

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT
PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 18TH DECEMBER 2012**

PRESENT: Councillor M. Hearldon in the Chair
Councillors Allman, Balding, Evans, Fitzsimmons, L. Hearldon,
T. Hearldon, Higgins, Lines-Rowlands and Spencer

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

PCSO Shacklock

Apologies were received from Councillors Bowden and Nelson and the Business and Finance Officer

Councillor Fitzsimmons proposed, Councillor Evans seconded and it was RESOLVED THAT:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council which took place on Tuesday, 27th November 2012, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

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.

573/2012 **RECESS**

Police Monthly Pledge Meeting and Update

PCSO Shacklock introduced herself to Members as the new PCSO to the Birchwood area; although she is not new to the job, having previously worked in Poulton North and South.

PCSO Shacklock gave Members a brief update on policing activity in the area since last month. She informed Members that priorities for December include monitoring the shopping centre in the run up to Christmas, specifically with regard to shoplifting. It is hoped that a number of Special Constables will be able to concentrate on Birchwood Mall.

The PCSOs have also been knocking on doors and putting advisory leaflets on cars during the icy mornings where people have left their keys in the ignition of their car, with the engine running and left it to defrost whilst they go back inside. Opportunist thieves are always on the look-out for this sort of target.

PCSO Shacklock also told Members about a recent trend of pub car parks being targeted overnight; even if valuables have not been left on display, car boots have been broken into.

PCSO Shacklock asked if anyone had any matters of concern they wished to raise.

The Clerk stated that over the last couple of nights there has been glass broken underneath the zip wire at Oakwood Local Park. She asked if the Police could monitor this area, in case it has become a place where people are congregating in the evenings.

The matter of travellers arriving on Silver Lane again was also raised – at the time of the meeting there were about four vans on the lane.

PCSO Shacklock stated that so far there had not been any complaints received about the travellers.

Councillor Fitzsimmons stated that there is an increasing problem of employees from the business area parking their vehicles on Cross Lane South and other local roads; since local businesses have started to charge staff up to £10 per day to park. Local residents have been told 'we can park where we like' when challenging some of the drivers, as there are no road markings or schemes preventing them from parking – although some drivers have actually blocked residents' driveways.

PCSO Shacklock stated that the Police have issued tickets when driveways have been blocked (after first knocking on doors and going in to local shops to ensure it is not local residents' own vehicles).

Councillor Fitzsimmons reported there is a meeting arranged for January to which the Police, Borough Council Highways Officers, Town Council representatives and representatives from local business will be invited to discuss the problem. He asked PCSO Shacklock if she and her colleagues can let residents know a meeting is planned, if they are asked what is being done about this matter.

PCSO Shacklock said that they would monitor Cross Lane South more closely.

Members thanked PCSO Shacklock for attending the meeting.

Priorities

The most recently available information regarding local Policing priorities can be found on the Cheshire Police Website: <http://www.cheshire.police.uk/my-neighbourhood/warrington-east/birchwood/priorities.aspx>

The Twitter address is @WarrEastNPU.

574/2012 **SILVER LANE**

(a) **Travellers**

It was mentioned earlier, during Recess (see Minute 573/2012) that at the time of the meeting, there are four caravans on Silver Lane

(b) **Stopping up of Silver Lane**

This matter is ongoing; there is currently no update available.

575/2012 **ADOPTION OF NEW CODE OF CONDUCT/REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

The final Register of Interest document was received this evening. We will now arrange for the complete set to be sent to the Monitoring Officer.

Action Clerk's office to send the complete set of documents to the Monitoring Officer.

576/2012 **POWELL AVENUE**

(a) **Underpass Drainage Issues**

The Clerk reported that this matter remains ongoing; the grit bin that was installed at this location has already had the lid torn off it twice.

Colin Jenkins has indicated that he will provide a further update in the New Year. He proposes to have a discussion with other Borough Council Officers regarding the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) Footpath/cycleway improvements in Birchwood to raise concerns about the underpass flooding and potential dangers of ice forming in this area, to see if there is an opportunity for the matter to be solved utilising some funding from the LSTF scheme.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with the Borough Council regarding this matter.

(b) **Additional Issues on Powell Avenue**

The Clerk reported that we had received several telephone calls from the resident who had previously visited the office to raise a number of concerns relating to Powell Avenue and the underpass.

The Clerk stated that the resident had mentioned the name of a Borough Council Officer, who we had not corresponded with or spoken to previously. She managed to contact the Officer, Mr. Paul Johnson from the Environmental Health Department; and had discussed the resident's concerns. Mr. Johnson will contact the resident about several of the matters, which concern light and noise issues.

577/2012 **JOINT POLICE/TOWN COUNCIL SURGERY**

These surgeries currently take place, the third Saturday of each month (except August) in the Community Corner in the Encounter Café, from 10.30am to 12 noon.

Councillors L. Hearldon and M. Hearldon attended the surgery on 15th December 2012. No one visited them.

Councillor Evans will be attending the surgery on 19th January 2013.

578/2012 **UPDATE ON PLANNING MATTERS**

(a) **Application No. 2011/18954 Land adjacent to Carrington Close, Birchwood. Application to establish land as Village Green.**

Councillors Fitzsimmons and Lines-Rowlands declared an interest

At the November meeting it was reported that Defra has called for a public enquiry regarding this matter; which is likely to take place in January 2013. There is nothing further to report at this present time.

(b) **Application No. 2012/19709 Prospect Farm, Prospect Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook, WA3 6EH. Proposed change of use to provide a clay pigeon shooting club, clubhouse and associated parking.**

This application will be considered at the Development Committee Meeting scheduled to take place on 24th January 2013.

(c) **Application No. 2011/19009 Prospect Farm, Prospect Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook. Proposed change of use to provide target shooting club with associated parking.**

(d) **Application No. 2011/19014 Prospect Farm, Prospect Lane, Rixton-with-Glazebrook. Retrospective application for upgrade of existing track surface.**

Regarding (c) and (d) above; we do not yet have any further information as to when these two applications will be considered by the Borough Council's Development Management Committee.

579/2012 **RISLEY LIAISON MEETING/BIFFA WASTE**

The Clerk reminded Members that the next Risley Liaison meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 22nd January 2013, 4pm, Rixton Old Hall.

580/2012 **CORRESPONDENCE WITH MCDONALD'S RE: LITTER BINS**

The Clerk stated that, as requested, she has written to the CEO of McDonald's UK asking whether they would be willing to sponsor additional litter bins in the area.

The Clerk has since spoken to the franchisee of the local outlet. They would like to work with us to supply some more litter bins in Birchwood. They favour the plastic bins and could offer four for the budget they have available.

The Clerk stated that the plastic bins are not ideal as they can be more prone to vandalism. She proposed that we ask for metal bins, but fewer of them. The Clerk added that the Borough Council has offered assistance in installing the bins as our Maintenance Team is no longer allowed to dig down to put them in – we don't have the necessary equipment to check for cabling, etc.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with the franchisee and Borough Council regarding this matter.

581/2012 **PEDESTRIAN CROSSING REQUEST - ADMIRALS ROAD NEAR CURLEW GROVE**

The Clerk reported that she has passed suggestions on to the Borough Council in relation to the potential provision of a crossing on Admirals Road and where one might be sited.

582/2012 **PARISH LIAISON MEETING**

The Clerk stated that she has suggested that the Borough Council might wish to have a Parish Liaison meeting specifically to discuss the precept and the changes in the way it is calculated and how this will affect local Councils. She believes this meeting should be held earlier in the year in order to allow local Councils to judge how it might affect them and how they may have to adapt in light of these changes.

An alternative suggestion was to ask someone from the Borough Council to make a presentation to the Town Council/all other local Councils once the mechanism for calculating the precept is known.

Action Clerk's office to liaise with the Borough Council regarding the above suggestions.

583/2012 **GIVE WAY ROAD MARKING REQUEST**

At the September Meeting the Clerk reported that an enquiry had been sent to Warrington Borough Council – (following a request from a resident) as to whether 'Give Way' road markings could be painted on the road at the junction of Ashdown Lane/Killingworth Lane in Gorse Covert.

At the November meeting it was reported that the resident was unhappy with the response from the Borough Council. He disagreed that visibility is not restricted as it depends on the time of day.

The Clerk reported that, as requested, she had contacted the Borough Council again, asking if they would reconsider this matter. We are awaiting a reply.

584/2012 **REQUEST FOR A REPLACEMENT SIGN ON COPPERFIELD CLOSE**

A response has been sent to the resident stating that: *"Following the receipt of a reply from Warrington Borough Council, the Town Council had to discuss the matter again in relation to all requests for informal signs within the area, whether for replacements or new ones. This is because the Borough Council has recently changed its policy in relation to such requests.*

For each new/replacement sign the Borough now requires an application for a licence to be made – if approved the licence fee is almost £500. Payment then has to be made for the installation of the sign. We are not allowed to install them ourselves. Each sign also has to be insured; all this on top of the cost of the sign itself, which is not actually enforceable.

The Town Council discussed this matter in some detail and reluctantly made the decision that as the signs are not enforceable and the costs have now become prohibitive, it will no longer be able to replace old signs or install new ones. This will be a Town Council policy for all informal sign requests.”

The Clerk stated that the resident subsequently asked if the old sign could be removed as it is twisted and rusted. An email has been sent to Craig Bailey asking if the Town Council is able to remove the sign or whether the Borough would have to remove it. We are awaiting a reply.

585/2012 **BIRCHWOOD STATION ACCESS FOR ALL PROJECT**

The Clerk reported that she, Councillor Evans, Councillor Higgins and Councillor Nelson had attended the stakeholder consultation meeting that was held on 11th December 2012 at Birchwood College.

Members were issued with copies of the draft proposals at tonight’s meeting, showing the first plans for the station upgrade scheme. The Clerk informed Members that the two crossing points shown are alternative proposed sites – either one or the other, not both.

Councillor Higgins stated that his current concern is that as the walkway between lifts is uncovered, he wondered about security (could people throw things off the bridge on to the tracks?).

Councillor Fitzsimmons asked, what happens when it is snowy or icy – would the walkway become slippery?

Councillor Evans reported that First Rail will maintain the new bridge, but does not want to be responsible for the old footbridge, which has now been in place for so long that it is considered a ‘right of way’. As such, the Borough Council has been asked to take responsibility for the upkeep of the old bridge. However, negotiations are still ongoing regarding this matter.

Councillor Balding asked whether pressure could be put on First Rail at this stage for them to agree to take responsibility for the old bridge as well.

Councillor Spencer stated that this could be done once the proposals were more formalised.

Councillor Fitzsimmons suggested that we could write now to state that we want the old bridge maintained by First Rail and the new bridge covered, and if necessary write again once more formal proposals are put forward.

The Clerk stated that the reason there are no current plans to cover the walkway is that there is no money left in the budget. However, it has been designed so that it could be covered at a future date.

Councillor Higgins stated that the scheme looks very exciting and said ‘well done’ to all those Members of the Town Council who have been involved in the long campaign for this to happen, including Councillors Nelson and Fitzsimmons and also several Councillors who sadly are no longer with us, such as Ron Tarry, Josie Mellor and John Keeney.

Action Clerk’s office to respond to the proposals regarding the bridge maintenance and a request to cover the walkway on health and safety grounds.

586/2012 **ROAD NAMEPLATES**

At the November meeting, the Clerk reported that we have been assured by the Borough Council that a number of nameplate signs have been ordered and the suppliers chased.

We have since received an email of thanks from a resident of Deanwater Close for assisting in having the sign replaced.

587/2012 **PARKING ISSUES ON WARRINGTON ROAD AND CROSS LANE SOUTH**

At the November meeting, the increasing problem of people from local businesses allegedly parking on residential roads in front of local residents' properties for the day (and on occasions blocking their driveways) was discussed in some detail. Some local businesses are also experiencing difficulties with people parking in their car parks for the day.

The Clerk's office was asked to arrange a meeting with MEPC, other local businesses, Warrington Borough Council Highways Officers, the Police and some of our Members, to discuss the issues.

At tonight's meeting the Clerk reported that a meeting has been arranged to take place on Monday 14th January 2013, to discuss these concerns. We are continuing to receive more complaints about this matter. (This was also discussed earlier in the meeting, see Minute 573/2012.)

588/2012 **RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE STILL NEEDED**

The Clerk reported that a resident representative is still needed from the Birchwood area for the Stronger Together Board for Warrington East. Members were asked if they knew anyone in the community who might be interested to pass on the information.

For further details contact Diane White on 07827 232561 or email dwhite@warrington.gov.uk

589/2012 **FACEBOOK AND TWITTER**

At the November meeting an email was received from a resident suggesting the Town Council should share articles, etc. (particularly about nature in Birchwood) on Facebook and Twitter.

The Town Council does not have a Twitter or Facebook account. Members discussed the suggestion and decided that Officers do not have time to keep such accounts regularly updated or, perhaps more importantly, moderated. Also, Members believe the specific promotion of nature is not really within our remit (although it sometimes occurs incidentally) and is best left to other local organisations.

The Clerk reported that a response has been sent to the resident.

590/2012 **'TRANSPARENCY'**

At the November meeting, the Clerk reported that we had received information re: a consultation on 'Local Government Transparency: Code (for £200K Councils) to be a legal requirement'.

The Clerk reported that the issue surrounding 'transparency' will require all Councils with an income of over £200,000 to publish details of any item that has cost £500 or over. There will be a formal layout for presenting this information.

Members were reminded that at a previous meeting, it was agreed once this becomes mandatory for local Councils, and the prescribed layouts have been received, the Town Council will comply by publishing the necessary information on its website.

At tonight's meeting, the Clerk reported that this matter remains ongoing; we have not yet received any further updates.

591/2012 **WEBSITE NOTICES**

At the November meeting, Councillor Balding suggested putting some of the notices the Town Council receives from local organisations on the website and asked Members for their opinion. It was agreed that the Clerk's office would select appropriate posters to scan on to the website as we receive them.

We have since uploaded a couple of items to the website under the 'What's On' section. Once the website has been updated, we will put further selected posters on the website as they come in to us.

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

592/2012 WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

- (a) Sent/Received – Emails re: leaves on paths within Birchwood Forest Park, making the paths slippery when they froze.

The Clerk reported that we had contacted the Borough Council about this matter and asked if the footpaths could be swept. A note of thanks has since been received from the resident.

- (b) Received – Details of the Government's 'Alcohol Strategy Consultation'.
- (c) Sent/Received – correspondence relating to lights on a footpath that were reported as faulty by a resident being incorrectly logged by the Borough Council and therefore not being repaired for many weeks. The resident asked the Town Council to intervene.
- (d) Received – Christmas greeting card from the Mayor and Mayoress of Warrington.
- (e) Received – Request from Diane White to attend a Council meeting to make a presentation relating to a project to turn a piece of land at HMP Risley into a green community space.

Members asked why Diane wanted to present to them as the prison is in Croft, not Birchwood.

The Clerk replied that Diane had offered as a matter of courtesy, as the prison is not far out of our boundary; just to keep Members updated on the project.

Members decided that they did not wish Diane to make the presentation, but would like to thank her for the offer. However, they would be interested in seeing the outcome, once the project has come to fruition.

Action Clerk's office to contact Diane White regarding the above.

- (f) Received – Neighbourhoods Monthly Bulletin, December 2012.
- (g) Received – Information relating to an item discussed by the Borough Council's recent Audit and Corporate Governance Committee, regarding Councillors' obligation to register as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office. There are fees involved in the registration, which would, at current rates, be £35 per Councillor.

Members discussed this matter in detail.

The Clerk explained that the Town Council is registered as a Data Controller, but if individual Members hold any information (names, addresses, etc) of residents or other people as part of their Council work – whether on computers or in hard copy, it seems they will have to be registered in their own right; as Councillors have a responsibility to ensure the safekeeping of other people's personal detail. She added that it is unclear whether a Borough Councillor who is also a Town Councillor would have to register and pay fees twice.

Councillor Fitzsimmons stated that he believes this will be challenged at some point, particularly as some smaller local Councils may find themselves in a position whereby they would have to increase their precepts just to pay the Data controller fees.

Action Clerk's office to await further information regarding this matter.

593/2012 **BIRCHWOOD FORUM**

- (a) Received – Invitation to the launch of the Warrington Collegiate Logistics Training Academy.
- (b) Received – Details of a Christmas Carol event in the canteen at The Centre.
- (c) Received – Agenda for the Forum meeting taking place on 19th December. Subsequent notification was received that the meeting has been postponed until the New Year as many people appear to be away during this week.

594/2012 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – Various news items/updates from Warrington Voluntary Action.

The Clerk stated that these had included information regarding the Borough Council's Budget Consultation, which residents have until 11th January 2013 to respond to.
- (b) Received – 'Parklife' – December 2012 e-newsletters.
- (c) Received – Autumn issue of 'The Wire' 2012 – e-newsletter.
- (d) Received – Note from a resident thanking the Town Council for cleaning the paths; stating it is a 'pleasure to walk the area'.

Councillor Higgins said that he thinks the Maintenance Team is doing a good job, keeping the area as tidy as possible.

595/2012 **iCAN ALERTS**

Full details regarding the iCAN alerts below and details of free membership to the service can be found at <http://www.tswarrington.co.uk/ican>

- (a) Warnings received of distraction burglaries – three recent incidents. Burglars have impersonated electricity workmen and gas supply workmen. Residents are urged to exercise extreme caution if they receive any unexpected callers to their homes.
- (b) Warning received of scam telephone calls from someone claiming to be from the Ministry of Justice saying that a PPI claim has been awarded. In order to receive the payout a payment should be made by Ukash voucher. This is a SCAM.
- (c) Reminder received to ensure you have suitable and up-to-date anti-virus software installed on your computers and that you firewall is switched on.
- (d) Suggestion received – that if you choose to donate to a charity, ensure it is a genuine charity. Check with the Charity Commission on 0845 300 0218 or www.charity-commission.gov.uk
- (e) Reminder received that if you are on any social networking sites, to avoid any risks. Never openly advertise personal or financial details. Check your privacy and account settings and limit access to your pages. Always choose a strong password with a combination of upper and lower case letters, characters and numbers – at least eight characters long.

- (f) Warning not to leave a car unattended with the keys in the ignition and the engine running whilst you are defrosting it; even for a few seconds. Leave extra time to defrost your vehicle and ensure your vision is completely clear before driving.
- (g) Caution advised if you are approached by anyone offering to sell you a memory foam mattress. Previous experience from residents buying from the 'back of a van' has shown the mattresses were of very poor quality. Don't be fooled by stories of surplus stock.
- (h) Warning re: a SCAM email appearing to come from PayPal. It suggests that if you don't act, they will suspend your account. To protect your financial information, ignore the requests in the email and forward the entire email – completely unchanged, to spoof@paypal.com
- (i) Received – details of a scam email appearing to come from HM Revenue and Customs which is in circulation again. It is headed 'Tax Refund Confirmation' in bold green text. The email asks for personal information including credit/debit card details. If you really are due a tax rebate the revenue office will normally issue a cheque to your home address. They **do not** ask for credit/debit card details.
- (j) Received – details of an 'advanced fee fraud' – a high number of local residents have been receiving telephone calls relating to prize draw winnings. In order to receive the large cash prize, an amount of money - £850 in this case - had to be sent by 'Moneygram'. This is a scam – you should never have to pay a fee to claim a legitimate prize.

596/2012 **CHESHIRE COMMUNITY ACTION**

- (a) Received – Annual Review 2011 – 2012.
- (b) Received – 'Cheshire Archives & local Studies Newsletter' – Issue 6.

597/2012 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

- (a) Received – Details of a review of the Quality council Accreditation Scheme 2012/2013.
- (b) Received – Reminder of a Chairmanship workshop being held in January.
- (c) Received – NALC Bulletin – 27th November 2012.

598/2012 **PRESS ARTICLES**

Copies of various articles from local publications of relevance/interest to Birchwood.

599/2012 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

LGC – 29/11/12, 06/12/12
 LCR – Winter 2012
 Clerks & Councils Direct – November 2012

600/2012 **MEMBERS' REFERRALS MADE VIA THE CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING FOR CONSIDERATION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING**

There were no Member's referrals made prior to the meeting.

601/2012 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) **Warrington Borough Council**

- (i) Received – Notification re: the Planning Application Sub-Committee meeting on Wednesday 5th December 2012.

There were no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the agenda for discussion.

- (ii) Received – Notification re: the Development Management Committee meeting on Thursday 6th December 2012.

There were no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the agenda for discussion.

602/2012 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

- (a) Application No. 2012/20645 Heathfield House, Delenty Drive, Birchwood. Proposed single storey extension to rear of building to replace outbuilding to provide 9 additional nursery spaces. **Withdrawn**
- (b) Application No. 2012/20596 23 Jay close, Birchwood. Proposed removal of existing garden wall with a replacement fence in a different position. **Refused**

603/2012 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

All plans can be viewed via the Borough Council's website:

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/home/transport_planning_and_environment/Planning/Search_planning_applications/

- (a) Application No. 2012/21023 2 Sandicroft Close, Birchwood. Proposed construction of timber 2m high fence to replace existing.

The meeting concluded at 7.40pm