Preference Service: You can register your wish not to receive unsolicited sales and marketing telephone calls at www.tpsonline.org.

- (c) An individual claiming to be a pharmacy representative has been attempting to order and collect prescriptions from GP practices without patient consent. Some prescriptions have been dispensed in pharmacies other than the patient's nominated pharmacy; some have not been delivered to the patient.

If you are registered to a repeat prescription collection service and have not received your medication, please contact Marilyn Knass or Gail Curphey on 01606 544421

161/2012 **SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS**

- (a) Received – Details of a training event re: General Power of Competence taking place at the Larger Council's Conference in April 2012.

The Clerk stated that this had already be discussed at a previous Council meeting when it was agreed that Members did not wish to proceed with the General Power of Competence for now.

- (b) Received – Details of the Cheshire Branch Conference taking place in April 2012.

162/2012 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

Received – Birchwood News Bulletin – February 2012.

163/2012 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

- (a) Sent/Received – Correspondence requesting clarification on the date the Annual Parish Meeting will have to take place following the May elections.

Members discussed the possible dates and it was suggested that the Annual Parish Meeting, preceded by the Annual Town Meeting, should both take place on Tuesday 15th May 2012

Action Date of meetings to be put on the website. Agendas will be put on the boards when appropriate.

- (b) Received – Details of an ‘Effective Presentation Skills Workshop’.
- (c) Received – Newsletter April 2012.

164/2012 **PRESS ARTICLES**

Copies of various articles from local publications of relevance/interest to Birchwood were copied to Members.

165/2012 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

LGC – 02/02/12, 09/02/12, 16/02/12, 23/02/12
 The Clerk – March 2012
 LCR – Spring 2012

166/2012 **MEMBERS’ REFERRALS MADE VIA THE CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING FOR CONSIDERATION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING**

There were no Members’ referrals made prior to the time of writing this report.

167/2012 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) **Warrington Borough Council**

- (i) Received – Notification that the Planning Applications Sub-Committee meeting would be taking place on 7th March 2012. There were no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the agenda for discussion.
- (ii) Received – Notification that the Development Management Committee meeting would be taking place on 8th March 2012. Two planning applications relevant to Birchwood were on the agenda for discussion at this meeting:
 - (1) Application No. 2011/19010 Prospect Farm, Prospect Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook. Proposed 2m high boundary fence (lawful development certificate)
 - (2) Application No. 2011/19014 Prospect Farm, Prospect Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook. Retrospective application for upgrade to existing track surface.

Councillor Bowden reported he spoke against both these application (1) and (2) above at the Development Management Committee that took place on 8th March 2012.

A decision has been deferred by the Borough Council’s planning committee on applications relating to Prospect Farm until a full application for the use of the site has been received, so that it can be properly considered in its entirety, rather than one piecemeal bit at a time.

(b) **New Building Work at Birchwood Park**

Received – A telephone call to the office from a local resident (see note in papers) and copies of correspondence between the resident and MEPC re: a request for additional planting to screen Fernbank Close from the new build that work started on recently.

Action Members discussed this matter and asked that the Clerk’s office check the conditions of the original application to see if planting is covered in them.

Action Clerk’s office to send a letter, supporting the resident’s request for additional planting.

168/2012 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

- (a) Application No. 2012/19543 38 Sandicroft Close Proposed work to trees. **Approved with conditions**
- (b) Application No. 2012/19303 Garrett House, Garrett Field. Proposed refurbishment of existing light industrial unit with new over cladding. **Approved with conditions.**

169/2012 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

All plans can be viewed via the Borough Council's website:

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport_planning_and_environment/Planning/Search_planning_applications/

- (a) Application No. 2012/19496 Chadwick House, Warrington Road, WA3 6AE. Application for consent to display one non-illuminated sign.
- (b) Application No. 2012/19459 Site 1, Dalton Avenue, Birchwood Park. Application to extend time limit for implementation of permission 2008/12744 (outline application for office building).
- (c) Application No. 2012/19636 Proposed single storey building with three classrooms and ancillary accommodation.
- (d) Application No. 2012/19696 Application to extend time limit for implementation of permission 2006/07641 (offices, industrial and warehousing development).

There were no objections raised by Members regarding the above applications.

- (e) Application No. 2012/19531 6 Wigmore Close, Birchwood, WA3 6UN Proposed change of use from residential dwelling (use class C3 to house of multiple occupation (use class C4).

Members discussed this application and were concerned that Wigmore Close would be an inappropriate area for such a development. The plans include six separate bedrooms in the property, each with its own lock. This potentially allows for at least six car users to be lodging there.

Councillors agreed that there are already parking issues on the close and that a development like this could create significant additional difficulties for local residents. They were also concerned about the potential for noise issues with so many people living one property. It is unknown at this stage what demographic this property will be marketed to.

Members asked for the plans to be looked at further and for a letter of objection to be sent to the Borough Council outlining our concerns.

The meeting concluded at 9.05pm