

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE**  
**ON TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2023, 6.00 PM**

- Present:** Councillor Dempsey in the Chair  
Councillors Ball, Bowden, Brereton, Evans, Reeves, Scott and Simcock  
  
Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald  
RFO / Deputy Clerk – Mrs. C. Caddock  
Administrative Assistant – Mrs. H. Thomas  
  
2 Residents
- Apologies:** Councillors Allen (away), Atkin (personal), Ellis (WBC meeting) and Sheridan (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.

*Birchwood Carnival Committee: Councillors Atkin and Simcock.*

120/23-24 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

(a) **Police Monthly Update**

There were no Police present at this meeting and no Monthly Police Report had been received.

(b) **Public Participation**

Two local residents attended the meeting to raise their concerns.

The first resident raised some concerns about health and safety matters, specifically in and around the Brook Path including the underpass. One issue he raised regarding this, is the poor drainage around the underpass. The resident stated that it appears that sediment and other waste has been washed down into the grid and has created a blockage. He stated that the issue has been going on for a while and he has previously brought it up at other Council meetings. He explained that when there is high rainfall, the area is so flooded that people struggle to get through, which is especially concerning as it is a popular and safe route to access the local primary school, and people are forced to use an alternative route.

Councillor Dempsey noted that over the past week, we have had a high volume of rainfall and advised the resident that WBC expects residents to go through their preferred method of reporting these findings, i.e., directly to WBC via their online portal, as they do not want BTC to act as an intermediary on behalf of residents.

The resident also brought up the need for maintenance to be undertaken along the Brook Path leading up towards Birchwood Train Station. He stated that it is very overgrown, and the bushes are now growing onto the footpath causing a health and safety issue. The resident added that he was led to believe that WBC deals with tree maintenance and BTC deals with bushes and shrubs.

The Clerk explained that BTC does not own any land apart from where our Council offices are located, but the BTC maintenance team does do some pruning and facing-off on WBC's behalf.

The Clerk also explained that we are aware that this area mentioned is down on WBC's work schedule for the flail, but we have not been given a date for this work to be completed.

The resident raised another point, that the alternative route to Gorse Covert/Risley Moss, if the first route is blocked due to the overflowing drain as he mentioned earlier, is via a cut-through in the wooded areas which is very overgrown and hard to navigate. He also wanted to raise a concern that, when walking along this route, he came across a large piece of metal sticking up through the ground, which he believes to be part of the old railway lines that used to run through there. He noted that this could be a trip hazard or a hazard for cyclists that needs to be addressed.

Councillor Bowden stated that he does not believe this to be a Public Right of Way but agreed that if people are using it regularly that the piece of metal does need to be dealt with as soon as possible.

Councillor Dempsey again reminded the resident that he should go through the official channels of reporting this issue to WBC directly so they can contact the resident directly to gather more information, should they need to.

**Action** Clerk's office to ask BTC maintenance team to visit all sites and take photographs so that the Officers can report accordingly.

The resident also enquired about who maintains the grass field on Birchwood Forest Park, and whether due diligence is undertaken prior to mowing to remove any litter as, whilst walking his dog, he has found pieces of metal cans which have been shredded by the mower, leaving dangerous sharp pieces of metal on the playing field. There was also a smashed bottle in the grass.

The Clerk explained that it is the Ranger Service that undertakes the maintenance of the field, and this is something we would have to raise with them.

**Action** Clerk's office to contact WBC to enquire if an inspection is done prior to mowing being undertaken on the Forest Park.

A second resident brought up the increase of graffiti around Birchwood now that there has been more installations of masts, with their associated electrical boxes. He stated that the underpass which leads to Birchwood Forest Park is also full of distasteful and offensive graffiti, some of which has been there for some time. He is concerned with the number of children who will potentially be exposed to it during the school summer holidays. He enquired if this was something the Police are aware of and if they can do anything to deter this behaviour.

The Clerk stated that previously the Council has cleared graffiti from utility boxes and the offenders seemed to see this as a new 'blank canvas' and vandalised it again.

The resident asked if there was any way the local PCSO could police this matter and argued that this deserves as much police attention as speed enforcements, and perhaps if one or two were reprimanded, it may set an example to the other offenders and could hopefully deter them.

Councillor Bowden stated that according to WBC protocol, any racist or offensive graffiti reported should be removed within 24 hours. He urged the resident to report it to WBC, and he also made a report himself.

**Action** Clerk's office to collect photographs of the graffiti to send to WBC.

#### 121/23-24 **JUNE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Councillor Simcock **proposed**, Councillor Brereton **seconded** and it was **unanimously resolved** that: The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

#### **PROGRESS**

#### 122/23-24 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)**

##### **Communication**

##### (a) **Admirals Square**

The Clerk reported that she has written to the private landowners but is still awaiting a reply, so she contacted WBC's Highways Department to ask if they can assist in addressing the issue.

The Clerk also stated that since sending the original correspondence, Officers have been informed by residents that there are several trees on the land which have very low hanging branches. The trees are near an entrance to the local nursery, so some people are struggling with obstructed views at drop-off and pick-up times. BTC's Maintenance Supervisor has collected photographs of the specific trees and they have been reported to WBC.

##### (b) **Issues Raised Regarding Lyster Close**

The Clerk reported that WBC have done some work on Lyster Close to cut back the growth from overgrown shrubs. She reported that when they were there however, there were several cars which looked to have been abandoned, which prevented WBC from completing the entire job. She stated that WBC's landscape team is liaising with the Environmental Crime team to check the Tax and MOT status of the vehicles in question and will recommence the work upon removal of the vehicles.

##### (c) **Working with WBC - Meeting**

The Clerk contacted Mr. David Boyer at WBC who suggested a meeting date of Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023, however, this date was not suitable for many Councillors. The Clerk proposed an alternative date of Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023, at 5.30pm, which was suitable for those Councillors present.

**Action** Clerk's office to confirm date and time with WBC.

(d) **Sunken Drain Covers**

The Clerk confirmed that the sunken drain covers on Risley Road have been reported to, and dealt with, by WBC.

(e) **Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)**

The RFO has updated residents who have emailed with enquiries about the SIDs. The Council is still awaiting further guidance from the Police and WBC on the matter of the best locations for installation.

(f) **Shrubbery on Gorse Covert Road**

The Clerk confirmed that work has been done on the overgrown shrubs on Gorse Covert Road. There were reports of the contractors not completing the entirety of the work, but this has been rectified as the contractors later returned to complete the job.

123/23-24 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP (YHG) – UPDATE**

(a) **Meeting and Walkabout with YHG**

The Clerk stated that she had been in contact with YHG regarding a meeting and walkabout with Councillors in the Strawberry Close/Heather Close area of Locking Stumps, and they have suggested two possible dates for this meeting. A discussion took place, and it was agreed that Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023 would be a preferred date for the walkabout, upon confirmation with YHG, when the time will also be confirmed.

**Action** Clerk's office to confirm meeting date with YHG and agree on a time for the meeting.

(b) **Kingfisher Close Park Removal**

The Clerk has been in contact with YHG to relay concerns from Members about the gradual reduction in the number of play areas for the local children and enquired about the loss of the Kingfisher Close play park. YHG replied that there was only an old see-saw at the park which failed its ROSPA inspection. The Clerk stated that she has made it clear to YHG that Councillors are unhappy with the ongoing reduction of play provision in Birchwood with it not being replaced with alternatives.

124/23-24 **MEMBER'S REFERRAL UPDATE**

The Clerk stated that she has passed over the Member's Referral brought by Councillor Atkin at the June Council Meeting, regarding the possibility of added dropped kerbs near Risley Moss, to the appropriate department at WBC. She received an update from a WBC Principal Transport Planner regarding the request, which states that their most recent work programme was fully committed but they have visited the location and look to improve accessibility around the whole roundabout at that location. WBC proposes to include this location in a future work programme. WBC will keep the Clerk's office updated when the programme is confirmed.

125/23-24 **TRAVELLER AWARENESS TRAINING**

The Clerk stated that the in-person Traveller Awareness training took place on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023. During the meeting, the Manager from Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team said that she would email some resources over to the Clerk's office but unfortunately, she has not had time to do so yet.

The Clerk stated that the Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team are sending some additional resources for Councillors by mail, and the office will pass them onto Councillors when received.

Councillor Brereton asked whether the Clerk's office could enquire if there are any other training courses available to Councillors, as she would like to take the training further.

**Action** Clerk's office to liaise with Cheshire and Warrington Traveller Team to ask if there are any additional courses.

#### 126/23-24 **BIRCHWOOD ROYAL ORDNANCE FACTORY (ROF) MEMORIAL**

At the June Council Meeting, Councillor Ellis was tasked with communicating with the Park Rangers to ask about an additional formal unveiling of the ROF memorial. Councillor Ellis was not able to attend this meeting but sent his report to the Clerk.

Councillor Ellis has spoken to Gaynor Kerry, one of the Park Rangers, who is in favour of a second formal unveiling and will speak Dave Hazelhurst, the other Park Ranger, and the Environmental Manager at WBC.

Councillor Ellis suggested that BTC holds a Working Party if a further event is agreed.

Another action tasked to Councillor Ellis was to enquire if Gaynor would be happy to lead historical walking tours of Birchwood.

Councillor Ellis reported that Gaynor already does these tours for school groups and would be happy to arrange tours for other residents also.

**Action** Council to appoint Working Party for organising second formal 'unveiling' of the ROF memorial, if required.

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

##### 127/23-24 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)**

- (a) Sent/received – various emails/online reports/telephone calls following queries/contact from residents regarding flytipping, tree/shrubbery issues, etc.
- (b) Received – email from resident enquiring if there is a plan to upgrade the skate park at Birchwood Forest Park where the surface is in poor condition.

This query was forwarded on to WBC, which advised that they had closed the case because the resident should report it to WBC directly.

The RFO asked the resident to report this matter through the WBC portal, explaining the reasons why.

- (d) Received – email from resident with concerns that grass had been mown in areas they do not agree should have been mown.

The Clerk's office informed the resident that it was not BTC that had undertaken the work and the area in question is one that only WBC mow.

- (e) Sent – email to WBC regarding overgrown vegetation on Kelvin/Montcliffe/Cadshaw Closes in Locking Stumps.

The Clerk stated that this issue has been going on for many years and has been raised with WBC on several occasions. The Clerk stated that the issue is regarding land ownership.

128/23-24 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP**

Sent/received – various emails/reports following queries/contact from residents including issues with flytipping, shrubbery maintenance, unfinished cutting, etc.

129/23-24 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE/ISSUES**

Received – various emails from Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA).

130/23-24 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

Received – Various Neighbourhood Alerts. All alerts relevant to Birchwood have been forwarded on to Councillors for information.

131/23-24 **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, 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

132/23-24 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

- (a) Various LGC e-mail correspondence/briefings.
- (b) ‘Clerks & Councils Direct’ publication.

133/23-24 **AUGUST RECESS**

The Chair asked Members of the Council to consider whether they wish for a recess to be taken in August and, if so, that the Clerk, RFO/Deputy Clerk be authorised, in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of the Council, under delegated powers to take any emergency action that may arise, for example, in regard to planning matters or payment of accounts.

If anything particularly ‘pressing’ arises that might require significant consideration, a (remote) Working Party meeting could be called to discuss matters or, if necessary, a relevant in-person sub-committee meeting, or an in-person Extraordinary Meeting of the Council.

Councillor Dempsey asked for a show of hands, and it was **unanimously resolved** that the Council will take recess for the month of August 2023.

134/23-24 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

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

- (i) The next DMC is scheduled to take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023. There is currently no meeting agenda available for this meeting.
- (ii) Information regarding enforcement cases specific to Birchwood have been circulated to Members.

(b) **Planning Decisions**

- (i) **Application No. 2023/00698/DISCON** – Unit 722 (within Development Parcels 701 and 702) Daten Avenue, Birchwood Park, Warrington. Discharge of Condition no. 10 (Verification Report) Attached to Outline Planning Permission (Major) 2015/26044. **Part Discharged.**
- (ii) **Application No. 2023/00617/CLDP** – 21 Killingworth Lane, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6TA. Proposed single storey side extension – **Refused.**

(c) **Planning Applications**

*All plans can be viewed via:*

[http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport\\_planning\\_and\\_environment/Planning/Search\\_planning\\_applications/](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. 2023/00847/FULH** – 99 Carrington Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7QB. Proposed front extension at first floor level over existing garage. Resubmission of 2022-4273.
- (ii) **Application No. 2023/00781/FULH** – 50 Woolmer Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6UU. Proposed installation of an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) at the rear of the property.
- (iii) **Application No. 2023/00903/FULH** – 21 Killingworth Lane, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 6TA. Proposed single storey side extension.
- (iv) **Application No. 2023/00926/DISCON** – Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington. Discharge of Condition 42 (HS2 Utilities safeguarded area) on previously approved application 2023/00333 (Motorway service area).
- (v) **Application No. 2023/00918/FULH** – 40 Sandicroft Close, Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7LA. Proposed single storey rear extension.

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

**This part of the meeting concluded at 6.50 pm.**