

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD AT PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY ON  
TUESDAY 28th MAY 2013**

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

**9 Residents**

**1. Opening of the Meeting**

The Chair, Councillor M. Hearldon opened the meeting at 6.30 pm and reported on the local activities of the Town Council during the 2012/2013 municipal year.

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

**2. Minutes of Proceedings**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2012 had previously been presented at the June 2012 Town Council meeting and signed as a correct record.

Copies of the Chair's Annual Report for 2012/2013 were available for anyone present who wished to see a copy.

This report will be published in the next issue of Birchwood Community News, delivered to all residents and on the Town Council's website.

**3. Chair's Report 2012/2013 – Councillor Muriel Hearldon**

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

**Chair's Annual Report 2012-2013**

The last twelve months have been a time of change for many of us whether it be in our personal or professional life. Some will have changed jobs, some may have sadly lost their job, others will have experienced great joy and some great sadness as I have during my tenure. Life brings us many challenges, some we have to face alone and some we face with others by our side.

The Town Council is a group of ordinary people who have been chosen through the election process to look after the well being of the community, much as you look after those close to you. We are here to protect the local community and, if possible, enrich the lives of our residents.

During the last 12 months, some long standing projects have been progressed further, for example, Councillors were delighted when they received the news that a bid for 'Access for All' funding had been successful and that finally, after many years of campaigning, lifts and other improvements to accessibility are to be made at Birchwood Railway Station. This project is progressing well and it is hoped that the scheme will be complete by January/February 2014.

We are also continuing to consult with Warrington Borough Council, the landowner, about some outline proposals for improving the facilities within Birchwood Forest Park. The park opened almost 30 years ago and is in need of some redevelopment and landscaping. We will be consulting with the community in order to establish if there is a desire within the community for improved facilities. This is something which we would have to be able to demonstrate to any potential funding providers.

Some initial thoughts are along the lines of:

- Installing some fitness equipment within the park for casual use by the community
- Installing some play equipment for older children
- Refurbishment of existing equipment e.g. new seats for the swings and some repainting
- Re-launching the 'kickabout' area as an informal multi use games area, perhaps for other ball games
- Rejuvenate the skateboard park/BMX track (hope to attract some external funding to achieve this)

We have been in discussions with the Borough Council and the Police on many occasions throughout the year on the subject of inconsiderate parking and speed limit reinforcement. As a result, some parking restrictions are likely to be introduced on Redshank Lane and Leacroft Road with some other areas being the subject of ongoing discussion.

We are also hopeful that a number of pedestrian crossings will be installed on Dewhurst Road to help people cross the road in safety; areas close to the Railway Station and the ASDA Service bay are being looked at, in addition to a location on Admirals Road.

The Town Council decided not to invest in a wildflower planting scheme during 2013 for a number of reasons. The last couple of years had seen a prevalence of yellow flowers despite choosing mixes with no yellow in them. The weather also had a large part to play, with one year having torrential rain and the next a drought. Sadly this produced some disappointing results.

Councillors took the decision to leave the areas 'fallow' for this year to see what, if anything, would grow whilst giving the soil a chance to recover. Instead we will be increasing the number of planters in the area with the addition of some located in the vicinity of Jay Close.

Unfortunately, dog fouling has been quite a problem in some areas of Birchwood during recent times and we have been working in conjunction with Warrington Borough Council and the 'Love Where you Live Campaign' to address this matter. A campaign started on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013 which will run for a month, during which we will be working with other key partners to organise some clean up's and to help promote responsible dog ownership.

We were in discussion with McDonalds Restaurants earlier in the year regarding the amount of discarded litter, and approached them about sponsoring some litter bins in the local area. The local franchisee very kindly agreed to fund the purchase of four new litter bins which have been installed within Birchwood. They have also offered to help out on a community litter pick.

In addition to the more involved initiatives, the Town Council is involved day to day with many other activities such as: planning, cleansing and litter picking, landscaping and maintenance work to name a few. Town Councillors go on regular walkabouts to identify any areas which may need some attention. For example, litter grot spots or areas prone to flytipping, graffiti, faulty street lamps etc. Any concerns identified are then passed on to the relevant organisation for appropriate action.

Much of the future work and ongoing community events within Birchwood are done against a background of difficult financial times for residents and local businesses. For our part, we have kept increases in expenditure to the bare minimum and have been able to provide a very stable local precept rate (increased by 0.52% per year averaged over five years) to help residents, whilst retaining the level of service for the community.

I have enjoyed being Chair of the Council during 2012/2013 and having the opportunity to work with the local community on the things that matter.

The Town Council works with many partner organisations and businesses to serve the needs of the community and continues to provide an excellent service within Birchwood.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors, Town Council Officers and the Maintenance Team for their support during the last twelve months. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you all, and I wish my successor well during their term of office.

**Councillor Muriel Hearldon**  
**Chair 2012-2013**

#### 4. **Community Issues**

##### **Parking issues**

Resident, Mr. Fitzsimmons stated that parking in the area of Cross Lane South and the service road for the residents living on Warrington Road, Risley Village continues to be a problem. There are still people, allegedly employees from local companies, parking inconsiderately.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked that the Town Council continues to work with other partners within the community to try to put pressure on the employees who park there and on local employers to try to assist in working towards a solution to the problem.

The Clerk stated that the Town Council has recently received further complaints from residents and has been in contact with various partners regarding this matter; which will be discussed further at the May meeting of the Town Council, taking place later in the evening.

The Clerk reported that residents (having spoken to the people parking outside their homes) believe that it is mainly employees from one particular local company who are parking on the service road. Melanie Cusick-Jones, Park Facilities Manager at MEPC Birchwood Park has scheduled a meeting with Warrington Borough Council's workplace travel team, who they work closely with, to try to manage issues such as this if they arise. MEPC encourages the companies on the business park to promote alternative travel methods to their staff.

The Clerk added that MEPC has said they will also contact the particular company named by residents regarding this matter and ask they review the setup offered to their staff in relation to parking.

There were no additional matters raised by those residents present.

***The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm.***