

**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT
PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2020**

Present: Councillor Reeves in the Chair
Councillors Atkin, Bowden, Breslin, D. Ellis, J. Ellis, Evans, Fitzsimmons and Nelson

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk – Mrs C. Caddock

Apologies: Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe
PCSO Jones
Councillor M. Hearldon (disp)

286/19-20 **JANUARY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor D. Ellis proposed, Councillor Atkin seconded, and it was resolved that: The Minutes of the January Council Meeting held on 14th January 2020 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

287/19-20 **POLICY, STRATEGY & ENGAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor D. Ellis proposed, Councillor J. Ellis seconded, and it was resolved that: The Minutes of the January Council Meeting held on 28th January 2020 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 Breslin, D. Ellis and J. Ellis– Birchwood Youth & Community Centre Committee

Councillors Atkin, Bowden, Breslin, D. Ellis and Nelson– Birchwood Carnival Committee

Councillor Reeves – Birchwood Community High School

Councillor Atkin – Sellafield employee

Councillor Evans – the Friends of Birchwood Forest Park

Councillor Atkin – Incredible Edibles

Councillor D. Ellis and Councillor Reeves – Birchwood Forum

288/19-20 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) **Police Report**

There were no Police representatives at tonight's meeting. A Police report had been emailed to us prior to the meeting.

Councillor Reeves commented that it might be useful, if possible, to receive a bit more detail in a report, rather than just basic statistics, if the Police are unable to attend a meeting.

(b) As there were no residents present at the meeting, the Chair declared Public Participation closed.

289/19-20 **DAMAGED BUS SHELTERS**

As requested at the January Council meeting, enquiries have been made as to whether the smashed bus shelters in Gorse Covert (over New Year's Eve) had been recorded within Birchwood statistics.

The Clerk reported that the Police had not been made aware of any damage to the bus shelters that had occurred on New Year's Eve.

Members noted that although people comment on social media about such matters, not many make reports via 111 to the Police. If they did, they would be recorded in official statistics and more of a picture can be built up, enabling the Police to allocate resources accordingly

290/19-20 **DAMAGED FENCING – RISLEY MOSS**

As requested at the January Council meeting, enquiries have been made as to whether the Rangers are aware of the damage to parts of the perimeter fencing around Risley Moss.

The Clerk reported that the Rangers are aware of the damage, but there is no CCTV covering the area, and no witnesses. We have been told that as soon as one section is repaired, another hole is made elsewhere in the fencing.

291/19-20 **GLOVER ROAD PARKING**

The Clerk reported that the parking issues on Glover Road appear to be resolved at present.

Councillor Atkin stated that approximately an additional 150 parking spaces have been secured at Rutherford House for Sellafield staff at present. However, this is temporary, so the situation will have to be monitored.

Councillor Bowden confirmed that this is a temporary arrangement, and that it doesn't cover all the additional staff that are currently working at/for Sellafield, due to an increased amount of project work being undertaken by the company. He added that there needs to be an effort to change the commuting habits of employees, promoting car sharing, use of public transport, etc., as well as encouraging employees who need to drive to work, to park safely and considerately.

292/19-20 **BIRCHWOOD WAY / BIRCHWOOD PARK AVENUE**

The Clerk reported that a Borough Council programme of work to litter pick, grass cut, tidy shrubs, etc. on the whole stretch of Birchwood Way, under traffic management, started on Saturday 22nd February 2020.

Birchwood Park Avenue should be litter picked when the grass cutting programme starts, probably in April, weather permitting.

293/19-20 **UPDATE RE: ACTION ITEMS FROM MEETINGS WITH WBC OFFICERS**

There are still several action items that remain ongoing.

294/19-20 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) - UPDATE**

The Clerk reported that the Senior Maintenance Team Operative and herself had met with representatives of YHG this morning, including members of their landscaping team.

YHG has undertaken some coppicing work during the last week and their team is currently working on the Redshank Estate. They will be undertaking some shrub cutting on the Spinal Path in order to lower the height to approximately 6 feet high.

YHG has applied for some additional funding to enable their landscaping team to cover some additional areas of Birchwood that are their responsibility – however, cutting will soon have to stop due to the start of the bird nesting season.

The Clerk stated that we have received a copy of the YHG cutting programme, which shows that their contractors will follow the same route, and rough timetable, as last year. The first cut will be to reduce the growth from last season. The second cut, later in the year, will be for more aesthetic purposes.

The Clerk informed Members that, at the meeting, YHG asked whether the Town Council can assist with some of their landscaping work.

She said that she has told YHG that we do not have the resources to assist with their formal landscaping programme due to other commitments in the area, but she would ask the Council if they would be prepared to allow our team to possibly cut back some of the cut-through paths, which generally don't get attention; to tidy them up and make them safe, especially when brambles and nettles are growing, as time allows.

Councillors discussed this suggestion.

Councillor Atkin commented that any work that is technically YHG's responsibility should only be undertaken if it is not at the expense of BTC work being done.

Following discussions, it was **unanimously resolved** that any work for YHG should only be undertaken on a reactive basis, and if there is a potential health and safety issue. It should not be routinely programmed into the BTC work schedule.

The Clerk reported that YHG hope to publish their Neighbourhood Plan in April. There will be approximately eight walkabouts per year.

Councillor Reeves enquired whether any will be scheduled for the evening so that Councillors who work during the day might have an opportunity to attend one or more of the walkabouts.

Action Clerk's office to enquire about the possibility of evening walkabouts.

The Clerk stated that she has no further scheduled meetings with Mike Redford, although he will make himself available for discussions if necessary. The Clerk added that she will meet with other YHG representatives instead, such as Jonathon Plumb, and Alison Turner. Alison is the new Head of Customer Service Delivery. She has previous knowledge of Birchwood and has worked around Mosslands, Rendlesham, etc.

An email had been circulated to Members, which details the response to several queries that had been raised at a recent meeting with Mike Redford and Alison Turner.

One item raised was the cleansing and inspections of YHG play areas. The play surfaces of YHG play areas are to be jet washed and the climbing wall at the small Centurion Close play area will be looked at, to ensure its safety. Several YHG members of staff are to be trained to enable YHG play areas to be inspected more frequently.

The Clerk said that it has been agreed that Alison, and Andrea Spamer (YHG's Housing Services Manager) will schedule meetings with her twice a year. If it is felt that we need to have additional meetings in between times, a meeting can be requested by either party.

In addition, Jonathan has arranged a walkabout with Sandra, the Chair of the Oakwood Residents' Group, on 4th March. Darren and Jonathan will be attending the residents' meeting on 18th March, and Jonathan has arranged a Police Liaison Meeting for 24th February 2020.

The Clerk informed Members that YHG has funded two new benches that have been installed in the Forest Park, to replace those that were removed when the play equipment was destroyed by arson at The Birches.

The Clerk reported that an ongoing issue regarding someone, believed to be a YHG tenant, allegedly running a vehicle repair business from a property on Linnet Grove has now been rectified by WBC enforcement.

295/19-20 **CHATFIELD DRIVE DOUBLE YELLOW LINES**

The Clerk stated that she has asked if the WBC street sweeper can sweep Chatfield Drive, as some of the double yellow lines are not visible, due to a large amount of debris in the gutters.

The Clerk added that there are stretches of the older sections of double yellow lines that are very faded and broken in places. She asked Members if they would like WBC to be asked to arrange for these lines to be repainted.

Members unanimously resolved that the Clerk should contact WBC to ask for the broken/faded yellow lines on Chatfield Drive to be repainted.

Action Clerk's office to contact WBC regarding the above.

296/19-20 **ASDA TROLLIES – UPDATE**

The Clerk referred to the content of an email about Asda trollies, received from Chris Gribben, Manager of the shopping centre, which had been circulated to Members. For various reasons, the wheel locking mechanism has not been reinstated. However, Asda has now instructed their contractor to commence reinstatement of the coin mechanisms from next Monday.

Councillor D. Ellis said that he is pleased that the coin mechanism is to be put back on the trollies, which should result in a reduction in the number that are abandoned around the area.

Councillor D. Ellis added that he would let Trolley Angels know in case they wished to start 'rounding up' the abandoned trolleys again and putting them where Trolleywise could find them. (They had previously stopped as they felt nothing was being done to by the relevant organisations to help alleviate the problem.)

The Clerk said that Chris Gribben had thanked the Town Council Members for their patience and support.

297/19-20 **CROSS LANE SOUTH SIGNAGE**

'No Through Road' signs, in advance of Cross Lane South, have been installed on both sides of Warrington Road.

298/19-20 **DEMOLISHED PLANTER**

The Clerk reported that she wrote to ask the Police if they could contact the driver/their insurance company regarding the accident that resulted in the destruction of a planter. We have not yet received any response.

299/19-20 **PROPOSED FOXWOOD SCHOOL SITE DEVELOPMENT**

The public consultation meeting regarding the proposed development took place at Birchwood Tennis Centre on 3rd February 2020.

300/19-20 **ABANDONED VEHICLE**

An alleged abandoned vehicle in Heather Close has now gone.

301/19-20 **UNEVEN PAVING – PATH TO SHOPPING CENTRE**

At the January 2020 meeting it was reported that an email had been received re: an uneven paving hazard where Dewhurst Road meets the private footpath that runs between Abbey Court and Birchwood One to the shopping centre.

The WBC highways department has advised that: *“The current status of this defect is ‘no defect’. Following inspection, the highways inspector has decided either that no action was required or couldn’t find a defect.”* This relates to the WBC section of pavement.

However, they did note a ‘defect’ on the un-adopted footpath at the side of Land Trust office - raised block paving adjacent to gully. WBC will undertake a land search required to obtain owners details in order to write and advise them of the defect that requires attention.

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

302/19-20 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails / online reports following contact from residents re: flytipping, overgrown shrubbery, narrowed paths, blocked drains/flooding, abandoned bins, damaged grass verges, broken glass on pavements at various locations in Birchwood, streetlights not working, etc.
- (b) Notification that the next Parish Liaison Meeting will be held on 5th March 2020. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk will be attending.
- (c) Sent – email re: Belisha Beacon not working outside high school. WBC are awaiting some specialist parts in order for a repair to be made.
- (d) Received/sent – Emails re: a complaint from a resident re: fencing at the Noggin site.
- (e) Received/sent emails re: the WBC stretch of footpath on Daten Avenue, following a complaint received via Councillor Atkin from a resident. With WBC’s permission, our team scraped the stretch back (some before and after photos were included in Members’ papers). WBC Highways checked where the path has been exposed and said that there are no areas of tarmac that require repair. WBC trimmed back the hedge.
- (f) Chaser emails sent re:
 - CRM912976 – Flytipping off the path by the bridge between the Walled Garden and high school. WBC Enforcement have advised it will be removed asap.
 - CRM910853 – Flytipped bin bags on Millhouse Lane (sent 27/01/2020) – no reply yet.
- (g) Received/displayed as required, Notice of Casual Vacancy for the Oakwood Ward. Relevant notifications and letters have been sent regarding this vacancy, which will be filled as part of the next ordinary elections taking place on 7th May 2020.
- (h) Received/sent/copied into numerous emails re: complaints from a resident about access, the signage, and difficulty they had negotiating the diversions to/from their home during the roadworks in Gorse Covert.
- (i) Received – notification that the Rights of Way Forum meeting has been postponed until 2nd April 2020.

- (j) To note that the Clerk has acted as liaison between Warrington Borough Council / Locking Stumps Primary School / Thomas Risley Church regarding the new directional signage that the church and school requested be installed on Glover Road. The church and school are sharing the cost of the signage.

303/19-20 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails re: flytipping, overgrown shrubbery and trees, ‘contaminated bins’, fallen trees, potential trip hazards, and poorly maintained play areas.
- (b) Sent – query following a complaint received via Councillor Atkin about multiple work vehicles allegedly being parked by a resident on a road in a YHG area of Oakwood.

304/19-20 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – Various update/information emails from Warrington Voluntary Action.
- (b) Received – Query from a resident about the possibility of having additional dropped kerbs in Gorse Covert to make the area more ‘mobility scooter friendly’. They suggested, in particular, one from near the Inglewood bus stop to the opposite side of the road.

Members discussed the query and unanimously resolved that the Town Council should make enquiries with WBC regarding additional ‘dropped kerbs’ in Gorse Covert.

Action Clerk’s office to contact WBC regarding the above.

- (c) Received – Details of the Great British Spring Clean.
- (d) Received – A letter of thanks from Birchwood Acts for the BTC’s assistance with storing/moving props for the Christmas Spectacular, and to Councillor D. Ellis for his help, and participation in the show.
- (e) Received – Information Commissioner’s Office Newsletter – February 2020.
- (f) Sent/received – emails re: flooding over the wall at the fire station. The Woodland Trust is going to investigate to see if any additional measures can be taken to prevent this happening again.
- (g) To note and report that discussions are taking place with the Birchwood Incredible Edibles Group.

Councillor D. Ellis said that there is a draft document that Incredible Edibles, Birchwood Youth and Community Centre (BYCC) and the Town Council are currently working together on, to put in place some terms and conditions for the use of the land to the rear of the community centre.
- (h) Received – complaint from a cyclist that the driver of a vehicle leaving Parkers Farm car park had not checked to the right and nearly collided with them – asking for all groups using the car park to be reminded that there may be cyclists/pedestrians coming from the right hand side as they exit the car park.

The Clerk said that the driver appeared to have been leaving a group that had taken place at BYCC. She added that all BTC staff have been instructed to stop and check to the right before driving out.

Officers regularly witness vehicles leaving the car park without stopping to check right for pedestrians and cyclists coming from the right. Although many cyclists appear to be aware of the exit and slow down to give way if necessary, some of the cyclists come down onto the road from the path at a relatively high speed.

Members discussed this issue.

Councillor D. Ellis said that visibility is extremely poor when exiting the Town Council's car park. He suggested that perhaps a mirror could be installed.

The Clerk asked if members of all groups using BYCC can be reminded, if they are driving, to stop and check right before exiting the car park.

Officers will also look at the possibility of getting a bespoke sign to place at the exit of our car park.

Action Clerk's office to investigate costs of bespoke 'STOP' signage.

305/19-20 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Received – various neighbourhood alerts.
- (b) Received – Stakeholder Bulletin – February 2020.

306/19-20 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (CHALC), NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC), SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC)**

- (a) Received – ChALC weekly e-bulletins with various attachments.
- (b) Received - NALC Chief Executive Bulletins, Blogs and Newsletters.
- (c) Received – SLCC – various News bulletins and details of Branch meetings, conferences, etc.

307/19-20 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

Various LGC magazines & e-mail briefings, and LCR – Winter 2020

308/19-20 **MEMBERS' REFERRALS MADE VIA THE CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING FOR CONSIDERATION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING**

Councillor Atkin – Risley Moss Observation Tower

Councillor Atkin said he had heard rumours that the building of the new Observation Tower at Risley Moss had been delayed. He was concerned that the element of funding from WREN would be lost, as he believed it was conditional on the tower being built in this financial year.

Councillor Bowden explained the reasons behind the delay. He added that, effectively, the design will be 'going back to the drawing board' – however there is good news as WREN has said that it will extend the timeframe for the grant funding to be used.

Councillor Atkin thanked Councillor Bowden for the update. He added that he hoped this would be an opportunity for more accessibility to be built into the next design.

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

The February DMC took place on 12th February 2020. There was one item on the main agenda for discussion specifically related to Birchwood: Application 2019/36175 Dewhurst Road, WA3 7QS – proposed telecommunications upgrade. Proposed phase 7 monopole C/W wraparound cabinet at base and associated works. It had an Officer recommendation for approval.

(b) **Enforcement Cases**

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

(c) **Planning Decisions**

- (i) Application No. 2019/35819 7 Montcliffe Close, WA3 7LX. Proposed single storey side extension to existing dwelling. **Approved with conditions**
- (ii) Application No. 2019/36070 Land at Kelvin Street, Birchwood Park. For approval of details reserved by condition 4 (full details of bollards, including fixings) following planning approval 2018/33281 (proposed widening of existing road). **Condition part discharged/part not discharged**
- (iii) Application No. 2019/35713 Birchwood Ranger's Cabin, Birchwood, WA3 6QX. Lawful Development Certificate. Section 192 -Proposed removal of existing external wall to be re-built on new location. Creation of new DDA WC in old store room. **Approved**
- (iv) Application No. 2019/35735 20 Talbot Close, WA3 6PR. Proposed bedroom/shower room to rear of property. **Approved with conditions**
- (v) Application No. 2019/36237 Area of vacant land located to, adjacent, Daten Avenue, WA3 6YN. Proposed discharge of conditions 6 (Travel Plan) and 7 (Parking Management plan and Service Management Strategy) on application 2015/26044. **Conditions part discharged/part not discharged**
- (vi) Application No. 2019/36101 Ground Floor 304 Bridgewater Place, Birchwood, WA3 6XG. Proposed internal sub-division of the suite and in order to meet Building Regulations, a secondary means of escape is proposed. **Approved with conditions**
- (vii) Application No. 2019/35300 687 Warrington Road, WA3 6AY (Noggin). Proposed change of use from public house A4 to offices B1 including external alterations. **Approved with conditions**
- (viii) Application No. 2019/36078 Site of existing Cheshire Fire & Rescue, Birchwood Fire Station, WA3 6QS. Full planning – Proposed material alterations to existing fire station (full description available in office). **Approved with conditions**
- (ix) Application No. 2019/35710 Locking Stumps Post Office/Nisa Shop, Glover Road, WA3 7PA. Proposed subdivision of existing units to create a health shop with new shop front. **Approved with conditions**

- (x) Application No. 2019/36232 North Cheshire House, Kelvin Close, Birchwood, WA3 7RB. Proposed discharge of condition no. 3 (noise management plan) and condition no. 5 (acoustic validation report) on original application 2017/31859.

Conditions discharged

(d) **Planning Applications**

All plans can be viewed via:

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport_planning_and_environment/Planning/Se arch_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.

- (i) Application No. 2020/36377 Eastern edge of Birchwood Park, plots 107, 300, 501-502, 611-612, 701-702 and Quadrant, WA3 6AE. Proposed discharge of condition 12 (noise and vibration) from original application 2015/26044.
- (ii) Application No. 2020/36374 18 Cadshaw Close, Birchwood, WA3 7LR. Section 192 Certificate – Proposed single storey rear extension.
- (iii) Application No. 2020/36456 Abbey Court, Ainscough Road, WA3 7PW. Class T Prior Approval – proposed change of use from nursing home for elderly people (Class C2/C2A) to a residential school for children with learning disabilities.
- (iv) Application No. 2020/36414 130, Birchwood Boulevard, Birchwood, WA3 7QH Full Planning - Proposed minor alterations including new entrance door, the removal of the entrance canopy, modifying a window at ground floor to create a door to the outside for access to that amenity, the provision of a smoking shelter, provision of additional cycle storage with e-bike charging points , provision of electric charging points at existing parking bays, installation of an external gate within the building perimeter fence on the south east to allow a new path and landscape improvements to the open area between the building and Birchwood Boulevard, additional lighting to the proposed muster points in the car park and modification of the landscape to accommodate parking modifications.
- (v) Application No. 2020/36476 McDonald's Restaurant, Birchwood Shopping Centre, Benson Road, Warrington, Birchwood, WA3 7PQ Proposed advertisement consent for x3 digital free standing sign and x1 digital booth screen (internally illuminated).

310/19-20 **MISCELLANEOUS PLANNING CORRESPONDENCE**

Received/sent emails following queries raised by a resident regarding two planning applications:

- 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.
- Application N0. 2019/35300 687 Warrington Road, WA3 6AY (Noggin). Proposed change of use from public house A4 to offices B1 including external alterations.

311/19-20 **STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Councillor D. Ellis had prepared a draft updated version of the 2016 – 2020 Birchwood Town Council Strategy and Action Plan, which had been circulated to Members.

He stated that the majority of items had been completed, although some items that had not progressed were beyond the control of the Town Council, such as the Birchwood BID which has not yet moved forward.

Councillor Atkin wondered whether, at this stage, the BID is irrevocably delayed.

Councillor D. Ellis said that there is a Birchwood Forum Meeting on Thursday, at which the BID will be discussed.

Councillor D. Ellis said that there are just a couple more items to be added to the draft plan, then it should be up to date.

This part of the meeting concluded at 6.50 pm.