

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE
ON TUESDAY 25TH APRIL 2023, 6.00 PM

Present: Councillor Ellis in the Chair
Councillors Atkin, Ball, Brereton Dempsey, Evans, Reeves, Sheridan, Scott,
and Simcock

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

Three residents

Apologies: Councillor Allen (personal), Cllr Bowden (personal)

Code of Conduct – Declaration of Interests

The Chair reminded Members of their responsibility to declare any personal interest or prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when the item is reached.

001/23-24 **MARCH 2023 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Evans **proposed**, Councillor Simcock **seconded**, and it was **resolved** that: The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 28th March 2023 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair with two amendments:

Minute 333/22-23 Police Report (page 232)

A report was received from the Police, however due to the date on the report being incorrect it had been misinterpreted as being a duplicate report.

Minute 344/22-23 Members Referral (pages 237/238)

To add an action that it was agreed that Officers make further enquiries with Warrington Borough Council regarding this project.

002/23-24 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) **Police Report**

PCSO Palfrey was present at the Town Council Meeting and he presented the Police Report which was circulated to Members.

Birchwood Shopping Centre – Business Watch is now up and running at the Centre, due to the pro-active partnership working we have seen a huge reduce in demand at the Centre.

PCSO Palfrey has been off since 06/03/2023 and returned to work on moderated duties on 06/04/2023.

The below statistics outline incidents from 21/03/2023- 21/04/2023:

Anti-Social Behaviour:

4 x Birchwood Forest Park- Scrambler bikes/quad bikes on the park
1 x Palliser Close- Report of dangerous dog
1 x Talbot Close – Discarded blow torch left in garden

1 x Halliday Close- Possible drug use
1 x Birchwood Business Park- Caravan parked up on the business park

Burglary Dwelling:

1 x Pallister Close
1 x Talbot Close

Burglary Others: N/A

Vehicle Crime / Offences – Reports:

1 x Sandicroft Close – Stolen Vehicle
1 x Birchwood Shopping Centre- Stolen license plates

Criminal Damage:

1 x Old Risley Police Station- youths breaking window
1 x Ainscough Close- 2 males climbing the scaffolding
1 x Wren Close – group of youths lit log on fire

PCSO Palfrey said that the Business Watch Scheme is now up and running at Birchwood Shopping Centre, all staff are wearing body cameras, as youths do not want to be seen on camera the number of incidents of ASB etc. have reduced significantly. In fact there had only been one incident reported in the last 7 weeks.

Councillor Ellis commented that the public address system was playing opera music between certain hours which may also discourage youths from gathering.

PCSO Palfrey also talked about the concerns relating to scrambler bikes. There is a Police Team tackling this and, so far, one person has been detained.

Councillor Sheridan enquired if PCSO Palfrey was aware of any tensions between youths from Birchwood High and youths from other areas. She commented that she had been informed that some of the teaching staff had escorted pupils who had been identified as being ‘at risk’ off the site to be collected by a parent or guardian.

PCSO Palfrey stated that it is usually the PCs who liaise with the High School and it is possible that incidents have been reported which would be dealt with by response officers.

Councillor Reeves will make some enquiries at the High School’s Risk Management Meeting tomorrow in his capacity as a Governor of the school.

Councillor Sheridan informed the meeting that the ex-McColls shop in Oakwood has now re-opened as a Morrisons and that it might benefit from being on the route for Police patrols.

(b) Presentation – Update from Sam Ollerenshaw, Community Health and Wellbeing Project Lead, Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Mr. Ollerenshaw attended the meeting to update Members on progress made by the Community Health and Wellbeing Workers.

He outlined the aim of the project which is to reduce inequalities in Oakwood by identifying unmet health needs and connect people to appropriate services.

Oakwood was identified as a target area as it is within the top 20% of the most deprived areas within the UK.

The project, which is based from Spencer House, needs to be sustainable, feasible and if people are not willing to engage then the project could fail. It is also reliant on ongoing funding.

People can be referred to the project or they can refer themselves. There are currently around 40-45 people using the service.

The team comprises of five wellbeing workers who assess each individual referred and then determine if they feel the person is capable of looking after themselves or if they will require further intervention or assistance.

Councillor Sheridan enquired what the most common concerns were.

Mr Ollerenshaw said that mental health was the main concern, closely followed by housing and financial issues.

The Wellbeing Workers have been attending local community activities/groups such as Warrington Borough Council's Talking Point which is held at the Encounter Centre on a Thursday, the Bread and Butter Thing which is based in Oakwood and they have, or will be, working with the GP Surgery, primary schools, dentist, Your Housing Group and the CAB (Citizens' Advice Bureau).

Mr Ollerenshaw informed Councillors that the team will be meeting representatives of Your Housing Group monthly, starting in a fortnight, to deal with any housing needs or concerns.

An assessment of the success of the project will be undertaken to see if there has been any effect on local services such as GP services and take up of vaccinations/screenings. The team will also gather feedback from service users via a simple form.

There was also a discussion about the possibility of having a local community hub where activities or information sessions could be held.

Councillor Ellis said that he has been making enquiries about the Oakwood Community House which would be an ideal location and is currently unused.

The Oakwood Community Association is currently inactive; however, it is understood that the group still has a bank account although the funds have been frozen by Barclays.

Councillors commented that the facility is underused because the charge for the room(s) is too expensive for many community groups.

Councillors Evans, Brereton and Sheridan expressed an interest in getting the Oakwood Community Association up and running again.

Councillor Ellis thanked Mr Ollerenshaw for attending the meeting and Councillors said that they look forward to another future update.

(c) Public Participation

There were no members of the public in attendance, so the Chair drew this part of the meeting to a close.

Communication

(a) **Street lighting**

There are a significant number of lights out in the Locking Stumps/Birchwood Park Avenue area due to a supply issue.

Councillor Ellis commented that he believes these lights are still not working due to a utility supply issue.

(b) **Powell Avenue/Temporary Ramp**

At the March Town Council Meeting Councillors had asked the Clerk to obtain details of the specification for the new fencing and the padlock which will be used to lock the bollard.

The Clerk said that these have been received and circulated and there is also a copy in the papers for the meeting this evening.

(c) **Admirals Square (Oakwood Local Shops)**

The Clerk stated that she had been informed that the queries relating to Admirals Square have been allocated to a WBC Highways Inspector. A response is still awaited.

The Clerk informed Councillors that she has chased this matter up with Warrington Borough Council.

(d) **Armstrong Close and Ainscough Road (potential adoption of street lighting)**

The Clerk said that she has been informed that WBC will review the situation over the next few months and will advise once this review has been completed. A response is still awaited.

A monthly report (see below) had been received from Warrington Borough Council just prior to the meeting regarding some other outstanding issues:

*Trip Hazards such as uneven paving Investigations Ongoing with highways. **Live**
Update Locking Stumps Play Area. Completed. Formal opening to be arranged with Councillor and BTC will be kept advised/informed. **Live**
Memorial - Birchwood Forest Park. Awaiting formal delivery of plaque, completed vegetation management. Further works to follow once received plaque. Anticipated installation May. **Live**
Work throughout borough such as facing off plantings surrounding verges and weeds.
Work live to be completed in due course, pending ground conditions. **Live***

004/23-24 YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) – UPDATE

A local resident had attended the February Meeting to ask the Town Council to influence YHG and the way that she believes they are ‘chopping down plants and replacing them with wood chippings, turning it into a desert’, querying why the work is carried out that way, if what they are doing is appropriate and whether the operatives undertaking the work are qualified.

The Clerk informed Members that she had written to the Landscaping Manager of YHG requesting a formal response which, to date, has not been forthcoming.

Action Clerk’s office to chase the formal response.

005/23-24 **INFORMATION REGARDING TRAVELLER ENCAMPMENTS**

The Clerk confirmed that she has followed up on the enquiry regarding awareness training which several Councillors had expressed an interest in attending.

Dawn Taylor, Manager of the Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team will provide the training and has asked for some dates. She has not been able to get a member of the Travelling Community to take part in the training to share their 'lived experience'.

Action Clerk's office to obtain some dates for training.

006/23-24 **PLANNING UPDATE**

Planning Application 2021/40696 – Trident Business Park – Proposed demolition of existing premises and redevelopment of site

The Clerk informed Members that a letter of objection had been submitted, on behalf of the Council, to Warrington Borough Council.

As there were technical issues submitting this via the online portal, she also emailed a copy to the Planning Officer and to Development Control.

As there were a considerable number of objections, Councillors expect the application to go before the Warrington Borough Council Development Management Committee (DMC).

If the application goes to DMC Councillor Ellis confirmed that he would speak to the application as a Borough Councillor.

Councillor Atkin will represent the Town Council with Councillor Scott acting as a stand in, if required.

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

007/23-24 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/online reports/telephone calls following queries/contact from residents regarding flytipping, tree/shrubbery issues, grass cutting, potholes, missing drain cover, trip hazards on footbridges where the surface has developed 'bumps', and where a bollard has been damaged, etc.
- (b) Received – various Traffic Notices
- (c) Wildflowers – There was a discussion with Councillors regarding the wildflower project. Some alternative options were discussed with Councillors such as additional bulb planting and/or more re-wilding areas.

Councillors asked Officers to arrange a meeting with Warrington Borough Council to discuss the absence of wildflowers for the 2023 season.

Action Clerk's office to arrange to meet with WBC.

- (d) Rights of Way – Councillor Ellis informed Members that he is still awaiting clarification from WBC regarding the old Birchwood Railway Station footbridge being designated as a definitive right of way on their system.

008/23-24 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/reports following queries/contact from residents including issues with flytipping (including that exposed by coppicing works), shrubbery maintenance, etc.

009/23-24 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE/ISSUES**

- (a) Received – various emails from Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA).
- (b) Received – Further update from Manchester Airport Future Airspace Project.
- (c) Details of the Friends of Gorse Covert Mounds meeting on 19th April, 7.30pm in the Poacher.
- (d) Cheshire Wildlife Trust Survey – shared on the BTC Facebook page.

010/23-24 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

Various LGC e-mail correspondence/briefings.

011/23-24 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Various Neighbourhood Alerts and ‘Our News’ – April 2023 – the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter.
- (b) Invitation for people to apply to join the Police Independent Ethics Panel.

012/23-24 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (CHALC), NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC), SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC)**

- (a) Received – NALC publications including the Chief Executive’s Bulletins, a consultation regarding the Infrastructure Levy (a reform to the existing system of developer contributions) events information, etc.
- (b) Received – ChALC weekly e-bulletins with various attachments, details of training sessions, etc.
- (c) Received – SLCC – various updates, briefings, news items, etc.

013/23-24 **MEMBERS REFERRAL**

Councillor Ellis – Signage/information boards re: Risley Presbyterian Church at the Cross Lane South Cemetery and potentially other local signs of historical interest.

At the March meeting Councillor Ellis had enquired if Members would be supportive of the installation of an information lectern being installed at the site of the old Risley Presbyterian Church to give a brief history of the site. He added that there are a number of local people buried in the graveyard with links to the local area, some of whom have roads named after them. He said that the board would have a QR code on it which would link to a website giving some local history. In the longer term he hoped that this would be one of several installations which would eventually form part of a heritage trail.

He commented that indicative prices had put the cost of a board at around £300 plus VAT, although he was mindful that the Town Council would have to work with Warrington Borough Council on the project as it is their land, and it is consecrated ground.

Members were unanimously in support of this project.

Action Officers to make enquiries with Warrington Borough Council regarding this project.

014/22-23 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

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

The next DMC is scheduled to take place on 27th April 2023. At the time of publishing the Clerk's Report no documents were yet available.

The Clerk's office had accessed the papers for the DMC prior to the meeting and there was one application which could be relevant to Birchwood. However, as the application relates to a location within the Ward of Croft, it was not sent to Birchwood Town Council.

Application No. 2022/42796 Biffa Waste Services, Risley Landfill Site Silver Lane, Warrington, WA3 6BY

Solar farm with associated infrastructure.

Councillors queried the basis of the application.

Councillor Ellis confirmed that the application states that the proposal is for a temporary consent for 25 years.

Councillors had concerns about what happens to the land upon expiration of the term and if there would be restricted access.

Councillor Ellis stated that, as the solar panels can be removed from site, it would probably be quite straightforward to return the land to recreational use. He added that the land is currently private, under the ownership of Biffa, and that current access is by way of permissive entry.

(b) **Planning Decisions**

(i) **Application No. 2022/42313** G And J Greenall, Melbury Park, Clayton Road, Birchwood, WA3 6PH. Proposed retention of a single storey Portakabin building for a period of 260 weeks from the date of expiry of original planning application, ref: 2019/34369 - granted on the 8th April 2019. **Granted.**

(ii) **Application No. 2022/42751** 2 Kelvin Close, Birchwood. Proposed retrospective alterations to the layout of the site to provide additional car parking, landscaping and associated works. **Granted with conditions.**

(iii) **Application No. 2022/42669** 82 Sandicroft Close, Birchwood, WA3 7LA. Proposed single storey rear extension. **Granted with conditions.**

- (iv) **Application No. 2022/42311** Spencer House, Dewhurst Road, WA3 7PG. Change of use of part of building to form 20. No. dwellings. Prior approval. **Granted with conditions.**
- (v) **Application No. 2022/42312** Spencer House, Dewhurst Road, WA3 7PG. Proposed external alterations at ground and first floor. Demolition of boiler room and tower. Erection of a refuse and cycle store, and installation of barrier across car park. **Granted with conditions.**
- (c) **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 for information only.
- (i) **Application No. 2023/00282/DISCON** (for information only). Terberg Matec UK, Leacroft Road, Birchwood, WA3 6PJ. Discharge of condition 5 (electric vehicle charging points) and condition 6 (cycle parking) on previously approved application 2022/41331 (change of use to ambulance station and training centre).

015/23-24 **ANNUAL MEETING AND ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

The Clerk informed Members that in previous years the Annual Meeting had been held prior to the Annual Town Council Meeting.

Members **resolved** that the Annual Meeting should be held on Tuesday, 23rd May starting at 6 pm with the Annual Town Council Meeting commencing at 6.30 pm.

016/23-24 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

The Chair reminded Councillors that it is customary for the Chair of the Town Council to formally open the Birchwood Carnival, which is to be held on Sunday, 11th June 2023.

This part of the meeting concluded at 6.45 pm.