

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD AT PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY ON  
TUESDAY 26th MAY 2009**

**PRESENT:** Chair – Councillor Terry Hearldon  
Clerk – Fiona McDonald  
Business and Finance Officer – Gary Crowe  
Deputy Clerk – Clare Caddock

**10 Residents**

**1. Opening of the Meeting**

The Chair, Councillor T. Hearldon opened the meeting at 6.30 pm and reported on the local activities of the Town Council during the 2008/2009 municipal year.

The purpose of the Meeting is to comply with the Local Government Act 1972.

**2. Minutes of Proceedings**

The Clerk reminded Members that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008 had been presented at the June 2008 Town Council meeting and signed as a correct record.

Copies of the Chair's Annual Report for 2008/2009 were available for anyone present who wished to see a copy.

This report will be published in the Summer 2009 issue of Birchwood Community News, delivered to all residents.

**3. Chair's Report**

The Chair welcomed residents to the meeting and reported as follows:

**Chair's Report 2008/2009**

Sadly, in 2009, our Chair, Councillor John Keeney passed away following a period of ill health, and so it is in the capacity of Acting Chair that I present this report to you.

2008/2009 has, once again, been a busy year for your Town Council and we have been heavily involved in a number of local initiatives. Here are just a few of the key ones:

**Parking**

The Town Council has worked tirelessly during the year, together with other partner agencies, to have double yellow lines installed near to the Birchwood Railway Station, Dewhurst Road and Benson Road. The parking situation became hazardous with cars parking wherever they could find a space, resulting in Dewhurst Road being effectively reduced to just one lane. Consequently, there were several near misses and on a number of occasions the buses could not access the railway station to pick up or drop off passengers.

We are pleased to report that since the yellow lines have been introduced the situation has improved considerably. The area is monitored and, where necessary, parking restrictions are enforced by Traffic Wardens who visit the site at least once a day.

### **Environmental Enhancements**

The Town Council has been considering how it can enhance the environment in ways which 'don't cost the earth'!

You may remember last year that there was a wildflower meadow on the 'dog bone' island near Oakwood Gate. The scheme was so well received by residents that we have been working with the Borough Council to extend the scheme to other suitable areas within Birchwood. In order for a wildflower meadow to have an impact, the area needs to be quite large so the locations selected were chosen for their size and accessibility.

During summer 2009 a further seven sites in Birchwood will be in bloom (fingers crossed) as a result of wildflower planting. Council Members decided upon several different seed mixes that would bring colour and variety to the area. Once the flowers are established we would welcome your comments to see what you think and from there we will decide whether to continue with the scheme next year.

In addition, there are some areas of Birchwood which do not lend themselves to having these meadows, and so we have looked at other means of introducing more colour to the area. We are hoping that by the time the magazine goes to print there should be a large six-tiered planter on the traffic island going out of Birchwood towards Junction 11 of the M62, and some planters in Locking Stumps and Risley Village.

The majority of the finance for the planters came after a successful application was made by the Town Council to the 'Quick Wins' scheme presided over by the new Warrington East Neighbourhood Board. We managed to secure £1,500 towards the cost of the scheme.

### **Oakwood Gate Renovation Project**

Council Officers and Members have been looking at the possibility of tidying and rejuvenating 'The Walled Garden' with other partner organisations. In its heyday the garden was well used and many local residents still have fond memories of it. Unfortunately, over the years the area has been neglected and it has suffered some vandalism.

The garden in its current state has been looked at by professionals, and despite being relieved of some of the specimen plants, early indications are that the majority of the remaining vegetation is in a reasonable condition and just requires some 'TLC'. This is a project that the Town Council is keen to be involved with along with the community and hopes that the area can be brought back to being a useful community space.

On the back pages of the magazine you will find a consultation questionnaire, so please take a few minutes to have your say and return it to us using the freepost address provided.

## **Land Acquisition**

During the year we have been able to formalise the lease on the land adjoining Parkers Farm which the Birchwood Youth and Community Centre stands on. The Town Council believes that this will be a valuable asset for the future.

## **Grant Aid**

The Town Council is able to offer grant aid to help support a number of community events during the year such as the Birchwood Carnival and the annual Community Fun Run, organised by Birchwood Community High School. We are also able to grant financial assistance to smaller community groups to help them provide much needed equipment or services to run local interest groups. Without this financial assistance many would struggle to survive.

I would like to assure you that before any grant is awarded a strict process has to be adhered to and applications must comply with our criteria in order that we fulfil our legal and financial responsibilities.

## **Speeding Traffic**

Birchwood's residents continue to have concerns about speeding traffic in the area, so in response to these concerns the Town Council and local Police have been looking at the introduction of more locations for the speed detection equipment to operate from within Birchwood, particularly on the key access roads.

During one campaign carried out on Ordnance Avenue 20 tickets were issued to speeding motorists and not all were visitors to the area! Please watch your speed.

## **Recycling**

There is now a kerbside collection scheme for recyclable waste which was introduced by the Borough Council. Although the scheme is proving successful, as far as we know there are no plans at present to remove the recycling facility at the Birchwood Shopping Centre.

## **Flytipping**

Unfortunately, the incidence of flytipping appears to be on the increase in many areas of Warrington, including Birchwood. We would like to take this opportunity to remind residents that flytipping is illegal and can carry a hefty fine. There is no need to flytip waste as residents have a number of disposal options available to them.

The Town Council will be working with other partner agencies during 2009/2010 to reduce or, hopefully, eliminate this blight on the community.

## **Abandoned Shopping Trolleys**

The number of abandoned shopping trolleys is on the increase again and so the Town Council, together with other local agencies such as Frontis, the Police and Warrington Borough Council have met with the Store Manager of ASDA to discuss ways of eradicating the problem. A number of measures have been agreed to make the reporting and collection of abandoned trolleys easier but it remains the responsibility of residents to return their shopping trolley to the shop or trolley park after use.

## **Partnership Working**

We are always looking at opportunities to work in partnership with local organisations to benefit the Birchwood Community and share costs.

We have been working with organisations such as Frontis Homes to deliver the playschemes facilitated by the Warrington Wolves Foundation and we are currently working with them and Warrington Borough Council to deliver the new Oakwood Local Park project which is to be a play area for our young people.

## **The Town Council**

Birchwood Town Council comprises of a team of nine staff and twelve Councillors who work tirelessly for the residents of Birchwood. During the year we have further developed links with other local organisations as we believe that by doing this we can deliver a safe, smart and successful Birchwood.

The Town Council is funded through the additional precept that is paid each year as part of the Council Tax, and provides a unique service to its residents. We pride ourselves on being a 'can do' Council and it is not often that we are unable to assist or find a solution to something. We continue to operate on the basis of an open information and access policy to residents.

We have a Council meeting each month (except August) open for any resident to come along to ask a question or comment on the way we provide services. We do our best to serve the local community and will strive to continue to do so. I have reported on the main issues of the 2008/2009 year, but many more one-off items have been dealt with in Council by Councillors and/or staff, so I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank them all for their contribution and for the support they have given me over the past year.

### 4. **Community Issues**

Resident, Mrs Nelson, informed those present that there has been good progress made on the Oakwood Local Park development. She stated that a further £50,000 of funding has been secured to put towards the future expansion of the scheme and that additional funding bids are currently being prepared with a view to securing more funds for the next phase(s) of the development.

Proposals for the next steps in the park's development include: a sensory garden, a memorial garden and play equipment designed for older children.

***The Meeting concluded at 6.50 pm.***