

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT
PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 22ND JANUARY 2013

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

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Business and Finance Officer – Mr. G. Crowe

PCSO Gina Jones

Apologies were received from Councillors Allman and Spencer and
Mrs C Caddock, Deputy Clerk to the Council

Councillor Fitzsimmons proposed, Councillor Higgins seconded and it was RESOLVED THAT:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council which took place on Tuesday, 18th December 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.

001/2013 TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPT 2013/2014

The BAFO reported that Birchwood Town Council's portion of the Council Tax on a Band D property for the 2013/2014 financial year will be £92.45. This represents a 1% increase; i.e. 89 pence per annum on a Band D property.

A precept requirement of £325,440.00 has been submitted to the Borough Council by the Town Council for the 2013/2014 financial year and, as one of the larger Local Councils, our budget will be published in the documentation that the Borough Council sends out with its Council Tax letters to residents.

The gap between our precept requirement and our budget of £340,500.00 for 2013/2014 will come from the use of miscellaneous income (£3,000) and some reserves (£12,060).

002/2013 RECESS

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

PCSO Jones gave Members a brief update on policing activity in the area since last month.

She reported that there had been two bike thefts; one from the business park and one from the High School. There was CCTV footage available but unfortunately the image was not of sufficient clarity. She added that the Police had obtained some new bike marking kits and that they were arranging a local bike marking event.

PCSO Jones told Members that there had been one attempted burglary on Layton Close and a disturbance on Redshank Lane, 3 males were arrested in connection with the Redshank incident.

She also told Members that the Town Council had reported incidents of broken glass being found on Oakwood Local Park and as a result she has arranged a tidy up day for 31st January 2013 between 2 and 4 pm. By holding at this time she hoped to get local children to take part which would present the opportunity to educate them about littering.

PCSO Jones reported that the Police had been monitoring parking outside Risley Spar and no problems had been reported. She added that parking would continue to be a priority during January.

Councillor Bowden added that parking in that area around lunchtimes is particularly bad.

Members were reminded not to leave cars unattended whilst defrosting them. The PCSOs have been out and about reminding people that they should not leave their vehicles unattended.

A discussion then took place between PCSO Jones and Members about the legalities of parking and leaving a vehicle unattended with the engine running.

PCSO Jones asked if anyone had any matters of concern they wished to raise.

The Clerk raised the matter of grit bins and the fact that some of them had been targeted by vandals over the past couple of months. One had been tipped over and there were incidents of the lids being torn off and removed from the area.

Cllr Evans asked the PCSO if they could ask the local schools to raise the matter with the children during an assembly and remind them that the grit bins are there so that we can ease the walkways for people during the winter months.

Members thanked PCSO Jones for attending the meeting.

Priorities

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 Twitter address is @WarrEastNPU.

(b) Local Matters Raised by a Resident

A local resident attended the meeting to raise a number of matters with Councillors:

- (i) Powell Avenue Underpass. The resident said that she had still not had a response from the Borough Council regarding any improvement works to the underpass. She added that there was water seeping across the underpass in two areas.

The resident then said that she had read that some funding had been secured for the Birchwood area to improve cycleways and footpaths. She enquired what this might mean for the area.

The Clerk confirmed that she had, again, contacted the Borough Council and is awaiting a formal response from the Officer dealing with this matter.

Councillor Balding said that he had attended the consultation event and having raised the matter there, he believes that the underpass may be part of the planned improvements. His understanding is that the current footway is to be divided into two – a footpath and a cycleway.

- (ii) Picket Fence on Powell Avenue. The resident informed Members that there is a fence located on Powell Avenue which is leaning out over the highway and is in a dangerous state. She asked if the Town Council could secure it in some way.
The Clerk informed the resident that the matter had been reported to the Borough Council and that it is not possible for the Town Council to undertake any work on it without the landowner's permission.
- (iii) 305 Birchwood Park. The resident informed Councillors that all of the lights in this new office building were left on most, if not all, of the time which was unacceptable to the residents, particularly as the building was unoccupied. She added that the planning application said that the internal lights would be on sensors so if no-one was working in a particular area, the lights would go off.

Cllr Evans commented that if people were working in the offices then they would need lights to be on, and suggested that perhaps the occupiers may consider installing some blinds to alleviate the situation.

Action Clerk's office to liaise with the Borough Council concerning (i) and (ii) and with MEPC, who are the local landlord regarding (iii).

003/2013 SILVER LANE

Stopping up of Silver Lane

This matter is ongoing; there is currently no update available.

004/2013 ADOPTION OF NEW CODE OF CONDUCT/REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Clerk has been in contact with the Monitoring Officer to make arrangements for the Register of Interest forms to be delivered. She is currently awaiting a response.

Action Clerk's office to send the complete set of documents to the Monitoring Officer.

005/2013 POWELL AVENUE

Underpass Drainage Issues

The Clerk reported that this matter remains ongoing; the grit bin that was installed at this location has already had the lid torn off it twice.

Colin Jenkins has indicated that he will provide a further update in the New Year. He proposes to have a discussion with other Borough Council Officers regarding the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) Footpath/cycleway improvements in Birchwood to raise concerns about the underpass flooding and potential dangers of ice forming in this area, to see if there is an opportunity for the matter to be solved utilising some funding from the LSTF scheme.

This matter was discussed earlier in the meeting.

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

006/2013 JOINT POLICE/TOWN COUNCIL SURGERY

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

Councillors Terry and Muriel Hearldon confirmed that they would attend the Surgery being held on 16th February 2013 and Cllr Fitzsimmons will attend the one on 16th March.

Councillors discussed the success of the surgeries and felt that the Police and Town Council should perhaps look at something different as very few people attended these joint surgeries.

Cllr Balding said that the previous CAM meetings were, in his opinion, a more successful way of engaging with the community as they were usually attended by 20-30 people.

007/2013 UPDATE ON PLANNING MATTERS

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

Councillor Fitzsimmons declared an interest

At the November meeting it was reported that Defra has called for a public enquiry regarding this matter; which is likely to take place in January 2013, although no confirmation has been received relating to this.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk reported that we have received correspondence confirming that, with regard to the piece of land on Ainscough Road that was successfully established as a Village Green, that it has been properly registered with the Borough Council and that it does not have to be registered with Defra.

The correspondence confirmed that Defra undertakes biannual surveys of village greens and records the results. The Borough Council has therefore provided Defra with the names and email addresses of the people to whom they should send their survey requests.

The Borough is optimistic that Warrington's records will then be updated alongside all of those relating to other local authorities.

- (b) **Application No. 2012/19709 Prospect Farm, Prospect Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook, WA3 6EH. Proposed change of use to provide a clay pigeon shooting club, clubhouse and associated parking.**

This application will be considered at the Development Committee Meeting scheduled to take place in February 2013.

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

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

Regarding (c) and (d) above; we do not yet have any further information as to when these two applications will be considered by the Borough Council's Development Management Committee.

008/2013 RISLEY LIAISON MEETING/BIFFA WASTE

The Clerk advised Members that the next Risley Liaison meeting had been held previously this evening, 4pm, Rixton Old Hall.

009/2013 **CORRESPONDENCE WITH MCDONALD'S RE: LITTER BINS**

The Clerk confirmed that the local franchisee would like to work with us to supply some litter bins in Birchwood. They have favoured the plastic bins which the Borough Council use.

The Maintenance Team Supervisor is to meet with the Borough Council tomorrow to discuss and agree locations for the bins.

The Clerk added that the franchisee had been in contact with her regarding a press article that had appeared in the local newspaper. The Clerk informed Members that he had been disappointed with the article which had been gleaned from the Town Council's Minutes by the local newspaper. The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken with the local reporter and had put the franchisee in contact with her direct so that they could work together to put a further article in the paper to clarify the current situation.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with the franchisee and the Borough Council regarding this matter.

010/2013 **PARISH LIAISON MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that she has suggested to the Borough Council that once the mechanism for calculating the precept is known an Officer of the Borough Council should attend the Town Council meeting to inform Members and Officers.

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

011/2013 **GIVE WAY ROAD MARKING REQUEST**

At the December meeting, the Clerk reported that, as requested, she had contacted the Borough Council again, asking if they would reconsider their initial negative response to the request from a resident for 'Give Way' road markings to be painted on the road at the junction of Ashdown Lane/Killingworth Lane in Gorse Covert.

A tonight's meeting, the Clerk stated that we have still not received a reply, but the resident who first contacted us back in September 2013 about the matter has asked if there is any further update that we can report back.

012/2013 **INFORMAL SIGN ON COPPERFIELD CLOSE**

The Clerk stated that we are still awaiting a response to an email sent to the Borough Council asking if the Town Council is able to remove the sign or whether the Borough will have to remove it.

Councillor Balding asked that the Clerk's office obtain costs relating to insuring the signage and also the costs that would be incurred in removing them.

Action Clerk's office to obtain costs.

013/2013 **BIRCHWOOD STATION ACCESS FOR ALL PROJECT**

The Clerk confirmed that she had sent an email outlining Councillors comments following the stakeholder consultation event. The main comments from Councillors were as follows:

- There was a major concern that the walkway was to be open and not covered (for a number of reasons); and
- There was some uncertainty over the existing bridge and what the long term plans were for it, i.e. who will maintain it in the future etc.

A response is awaited from the Borough Council.

014/2013 **PARKING ISSUES ON WARRINGTON ROAD AND CROSS LANE SOUTH**

At the November meeting, the increasing problem of people from local businesses allegedly parking on residential roads in front of local residents' properties for the day (and on occasions blocking their driveways) was discussed in some detail. Some local businesses are also experiencing difficulties with people parking in their car parks for the day. This matter was also discussed during recess with PCSO Jones.

The Clerk confirmed that a meeting is due to take place tomorrow, 23rd January at 11 am with a view to discussing the matter with Officers of Warrington Borough Council, the Police, MEPC and Birchwood Town Council so that the issues can be discussed in more detail.

015/2013 **'TRANSPARENCY'**

At the November meeting, the Clerk reported that we had received information re: a consultation on 'Local Government Transparency: Code (for £200K Councils) to be a legal requirement'.

The Clerk reported that the issue surrounding 'transparency' will require all Councils with an income of over £200,000 to publish details of any item that has cost £500 or over. There will be a formal layout for presenting this information.

Members were reminded that at a previous meeting, it was agreed once this becomes mandatory for local Councils, and the prescribed layouts have been received, the Town Council will comply by publishing the necessary information on its website.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk reported that this matter remains ongoing; we have not yet received any further updates.

016/2013 **WEBSITE NOTICES**

The Clerk confirmed to Members that the notices are updated on a regular basis.

017/2013 **PROJECT ON LAND AT HMP RISLEY**

At the December 2013 meeting, a request was received from Diane White to attend a Council meeting to make a presentation relating to a project to turn a piece of land at HMP Risley into a green community space.

Members decided that they did not wish Diane to make the presentation as the area in question is outside the Town Council's boundary, but Members wanted to thank her for the offer. However, they would be interested in seeing the outcome, once the project has come to fruition.

Action Clerk's office to write to Diane White regarding the above.

018/2013 **DATA CONTROLLER REGISTRATION**

At the December 2013 meeting information was received relating to an item discussed by the Borough Council's recent Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, regarding Councillors' obligation to register as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office. There are fees involved in the registration, which would, at current rates, be £35 per Councillor.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk advised Members that she had spoken with the Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO) who advised her that if a Councillor is also a Borough Councillor they would be covered under their Borough Council registration. They also confirmed that a Town Councillor only has to be registered if he/she holds constituents' details electronically or transfers their information electronically.

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

019/2013 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- (a) Received – Correspondence relating to changes to alternate weekly collections for household waste. The Borough would like to make a presentation to the Town Council. Members declined as they considered that the proposals appear to be self explanatory.
- (b) Received – Update relating to the 2012 ‘Warrington Residents Survey’. The Clerk advised members that WBC had received 806 completed surveys back. Their target being 1100 by 8 February 2013.
- (c) Received – Correspondence with Lesley McAllister, Principal Travel Planner at Warrington Borough Council regarding gritting of the footpath heading towards Longbarn. She later added that the Borough Council may look to install one or two grit bins in this location.
- (d) Sent – Query relating to the defender bollards on Kinsale Drive (which restrict accessibility not only for travellers, but also for Council vehicles). We are awaiting a reply. Cllr Bowden added that he had been informed some time ago that the bollards were temporary.

Members added that no only do they look unsightly, they are impeding access for maintenance vehicles.

Action Clerk’s office to chase up the response from WBC.

- (e) Received – (Sent by WBC on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire) – the draft Police and Crime Plan; for consideration.
- (f) Received – Details of a ‘Welfare Reform Information Event’ (placed on website).
- (g) Received – Details of a health event (placed on website). There is one taking place at Birchwood Library, 10am – 12 noon on Saturday 26th January 2013.
- (f) Received – Details of a ‘Warm Homes Meeting’ for organisations working in the Health and Social Sector.
- (g) Sent – Request for someone to look at the Walled Garden ponds as a matter of urgency due to severe flooding in the area. Councillor Balding added that a land drain on the middle entrance to Gorse Covert Mounds was overflowing, possibly caused by a Borough Council drainage ditch on the other side of the road not draining properly.

Action Clerk’s office to liaise with WBC/ Woodland Trust regarding the pond(s).

- (h) Received – Notice that a Warrington Health & Wellbeing Survey will be being sent round to a sample of around 18,000 residents.
- (i) Received – Details of a consultation, recently been launched giving residents and other interested parties the chance to comment on the Warrington Borough Council’s draft parking strategy. This has been placed on our website.
- (j) Received – correspondence relating to Warrington Borough Council’s Standards Committee. Letter inviting Parish Councillors to apply for co-option on the Borough Council’s Standards Committee. Applications to be made in writing with a brief resume.
- (k) Received – email attaching a ‘one minute guide to domestic abuse – information for practitioners’.

- (l) Received – Notice of pre-hearing meeting for Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy Examination. Letter detailing the process for the pre-hearing meetings and the hearing itself.

020/2013 **BIRCHWOOD FORUM**

- (a) Received – Agenda re: meeting on 22nd January at The Peacock.
- (b) Received – Details of a free HR breakfast seminar, taking place at the De Vere Village Hotel on 31st January.

021/2013 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – from Warrington Voluntary Action – update 10/01/2013 and update on the new web portal; including details of the next Volunteer Co-ordinators Networking Event taking place on 23rd January, 9.15am – 11.15am at The Gateway in Warrington.
- (b) Received – Details of Cheshire & Warrington Low Carbon Communities Network Meeting.
- (c) Received – ‘Parklife’ – January 2013 newsletter.
- (d) Received – Notice from United Utilities about the replacement of a water meter at Parkers Farm on 17th January 2013. The Clerk informed Members that when the UU representative attended to conduct a survey the valve broke which resulted in a loss of water supply and subsequent replacement of the meter.
- (e) Received – Consultation regarding proposed changes to Gorse Covert Post Office. Responses will be accepted up to and including 8th February 2013. Details were placed on our website. The Clerk informed Members that some services would no longer be provided from the Gorse Covert Post Office.
- (f) Received – email advising of Third Sector Hub Vacancies.
- (g) Received – email from Mike Durrington, Clerk to Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council to advise that the date of the Civic Service has been changed to the 21st April 2013 and that formal invitations will follow in due course.

022/2013 **iCAN ALERTS**

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

- (a) Residents have reported receiving a message from an automated service, suggesting if you are over 65 and drawing a deferred company pension you are entitled to a payout and requests bank details; asking you to press button 5 to continue in order to access a cash payout of £1,000. If you receive this call hang up immediately.
- (b) Residents have reported a telephone scam in operation; from someone claiming they can solve a problem ‘they say’ you have with your computer. The caller may claim to be from Microsoft and will claim your computer contains a virus they can remove with remote access. DO NOT allow access to your computer. This is a scam - just hang up.
- (c) Cheshire Police would like to remind residents to remain vigilant when using cash machines. Millions of pounds are stolen at UK cash machines each year using skimming or card cloning devices or card traps. Where possible, use a cash machine that is in a branch.
- (d) Residents are asked to be aware that there has been a significant increase in the number of ‘theft from motor vehicles’; particularly vehicles that have been left insecure (which may invalidate any insurance claim). Report suspicious activity to the Police on 101.

- (e) Warning to residents regarding a repeated scam from a caller saying that they can assist residents in making a claim to reduce their Council Tax bills.
- (f) Information received regarding the closure of the Warm Front Scheme from 19th January. After this date support will be available under the Energy Company Obligation. For further details call the Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234.
- (g) Information relating to incidents of door step traders offering to carry out gutter cleaning and roof repairs.
- (h) Reports of a male cold calling claiming to have been sent to service / maintain equipment provided by Adult Social Services.

023/2013 **FRONTIS**

- (a) Received – Poster advertising the rooms at the Youth and Community Centre. The Clerk advised Members that she had spoken with Frontis about the prominence of their brand and reiterated that the Youth and Community Centre was, in fact, owned by the Lottery Fund.
- (b) Received – Details of a clean up near Oakwood Local Park, taking place 31st January from 2pm to 4pm.
- (c) Received – email informing the Town Council of a walkabout which is to take place in Locking Stumps on Monday, 11th February at 10 am.

Action Clerk's office to confirm where to meet up.

024/2013 **SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS**

- (a) Received – December 2012 update; including further information regarding changes to the Council Tax base.
- (b) Received – Ballot papers and candidate statements re: SLCC election of Chief Executive. Also received – email from Nick Randle encouraging people to vote, along with contact details for each candidate. Members declined to respond.
- (c) Received – Questionnaire regarding Clerks' hours of work and details of the 9th Larger Council's Conference.
- (d) Received – News Bulletin dated 17 January 2013.

025/2013 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Received – News Bulletin – January 2013.

026/2013 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

- (a) Received – Invitation to join 'Cheshire East Local Access Forum' –a statutory body of volunteers which advises organisations on access to the countryside'.
- (b) Received – Details of the Royal Garden Party invitation to nominate attendees.
- (c) Received – Advertisement for Assistant Clerk to Holmes Chapel.
- (d) Received – Details of a 'General Power of Competence' training session.

- (e) Received – Details of a Councillor Training Workshop being held on 4th February.
- (f) Received – Notes from the ChALC Executive Board Meeting with John Dwyer, Police Commissioner and Mark Sellwood, Chief Executive.

027/2013 **PRESS ARTICLES**

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

028/2013 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

LGC – 13/12/12, 10/01/03
The Clerk – January 2013
Your Link – Issue 1 – Autumn/Winter 2012
Clerks & Councils Direct – January 2013

029/2013 **MEMBERS' REFERRALS MADE VIA THE CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING FOR CONSIDERATION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING**

Councillor Balding declared an interest.

Cllr Balding advised Members that he had been contacted with regards to the network of paths within Risley Moss and had been informed that they are in a poor state of repair. In fact, they had been deemed unsafe.

He added that Gaynor Kerry, one of the Rangers had applied for WREN funding to repair the paths and had asked for a letter of support from the Town Council.

Cllr Evans added that Gaynor had also spoken with him about the letter of support, however, a little later she confirmed that she had enough support for the bid for funding and no longer needed one.

Cllr Balding said that the Green Safari Day and Carnival were being held very close together this year and it was uncertain how the events were going to be organised because of some staffing constraints at the Borough Council.

Cllr M. Hearldon told Members that a meeting of the Carnival Committee was due to take place in December, but this was cancelled on the day. She added that another meeting needed to be arranged.

030/2013 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) Warrington Borough Council

- (i) Received – Notification re: the Planning Application Sub-Committee meeting on Wednesday 2nd January 2013 and Wednesday 23rd January 2013.

There were no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the agenda for discussion.

- (ii) Received – Notification re: the Development Management Committee meeting on Thursday 3rd January 2013, Thursday 24th January and Wednesday, 30th January 2013.

There were no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the agenda for discussion.

- (iii) Received – Letter regarding clarification statements and proposed modifications to the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy Examination. The link to these documents is: <http://warrington-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/> These modifications will be subject to a six week consultation from Monday 7th January 2013 to 5pm on Monday 18th February 2013.
- (iv) Received – Correspondence relating to a planning enforcement query; an unauthorised sign on Glover road has now been removed.
- (v) Received – Correspondence relating to viewing planning applications online.

(b) **Biffa Waste Site**

Received – Correspondence from Jacqui Johnson, Liaison Group Member regarding three planning applications relating to the Biffa waste site (re: discharge of conditions).

031/2013 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

- (a) Application No. 2012/20893 Unit 205, Cavendish Place, Birchwood Park. Proposed change of use from B2/B8 to mixed B1/B2/B8 plus minor external works. **Approved with conditions**
- (b) Application No. 2012/20869 Land at Aston Avenue, Birchwood Park. Proposed formation of car parking and circulation space. **Approved with conditions**
- (c) Application No. 2012/20708 Hamnett Court, Ainscough Road, WA3 7PN. Proposed external works including a revised car parking layout, relocated bin storage. **Approved with conditions**
- (d) Application No. 2012/21023 2 Sandicroft Close, Birchwood. Proposed construction of 2m high fence to replace existing. **Refused**

032/2013 **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. 2012/20923 Forbes Close, Birchwood, WA3 6PP. Proposed change of use from soft landscaped verges into new parking bays.
- (b) Application No. 2012/21060 61 Applecross Close, Birchwood, WA3 6XB. Proposed single storey extension to rear of house.

033/2013(a) **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Cllr Fitzsimmons proposed that the Payment of Accounts be approved and Cllr T. Hearldon seconded the proposal.

The meeting concluded at 7.55 pm