

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY ON
TUESDAY 24th MAY 2011**

PRESENT: Chair – Councillor Mike Evans
Clerk – Fiona McDonald
Business and Finance Officer – Gary Crowe
Deputy Clerk – Clare Caddock

13 Residents

1. Opening of the Meeting

The Chair, Councillor Evans opened the meeting at 6.30 pm and reported on the local activities of the Town Council during the 2010/2011 municipal year.

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

2. Minutes of Proceedings

The Clerk reminded those present that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on the 25th May 2010 had been presented at the June 2010 Town Council meeting and signed as a correct record.

Copies of the Chair's Annual Report for 2010/2011 were available for anyone present who wished to see a copy.

This report will be published in the Summer 2011 issue of Birchwood Community News, delivered to all residents.

3. Chair's Report 2010/2011

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

Message from the Chair

As my term of office draws to a close, it does so with many fond memories. I have thoroughly enjoyed being the Chair of Birchwood Town Council and have been proud to represent Birchwood at many local events. During this time I have met some fantastic people and have been involved with a number of wonderful projects. Thank you for the opportunity.

During the last 12 months, speeding motorists have caused many of our residents concern. Following discussions with the Police, the Borough Council and the local residents, the Town Council has decided to invest in a vehicle activated roadside speed indicator sign for the areas where a speed camera cannot be deployed. The Police will still carry out roadside speed checks in some areas of Birchwood.

What is interesting to note is that when the speed camera is deployed, and speeding motorists are caught out, surprisingly around half are local residents.

After several serious road traffic accidents on Birchwood Park Avenue, the Town Council requested a review of the speed limit. I can now report that Warrington Borough Council has completed all the necessary investigations and legalities, so a reduction in the speed limit to 50 mph will be implemented very soon.

We have also been campaigning for a place of safety to be installed on the splitter island located on Birchwood Park Avenue, close to the Carphone Warehouse. At a recent meeting Warrington Borough Council Officers recognised that this should be done as a matter of urgency and we are hopeful that this will be installed very shortly.

Continuing with the subject of road safety, the Town Council was successful in working with the Borough Council to have double yellow lines installed on the bend of Chatfield Drive. Many local residents raised concerns about the inconsiderate parking along this stretch of road resulting in buses being unable to pass and sight lines becoming obstructed.

I am pleased to report that although some motorists still park along that stretch of road, it has eased the situation.

The Town Council has been working with The Birchwood Partnership to secure funding which would facilitate the regeneration of the Walled Garden.

To date we have been successful in securing £50,000; however, this money can only be released if we manage to secure a further £36,000 from another funding organisation. We are working hard to try and make this happen.

We have also been working in partnership with Warrington Borough Council on the Nursery Garden located within Birchwood Forest Park near to the Ranger Centre.

This area has been neglected over several years, and a team comprising Gorse Covert Day Centre, Warrington Borough Council's Ranger Service, Birchwood Town Council and some local volunteers have worked on tidying the existing garden, installing a new fence around the pond, sowing a wildflower meadow and planting some bulbs.

Birchwood Town Council also funded the purchase of some Spring bulbs for Birchwood Forest Park so earlier in the year several Members of the Town Council, myself included, helped plant them near the entrance and car park to provide some much needed Spring colour.

Still on the subject of environmental enhancements, we are currently looking at potential sites for the installation of planters within Locking Stumps and are awaiting the approval of the landowners, Warrington Borough Council.

Over the past few years, the Town Council has been pressing for the maintenance, or removal, of a triangular raised flower bed in Gorse Covert. It was in a poor state of repair and needed some radical intervention. Several years later, we are delighted to report that this has been removed and the area was turfed. The Town Council secured permission from the Borough Council to relocate our six-tiered planter to this location and I am pleased to report that it is now in situ. The next few months should see a wealth of colour . . . we hope you like it.

Play provision has also featured during the year, and I am pleased to report that improvements have been made to several play areas within Birchwood during the year. Some of this has been achieved drawing on Playbuilder Funding and working in partnership with Frontis and Warrington Borough Council on some, not all, of the projects.

Looking forward, we recognise that some areas fare better than others and the Town Council will be looking at this during my successor's year of office, 2011-2012.

During the year we have also been involved in some contentious issues, such as the removal of the school crossing patrol provision at Locking Stumps Primary. We pushed for this to remain but due to budget cuts being made at the Borough Council and the fact that there was a signal controlled crossing point available; we could not get the decision overturned.

However, we did succeed in getting the plans for a telephone mast in Oakwood refused and Councillors also represented residents at the Development Control Committee meeting which saw the Biffa site at Risley being given a final date for closure.

We also worked with many organisations, including the YMCA, to get Hamnett Court secured when it became the target for anti social behaviour.

Trolleys were, again, a problem in the area and meetings took place with ASDA to discuss what could be done to improve the situation. There is now a company called Trolleywise which comes into the area twice a week to collect abandoned shopping trolleys.

We were perturbed to see the amount of waste left on Silver Lane on several occasions during the last three or four months. Although this area is outside the Birchwood boundary we believe it is unsightly for our residents and so Councillors and Officers have worked with the Borough Council and Biffa to try and resolve the issue.

At present Biffa is liaising with the Borough to introduce measures which will restrict access to this area and hopefully remedy this situation once and for all.

During the year we launched our new website which is still being updated, but we hope that you will find it a bit more user friendly. You can find us at www.birchwoodtowncouncil.org.uk

In closing, I would like to say that I am proud to be a Member of Birchwood Town Council, a Council that is proactive and serves the needs of the community as best it can.

Council Officers and the Maintenance Team continue to provide an excellent service within Birchwood and it has been a great pleasure to work more closely with them during my term of office.

I would like to thank both Officers and my fellow Councillors for their assistance during the last twelve months and I wish my successor every success during their terms of office.

4. **Community Issues**

(a) **Parking on Strawberry Close**

Resident, Mr. Fitzsimmons, raised concerns about parking in some parts of Strawberry Close, where some people are parking on the grass. He asked whether Frontis could be asked to put some form of bollards or posts on the areas of concern.

The Chair stated that we could write to Frontis about the matter and ask if they could install some form of post.

Action Clerk's office to write to Frontis regarding the above.

(b) Confusing House Numbering Strawberry/Violet Close

Resident, Mrs. Nelson, asked whether the Borough Council could be contacted over some confusion that often arises due to the fact that the back of some houses on Violet Close are accessed via Strawberry Close.

This has, apparently, even been the cause of some delay in ambulances attending houses on Violet Close (their front doors are only accessible via a footpath; vehicle access has to be at the back of the properties via Strawberry Close).

Mrs. Nelson asked whether the Town Council could write to the Borough Council regarding this matter and request that additional signage is installed to clarify house numbers.

The Chair stated that we could write to the Borough Council, depending who is responsible for the street signage in that area to make the request.

Action Clerk's office to send a letter regarding the above.

The Meeting concluded at 6.50 pm.