

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD ONLINE, ON TUESDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2021, 6PM

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

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

PCSO Titans

Apologies: Councillors M. Hearldon (dispensation) and T. Hearldon

298/20-21 **JANUARY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Atkin proposed, Councillor D. Ellis seconded, and it was resolved that: the Minutes of the December Council Meeting held on 26th January 2021 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.

Councillor D. Ellis and Councillor Reeves – Birchwood Forum

Councillors Atkin and Reeves – Cheshire Wildlife Trust

Councillor D. Ellis – Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission

299/20-21 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) **Police Report**

A Police report was emailed to us by PCSO Stefan Titans prior to the meeting, which had been circulated to Members. The report details are as follows:

The following comprises the Police Report for the month of February 2021 to date. Also included are incidents from the second half of January not covered by the previous report.

- *There have been no reported instances of burglary in the area.*
- *There have been 4 instances reported of attempts to gain unlawful entry to premises, 3 of which are of a private dwelling. These were reported in late January/early February. There have been no lines of enquiry to progress investigation of these incidents.*
- *There has been 1 instance of criminal damage to a vehicle in which a resident's rear windscreen was smashed whilst parked their cul-de-sac overnight.*
- *There has been 2 report of theft from a motor vehicle, one in which a HGV, which was not properly secured, was accessed and contents stolen, as well as fuel possibly being siphoned. Another in which the person reported having a seizure whilst in the car and found their bag to be missing afterwards.*
- *There have been 2 reports of theft from a business premises, one in which 140 office chairs were allegedly stolen and another in which recording equipment to the value of approximately £2000 was stolen.*

- *There has been 1 report of shoplifting in which a rug was stolen from Birchwood Shopping Centre.*
- *3 reports of COVID breaches of a business nature.*
- *There has been one assault amounting to wounding with intent using a bladed article.*
- *There have been two instances of assault by beating (excluding domestic), one in which a female was assaulted by two males in the street, another involving a dispute between youths.*
- *Approximately 30 bin bags containing the soil bases and residual plant matter from harvested cannabis plants were found in the car park of Birchwood Forest Park.*
- *There was a disturbance in Oakwood, in which an address was targeted by “paedophile hunters”.*
- *There have been numerous unauthorised Travellers’ encampments in the area (which (Councillors) will be well aware of). There have been two reports in relation to these of criminal damage/threatening behaviour, but no evidence has been found to support these reports. I have engaged with the occupants of the encampments, providing Covid-19 safety advice and impromptu welfare checks.*
- *(A) neighbour dispute (. . .) in Locking Stumps appears set to be resolved following appropriate action from Your Housing Group.*
- *Cheshire Police have carried out a search warrant on an address, which resulted in controlled substances being seized and the inhabitant being released under investigation.*
- *We are continuing to see a moderate volume of domestic incident reports.*
- *Youth ASB saw a drop since the imposition of national lockdown, however, that has begun to rise since the second half of February, with youths resuming gatherings on the train station and parks during half-term.*
- *PC Gareth Frith has left Birchwood Beat Team to transfer to another department in a move to expand his experience base. Recruitment for a replacement beat PC is underway.*

PCSO Titans answered questions from Members and the Clerk relating to the above report, and regarding some other queries that had been raised locally.

One additionally query was regarding rumours of dog thefts in the area.

PCSO Titans said that he was not aware of any formal reports being made to the Police about the theft of dogs.

(i) Traveller Encampments

PCSO Titans, Councillors and Officers discussed various concerns raised with BTC, by residents, during the recent spate of unauthorised Traveller encampments in the area.

Several residents had raised concerns about whether the movement of Travellers into and around the area could increase the risk of Covid spreading within the local community.

PCSO Titans said that he had sought advice regarding the Covid regulations, and how these might be applied to Travellers, but it appears that when the regulations were being drawn up, that advice for the travelling community had not been specifically taken into account.

The 'stay at home' advice is being followed, as their caravans are their homes, and they often travel in one 'family' group – albeit a large one.

PCSO Titans added that, ideally, if Warrington had a transit site, then the Police would have the powers to direct any unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments to move to the site.

Councillor Atkin had enquired when Section 61 powers can be used to move unauthorised encampments out of an area. This query had been sent to Sergeant Gibbard, who had replied:

'Section 61 powers are very rarely used. Unfortunately worry and anxiety regarding the presence of a site would not give use to the power.'

PCSO Titans explained that Section 61 powers can only be used when there is evidence of criminal damage. Environmental concerns, such as flytipping, cannot be used to apply Section 61 powers.

Any use of powers has to be proportional to the reason for applying them.

Councillor Atkin said that the issue of trying to find a site that is suitable for a transit site in Warrington has been ongoing for a number of years. Any proposal for such a site would have to be deliverable, and appropriate for both local residents and the Travelling community.

Warrington Borough Council (WBC) has money earmarked for a transit site, once a suitable location is found.

(ii) **Vandalism / ASB at Birchwood Railway Station**

At the January meeting PCSO Titans and Councillors had discussed the ongoing issues of ASB at Birchwood Railway Station.

The Clerk, as requested, has written to WBC again regarding this matter, and a letter received from PCSO Titans, offering the Police views on the issues, has also been forwarded onto WBC. We are awaiting a reply.

PCSO Titans, in response to a query about previously proposed mobile CCTV at the footbridge, explained that the station already has CCTV covering the only area where mobile CCTV could have been placed.

(iii) **Street Lighting**

At the January meeting PCSO Titans asked whether the Town Council had any input on lighting within the Birchwood area. He said that it is noticeable that where lighting is poor, the incidents of ASB are much higher, and he had raised concerns about the safety of members of the public in these areas.

It was noted that the Town Council remains very concerned about poor lighting quality in some areas. Councillors undertook a 'survey' of the 'new' lighting after it was first installed. They had met WBC Officers on site to show them some of the worse areas, and to explain their concerns.

Despite ongoing complaints and chasing the issues, the Town Council has never received a proper response from WBC regarding these issues.

At tonight's meeting the Clerk reported that she has written to WBC again regarding this matter, and a letter from PCSO Titans, presenting the Police views on the issues, has also been forwarded onto WBC. We await a reply.

The Clerk suggested that Members might wish to consider inviting a Senior Officer from WBC to a future meeting to discuss both the lighting issues, and ASB problems at the railway station.

Members resolved to invite a WBC Officer to a future meeting.

Action Clerk's office to invite a WBC Officer to a future meeting to discuss the lighting, and railway station ASB issues.

(iv) **How to Contact the Police Online**

The Clerk reported that a link to the Police online submission form was published on our Facebook page, as an alternative to contacting the Police using the 101 phone line. A number of (non-emergency) issues can be reported to the Police using this form. In an emergency, always dial 999.

There were no more questions for PCSO Titans. Members thanked him for attending the meeting.

PCSO Titans left the meeting.

As there were no residents present at tonight's meeting, the Chair declared Public Participation closed.

300/20-21 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) – UPDATE**

The Clerk said that Councillors might have noticed some further piles of rubbish at the side of some roads, following ongoing coppicing work being undertaken by YHG. YHG is arranging for these to be removed.

The Clerk stated that YHG had finished their scheduled coppicing work ahead of time. They hope to start on another area before the programme formally ends at the end of the month.

Councillor Atkin commented that the work they have done has made a big difference, with a lot of homes now benefitting from natural light coming into their gardens and homes, where the overgrowth had previously been keeping them shaded.

The Clerk added that she hopes to be having a catch-up meeting with Darren Hardie within the next few days.

301/20-21 **MAY 2021 ELECTIONS**

The Clerk reminded Members that she and the Deputy Clerk attended the recent Parish Liaison Meeting, where the upcoming all-out May 2021 elections were one of the items discussed. It was confirmed that the elections will be going ahead, nationwide.

The Town Council has published information on our Facebook page and website about the upcoming elections, and what local Councillors do, etc. A 'Your Vote Matters – Don't Lose It' poster has also been published on our Facebook page, indicating various ways that people can cast their votes in these elections.

302/20-21 **BTC LITTER PICKING**

At the January meeting the Clerk reported that the Town Council maintenance team collects approximately one ton of litter (including waste from the litter bins and some flytipped items on WBC land) each week. The Clerk was asked how many bags of litter the team collects in addition to the waste taken out of litter bins.

At tonight's meeting the Clerk stated that the team has put together some figures of the number of bags of waste they collected over a three-week period. Members noted that, currently, the amount of litter is actually lower than it would be, if lockdown regulations were not in place:

1 st – 5 th February 2021	69 bags from litter bins	117 bags from the streets
8 th – 12 th February 2021	96 bags from litter bins	109 bags from the streets
15 th – 19 th February 2021	119 bags from litter bins	109 bags from the streets

The Clerk said that the Town Council has 'responsibility' for 40 bins, which it empties, usually twice a week, on a Monday and Friday. If there are only a few items at the bottom of a bin, it might only be emptied once. Some bins require emptying three times a week on occasion.

The frequency areas are picked varies depending on need but all residential areas and roads are visited.

There are a number of litter bins that WBC has the responsibility for emptying, including those on Birchwood Forest Park, and some which are YHG's responsibility.

The Clerk stated that if BTC's resources are stretched, for example during times when the team is needed for other work, such as gritting, watering baskets and planters, times of staff absence, holidays, etc., then the litter picking may not be undertaken at the same frequency – but the bins would always be emptied (except for during the Christmas shutdown period).

303/20-21 **SMITHILLS CLOSE FOOTPATH**

The Clerk reported that we have continued to receive complaints from several residents regarding the severely overgrown footpath from Smithills Close, towards Kelvin Close. The most recent correspondence regarding this matter was received from an Officer at Warrington Borough Council on 17th February 2021, which states:

“As the owners are based in London it is impossible to get in touch with the correct person.

As no additional work has been carried out, I will need to serve a legal notice on the owners Car Phone Warehouse.

Once the notice is posted, it gives the owners a maximum of 21 days with a further 7 days to make a legal appeal.

If after 28 days no action has been taken, our own landscape section will undertake the works and recharge our costs back to the owners.”

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

304/20-21 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails / online reports following contact from residents re: flytipping (including approximately 30 bags near the Air Cadet cabin on the Forest Park), pot holes, flooding, fallen trees, etc.
- (b) Received/sent – emails re: several unauthorised traveller encampments.
- (c) The temporary ramp that had gone missing on Powell Avenue has now been replaced.

- (d) Received – Link to a consultation being undertaken by WBC re: proposed new measures to be included within a revised and updated Air Quality Action Plan.

The Chair stated that he would respond to the consultation.

- (e) Sent – emails, following contact from a resident, re: alleged unauthorised cutting down of trees and dumping of green waste in an area of Locking Stumps. They also raised a concern regarding an alleged unconnected ‘drainpipe’.

WBC has referred the issue of the trees and green waste to their Environmental Crime department. WBC suggested that the drainpipe matter should be referred to United Utilities.

- (f) Sent – email, following correspondence received from a resident, asking that consideration be given to a request for the extension of a pavement on each side of the entrance to Mansfield Close in Oakwood, to join it up with the pavement on Admirals Road. Currently pedestrians have to walk into the road to get from Mansfield Close onto Admirals Road. This has been passed on to the WBC Transport Planning Team.
- (g) The Clerk has asked WBC when the grass cutting season might start. WBC delivered the mowers back to us, this morning. WBC would normally undertake the first grass cut, due to the length of the grass, which their larger mowers can deal with. The Clerk reported that our insurance company has been informed that BTC has the mowers in our possession again.
- (h) The Clerk said that WBC has been contacted to ask if arrangements have been put in place for a team to clean up the area around Rutherford House, now that the Traveller encampment has vacated the site.
- (i) Following a query from Councillor D. Ellis, the Forest Park Ranger was contacted regarding a missing bin on the Forest Park. Also, a request was made asking if a ‘vandal-proof’ bin could be installed near the bandstand. The Ranger replied that the ‘missing’ bin has now been replaced – it was removed due to age/damage, and a bin near the bandstand is due for installation in the near future.

Two Councillors were uncertain whether it was the same bin that had been reported by Councillor D. Ellis.

Action Clerk’s office to check with the Forest Park Ranger about the location of the replaced bin.

- (j) To note the change of date to MS Teams presentations about the Town Centre and House extensions Supplementary Planning Documents (promised at the recent Parish Liaison Meeting) to 8th March at 6pm.

305/20-21 **BIRCHWOOD FORUM**

To note that Susan Spibey has informed us that she has left Birchwood Forum

306/20-21 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG)**

- (a) Emails received / sent re: further flytipped waste being uncovered whilst YHG contractors are undertaking coppicing works.

- (b) Received / sent – emails, liaising with a YHG tenant and YHG regarding concerns about the safety of a tree in Oakwood. YHG are undertaking a site visit to assess the tree in question, and their contractor will remove the ivy growing up the tree.

307/20-21 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – Various update/information emails from Warrington Voluntary Action.
- (b) Sent/received – emails re: overflowing water from the ‘pond/ditch’ by the small wall near the fire station entrance. The Woodland Trust arranged for some of the water to be pumped out to prevent overflow.
- (c) Received – M62 Junctions 10 to 12 Motorway Upgrade project newsletter – Jan. 2021.
- (d) Sent/received – emails with Trolleywise re: abandoned trolleys. From 21st March 2021, Trolleywise will no longer be picking up Asda trolleys, nationwide, as their contract has not been renewed.

Members were concerned about the potential for an increase in abandoned Asda trolleys being left around Birchwood.

Action Clerk’s office to contact Asda to enquire about their trolley collection policy going forward.

- (e) Received / sent – emails with a resident re: apparent delays in correspondence with WBC relating to a planning application they have submitted.
- (f) To note the information circulated by the Clerk re: Road Verge Biomass Harvesting and verge harvesters. This is for interest only, as it would be applicable to Borough Councils or large Councils with responsibility for roadside harvesting.

308/20-21 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Received - Various Neighbourhood Alerts; and Stakeholder Special Bulletin February 2021 - ‘Police Budget’.
- (b) Sent – email re: vandalism re: several bus stops being vandalised in Locking Stumps.
- (c) Received – from PC Frith – notice that he will no longer be the local Beat Officer in Birchwood, as he is taking on a different role, in Offender Management, with the Police. We do not yet know who his replacement will be.
- (d) Sent / received – emails re: travellers - relating to travel enforcement due to Covid-19 restrictions.

309/20-21 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (CHALC), NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC), SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC)**

- (a) Received – NALC Chief Executive’s Bulletins, and various other bulletins and updates.
- (b) Received – ChALC weekly e-bulletins with various attachments, details of training sessions, etc.
- (c) Received – from SLCC – news updates, training information, etc.

- (d) NALC's Management Board met to consider the Local Government Association (LGA) model code of conduct.

Subject to feedback from county officers, it was agreed to recommend to National Assembly on 9 March that it be adopted by local councils and replace the NALC code. They stressed that this needed to be part of a wider project on civility aimed at improving standards and behaviours and agreed on the need to dedicate resources and work closely with the Society of Local Council Clerks.

The Clerk reported that, at the recent Parish Liaison Meeting, attendees were informed about the proposed LGA model code of conduct.

It is up to individual Councils whether they wish to adopt this model or not. Councils can choose to continue with the code of conduct that they currently have in place.

The Clerk suggested that this decision be deferred, to be made by the new Council in May 2021 or shortly thereafter. The proposed new model still needs to be formally approved by the National Assembly in March 2021.

Members **resolved** that the decision be made by the new Council in May 2021 or shortly thereafter.

- (e) The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has launched a consultation seeking views on proposals to reform of Strand 2 (land owned by a local authority or certain other public bodies) of the Right to Contest under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 operated by MHCLG. The link to the documentation was included in the email circulated to Members.
- (f) Received – Various updates/information emails from SLCC. In the 19th February SLCC Bulletin – it is reported that the SLCC has approached the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government directly to voice local Councils concerns about the legislation giving the power to conduct remote meetings ending in May.

SLCC is working with other organisations to seek a declaration from the courts, to give Councils the option of holding remote meetings beyond 7th May 2021.

The Clerk advised Members that Officers will need to give consideration as to how face-to-face meetings could be held safely, if the option of holding meetings remotely is removed from Local Councils.

310/20-21 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

Various LGC magazines and e-mail briefings.

311/20-21 **MEMBERS' REFERRALS MADE VIA THE CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING FOR CONSIDERATION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING**

Councillor Atkin – Grass cutting – Proposing that consideration be given to the management of some roadside verges in Birchwood, as suggested by 'Plantlife', and explained in 'The Good Verge Guide', which was circulated to Members by email.

Councillors Atkin and Reeves declared an interest as they are members of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust; which also promotes the maintenance of roadside verges, in a similar way to 'Plantlife', as important places for local biodiversity.

Councillor Atkin had circulated a link to ‘The Good Verge Guide’ and a presentation that he had prepared regarding his proposals:

BTC currently supports WBC by undertaking intermediate cuts to some of the WBC-owned grassed areas in Birchwood. This provides a high frequency of grass cutting and keeps these areas “neat and tidy”.

Maintaining these grassed areas cut short throughout the year minimises their biodiversity in terms of both flowering plants and invertebrates, increases the workload for BTC’s limited resources, and increases carbon emissions through increased use of mowers.

Based on some of the information in ‘The Good Verge Guide’, more specifically ‘A - Simple management for grassy road verges’ and ‘C - Managing urban grassy road verges’, which are the sections most relevant to the areas that BTC mows, Councillor Atkin suggested that that the grass cutting operation for WBC areas in Birchwood be modified as follows:

Narrow areas (less than two metres wide)

- *Cut whole area approximately every four weeks to a height of 3-6cm*
- *Collect clippings wherever possible*

Wider areas

- *Cut one mower’s width next to paths and roads on current schedule*
- *Only cut remainder of area twice per year - once between late July and end September and once between October and Christmas*
- *Collect clippings wherever possible*

By “framing” the larger areas with frequent cuts next to paths and roads, this will indicate to residents that this is a deliberate policy rather than neglect. To reinforce this, communications should be issued e.g. through the noticeboards and Facebook page to explain the environmental benefits of this approach, both in terms of biodiversity and carbon emissions reduction.

Whilst the Plantlife guide recommends the installation of signage to further reinforce the message, this is not proposed here.

Given that many of our grassed areas are adjacent to woodland or other natural areas, the proposed changes would be visually more in keeping with the surroundings than the current “neat and tidy” policy more suited to urban areas. It would also encourage the spread of native wildflowers, in addition to the designated wildflower meadows BTC funds each year.”

Councillor Atkin suggested that the proposal would result in a small cost saving to BTC through reduced mower fuel usage, as well as reducing the time spent mowing, freeing up a member of the maintenance team for other duties. He proposed looking at the feasibility of this form of roadside verge management with WBC.

It is recognised that this is not a decision that BTC can take unilaterally since it is in relation to WBC land. If members agree that they would like to take this proposal forward, the immediate action would be for BTC Officers to contact their WBC counterparts explaining the proposal and to seek their buy-in prior to the start of the 2021 grass cutting campaign.

The full version of “The Good Verge Guide” can be downloaded at:

https://www.plantlife.org.uk/application/files/7916/1191/6240/Road_verge_guide_2021_WEB.pdf

Members discussed Councillor Atkin’s proposal in detail.

The Clerk reminded Members that the mowers BTC have on loan from WBC will not cut very long grass and they do not have grass collection boxes on them. Areas left to grow would, therefore, have to be cut by WBC.

Members **unanimously resolved** that, in principle, they support Councillor Atkin's proposal.

The Clerk suggested that, perhaps, Councillor D. Ellis could also raise this with the Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission, of which he is a member.

Councillor Fitzsimmons said that in many areas of Warrington, it is already WBC policy to only cut one strip, and allow the rest of the grassed area to grow 'wild' to encourage natural flowering and biodiversity. He added that there might be some areas where YHG land adjoins WBC land – and care would be needed to ensure that YHG does not mow areas left deliberately uncut by WBC / BTC.

Action Clerk's office to contact WBC regarding Councillor Atkin's proposals.

Action Councillor D. Ellis to raise the proposals with the Climate and Ecological Emergency Commission.

312/20-21 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) **Warrington Borough Council**

(i) Development Management Committee (DMC)

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

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

The upgrade is to improve 2G/3G/4G coverage in the area, and will 'future proof' for when 5G services are rolled out in the area.

Members discussed the letter. It was noted that when the first base station was installed, that there was some concern raised by local residents, mainly on the grounds of perceived health and safety risks.

Action Clerk's office to ask how the company plans to consult directly with local residents regarding this proposed upgrade, and to publish any formal planning application on our Facebook page.

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

(b) **Enforcement Cases**

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

(c) **Planning Decisions**

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

- (ii) Application No. 2020/37925 Unit 5 Prestwood Court, Birchwood, WA3 6SB. Proposed change of use from light industrial to sports rehabilitation and sports therapy (use Class E). **Approved with conditions.**
- (iii) Application No. 2020/37928 1 Cross Lane South, Birchwood, WA3 7AQ. Works to trees (removal of lower branches of 2 x Sycamore, and a Lime due to size and weight) covered (TPO 261). **Approved with conditions.**
- (iv) Application No. 2020/2021 36 Inglewood Close, Birchwood, WA3 6UJ. Section 192 Lawful Development Certificate – proposed rear and side single-story extensions. **Approved.**
- (v) Application No. 2021/38455 41 Daniel Close, Birchwood, WA3 6QL. Prior Approval – proposed single storey rear extension to extend beyond the rear wall by 4.04m, maximum height 3.15m, height at the eaves 2.25m. **Prior Approval not required.**
- (vi) Application No. 2020/38316 42A Woodhouse Close, Birchwood, WA3 6QP. Retrospective single storey rear extension. **Approved with conditions.**
- (vii) Application No. 2020/38031 Oakwood Gate Service Station, Birchwood, WA3 6RW, Proposed installation of 8 x vehicle charging points with canopy. Installation of associated electrical infrastructure within 2.4m high timber enclosure and new retaining wall. **Approved with conditions.**

(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. 2021/38618 71 Applecross Close, Birchwood, WA3 6XB. Lawful Development Certificate – proposed partial garage conversion.
- (ii) Application No. 2021/38666 41 Ringwood Close, Birchwood, WA3 6TQ. Proposed single storey extension rear extension.
- (iii) Application No. 2021/38553 16 Woolmer Close, Birchwood, WA3 6UU. Proposed second storey pitched roof extension.
- (iv) Application No. 2021/38703 Unit B1 Birchwood Shopping Centre, WA3 7QP. Proposed main sign and window graphics (externally illuminated).
- (v) Application No. 2021/38704 Oakwood Gate Service Station, WA3 6RW. Proposed discharge of Condition 4 (Acoustics) on previously approved application 2020/38031 (installation of 8 x vehicle charging points with canopy. Installation of associated electrical infrastructure within 2.4m high timber enclosure and new retaining wall).

- (vi) Application No. 2021/38726 Oakwood Gate Service Station, WA3 6RW. Proposed discharge of Condition 3 (Construction, Highways and Environmental Management Plan) on previously approved application 2020/38031 (Installation of 8 no. vehicle charging points with canopy.)
- (vii) Application No. 2021/38745 4 Westhay Crescent, Birchwood, WA3 6UZ. Lawful Development Certificate (Section 192) Proposed single storey pitched roof side extension and partial garage conversion.

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

- (viii) Application No. 2021/38590 Stanford House, Garrett Field, Birchwood Park, WA3 7BH. Proposed external alterations as part of a programme of comprehensive refurbishments at Birchwood Park.

The Clerk said that this application had come in late this afternoon – but the details are already online. The proposals are for 600 employees to be employed at the site. There will be 381 parking spaces and 70 cycle spaces. There will be some electric vehicle charging points.

Opening hours are listed as 7am to 10pm, seven days a week.

The plans show that there will be a barrier fitted on the entrance to the car park.

The Clerk wondered whether the barrier might cause traffic to back up on Garrett Field, and potentially create ‘grid-lock’ and / or safety issues for vehicles on / coming off the Garrett Field / Birchwood Park Avenue / Glover Road roundabout.

There is a barrier at the entrance to the Genesis Centre, a bit further down the road, opposite the bus stop, which already creates tailbacks on Garrett Field, on a bend, at busy times.

Councillor D. Ellis said that the potential lack of sufficient parking spaces, could create problems if employees who cannot find a space in the car park choose to park in residential areas, as has been experienced in the past, on Glover Road, Heather Close and Armstrong Close.

Local public transport does not run late enough for employees working late shift patterns to be able to use it.

Members resolved to raise the above concerns with the Planning Department.

Action Clerk’s office to write to WBC Planning regarding the above.

313/20-21 **STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

There were currently no further updates re: the Birchwood Town Council Strategy and Action Plan.

This part of the meeting concluded at 7.30pm.