

February 2021 Birchwood Town Council Meeting:

(1 to 4) Apologies, Declarations of Interest, Public Participation (including the Police Report) and the approval of the January 2021 Council Meeting minutes.

Clerks Report to the Council / Part I Finance

- (5) Progress Report - Copies of the main correspondence sent out/received since the Council Meeting in January 2021
(6) New Items for the consideration of the Council not otherwise raised in the Progress Report (7) Members' Referrals
(8) Planning Matters (9) Strategy & Action Plan Update (10) Accounts for Payment (11 to 13) Part I Finance; including approval of Minutes, main correspondence sent / received (progress) and new items received since the January 2021 meeting (14) Part II Finance; including approval of January 2021 Minutes

6 New Items

6.1 **Warrington Borough Council (WBC)** (*majority not copied in papers as A/circ. and/or available in the office*)

- 6.1.1 Sent/received – various emails / online reports following contact from residents re: flytipping (including approximately 30 bags near the Air Cadet cabin on the Forest Park), pot holes, flooding, fallen trees, etc.
6.1.2 Received/sent – emails re: several unauthorised traveller encampments.
6.1.3 The temporary ramp that had gone missing on Powell Avenue has now been replaced.
6.1.4 Received – Link to a consultation being undertaken by WBC re: proposed new measures to be included within a revised and updated Air Quality Action Plan (circulated by email to Members).

6.2 **Your Housing Group (YHG)**

Sent/received – various emails / online reports re: flytipping and coppicing works.

6.3 **Miscellaneous Correspondence** (*majority not copied in papers – available in the office*)

- 6.3.1 Received – Various update/information emails from Warrington Voluntary Action.
6.3.2 Sent/received – emails re: overflowing water from the 'pond/ditch' by the small wall near the fire station entrance. The Woodland Trust arranged for some of the water to be pumped out to prevent overflow.
6.3.3 Received – M62 Junctions 10 to 12 Motorway Upgrade project newsletter – January 2021.
6.3.4 Sent/received – emails with Trolleywise re: abandoned trolleys. From 21st March 2021, Trolleywise will no longer be picking up Asda trolleys, nationwide, as their contract has not been renewed. If they are made aware of whether a contract has been awarded to a different company, they will let us know.
6.3.5 To note that Susan Spibey has informed us that she is leaving Birchwood Forum.

6.4 **Cheshire Police** (*Alerts already circulated - not copied in papers – available in the office*)

- 6.4.1 Received - Various Neighbourhood Alerts; and Stakeholder Special Bulletin February 2021 - 'Police Budget'.
6.4.2 Sent – email re: vandalism re: several bus stops being vandalised in Locking Stumps.
6.4.3 Received – from PC Frith – notice that he will no longer be the local Beat Officer in Birchwood, as he is taking on a different role, in Offender Management, with the Police.
6.4.4 Sent / received – emails re: travellers - relating to travel enforcement due to Covid-19 restrictions.

6.5 **Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC), National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)** (*already circulated – not copied in papers – copies available in the office*)

- 6.5.1 Received – NALC Chief Executive's Bulletins, and various other bulletins and updates.
6.5.2 Received – ChALC weekly e-bulletins with various attachments, details of training sessions, etc.
6.5.3 Received – from SLCC – news updates, training information, etc.
6.5.4 NALC's Management Board met to consider the Local Government Association (LGA) model code of conduct. Subject to feedback from county officers, it was agreed to recommend to National Assembly on 9 March that it be adopted by local councils and replace the NALC code. They stressed that this needed to be part of a wider project on civility aimed at improving standards and behaviours and agreed on the need to dedicate resources and work closely with the Society of Local Council Clerks.

6.5.5 The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has launched a consultation seeking views on proposals to reform of Strand 2 (land owned by a local authority or certain other public bodies) of the Right to Contest under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 operated by MHCLG. The link to the documentation was included in the email circulated to Members.

6.6 Publications Received

Various LGC magazines and e-mail briefings.

7 Members' Referrals made via the Clerk prior to the meeting for consideration at this Council Meeting

Councillor Atkin – Grass cutting – see 'The Good Verge Guide – a different approach to managing road verges'. This has been circulated to Members by email.

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

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

The DMC that took place on 10th February 2021 had no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the main agenda for consideration.

(b) Received – details of a proposed Based Station Upgrade at: CTIL_131695_TF_044521_VF_66138_6, Gorse Covert, Moss Gate, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6QX (E366270 N392418). The tower will be 5m taller and there will be additional equipment cabinets.

(c) Received – notice that the Borough Council is consulting on a draft Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and a draft House Extensions SPD. Details can be found at <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/TownCentreSPD>

8.2 **Enforcement Cases** (*Already circulated if there is a relevant Birchwood item on the list*)

Lists of enforcement cases recently opened/closed have been received.

8.3 **Planning Decisions**

(a) Application No. 2020/38176 79 Sandicroft Close, Birchwood, WA3 7LY. Proposed single storey front and side extensions. **Approved with conditions.**

(b) Application No. 2020/37925 Unit 5 Prestwood Court, Birchwood, WA3 6SB. Proposed change of use from light industrial to sports rehabilitation and sports therapy (use Class E). **Approved with conditions.**

(c) Application No. 2020/37928 1 Cross Lane South, Birchwood, WA3 7AQ. Works to trees (removal of lower branches of 2 x Sycamore, and a Lime due to size and weight) covered (TPO 261). **Approved with conditions.**

(d) Application No. 2020/2021 36 Inglewood Close, Birchwood, WA3 6UJ. Section 192 Lawful Development Certificate – proposed rear and side single-story extensions. **Approved.**

(e) Application No. 2021/38455 41 Daniel Close, Birchwood, WA3 6QL. Prior Approval – proposed single storey rear extension to extend beyond the rear wall by 4.04m, maximum height 3.15m, height at the eaves 2.25m. **Prior Approval not required.**

(f) Application No. 2020/38316 42A Woodhouse Close, Birchwood, WA3 6QP. Retrospective single storey rear extension. **Approved with conditions.**

(g) Application No. 2020/38031 Oakwood Gate Service Station, Birchwood, WA3 6RW, Proposed installation of 8 x vehicle charging points with canopy. Installation of associated electrical infrastructure within 2.4m high timber enclosure and new retaining wall. **Approved with conditions.**

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

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

Certain applications are not Planning Applications; therefore there is no statutory opportunity to allow 21 days for comments, e.g: Non material amendment applications, Lawful development certificates (S192) and 28 day prior approval/determination applications. These types of applications are received for information only.

(a) Application No. 2021/38618 71 Applecross Close, Birchwood, WA3 6XB. Lawful Development Certificate – proposed partial garage conversion.

- (b) Application No. 2021/38666 41 Ringwood Close, Birchwood, WA3 6TQ. Proposed single storey extension rear extension.
- (c) Application No. 2021/38553 16 Woolmer Close, Birchwood, WA3 6UU. Proposed second storey pitched roof extension.
- (d) Application No. 2021/38703 Unit B1 Birchwood Shopping Centre, WA3 7QP. Proposed main sign and window graphics (externally illuminated).
- (e) Application No. 2021/38704 Oakwood Gate Service Station, WA3 6RW. Proposed of discharge of Condition 4 (Acoustics) on previously approved application 2020/38031 (installation of 8 x vehicle charging points with canopy. Installation of associated electrical infrastructure within 2.4m high timber enclosure and new retaining wall).
- (f) Application No. 2021/38726 Oakwood Gate Service Station, WA3 6RW. Proposed discharge of Condition 3 (Constuction, Highways and Environmental Management Plan) on previously approved application 2020/38031 (Installation of 8no. vehicle charging points with canopy.)

9 **STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

To receive any further updates re: the Birchwood Town Council Strategy and Action Plan.

PART I FINANCE ITEMS – INCORPORATING THE BUDGET & STRATEGY MEETING

10 **Payment of Accounts**

Members are asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts.

11 **To receive the Minutes and recommendations of the Part I Finance, Audit and Personnel Meeting held on 26th January 2021.**

12 **Progress Finance, Audit & Personnel Items / Budget & Precept Items**

12.1 **Birchwood Youth and Community Centre (BYCC) Ownership**

- (a) To note that the BAFO has sent the solicitor an email, confirming that the Town Council wants work on a new lease to cease, but would like the solicitor to consider how the ownership of the land / building can be formally changed to BYCC, to own the land / property on behalf of the Birchwood community.
- (b) To receive any further update, if available, regarding BYCC ownership.

12.2 **Parkers Farm Estate**

- (a) To receive a verbal update regarding the works to Parkers Farm.
- (b) To note the receipt of the second (of three) interim payment invoices from Cube, for project management of the external works at Parkers Farm (£1,250 +VAT). This is on the payments for approval list.
- (c) To note that the second part payment invoice from Trinity (£14,887.97 + £2,977.59 VAT) and the third part payment (£14,552.51 + £2,910.50 VAT) have been paid.
- (d) To note that, as agreed at the January 2021 meeting (minute 287/20-21 (b)) after speaking to several valuation companies, the BAFO received a quote (£1,500 +VAT) from a local, specialist valuer, to undertake a rebuild valuation of the Parkers Farm complex, which our insurance company has requested. The BAFO has booked the provisional date of 24th February for this valuation to be undertaken. **Are Members happy to formally ratify this action?**
- (e) To note that a digital copy of the Title Register and Title Deeds for Parkers Farm has been obtained from the Land Registry (at a cost of £6.00) which a valuer will require.
- (f) To note that a quote for the cost of a replacement chimney pot has been received - £380.72 +VAT (inc shipping). The cost of installation, in addition, is £256.00 +VAT. The rear chimney pot, on the left of the office building, is damaged. The chimneys are not operational. The damage can be seen from the side and rear of the property, not from the front. **Do Members wish to have the pot replaced?**

12.3 BTC Vehicles

- (a) To note that our tipper van, NH57 CZV, failed its recent MOT. The Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of the Council were contacted for approval for the work to be undertaken to enable it to be repaired and pass its repeat MOT. The service and first MOT cost is £379.47 +VAT. The estimate for the repairs was £1,321.54 +VAT. We have asked for one invoice to be issued, once all the work is completed.

As the repairs were necessary to get the van, one of our main 'work horses', back on the road, approval was received, and the garage was given the 'go-ahead' for the work to be undertaken.

- (b) To consider potential options to replace ND09 VNL prior to its next MOT due in October.
- (c) To consider any thoughts Members may have re: a future vehicle replacement programme.

12.4 Precept Notification

To note that information re: the Town Council's portion of the Council Tax has been sent to the Warrington Guardian for publication; as noted in the December 2020 Budget and Precept Meeting minutes (261/20-21 (vii)).

12.5 Memorial Proposal

It has been confirmed that the memorial bench for Councillor Nelson had already been purchased and installed, prior to the consideration of the grant application at our January 2021 meeting.

12.6 2020/2021 Interim Internal Audit

To note that we have received the report from our internal auditor regarding our interim audit, which was done remotely, with the submission of documents via WeTransfer. The auditor has made two recommendations: to establish a formal contracts register, and to formally verify VAT numbers of any new major supplier.

12.7 General Items for Reporting / Noting

- 12.7.1 To note that a PAT testing quote was obtained from a third company, which was for £50 for the first 50 items and 60p per additional item. For 78 items, this would cost £66.80. This is the best quote we have received, for the same service. The PAT testing has been booked for 8th June 2021, with this company. We have received copies of their insurance cover, risk assessment and method statement documents.
- 12.7.2 To note that the Town Council's SAS Protect membership contract has been renewed, as resolved at the January meeting (£1,377 +VAT) for one year.
- 12.7.3 To note that the annual Fire and Health & Safety Risk Assessment reviews took place remotely, with Terrain, on 2nd February 2021. An on-site review will take place as soon as 'lockdown' conditions allow.
- An interim H&S Update Report has been received from Terrain, as well as an updated Health & Safety Policy and Handbook, which has been circulated to all members of staff.
- 12.7.4 To note that a response was sent regarding an email received re: Be a Good Egg for NHS campaign.
- 12.7.5 To note that following on from the Clerk sending an IT and Data Sharing Information document to our GDPR consultant for information, he has advised that the ICO has issued a statement re: GDPR post-Brexit (copied to Members in their papers).

13 New Finance, Audit & Personnel Items

13.1 Bank Account Reconciliation

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account periods 1st April 2020 – 31st January 2021.

The payroll figure was £12,878.97 for December 2020, and £12,887.24 for January 2021.

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

13.2 Keyholding Services

To note that the contract for our keyholding services has been renewed with Uniqwin. The annual charge is the same as last year (£375.95). Officers are happy with their services.

13.3 Pension Items

- (a) To note that the Pension Consultative Forum Meeting took place on 5th February 2021. BTC did not 'attend' this meeting, as the agenda was a review of the Fund's administration strategy, which was discussed in detail at a previous meeting, attended by the BAFO. The document is available for Members to view in the office.
- (b) To note receipt of information regarding the £95k restriction on exit payments. This does not affect the Town Council.

13.4 General Items for Reporting / Noting

- 13.4.1 To note that The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has notified the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) that the appropriate sum for the purpose of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for Parish and Town councils in England for 2021-22 is £8.41 per elector.
- 13.4.2 To receive a verbal update re: Birchwood Carnival.
- 13.4.3 Received – SAS Protect Newsletter – February 2021.
- 13.4.4 Received – Intruder alarm servicing worksheet – for the annual service undertaken on 1st February 2021. There were no issues to report. Invoice to follow.
- 13.4.5 To note that the Clerk has registered to attend an HMRC webinar on 26th February 2021 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme'.
- 13.4.6 To report that we have received the invoice from our insurance company (£5,277.25 plus £633.28 Insurance Premium Tax) for 2021/2022. We are currently in a long-term agreement with them. This is on the list of payments for approval – to be paid on 1st April 2021, for the new financial year.
- 13.4.7 To report that the next payment to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) is due on 10th March 2021, in the amount of £10,660.00.
- 13.4.8 To note that we have received a credit note from Matco in the amount of £55.61 (inc. VAT) for mat cleaning services that could not be undertaken due to lockdown. The charge to cover October to March is now £177.73. There may be additional credit to be applied to the next invoice if we cannot receive the service in March.
- 13.4.9 Received – as a follow-up from the recent Parish Liaison meeting - some details regarding election costs in a combined election. The Parish election charges for the 'all-out' May 2016 total was £5,464.05. The Town Council costs will depend on whether all seats are contested, the effect of inflation, and potential additional costs re: Covid-19 security e.g. extra cleaning.
- 13.4.10 Received – Employer Bulletin – February 2021.
- 13.4.11 To ask Members to consider the draft 'Appendix C – Annual Risk Assessment Review (Financial and Operational Processes). This will form part of the formal end of year documentation. **Do Members have any comments to make regarding this document?**
- 13.4.12 To note that we have received our latest 'Anti-virus Health Report', 'Computer Health Standards' and 'Performance Review' from Yellowbus (5th February 2021), relating to our two office pcs and the laptop.
- 13.4.13 To note that all staff have received a revised copy of the Town Council's 'Working During the Covid 19 Pandemic – Risk Assessment January 2021'. They will sign individual sheets to acknowledge they have read and understand the document.