

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2018

Present: Councillor Ellis in the Chair
Councillors Allman, Atkin, Bowden, Evans, Fitzsimmons and T. Hearldon
Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk – Mrs. C Caddock
Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe
John Nichol, Principal Transport Planner (Capital Delivery), WBC
PCSO Steve Bingham
1 resident

Apologies: Councillors Breslin, M. Hearldon, Nelson and Reeves

Councillor Evans proposed, Councillor Fitzsimmons seconded and it was resolved that: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23rd January 2018 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.

Councillors Allman and Evans – the Friends of Birchwood Forest Park

Councillors Allman and Evans – Oakwood Community Association

Councillors Ellis and Allman – the Youth & Community Centre Committee

Councillors Atkin, Bowden, Ellis and T. Hearldon – Birchwood Carnival Committee

415/17-18 **COUNCILLOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Ellis asked Members to consider passing a resolution relating to the recent absences of Councillor M. Hearldon at meetings.

Councillor Ellis reminded Members that within the Local Government Act 1972 c. 70, Part V, 85. – ‘Vacation of office by failure to attend meetings’, it states that, “ *If a member of a local authority which are operating executive arrangements, who is also a member of the executive of that local authority, fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the executive, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the local authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the local authority.*”

Councillor Ellis informed Members that Councillor M. Hearldon has been unable to attend meetings for a number of months due to health issues; therefore the Council needs to resolve to approve any potential ongoing absences before the time (6 consecutive months) runs out, in order to avoid automatic disqualification for Councillor M. Hearldon.

Councillor Fitzsimmons **proposed**, Councillor Evans **seconded** and it was unanimously **resolved** that Councillor M. Hearldon’s reason for absence, on the grounds of ill health, is accepted by the Council, until such a time that she is recovered fully and able to return.

Councillor T. Hearldon reported that Councillor M. Hearldon is now on the road to recovery and hopes to be well enough to undertake her Council duties again soon.

Members asked Councillor T. Hearldon to pass on their best wishes for a speedy recovery to Councillor M. Hearldon.

(a) **Police Monthly Update**

PC Gareth Frith had emailed a brief report to the Council earlier in the day, relating to occurrences reported to Cheshire Police during February 2018.

PCSO Bingham attended tonight's meeting and presented the report to Members as follows:

Burglary, theft from motor vehicle, theft of motor vehicle

There have been two instances of burglary this month, one was an attempt and the other domestic related and concerned with a dispute over property between former partners.

There has been one burglary other than in a dwelling.

There have been no instances of theft of motor vehicle, and one theft from motor vehicle where fuel was stolen from a vehicle's cut pipes, and the catalytic converter was removed.

Anti-social behaviour

There have been a number of low level anti-social behaviour incidents; however there are no patterns or repeat perpetrators identified yet.

There was not a noticeable spike during half term, and no specific instances of note.

Traffic management

Speed enforcement has taken place this month; PCSO Bingham reported that he has taken the camera out and recorded the following:

On 11th February 2018 - speed advisory sign placed on Locking Stumps Lane from 09.40 – 10.50. PCSO Bingham said that this is effective is making drivers aware of the speed limit. However, due to the construction of the sign and battery pack, which is in three parts, it cannot be secured and left in situ for several hours; he has to stay with it, which limits the length of time it can be used.

There are alternative signs which can be fixed to lighting columns and left in situ, but it would require additional funding to purchase them and permissions would have to be obtained to install them. Also, PCSO Bingham said that he thinks people can get used to the fixed signs, whereas the mobile sign, which has a PCSO standing with it, can be used in many more locations and might be more effective as people don't know when or where it will be and may be more likely to prompt people to think about the speed they are doing.

On 23rd February 2018 - Tru cam taken out on Ordnance Avenue from 11.30 – 12.30, 40 vehicles were recorded speeding.

PCSO Bingham stated that he is still waiting for codes to be issued for Locking Stumps Lane, once he has those, he will be able to undertake enforcement operations in that area.

Other incidents of note

The three males who were interviewed in relation to causing criminal damage to two motor vehicles over the Christmas period, after wing-mirrors were kicked off cars, are in the process of being issued with youth cautions.

Reparations have been made to the victims as a result of positive parental engagement, and Youth Offending Teams are working closely with one of the males.

On 27th February 2018 PC Frith and PCSO Jones conducted a scrap metal collector operation with representatives from Trading Standards and Environmental Services from Warrington Borough Council; there are more similar operations planned.

Councillor Ellis asked whether there was any update in relation to an incident of flytipping on Silver Lane some months ago, when the remnants of a cannabis farm were discovered, along with a name and address on one of the boxes.

PCSO Bingham said that this was looked into and is being treated as intelligence. PCSO Bingham does monitor Silver Lane from time to time, where there is a mix of landowners, including the Highways Agency, Warrington Borough Council, The Woodland Trust and a farmer. He added that Silver Lane would not be subjected to as much flytipping if the barrier/gate was kept locked.

Councillor Ellis said this is something the Town Council has been saying for years, but this is not done because, we are told, because one of the dwellings requires uninhibited access. He added that perhaps a CCTV camera that is triggered when a vehicle enters the lane could be considered.

PCSO Bingham said that this is something that would have to be undertaken by Environmental Crime at Warrington Borough Council, if they have the resources.

Councillor Ellis suggested that even a fake camera might act as some form of deterrent.

PCSO Bingham said that he would monitor Silver Lane when he can.

Members thanked PCSO Bingham for attending.

(b) **Questions from the Public**

A resident attended tonight's meeting to raise the issue of ice that forms across the footpath by the fire station in freezing weather when water seeps through a damaged wall and asked whether this could be gritted at the same time as the team grits around the fire station underpasses. The resident contacted the office earlier in the week regarding this matter.

The Clerk reported that the Deputy Clerk has contacted the Woodland Trust as the water seepage originates from their land. There is a large dip in a group of trees, which creates a natural pond in wet weather. Once it reaches a certain height, the water seeps through a low wall and runs across the footpath that runs close to the entrance to the Fire Station. When the weather is very cold, this ices up, creating a slip hazard. It is understood that the wall also belongs to the Woodland Trust.

It was also reported that the problem has been raised on several occasions with both the Woodland Trust and Borough Council over the years. The Woodland Trust has been requested to repair the wall urgently in such a way that it no longer allows water to seep through when the levels are high. We have also asked that if the wall does not form part of the Woodland Trust's responsibility – then could some additional drainage be provided around the 'pond' to reduce the level of the water in the dip when it rains.

The Clerk stated that our team has put grit down on several occasions, but when the weather warms enough to melt the ice, the water has been running freely enough to wash the grit away.

We have been informed that the Site Manager from the Woodland Trust will visit the site during the next week or so to see what can be done regarding this matter.

Action To keep the resident updated regarding this issue.

The resident had an additional query regarding the removal of trees at Oakwood Gate, College Place and Blackbrook Island.

The Chair said that this could be best answered by Mr. John Nichol who was attending tonight's meeting to give an update on Warrington East Phase 2.

Mr. Nichol was invited to give his presentation.

(c) **Presentation re: Warrington East Phase 2 Works**

John Nichol, Principal Transport Planner (Capital Delivery) Transport for Warrington, Warrington Borough Council, gave an update on Warrington East Phase 2.

Mr Nichol said that good progress is being made with the Warrington East phase 2 project. The project is designed to improve overall traffic flow along the A574 Birchwood Way, reducing congestion, improving road safety and general accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians.

Phase 2 follows the success of the Birchwood Pinchpoint Project (Phase 1), and is funded from the Cheshire and Warrington Growth Deal and the Borough Council's own Capital Investment Programme.

The areas involved in the scheme are Oakwood Gate, College Place and Blackbrook Avenue. There are also plans for the extension of the merge lane from Moss Gate onto Birchwood Way, heading towards the M62 Junction 11.

Further details can be found at:

https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/201251/other_projects/2328/warrington_east_-_phase_2

A number of site surveys took place to help inform the detailed design process, including topographical, drainage and ground investigation surveys as well as environmental surveys, including those for ecology and noise.

The survey work identified a 'spaghetti' of utilities, including a network of extremely old drainage, some of which might need to be replaced. The ecology report has flagged up the presence of great crested newts in an area which will be protected during the project.

During the survey process some trees and vegetation were cleared to allow the surveys to take place. It has been necessary to undertake additional removal of trees, shrubs, etc. where there are going to be road improvement works, in advance of the works commencing, hopefully towards the end of May 2018 in order to avoid the bird nesting season; otherwise the start of works would have been delayed until September 2018 at the earliest.

BT has also been undertaking some chamber work for their lines at Oakwood Gate.

On Blackbrook Avenue, where a new slip lane will be installed, a number of the trees that have been removed would have been taken out anyway. Several of them were diseased in the centre and others were much too close to the road. There will be no re-planting as the removal of those that have gone was necessary for the project to go ahead and for highways safety.

The Borough Council is hoping to work with Padgate High School which owns some land on one of the corners, to see if there may be an opportunity to do some new planting on the school side of the field; an area which is quite 'boggy' and is not presently utilised by the school for activities, etc.

A public consultation exercise took place in May and June 2017 on the draft proposals and received support from over 70% of those who completed the exercise. Since then the junction designs were amended to reflect public and stakeholder opinion.

There will be a report made to the Executive Board in April when the confirmation of Balfour Beatty as the main contractor will take place and costs will be approved.

Work is anticipated to start in late May, but it will be undertaken in phases as there will be a lot of traffic management involved. The impact of traffic management will be minimised as much as possible. It is hoped that there will be no night time working and that work will take place outside of peak hours wherever possible, from 9.30am to 3.30pm approximately.

Once the details have been firmed up, the Borough Council will inform all the local stakeholders about the plans; schools, businesses, local councils, emergency services, bus operators, etc. Also residential properties close to the works will be leaflet dropped. It is too expensive to let every household know individually, however there will be further exhibitions held around the area; including the shopping centre and organisations, such as local councils, will be asked to disseminate the information on their websites, etc. Traffic information boards will also be put up in advance of any works starting.

With regard to the planned work to extend the merge lane on Birchwood Way and extend the partial dualling, there is an opportunity to undertake this work at the same time that Highways England is doing some improvement work at Junction 11 of the M62. It is hoped that this part of the scheme will be approved in April with the potential for the work to commence in autumn this year.

Highways England has also asked to have some information displays within the area regarding the upcoming extension to the smart motorway between junctions 10 to 12 of the M62 (including junction 11). The Borough is hoping to coordinate with Highways England and inform the local community about the new partial dualling of Birchwood Way at the same time.

The resident enquired whether the litter on the main roads could be picked at the same time as traffic management is in place to manage the roadworks.

The Maintenance Team is no longer allowed to work alongside roads with a speed limit above 40mph, as the Borough Council withdrew permission on the grounds of health and safety.

The Clerk advised that we have tried to work with the Borough Council and other contractors in the past whilst traffic management is in place; it has been successful on a couple of occasions, but very difficult to get people to liaise with us effectively on others; wasting a lot of our team's time when they have been ready, but unable to get on site, even during what had been approved times.

It was noted that the main routes are usually litter picked before the grass is cut by the Borough Council. It is not yet known when this will be. The Borough Council also needs traffic management to be in place before they undertake the mowing on the high speed roads; which is costly.

Councillor Ellis said that an application has been made for Birchwood to become part of a Business Improvement District (BID). One of the things that local businesses want to see, which was established during the consultation phase of the application, was for the main routes in and around Birchwood to be kept tidier/become more attractive.

If the BID is established there may be funding available to enable the main roads to be kept cleaner and possible for them to be made more attractive with additional bulb planting, etc.

Councillor Ellis asked Mr. Nichol whether there were any plans for wildflowers or bulbs to be planted at the end of the roadwork scheme.

Mr. Nichol said that this would probably be funding dependent at the very end of the contract.

Councillor Ellis said that, if possible, he would like to see some different types of bulbs being planted, other than daffodils, such as bluebells or wild garlic, which will then spread naturally.

Councillor Atkin wondered whether any measures could be introduced as part of the scheme to improve lane discipline when approaching College place from Woolston Grange, where some drivers have a tendency to weave between lanes; such as improved signage.

Mr. Nichol said that once traffic signals have been installed he believes there will be fewer instances of people weaving between the lanes.

Members thank Mr. Nichol for attending the meeting.

417/17-18 **LOCKING STUMPS BY-ELECTION**

The Clerk reported that the Notice of Election and Statement of Persons Nominated had been received and displayed as necessary on our notice boards, website and Facebook page. The Locking Stumps by-election will take place on 15th March 2018.

418/17-18 **QUERY RE: RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOME DRIVES AND ACCESS PATHS IN AN AREA OF OAKWOOD**

The Clerk reported that this remains ongoing; it had been chased again for a response from the Borough Council.

419/17-18 **POT HOLES - JUNCTION OF LORDS LANE AND GLOVER ROAD**

The Clerk reported that the permanent fix with Tex banding has still not been done and it would appear that the temporary repair is no longer in place.

Action To chase the Borough Council again regarding this repair

420/17-18 **UNDERPASS LIGHTING**

The Clerk reported that the Borough Council has started installing the new lighting units in the underpasses in Birchwood, starting with the underpass at Roberts Fold. All Birchwood underpasses will be done before the Borough Council team moves on to a different area.

421/17-18 **FOOTPATH MAINTENANCE**

At the December meeting Members were informed that an email had been sent to the Borough Council re: maintenance on a footpath between Smithills Close and Kelvin Close. The Borough Council indicated that the footpath issues will be dealt with in the New Year.

At the January 2018 and tonight's meeting, the Clerk reported that we have chased the Borough Council again. We are still awaiting a reply.

422/17-18 **LIGHTING ISSUES IN PART OF THE FOREST PARK**

The Clerk stated that we have been informed by the Borough Council that this lighting was repaired on 18th December 2018.

423/17-18 **DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

The Clerk reported that the deadline for comments to be made regarding the Borough Council's draft Housing Strategy consultation has been extended to 23rd March 2018.

424/17-18 **LETTER TO THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC) FOR CHESHIRE**

At the January 2018 meeting it was agreed that the Town Council wished to send a formal written response directly to David Keane, expressing the opinion that Cheshire Constabulary, as a precepting body, should increase its own precept as it sees necessary, to raise the finance required to maintain necessary resource levels. This would negate the need to pass that financial burden on to local Parish and Town Councils, by asking them to fully fund additional PCSOs at a current cost of around £33,000 per year.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk confirmed that the letter had been sent as requested, and the reply from the PCC, David Keane, was copied to Members in their papers.

The reply re-stated the Police reasons for giving Parish Councils the 'opportunity' to fully fund additional PCSOs for their area, in addition to the one PCSO that the Police will fund for each community (i.e. Birchwood). The email also states: "*I understand that Birchwood Town Council has made the decision not to do this given the costs to the local council and whilst this is regrettable, I do understand the rationale for the decision Finally in relation to your initial comments regarding diminishing visibility in your local community I will raise this with the local Chief Inspector on your behalf so that this can be addressed.*"

425/17-18 **PLANNING UPDATE**

Application No. 2017/31859 Land on the east side of Kelvin Close, WA3 7PB. Proposed change of use from use Class B1(b) a research and development instrumentation laboratory, to a multi-purpose use Class B1(c) and use Class B2 for the manufacture and storage of aluminium frame windows.

The Clerk stated that following the receipt of letters of objection from local residents regarding this application, Members had discussed that application at the January meeting and, as requested, a letter had been sent to Warrington Borough Council asking that if there is the possibility of unacceptable levels of noise from such a manufacturing operation, to ask that this be mitigated as part of any conditions put on the application (if it is approved) and to ask that working hours would be limited to 'normal working hours'.

Following the sending of this letter, two additional documents were submitted to the Planning Department and circulated to the Town Council which related to noise and highways surveys. These were circulated to Members for consideration, but they did not wish to make any additional comments.

Further emails were sent to the Planning Department, confirming the comments the Town Council wished to be considered regarding potential noise pollution and stating there were no comments from the Town Council in relation to the Highways document.

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

426/17-18 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- (a) Sent – email re: potholes at the junction of Glover Road and Hawkshaw Close.
- (b) Sent/received – emails re: flytipping in an area of Oakwood – this is currently being investigated.
- (c) Received – email re: two schemes to be delivered: the first to install fencing/ railing to prevent cyclists from cycling down land adjacent to stairs on one side of the footbridge leading from Delenty Drive to Warrington Road. Secondly, to provide an additional covered cycle parking area at Birchwood Station.
- (d) Sent – email to Angus Lord and Dave Hazlehurst re: the Kew Gardens community wildflower scheme 'Grow Wild' – enquiring if this is something the Friends of Birchwood Forest Park might wish to look into (it involves making an application for free seeds).

The Clerk reported that she has been informed that 'The Friends Group' are aware of the initiative and is currently considering making an application.

- (e) Received – Neighbourhoods in Warrington Bulletin Jan/Feb 2018.
- (f) Sent – email re: a tree on Ashdown Lane following correspondence with a resident regarding responsibility for the tree and the perceived need for it to be maintained.

The Clerk reported that the Maintenance Team had noticed that three Silver Birch trees on Ashmore Close have been cut down, but the branches had been left in situ, one of them was protruding into the road.

The Borough Council have not cut these trees down, nor given permission for them to be cut back; they are looking into this matter.

- (g) Sent/received – correspondence re: dog fouling in Oakwood. The Borough advises that if residents can provide information to assist them to identify people who are not picking up their dogs' mess, even if they are unable to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice they will issue warning letters or letter drop certain streets, but they need specific information in order to direct their limited resources effectively.

Residents can report any issues of dog fouling on 01925 443322 or via the following web link <http://www.warrington.gov.uk/report>.

The Clerk stated that the Borough Council will provide us with stickers to put on lighting columns whilst the maintenance team is out around the area, starting with the areas where we know the problems are the worst and then cover other areas of Birchwood.

- (h) Sent/received- emails re: maintenance of a laurel hedge causing sight line issues in Locking Stumps. Warrington Borough Council has contacted a resident to ask them to prune it back.

The Borough Council will monitor the situation and, if no action is taken by the resident, they will serve a notice to cut the hedge and will recharge the resident if they have to cut it back.

- (i) Minutes from the Oakwood Community Association meeting on 05/05/18 and posters for their half term craft and picnic event.
- (j) The Clerk informed Members that she, the BAFO and the Senior Maintenance Operative (for part of the meeting) had met with Officers of Warrington Borough Council recently to discuss a number of issues; these had included:

Grass cutting – The Senior Maintenance Operative discussed the areas that are to be grass cut with the Borough Council Officers, clarifying areas where there was some confusion regarding WBC ownership. They also discussed the frequency of the mowing. It is hoped that with the additional ‘in between’ cut that the Town Council will do, the grass in the majority of Borough Council areas of Birchwood, will be mown every three weeks once the grass cutting season starts. This will be weather dependent and there are some areas where the Town Council does not have permission to grass cut.

The Clerk stated that we will be loaned the same two mowers as last year and that she has already spoken to the insurance company about putting them on the Town Council’s insurance for the season.

Shrubs on Borough Council land – The Clerk said that we have a general permission from Warrington Borough Council that our teams can cut back shrubbery on their land where it is necessary. The Borough Council does not currently have the resources to be as proactive as they would like to be regarding shrub/hedge maintenance.

The Clerk added that the Town Council is currently having to pick up work that various other organisations should ordinarily be doing. We have, for example, just been given permission to cut some shrubbery on Culbin Close and part of Gorse Covert Road, which belongs to The Land Trust. We have, however, been assured that the maintenance schedule for these areas is being reviewed and these areas will be included for more regular maintenance.

Members wondered whether the Town Council could start re-charging for the work they do when other organisations don’t do it themselves.

Councillor Bowden reminded Members that, as the Town Council does not own the land, shrubbery, etc., it does not have the statutory powers needed to charge for work.

Walled Garden – The Clerk said that the Borough Council Officers were asked about the current policy re: volunteers working to renovate, or tidy up, the Walled Garden.

The Borough Council is reluctant to allow other people/organisations to work in the Walled Garden without first dealing with some of the larger trees, which would require some significant investment. In principle there is no objection to people volunteering in the Walled Garden, but it would have to be under the strict supervision and/or guidance of the Borough Council.

Risley Moss – The Clerk reported that the Borough Council is looking at the possibility of providing additional signage and notice boards for Risley Moss, as part of the Carbon Landscape Scheme bid. With regard to the observation tower that was burned down, various options are still being considered for a replacement. Any new build will have to comply with all current accessibility legislation.

427/17-18 **BIRCHWOOD FORUM**

- (a) Received – Information from the Northern Powerhouse Partnership re: their report ‘Educating the North’.
- (b) Received – information re: the launch of Birchwood Tech Forum.

428/17-18 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – Various update/information emails from Warrington Voluntary Action.
- (b) Received - Various LGC briefing emails.
- (c) Sent – email to The Land Trust to try to ascertain if they own some shrubbery on a footpath near Culbin Close.
- (d) Received – invitations for the Chair to attend the Croft Parish Council Civic Sunday on 22nd April 2018 and the Walton Parish Council Civic Service on 25th March 2018.

The Clerk reported that the Croft Civic Service has been cancelled and the Chair is unable to attend the Walton Parish Civic Service.

- (e) Received – details of a Winter Tree Walk organised by the Friends of Gorse Covert Mounds (10th Feb).
- (f) Received – Copy of an email conversation between the Culcheth Clerk and representative of Northern Rail re: accessibility at Birchwood Station, in relation to the lift and times when the station is locked.

429/17-18 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG)**

- (a) Sent/received – Emails re: request for cutting schedule and to request permission to cut some YHG areas.

Councillor Ellis said that he had a constructive meeting with James Coates, Customer First Co-ordinator for YHG, and the Chair of the Tenants' Association, regarding the general cleanliness of YHG areas and the possibility of organising days when tenants could work with contractors together to tidy up certain areas.

The Clerk stated that no representative of YHG attended the last walkabout, and no further dates had been offered.

- (b) Sent/received – Emails re: resident's concern about a tree on Strawberry Close.
- (c) Sent/received – Emails re: unsafe tree on a path to the rear of Lyster Close. This has been cut back.

430/17-18 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

Received – Various alerts from the Cheshire Police Alert System.

431/17-18 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (CHALC), NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC) & SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC)**

- (a) Received – ChALC weekly e-bulletins and details of training courses.
- (b) Received - NALC Chief Executive Bulletins; including a link to NALC's GDPR toolkit, available on the NALC website.
- (c) Received – SLCC e-news bulletin, 9th February 2018.

432/17-18 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

LGC – 25/01/2018, 08/02/2018
Clerks & Councils Direct – March 2018

433/17-18 **PRESS RELEASE**

An article was copied to Members from the Warrington Guardian's website which includes news that Risley Moss will benefit from £20,000 of funding after the Environmental Agency secured £160k to restore parts of the Cheshire environment.

434/17-18 **MEMBERS' REFERRALS**

Councillor Nelson – YHG termination of Scheme Manager Role (September 2017) and the end of the contract with Community Voice which provided the warden call alarm.

Councillor Nelson was unable to attend tonight's meeting, however Councillors discussed the information that Councillor Nelson had sent prior to the meeting and which had been copied to them in their papers.

It was noted that the main issue of concern appeared to be that residents thought they had paid for a service that had been withdrawn. Your Housing Group had confirmed that the annual service charges are always paid a year in arrears, which is why tenants were still paying even when the scheme had been withdrawn.

With regard to the Community Voice, warden call alarm service, the charge for this service will no longer be added to the tenancies. However, those tenants who wish to retain this service can contact Community Voice in order to receive the service directly from them.

Councillor Bowden said that whilst the documents received indicated that a particular tenant has been concerned about the apparent payment for a service which had been removed (which was not the case, as it was a payment in arrears) he had been contacted during the consultation phase by people who wanted to keep the warden support.

Councillor Ellis commented that when people decided to move into the area, many did so because it was sheltered accommodation, with a warden on site, who could offer timely support and reassurance if it was needed. It is no longer sheltered accommodation and there may be vulnerable tenants with all sorts of issues who would have chosen to live somewhere else if they had known the warden service would be removed at some point in time. He added that it is the vulnerable residents who may be those who felt unable to make their voice heard during the 'consultation' on the matter. He thinks it is terrible that this has happened.

Councillor Allman suggested that the Town Council could write to Your Housing Group to express its disappointment regarding the removal of the warden service and to ask if there is any other support that will be put in place, in addition to the option of signing up to Community Voice privately, for those residents who are particularly vulnerable and who relied on a warden being close at hand.

Members agreed to this suggestion.

Action Clerk's office to write to Your Housing Group regarding the above.

435/17-18 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) **Warrington Borough Council**

- (i) Received – Documents for the Development Management Committee meeting that took place on 31st January 2018. There were no items specifically relevant to Birchwood on the main agenda.
- (ii) Received – Notification that the consultation over the Local Plan Preferred Development Option received around 4,000 responses. The draft Local Plan is programmed to be published in autumn/winter 2018; followed by another period of consultation.
- (iii) Councillor Fitzsimmons said that he was informed at a meeting that the new Head of the Planning Department is unhappy that some Local Parish Councils object to planning applications without then following the objection through by sending a Council Member to speak against it at a Development Management Committee. It was suggested that Local Councils should no longer be allowed to make objections to planning applications.

Councillor Fitzsimmons said that he had stated he did not agree with this suggestion and that it should be raised at the next Parish Liaison Meeting to allow Local Councils to be informed directly and have a chance to reply.

It was noted by Members that if it Birchwood Town Council sends in a considered formal objection to an application, it ensures that a Councillor attends the Development Management Committee to represent the Town Council.

Members agreed with a comment that was made, that it would remove the democratic right of the Local Councils as statutory consultees if they could not make an objection to an application, whether in support of a resident or on behalf of the Council.

The Clerk reminded Members that this prohibition was suggested by the Borough Council several years ago, when the same issue was occurring, but objections to the suggestion were successfully made by the Local Councils; it is unfortunate that the same issue has had to be raised again.

436/17-18 **ENFORCEMENT CASES**

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

437/17-18 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

- (a) Application No. 2017/313650 14 Leacroft Road, Warrington, WA3 6PJ. Proposed portable office building. **Approved for a limited period with conditions**
- (b) Application No. 2017/31733 730 Birchwood Boulevard, WA3 7QY. Proposed construction of a compound for air condenser units and bin store. **Approved with conditions**
- (c) Application No. 2017/31684 10 Rockingham Close, Birchwood, WA3 6UY. Proposed demolition of existing conservatory and replacement flat roof rear extension, internal alteration and reworked drive frontage. **Approved with conditions**

- (d) Application 2017/31643 34 Keyes Close, Birchwood, WA3 6RU. Proposed first floor rear extension and ground floor side extension. **Approved with conditions**
- (e) Application No. 2017/31846 Land bounded by Admirals Road, Linnet Grove and Curlew Grove. Proposed discharge of conditions 5 (noise levels), 23 (details of LEAP), 25 (provision of affordable housing) and 26 (samples of roofing and facing materials) on application 2016/28810. **Conditions part discharged/part not discharged**

438/17-18 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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 on an information basis only.

- (a) Application No. 2017/31826 14 Forbes Close Birchwood, WA3 6PP. Proposed two storey side extension and rear conservatory.
- (b) Application No. 2018/32045 Birchwood Community High School, Brock Road, WA3 7PT. Proposed replacement of existing artificial sports pitch with new 3G pitch, new 15 metre high floodlights, 4.5 metre high fencing and steel storage container.
- (c) Application No. 2018/32121 The Firs, Gorse Covert Road, WA3 6UQ. Proposed orangery to the rear of the property.
- (d) Application No. 2018/32236 5 Kelsall Close, Birchwood, WA3 6LZ. Proposed single storey rear extension.

Members did not have any objections or comments to make at this point in time to the above applications.

- (d) To note that the Town Council will be putting in an application for listed building consent for alterations; to enable us to undertake the necessary repair work to the roof and community room ceiling. We are waiting for information from the contractors in order to complete the application forms.

439/17-18 **STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Councillor Ellis stated that he had completed the update of the Town Council's Strategy and Action Plan, incorporating items taken from the results of the community consultation and actions agreed following the Policy, Strategy & Engagement Sub-Committee Meeting that took place in November 2017.

Councillor Ellis said he believes it is about '98% there'.

The document had been emailed to Members prior to the meeting and they were issued with hard copies this evening.

Councillor Ellis asked that Members consider the document again and, if there are any minor changes they wish to raise, he asked that they let him know within 2 weeks, by 13th March 2018 at the latest and he will incorporate them into the document.

Members discussed the document.

Councillor Fitzsimmons **proposed** that the Town Council accept the document as the Birchwood Town Council Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020. This was **seconded** by Councillor Evans and **unanimously approved** by those present.

Members thanked Councillor Ellis for his hard work and tenacity in leading the work to put the plan together.

Action For any minor changes to the document to be made during the next two weeks, if necessary. The document can then be published on our website.

This part of the meeting concluded at 7.25 pm.