

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT
PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 24TH JANUARY 2012**

PRESENT: Councillor Bowden in the Chair
Councillors Evans, Fitzsimmons, M. Hearldon, T. Hearldon, Hepworth
Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk – Mrs. C. Caddock
Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe
PCSO Jon Williams
1 resident
Bernadette Bell from Frontis, John Littler, Head Teacher of Locking Stumps Community Primary School and four children from the School Council
Duncan Richardson – Strategic Commissioner and Partnership Development Manager from Warrington Borough Council
Steph Duerdon – Third Sector Partnership Officer
Apologies were received from Councillors Higgins, Nelson, Ratcliffe and Spencer

It was RESOLVED THAT:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council which took place on Tuesday, 20th December 2011, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

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.

001/2012 **TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPT 2012/2013**

The BAFO reported that Birchwood Town Council's portion of the Council Tax on a Band D property for the 2012/2013 financial year will be the same as the 2011/2012 requirement. This represents a NIL increase.

A precept requirement of £322,200.00 has been submitted to the Borough Council by the Town Council for the 2012/2013 financial year and, as one of the larger Local Councils, our budget will be published in the documentation that the Borough Council sends out with its Council Tax letters to residents.

The gap between our precept requirement and our budget of £349,300.00 for 2012/2013 will come from the use of miscellaneous income and some reserves.

002/2012 **RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLORS**

The Chairman reported that following the December 2012 meeting, he had received a letter of resignation from Councillor Jim Clark and Councillor Rachael Clark; due to family and work commitments.

The BAFO stated that as elections are already scheduled to be held in May 2012 the Town Council is not required to call a by-election under the 'six month rule'.

Action Clerk's office to inform the Borough Council of the resignations and subsequent vacancies.

(a) **Presentation re: Proposed Redevelopment of Locking Stumps Skate Park**

Bernadette Bell from Frontis, John Littler, Head Teacher of Locking Stumps Primary School and four of the schoolchildren attended the meeting to present their proposals for the regeneration of Locking Stumps Skate Park.

Councillor Bowden, Chair of the Council, welcomed them all and reminded Members and other visitors of the background that has led to the proposals being made. The project was first put forward at a Learner Voice Conference and it has taken almost two years for it to reach the stage it is at currently.

The children had prepared a board with photographs of the area as it currently stands on one side and on the opposite side of the board were plans, diagrams and photographs showing what they would like it to become.

The four children who are in Year 5, and on their School Council, introduced themselves and then gave a very confident presentation outlining the proposals.

The area in question is adjacent to Locking Stumps Primary School, close to a footpath and some local housing. The area had previously been used as a skateboard park, but over the years has become overgrown; it is dark and the children stated that 'it is often used for the wrong things'.

The children added that they would like to help the local environment by improving the area and make better use of the space to encourage healthy living. They said that their initial consultations had shown a high level of support.

Their proposal is to regenerate the area and for it to become 'The Birches Healthy Family Zone'.

The diagrams and plans showed an area for younger children with play equipment, a relaxation area with mosaic seating, flower beds, two outdoor tennis tables and an area with exercise equipment for older children and adults to use.

Councillor Evans asked if they had talked to the people who live close to the area that they were looking to regenerate.

John Littler replied that now the actual proposals have been drawn up they will be undertaking another consultation.

Bernadette Bell from Frontis said that they are not asking for financial assistance, but asked Members if they would consider sending a letter of support for the proposals. Funding is being sought from various bodies including WREN, Sense of Place and the East Area Board, for a total of around £62,000.

Councillor Bowden asked when the scheme would be started if all went to plan.

Bernadette stated that they would hope to start work in June 2012 with completion by October 2012.

Councillors were impressed with the proposals and unanimously agreed to send a letter of support.

Members thanked the children for attending the meeting and gave them a well deserved round of applause for their excellent presentation.

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

(b) **Warrington Borough Council's Consultation re: Community Asset Transfers**

Duncan Richardson – Strategic Commissioner and Partnership Development Manager from Warrington Borough Council and Steph Duerdon – Third Sector Partnership Officer attended tonight's meeting to give a presentation to Members on the Borough Council's consultation regarding community asset transfers.

Mr Richardson briefly went through the draft consultation document which can be found online at:

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/content_documents/Documents/Communications/Draft_CAT_Policy_Consultation.pdf

The term 'community asset transfer' relates primarily to the Borough Council giving property (land and/or buildings) to a community or voluntary organisation (VCO) so the VCO can use the property for the benefit of the community. This can be on either a long leasehold or freehold arrangement and is usually a transfer at less than best consideration (i.e. less than market value) to VCOs.

Mr Richardson also briefly went through the benefits to the local community, benefits to the Borough Council and other service providers and the benefits to the VCO of community asset transfers.

Any transfer would have to be sustainable and the Community Asset Transfer Team would be able to advise interested parties about all the considerations that would have to be looked at and how best to progress any requests. They would also remain available to advise after any transfer that has taken place as it would not be in anyone's interest for a transfer to fail.

Recent examples of community asset transfer have been the Warrington Disability Partnership's acquisition of Beaufort Street, Great Sankey Library and Grappenhall Library.

Steph Duerdon then went through some of the policy relating to the consultation (also in the draft consultation) and informed Members that there is a very comprehensive 'Tool Kit' document available which covers the consultation proposals in great detail. This can be viewed online at:

http://www.warrington.gov.uk/content_documents/Documents/Communications/CAT_Toolkit_consultation.pdf

This is quite a technical document, and it goes into far greater detail than the shorter consultation document. It does include several checklists including minimum eligibility criteria.

She went on to say that the Borough Council could potentially receive numerous requests from various groups about community asset transfers and one of the areas they would like some suggestions on is 'how would the Borough Council fairly prioritise requests?' if several organisations show an interest in the same property or piece of land. They would also like to receive any other comments or suggestions about the draft consultation documents. She added that if Members had any further questions, they would be happy to answer queries over the phone.

Councillor Fitzsimmons stated that the Town Council had seen a recent press release regarding a consultation on the sale of some Borough Council owned land, including the former Oliver Plunkett playing fields on Admirals Road and various fishing sites.

Mr Richardson stated that the Oliver Plunkett site was being considered for sale rather than for community asset transfer, but it may be that some of the ponds in Birchwood might be suitable for community asset transfers (although the article did not list which fishing sites were included for consideration).

A questionnaire on the consultation was circulated to Members and Ms Duerdon stated that the consultation ends on 24th February 2012 and that they would be pleased to receive any comments.

Councillor Bowden thanked Mr Richardson and Ms Duerdon for attending the meeting.

Action Members to complete and return the questionnaire if they have any comments or suggestions to make.

(c) **Police Monthly Pledge Meeting and Update**

PCSO Williams gave Members a brief update on policing activity in the area since last month and reported some of the statistics for the Birchwood area.

Issues reported included an increase in incidences of bicycle thefts, of which there have been four so far this month.

PCSO Williams stated that he is hoping to be able to acquire some property marking equipment and SmartWater soon and to hold an event locally for people to have their bicycles marked. He stated that he will let the Council know the details of when and where once he has been able to set up this event.

Priorities

PCSO Williams stated that the shopping centre (re: shoplifting) and business parks (re: theft of catalytic converters) had remained a priority and asked whether there were any suggestions for items to be considered as priorities for the coming month.

Councillor Bowden stated that, as usual, speeding continues to be an issue that is regularly raised with Councillors.

PCSO Williams reported that speeding is an ongoing issue that is now monitored whenever possible. Recent high winds made the deployment of the mobile speed sign difficult, as if a strong gust of wind catches the sign there is the possibility that it could be blown over and damaged. The Police will continue to regularly monitor speeds around the area.

Councillor Hepworth stated that he had recently been aware of what sounds like mini motos being ridden in and around the Pipit Lane area between the hours of 11pm and 2am. He asked if the Police were aware of any other reports of this.

PCSO Williams replied that he was nor aware of any reports, but that he would ask for this to be considered as a priority.

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>

Local arson attack

Councillor Fitzsimmons asked whether there had been any positive progress made regarding the recent arson attack on the local shop in Locking Stumps

PCSO Williams stated that although the suspect could not be identified from the CCTV images, there was a potential piece of evidence being examined and the investigation is ongoing.

Councillor Bowden thanked PCSO Williams for attending the meeting.

004/2012 **PARKING CONCERNS – AINSCOUGH ROAD**

The Clerk reported that the Maintenance Team had cut back shrubbery on the footpath and opened up the area near the back of Betfred and asked PCSO Williams if he could inform PCSO Davies that the work (that she had requested be undertaken) had been completed.

PCSO Davies had said at a previous meeting that once the shrubbery had been cut back she would start putting warning notices and fixed penalty notices on the cars that are parking inappropriately and will speak to staff at Betfred warning them about parking there.

PCSO Williams said he would pass the information onto PCSO Davies.

005/2012 **RISLEY LANDFILL LIAISON MEETING**

The Clerk reported that the Risley Landfill Liaison meeting scheduled for 2nd February 2012 has been postponed and will now be taking place at 4pm on 28th March 2012.

006/2012 **UPDATE RE: TRAFFIC RELATED QUERIES**

(a) Proposed Puffin Crossing to the Forest Park from Gorse Covert

The Clerk reported that work has begun to install the puffin crossing. It is estimated that it will take around five weeks to complete from 16th January 2012.

(b) Birchwood Park Avenue – reduction in speed limit

The Clerk reported that some signs appear to have been installed, which are currently covered with black plastic, but we have not received any official confirmation yet as to when the signs will be ‘operational’.

007/2012 **PLAY EQUIPMENT IN BIRCHWOOD**

The Clerk reported that she and the BAFO had met a representative of Wickstead (a supplier of play equipment) at the Forest Park recently to look at the possibilities of what could be done in the area with regard to rejuvenating the play areas.

We are currently waiting for him to draw up some proposals for potential schemes as a starting point on which to base discussions with the Borough Council (which owns the land) and to consult with the local community. Thought will also have to be given as to where any funding might be sought from in order to finance any improvements/additions to the area.

Councillor Evans asked whether the equipment (the grinding rail) had been reinstalled yet at the skateboard park.

The Clerk said that it had not yet been replaced.

Action Clerk’s office to contact the Borough Council about the reinstatement of the grinding rail.

008/2012 **JOINT POLICE/TOWN COUNCIL SURGERY**

Councillors M. Hearldon and T. Hearldon attended the surgery held on 21st January 2012, with PCSO Davies.

Councillor M. Hearldon said that the surgery had been relocated in to the Encounter coffee shop area, but nobody came.

Councillor Evans asked whether any posters had been made yet, which we have been told can be displayed in the Encounter coffee shop to advertise the surgery a bit more.

The Clerk replied that the Police have told her that they would supply the posters.

Councillor Fitzsimmons said he will be available to attend the next surgery on 18th February 2012.

Action The Clerk stated that she would enquire again about posters being made.

009/2012 **WALLED GARDEN**

Councillor Bowden declared an interest

As the WREN deadline of 31st December 2011 passed with no additional funding having been secured, their funding offer has been withdrawn.

Members agreed that this project will have to be put 'on the back burner' for a while.

Councillor Bowden wondered whether it might be an area that could be considered for community asset transfer, once the consultation has been completed and official policies are in place.

010/2012 **TOWN COUNCIL FLAG**

The Clerk reported that this matter remains ongoing.

011/2012 **FRONTIS WALKABOUTS**

The Clerk reported that the walkabout which she, the Maintenance Team Supervisor and Councillors Fitzsimmons and Evans had attended, took place on Monday 16th January 2012 in Oakwood. A follow up walkabout is on Monday 27th February 2012, meeting at the corner of Dunnock Grove and Admirals Road.

Councillor M. Hearldon reported that a nameplate sign for Swallow Close is still missing.

The Clerk said that it has been requested, but that she will chase it up with the Borough Council.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Borough Council about the Swallow Close nameplate sign.

012/2012 **PLANTERS**

The Clerk reported that all the paperwork has been done for the licences and it just requires approval by the Borough Council. The planters should be in situ in the springtime.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with the Borough Council re: the licence.

013/2012 **BIRCHWOOD RAILWAY STATION ACCESS**

The Clerk reported that, as requested, a letter of thanks has been sent to Richard Strachan, Chair of the East Area Board which had agreed to contribute £10,000 towards the successful 'Access for All' bid for a grant of £1M to put towards the cost of making improvements at Birchwood Railway Station.

014/2012 **WASTE BINS**

The Clerk reported that two new waste bins have been installed, one close to Birchwood Railway Station and the other between Whinchat Drive and Oakwood Common.

015/2012 **LIGHTING ISSUES ON THE 'SPINAL PATH'**

The Clerk reported that the Borough Council is in discussion with contractors and hopefully work should be able to start soon to solve the lighting issues.

016/2012 **ALLOTMENTS**

At the December 2011 meeting, the Clerk reported that she has been informed by Terry Hill from Warrington Borough Council that the Borough Council is keen to supply allotments but the funding is not available for them.

Members had thought £250,000 has been allocated for the provision of allotments and the Clerk was requested to ask the Borough Council for some clarification on the issue.

At tonight's meeting the Clerk reported that she had contacted Terry Hill, Service Manager Parks & Woodland Services at Warrington Borough Council. He replied that: "*The Executive Board agreed to make provision in the sum of £250K to fund the development and implementation of a formal Allotment Strategy. This was subject to this being considered as part of the Council's overall budget setting process. Because of the Council's budget savings it has had to make it was no longer considered. However Councillor Keane is the portfolio holder for allotment provision. Overview and Scrutiny have asked for a review on allotment provision and Councillor Keane is in the process of setting up an Executive Task Group to include all parties to look at this.*"

Councillor Bowden informed Members that a Task Group had been set up at the previous Executive Board meeting.

Councillor Fitzsimmons stated that it would be worth reminding the Task Group about the Borough Council's portion of the old Oliver Plunkett School site, which is already fenced off and there are utility services still running to the site.

Action Borough Council Members to speak to the Task Group about the Oliver Plunkett Site.

017/2012 **UPDATE ON PLANNING MATTERS**

(a) **Application No. 2011/18822 1 Delenty Drive**

Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and construction of six detached two storey dwellings, garages and associated landscaping.

The Clerk reported that this application will be discussed at the Planning Applications Sub-Committee taking place on 25th January 2012

Councillor Bowden stated that he will attend the meeting with a view to ensuring that all the verbal agreements made between the local residents and the developer were formally included in the plans or conditions

Action Councillor Bowden to attend the Planning Applications Sub-Committee meeting.

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

The Clerk reported that this application is still going through the relevant application process. She stated that we have received a letter from Birchwood Golf Club expressing their opinions and had drafted a response for Members to consider, which she will send if approved.

Councillor Fitzsimmons stated that although he lives in Carrington Close, he has no pecuniary interest in the application and he refused an invitation to join the Friends of Carrington Close Community Area (FOCCCA) group in order that he did not have any conflict of interest and so that he could remain impartial.

Councillor Evans stated that he has been asked by the Chairman of FOCCCA if we can ask the Borough Council where the application is up to and how it is progressing.

The Clerk reiterated that it is going through due process and FOCCCA is likely to hear any news on progress before the Town Council does. She added that all the relevant documentation can be searched online on the Borough Council's website.

Councillor Evans asked if the Clerk's office could let the Chairman of FOCCCA know that the plans and any other relevant documents/information regarding progress can be viewed online.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Chairman of FOCCCA regarding the above.

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

Councillor Bowden reported that this application had been withdrawn.

Councillor Evans asked about an email that had been received from BE Group asking for a meeting to discuss new proposals for the site

The Clerk reported that we had received an email from the BE Group stating that they have been appointed by Prospect Target Club to propose a new planning application for their proposed development and asking if they could meet with the Council in order to outline and discuss the new proposals.

Members considered this request and agreed that it would be best discussed at a Environment Working Party meeting when more time could be given for discussion. However, Councillor Bowden stated that it is highly unlikely that the Town Council will change its mind about objecting to any similar application.

Action Clerk's office to arrange an Environment Working Party meeting and invite a representative of the BE Group to attend.

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

Councillor Bowden reported that a decision on this application had been deferred for a site visit.

018/2012 **NEW BUS SHELTER ON BROCK ROAD**

At tonight's meeting the Clerk reported that the shelter has still not yet been installed and that she will chase matter up with the Borough Council again.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Borough Council regarding the above.

019/2012 **QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIAMOND JUBILEE**

At the December 2011 meeting, the Clerk reported that a consultation item has been published in the winter issue of Birchwood Community News; asking residents whether they would like the Town Council to mark this occasion somehow, and, if so, whether they have any suggestions for a way that would be both feasible and inclusive.

We have not received any feedback from residents regarding this issue.

Councillor Bowden reported that Warrington Borough Council is planning to purchase a large likeness of the Queen which will be available to use by organisations planning a Jubilee themed event. He suggested that perhaps the Carnival Committee might like to consider using it if they are going to add a Jubilee theme to the Carnival this year.

The BAFO stated that we have asked the Carnival Committee to meet with Town Council representatives on several occasions over the past few months, but have not had any success in convening a meeting so far.

Councillor M. Hearldon confirmed that whenever she had offered to meet the Committee the offer had not been taken up. She is disappointed because the idea had been for the Town Council to offer assistance in bringing new ideas to rejuvenate the Carnival whilst there was time to do so, but there are now only about four months for any new ideas to be put in place.

The Clerk reported that we are still unsure as to what date has been decided on for the Carnival because it was originally due to be held on the Jubilee extended 'weekend'; 2nd – 5th June 2012. The Clerk stated that the point had been raised that there will be so many events taking place that weekend, it might be better to move it – but we have not received any information since.

020/2012 **WINTER RESILIENCE SCHEME**

The Clerk informed Members that the five grit bins were installed in Birchwood prior to Christmas, so we are now ready for any cold snaps. In response to a question about stickers identifying these as Birchwood Town Council bins, the Clerk informed Members that there does not appear to be identification on any Local Council bins in any of the areas, but we do have some Birchwood Town Council logo stickers that we could possibly put on our grit bins if the Borough Council agrees.

Action Clerk's office to arrange to put stickers on the grit bins if possible.

021/2012 **BASKETBALL COURT ON CHATFIELD DRIVE**

The Clerk reported that all the containers and fencing had now been removed from the basketball court and it has been tidied up.

(a) **Review of Executive Board and Committee Structures**

Councillors Bowden and Fitzsimmons declared an interest

The Clerk reported that, as requested at the December 2012 meeting following Members' discussion of the proposals, a letter had been sent to the Borough Council stating that the Town Council supported the suggestions laid out in the consultation, but that they would like the issue of Parish Council Liaison to be included.

(b) **Local Development Framework – Core Strategy**

At the December 2011 meeting Members asked that someone be invited to make a presentation to the Town Council about what it will mean for Local Councils once the Local Development Framework – Core Strategy has been completed.

At tonight's meeting the Clerk reported that she had spoken to John Groves who informed her that Birchwood does not have any land that would be included in the strategy. However, they are planning to carry out a series of presentations for Town and Parish Councils later in the year.

(c) **Complaints about Dog Excrement on Old Warrington Road**

At the December 2011 meeting the Clerk reported that we had sent correspondence to the Borough Council regarding complaints received about the significant amount of dog excrement on the pavement on Old Warrington Road in Locking Stumps.

The Clerk stated that we are still awaiting a reply; she has already chased the matter up and will do so again.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Borough Council regarding the above.

(d) **Roberts Fold and Powell Avenue Subways**

The Clerk reported that the damage at Roberts Fold Subway has now been repaired.

With regard to the underpass that runs between Birchwood Fire Station and Powell Avenue/Delenty Drive, we received several reports of it being impassable due to flooding. This was reported to the Borough Council.

Although the Borough Council went out on the day it was reported, jetting the gullies did not solve the problem. We have been informed that some additional investigation will be required.

The BAFO reported that he had attended the 'Accreditation to the National Quality Council Scheme and Adopting the Power of Well-Being' held on 17th January 2012. Papers relating to the event were circulated to Members via email and copied for information in the late papers.

The BAFO stated that they were told at the event that issues like community asset transfers can only be dealt with by Local Councils with Quality Council status. However, Warrington Borough Council seems to have different criteria to assess their dealings with its Local Town and Parish Councils. He added that the title of 'Quality Council' appears to offer some kudos, but it also relies on the Clerk having the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification and if the Clerk leaves, the Council will lose the qualification unless it can hire another qualified Clerk.

With regard to the Power of Well Being, its benefits purport to allow Local Councils to fund projects that at present they do not have the power to do. The BAFO stated that in all the years he has worked for Local Councils he cannot think of any project that could have been dealt with more professionally or funded better or cheaper if we had additional powers. It is his opinion that the powers that the Town Council already has are more than sufficient to deal with what it does for the local community.

Members discussed both accreditation to the National Quality Council Scheme and adopting the Power of Well-Being and unanimously agreed that, at present, the Town Council does not wish to pursue either option.

024/2011 **LEISTON-CUM-SIZEWELL TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING PROPOSAL**

At previous meetings it has been reported that correspondence has been received about Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council's proposal to ask planning applicants to provide assistance to Parish and Town Councils; to help understand the details of large planning applications affecting their local areas.

At tonight's meeting the Clerk reported that we had received an email asking that we support this proposal further as although the Minister for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark MP is sympathetic, there are some in Whitehall who are not.

The Clerk asked whether the Town Council wished to continue supporting this proposal.

Members discussed the matter and unanimously agreed to send a letter to the Minister for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark MP, with a copy of the letter to go to Warrington North MP, Helen Jones.

Action Clerk's office to send letters regarding the above.

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

025/2012 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- (a) Sent/received – Correspondence following a telephone call from Warrington Borough Council regarding the recycling bays at Birchwood Shopping Centre which the landlords have asked to be removed due to the redevelopment of the shopping centre.

The Clerk said that she had been informed that the textile and shoe banks are to be retained elsewhere on site. Most people have blue bins at home in which paper, glass and cardboard can be recycled and it appears that the banks were being used by a significant number of businesses to dispose of their waste rather than arranging business contracts for disposal. The last time our team will litter pick the site will be 13th February.

The BAFO stated that the Town Council will be losing a small income stream, but the budget was prepared without relying on this income.

Councillor Fitzsimmons wondered if the back of the Tennis Centre might be an appropriate site for the cardboard and glass banks as there are already some bins there.

The Clerk said that it might cause a problem because there is a fire exit in that location. There are, however, additional glass, cans and textiles banks based at the Nelson's Quarterdeck public house on Admirals Road.

- (b) Received – A copy of the Borough Council’s Budget Consultation document for 2012-2013. This is available to view on the Borough Council’s website.
- (c) Received – Details of the Public Rights of Way Forum meeting – 11th January 2012.
- (d) Received – Correspondence from Phil Ramsden at the Borough Council regarding an application they are making to the Kennel Club for an award regarding the Oakwood dog fouling project and requesting a letter of support from the Town Council.

The Clerk reported that the letter came in between meetings and there was a very short time given in which to respond. Therefore a letter of support regarding the application was sent under a Chair’s Action, after speaking to Councillor Bowden, as the Town Council had fully supported the scheme during the time it was running.

- (e) Sent – Email regarding the flooding that occurs on the sharp bend near the ASDA service yard following heavy rain. The Borough sent a team to unblock the drains.
- (f) Sent – Email re: a tree that came down over a pond near the Walled Garden and a query about whether the pond can be returned to its original depth. We are awaiting a reply re: the pond. The Woodland Trust has made arrangements for the tree to be removed.
- (g) Received – Details re: a visit to Stockton Heath Library by author Carol Birch.
- (h) Received – Details of a free football table tournament event taking place at Padgate Library, Saturday 4th February, to celebrate national libraries day.
- (i) Received – Details of some roadworks that will be taking place on the A574 Birchwood Way, east bound between the roundabout at College Place/Woolston Grange Avenue and the roundabout at Birchwood Park Avenue/Oakwood Gate.

The work is programmed to commence on 19th March 2012 for 6 weeks. Work will take place on Mondays to Fridays between the hours of 9.30am and 3.30pm.

Eastbound lanes will be closed and a contra flow will be in operation to allow vehicles travelling towards Birchwood/M62 to cross on to the west bound side during the working day to allow resurfacing of the road. A 30mph speed limit will be in place. Pedestrian access will be maintained at all times.

A diagram has been placed on our notice boards and can also be seen by visiting the ‘Latest News’ page of our website www.birchwoodtowncouncil.org.uk and clicking on the link.

- (j) Received – A copy of the consultation regarding the Borough Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy, which runs until 3rd February 2012.
- (k) Received – Newsletter from the Illegal Money Lending Team (copied to Members).

The Clerk reported that two of the items in the newsletter related to Warrington.

Councillor Fitzsimmons stated that he was horrified recently to see some of the ‘payday loan’ type advertisements on television with APR rates of over 5,500%.

Councillor M. Hearldon said that this is something that she has been monitoring and wondered how it can be legal for vulnerable people to be offered such extortionate rates to borrow money which they may struggle to pay back, getting them even further into debt.

Councillor Bowden stated that a Motion had been proposed and received approval at the last full Borough Council meeting in December 2011 regarding this matter. The Borough Council is supporting the role of Credit Unions and is calling on the Government to introduce legislation against 'loan sharking' and is also asking it to limit the level of interest rates that can be charged.

Councillor Bowden asked if an item could be put in the next issue of Birchwood Community News, due for delivery sometime in July, about the North East Warrington Credit Union, which can lend money to its customers at reasonable rates.

The Deputy Clerk stated that a space will be reserved for an article.

Councillors also agreed that, in their opinion, advertising loans with people's cars as collateral is also unacceptable, as for some people who are already vulnerable to debt, their car may be the only realistic mode of getting to work and if they lose their car, they may lose their job - getting into even further debt. It is a 'vicious circle'.

- (l) Received – Warrington Carers Newsletter

026/2012 **BIRCHWOOD FORUM**

- (a) Received – Copy of 'Marketing Cheshire' presentation from December meeting and 'Marketing Cheshire' e-bulletin – 4th January 2012.
- (b) Received – Notification that the next meeting is on 20th January 2012. MP David Mowat will be attending the meeting.
- (c) Received – Details of a Ceilidh Night taking place at The Centre on Birchwood Park to support the local Brainwave Centre.
- (d) Received – Details of an event re: superfast broadband; taking place on at Jodrell Bank.

027/2012 **FRONTIS**

- (a) Received – Poster regarding two workshops being offered in conjunction with Next Step to help people to find work. The posters were displayed on our notice boards.
- (b) Received – Poster inviting residents who are interested in joining a project and growing their own food to attend a meeting. These were displayed on our notice boards.

028/2012 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – An enquiry made under the Freedom of Information Act regarding a mobile food van on Leacroft Road. A reply has been sent.
- (b) Received – 'The Roar' January 2012; the Birchwood Lions' newsletter.
- (c) Received – 'Craven Rail' – the magazine for SELRAP – the Skipton-East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership 2011/2012.
- (d) Received – 'Warrington LINK/HealthWatch' – issue 31, December 2011.
- (e) Received – Warrington Association for Special Children's December 2011 newsletter.
- (f) Received – From Birchwood Community High School – notification that Friday, 3rd February is the high school's annual review day when learners are off timetable and will only need to be in school for the duration of their interview.

- (g) Received – Invitation to the Chair to attend the Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council Civic Service on 11th March 2012.

The Chair said that he would check and advise the Clerk's office if he is able to attend.

Action Clerk's office to reply to the Clerk to Culcheth & Glazebury once the Chair knows his availability.

- (h) Received – Details of a range of seminars taking place in March in London dedicated to Local Government and Public Sector Efficiency.
- (i) Received – Poster regarding the Friends of Gorse Covert Mounds Group Meeting, taking place on 7th February 2012. This was displayed on our notice boards.
- (j) Received – Poster regarding the Warrington Disability Partnership's 'Weekend of Challenges – Going the eXtra Mile', taking place on 25th and 26th February. This has been displayed on our notice boards.
- (k) Received – Details of a Big Lottery online discussion event, taking place 1st February.

029/2012 **RECENT iCAN ALERTS**

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

- (a) Reports have recently been received about the doorstep sale of memory foam mattresses. NEVER buy from unknown sources as you may not get exactly what you expect. The goods may be stolen or counterfeit and possibly dangerous as they may not have gone through the appropriate safety methods of testing.
- (b) Residents are asked to be cautious if receiving a telephone call from anyone offering to help reduce council tax payments. Please do not engage with the caller and do not give out any personal details.

To have your council tax band checked free of charge, contact the Valuation Office Agency on 03000 501 501. Alternatively go to <http://www.direct.gov.uk/> scroll down to home and community then click on 'council tax'.

030/2012 **SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS**

- (a) Received – Continuous Professional Development email re: courses for 2012.

031/2012 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Received – Birchwood Partnership Report – January 2012. *Information*

032/2012 **CHESHIRE FIRE**

- (a) Received – Detailed correspondence from Gwyn Williams at Cheshire Fire. The essence of the letter is to ask for support for the campaign to retain the local fire control room.
- (b) Received – A letter of response from Councillor David Topping, Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority regarding the correspondence mentioned in (a) above.

Councillors had considered both the letters mentioned in (a) and (b) above which had been circulated in their papers and unanimously agreed to support the use of new 'state-of-the-art' facilities at Lingley Mere in Warrington.

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

033/2012 **CESHIRE COMMUNITY ACTION**

- (a) Received – Details of their Community Pride competition 2012.
- (b) Received – Invitation to the Connecting Communities event, taking place on 7th March 2012 in Crewe. Booking form is to follow.

034/2012 **CESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

- (a) Received – Details of a meeting regarding rural priorities for the Cheshire and Warrington LEP Strategy.
- (b) Received – Letter inviting Councils to nominate their outgoing Chairman or Town Mayor to attend a Royal Garden Party on 22nd May 2012.
- (c) Received – E-bulletin including details of some upcoming NALC conferences and various NALC Briefings on a variety of employment topics.

035/2012 **PRESS ARTICLES**

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

036/2012 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

LGC – 01/12/11, 15/12/11
Clerks & Councils Direct – January 2012
The Clerk – January 2012

037/2012 **MEMBERS' REFERRALS MADE VIA THE CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING FOR CONSIDERATION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING**

Councillor Fitzsimmons brought the issue of dropped kerbs to the attention of Members.

He reported that he has recently received a couple of queries about areas that did not have dropped kerbs and he has already dealt with these via the Borough Council. However, he stated that when people are out and about, a lot of attention is paid to the state of the shrubbery or if there is fly tipping or litter hotspots in the area, but he asked if Members could possibly consider noting any areas they feel are lacking in dropped kerbs.

Councillor Fitzsimmons added that, in theory, someone with disabilities in a wheelchair or on a disability scooter should be able to get around the whole of Birchwood's footpaths using dropped kerbs to cross from one side of a road to another.

Members agreed that this was a good suggestion and agreed to pay some consideration to this whether on official walkabouts or just on their daily travels.

The Clerk said that she would ask the Maintenance Team if they were aware of any areas that were lacking dropped kerbs and to bear it in mind as they were undertaking their work duties. She said that we could possibly ask the PCSOs to note any areas they might be aware of as well.

Action Clerk's office to speak to the Maintenance Team and the PCSOs regarding the above.

038/2012 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) **Warrington Borough Council**

- (i) Received – Notification of the Planning Applications Sub-Committee meeting that took place on 4th January 2012. There were no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the agenda for discussion.
- (ii) Received – Notification that the Development Management Committee meeting that took place on 5th January 2012. There were no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the agenda for discussion.
- (iii) Received – Email reminder about drop-in sessions for Councillors regarding the Borough’s Pre-Publication Draft Core Strategy.
- (iv) Received – Notification of the Planning Applications Sub-Committee meeting that took place on 25th January 2012.

Application No. 2011/18822 1 Delenty Drive - Proposed demolition of existing dwelling and construction of six detached two storey dwellings, garages and associated landscaping, was on the agenda for consideration with a Borough Council Planning Officer’s recommendation for approval.

- (v) Received – Notification that the Development Management Committee meeting that took place on 26th January 2012. There were no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the agenda for discussion.

- (b) Received – copy of a guide from the Campaign to Protect Rural England – ‘How to shape where you live: a guide to neighbourhood planning’.

This guide can also be viewed online a www.planninghelp.org.uk

039/2012 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

There were no decisions relating specifically to Birchwood available to report at the time of the meeting

040/2012 **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. 2012/19355 Site 3, Birchwood Park. Application for non-material amendment to permission 2005/16953 (landscape changes to front of building 305 and changes to ancillary building).

The meeting concluded at 8.40pm