

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD AT
PARKERS FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE, DELENTY DRIVE, RISLEY
ON TUESDAY 26TH JUNE 2012**

PRESENT: Councillor M. Hearldon in the Chair
Councillors Allman, Balding, Bowden, Fitzsimmons, T. Hearldon and
Liz Hearldon

Clerk – Mrs. F. McDonald
Deputy Clerk – Mrs. C. Caddock
Business and Finance Officer - Mr. G. Crowe

Mr. John Groves, Development Services Manager, Planning and Building Control,
Warrington Borough Council

PCSO Gina Jones

3 Residents

Apologies were received from Councillors Evans, Higgins, Lines-Rowlands, Nelson
and Spencer

It was RESOLVED THAT:

**The Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Town Council which took place on Tuesday,
15th May 2012, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.**

It was RESOLVED THAT:

**The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council which took place on Tuesday,
15th May 2012, be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair with one
amendment: Part of draft Minute 252/2012 had read, ‘Councillor Balding said that the
Woodland Trust is also very keen to solve this ongoing issue. Clare Burnside would like to arrange
a meeting with the farmer – although Councillor Balding thinks it may need a prosecution which
would possibly incur a financial penalty to the farmer, to encourage him to install a locked gate to
the lane to allow only authorised access.’ **This will now read, ‘Councillor Bowden said that the
Woodland Trust is also very keen to solve this ongoing issue. Clare Burnside would like to arrange
a meeting with the farmer – although Councillor Bowden thinks it may need enforcement and
potentially a prosecution in order to encourage the farmer to install a locked gate to the lane to
allow only authorised access.’****

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.

300/2012 **ADOPTION OF NEW CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Clerk informed Members that we had received very late notice from ChALC and also from
Warrington Borough Council (this afternoon) regarding information about the necessity for all
Town and Parish Councils to adopt a new Code of Conduct by 1st July 2012. There are currently
around five different draft models being put together for consideration by a number of different
organisations.

Councillor Fitzsimmons said that he had attended a meeting of the Borough Council on 25th June (last night) at which this matter was discussed. He formally proposed that the Town Council adopts the draft Code of Conduct from Warrington Borough Council, whilst other potential draft models are still being finalised.

This was discussed and agreed by those Members present.

New Register of Interest documents are also currently being prepared which will need to be completed by Members and published on our website when they are available.

The Clerk asked Members to take away the late paper regarding the Borough Council's draft Code of Conduct that had been circulated to Members this evening, for further consideration; so that, if necessary, this can be revisited at a future meeting when all the Code of Conduct documents are available to compare.

Action Clerk's office to publish the Code of Conduct circulated by Warrington Borough Council and adopted by the Town Council at tonight's meeting (possibly temporarily) in the absence of alternatives; in order to comply with the new regulations by 1st July 2012.

301/2012 **RECESS**

(a) **Presentation by John Groves**

Tonight's meeting was attended by Mr. John Groves, Development Services Manager, Planning and Building Control, Warrington Borough Council. Mr. Groves gave a brief presentation to Members regarding the National Planning Policy Framework. This new framework replaces over a thousand pages of national policy with around eighty, written simply, more clearly and concisely, with the aim of making planning more accessible to people and communities.

Mr Groves explained that it is important when local Councils are commenting on or objecting to planning applications, they make reference to the new Framework rather than the old planning policy guidelines, so it would be useful for Members and Officers to become acquainted with the new Framework.

Mr Groves reminded Members that there is currently a consultation ongoing, which finishes on Friday 6th July 2012; regarding the 'Proposed Submission Local Plan Core Strategy'

On the Borough Council's website page relating to this consultation it explains that, *'Warrington's Core Strategy is the overarching strategic policy document in the Local Planning Framework which, once adopted will replace the Unitary Development Plan adopted in January 2006. It sets out a planning framework for guiding the location and level of development in the Borough up to 2027, as well as a number of principles that will shape the way that Warrington and specific areas within it will develop between now and then. It will be the bar against which all future planning applications will be assessed.'*

The council intend to submit the Warrington Local Plan Core Strategy to the Secretary of State of Communities and Local Government, later in 2012, for public examination by an Inspector appointed by him to consider the Soundness of the Plan prior to its adoption as a Statutory Development Plan'

In response to a number of questions regarding the lack of specific detail relevant to local communities, such as Birchwood, Mr. Groves stated that the National Planning Policy Framework has to be general enough to cover all communities, but it would not preclude more local Neighbourhood Plans being drawn up at later dates that specifically relate to local areas and potential planning matters of concern to each of those different communities.

Mr. Groves stated that if Members had any other matters of concern that they wished to discuss further, he would be pleased to arrange another time to speak to them in more detail regarding the Local Plan Core Strategy and/or the National Planning Policy Framework. He added that any comments that Members might have regarding the consultation would be appreciated and positive comments were also welcome along with any points of concern.

Members thanked Mr. Groves for attending the meeting.

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

PCSO Jones gave Members a brief update on policing activity in the area since last month and reported some of the statistics for the Birchwood area. This has included the theft of some bicycles in the area. However, PCSOs Jones and Pickering have recently been undertaking some bike marking events and recently marked up 75 bikes at Birchwood Community High School in one day. There are also plans to undertake bike marking at Birchwood Park business park and at the local primary schools.

PCSO Jones informed Members that there have been anti social behaviour reports over the last month relating to the use of quad bikes around the area, particularly in Gorse Covert.

Councillor Liz Hearlton told PCSO Jones that she has also heard quad bikes on a number of occasions being ridden on the field at the rear of Swallow Close.

PCSO Jones asked that if people do hear or see them being ridden in an inappropriate area or manner that they let the Police know. (This can be reported on the 101 Police Number.)

Recent Priorities

(i) **Parking Issues Glover Road and Ordnance Avenue**

PCSO Jones stated that last month the Town Council asked that parking on Ordnance Avenue, near to the junction of Redshank Lane and parking on Glover Road, near to the junctions with Heather Close and Armstrong Close be raised as priorities.

With regard to Ordnance Avenue, PCSO Jones stated that as there are no road markings, the cars are not parking illegally, so the Police are unable to act – with the exception of when vehicles are parked too close to the junction with Redshank Lane causing residents to experience sight line difficulties and cars have been ticketed when this has occurred.

Regarding Glover Road, one of the PCSOs did ask one of the car owners to move their vehicle in order to allow the Borough Council's grass cutters to cut the grass. It was moved, but is now back again. Again, the Police cannot do anything unless there are road markings that legally prohibit parking in this area.

(ii) **Speeding**

PCSO Jones said that PCSO Pickering had informed her about the ongoing concerns of residents of Locking Stumps Lane relating to speeding. She said that data from the last speed monitoring exercise had shown that only a few vehicles were actually speeding. Councillor Bowden stated that he believes that part of the problem is that there is a perception that vehicles are speeding due to the layout of the road.

PCSO Jones agreed and added that as the actual houses are very close to the edge of the road, this also adds to the perception that vehicles are speeding, rather than them actually travelling over the limit. She said that PCSO Pickering has suggested asking if Members would be supportive of asking residents if they would like to set up a Community Speed Watch scheme, which they operate. The Police would help to organise this.

Councillor Bowden stated that a similar scheme in Croft had worked quite well but commented that any such scheme should not be used as a replacement for proper enforcement

PCSO Jones stated that the residents could stand with the mobile sign, which the Police could take out to agreed sites and they could make tally charts of the speed of traffic, although the sign remains an awareness tool only.

Councillor Allman stated that he believes that a sign that flashes the speed you are travelling would be a good deterrent as sometimes people don't realise just how fast they are going.

The Clerk informed Members that she believes the data the Police currently have to hand is from an old speed monitoring exercise and that a resident has informed us that a new set of traffic ribbons was installed on Locking Stumps Lane a few days ago. She added that the scheme undertaken in Croft had used a hand held speed 'gun' rather than a flashing sign and this had enabled warning letters to be sent out to drivers who had exceeded the speed limit.

PCSO Jones said that she believes the sign is still a good deterrent and asked Members to consider setting up a resident-led Speed Watch initiative.

Members were happy for the Police to contact residents to enquire if they would be interested in setting up and running a scheme.

Action PCSOs to be asked to consult with residents to enquire whether they wish to set up a Community Speed Watch Scheme.

PCSO Jones informed Members that Warrington East Neighbourhood Policing Unit now has a twitter account, so people can follow what is going on in their local area. Their Twitter address is @WarrEastNPU.

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>

Members thanked PCSO Jones for attending the meeting.

(c) **Parking and Landscaping Issues on Whinchat Drive**

Councillor Allman declared an interest as he is a resident of Whinchat Drive

Two residents attended tonight's meeting to inform Members about ongoing parking problems being experienced by residents of Whinchat Drive and to ask for the Council's help in trying to encourage Frontis to change the landscaping to allow for more parking spaces, as has been done in other Frontis areas, such as Talbot Close.

In addition the residents stated that they are fearful that there will be a serious accident soon because the shrubbery is so overgrown that drivers cannot see if other vehicles are passing as they are pulling out; and children cannot be seen if they are waiting to cross the road – or if they are playing and might be likely to run out.

A petition and photographs were sent to Frontis along with a letter asking if hedges could be moved to make more spaces.

The response that has been received from Frontis by one of the residents (as she is a Frontis tenant) was not positive. The letter states that parking is on a 'first come first served' basis. The residents explained that this is causing friction amongst neighbours, especially as some residents who work late have no chance of being able to find a parking space when they get home. In addition they said that residents from other roads are parking on Whinchat Drive.

For information, Councillor Allman stated that the residents are correct with regard to the parking problems and the issues with shrubbery. He said that he believes Whinchat Drive is on a 'safe routes to school' programme and this matter should be taken seriously by Frontis as a health and safety issue.

Councillor Allman added that (for information) he could bring in a copy of the letter that was sent to most residents of Whinchat Drive.

Councillor Bowden stated that Talbot Close has been remodelled and he believes Forbes Close might experience a similar remodelling soon, so he does not think it likely in the short term that the same will happen on Whinchat Drive; however he thinks that we could press for the overgrown landscaping to be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

The Clerk informed Members that landscaping maintenance on Whinchat Drive is listed on Frontis' shrub cutting programme as being due to take place in July.

Councillor M. Hearldon asked the residents if they would be happy for the Town Council to speak to Frontis about the matter.

The residents said they would be grateful if the Town Council could help in pressing for the landscaping to be cut back as a matter of urgency and for the issue of parking to be properly considered and not dismissed out of hand by Frontis.

Action Clerks office to contact Frontis regarding the above.

Action Councillor Allman to bring a copy of the letter mentioned above to the office for information.

(d) **Powell Avenue Underpass Drainage Issues**

The resident who initially brought this matter to the attention of the Town Council at the beginning of the year, following a fall that her husband experienced on black ice, attended tonight's meeting to inform Members that she had still not received any correspondence from Warrington Borough Council.

She had asked to be contacted by letter rather than by email and has so far heard nothing since her accidental meeting with Colin Jenkins at the underpass earlier in the year.

She stated that the three gullies are still regularly blocked and overflow (despite them having been put on a regular cleaning programme by the Borough Council) leaving a sludge residue which she believes is in itself is a slip hazard and is unsightly. Her main concern is that water is still running diagonally across the underpass, which could again become a slip hazard later in the year when the weather turns icy. In addition, water is also seeping from the bottom of the concrete slabs in the underpass itself.

The Clerk stated that she has spoken to Colin Jenkins and asked him to respond directly to the resident. She also sent another email last week, but has heard nothing back.

Councillor Fitzsimmons stated that he is very concerned that the resident has not received a written response from the Borough Council. He advised her to write to the interim Chief Executive Officer, Professor Steven Broomhead, regarding the lack of a written response.

The Clerk stated that Street Services should be cutting some of the vegetation in the area to try to create a natural ditch to divert some of the water away from the underpass.

The resident reiterated that although the underpass itself is not completely flooding some of the drains are still overflowing and water is still draining diagonally. Ideally she would like to see a drain installed on the left side of the underpass for water to flow into.

Councillor Bowden agreed that the resident should write to Professor Broomhead and stated that he would do the same on her behalf.

Action Councillor Bowden to write to Professor Broomhead.

Action Clerk's office to continue to liaise with the resident.

302/2012 **TELECOMMUNICATIONS MAST ON ADMIRALS ROAD**

We have not received any further information regarding this matter.

303/2012 **FLYTIPPING ON SILVER LANE**

Councillor Balding declared an interest

A clarification to the May Minute 252/2012 was made at the beginning of the meeting.

This matter remains ongoing.

304/2012 **POWELL AVENUE UNDERPASS DRAINAGE ISSUES**

This matter was discussed during Recess; see minute 301/2012 (d)

305/2012 **PARKING ON RENOWN CLOSE**

The Clerk reminded Members that a walkabout has been arranged to take place on the 2nd July 2012, 10.30am, meeting outside No. 1 Renown Close. The issue of parking can be raised again during this walkabout.

(Notification that this walkabout is postponed due to illness was received following the meeting.)

Action Clerk's office to send a reminder regarding the walkabout to Councillors nearer the time.

306/2012 **FOOTPATH OWNERSHIP**

The Clerk reported that we are still trying to ascertain land ownership regarding the path from the underpass to Chadwick House, which is on private land. She has chased the Borough Council again as they were going to help us find out who the land belongs to, but are still awaiting a reply.

Action Clerk's office to continue to try to ascertain who owns the land.

307/2012 **PLAY EQUIPMENT IN BIRCHWOOD**

This matter was moved to the Finance section of the meeting.

308/2012 **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.

Councillor Allman will be available to attend the next surgery on 21st July 2012.

Councillor Bowden suggested that we contact Inspector Tomlinson regarding these meetings as they take up a lot of time, both for the PCSOs and Councillors and on most occasions no one attends the meetings.

The Deputy Clerk stated that she had prepared some more posters for the Encounter Café, advertising the surgeries, which Councillor Evans had delivered to them. He was told they would be displayed, but none have yet been put up at the venue.

Councillor Balding stated that he felt the previous Community Action Meetings (CAMs) that were held in the evenings a few years ago were more useful and residents had attended each meeting. He suggested asking Inspector Tomlinson to reinstate the CAM meetings or to suggest other options of engaging with the local community.

Action Clerk's office to contact Inspector Tomlinson regarding the above.

309/2012 **FRONTIS WALKABOUTS**

A follow up walkabout on Dunnock Grove took place on 28th May 2012. The Clerk stated that the area had been tidied up since the initial walkabout.

Councillor T. Hearldon questioned the effectiveness of the walkabouts.

Councillor Fitzsimmons stated that they are effective multi-agency events and actions are allocated to organisations depending on what issues are seen to arise. The follow up walkabouts ensure that the actions have been taken. He said that Councillor T. Hearldon is welcome to attend the walkabouts to see what goes on.

Councillor Liz Hearldon said that a walkabout encompassing the back of Nightingale Close might be useful as a lot of flytipping goes on in that area.

310/2012 **BULKY WASTE COLLECTIONS**

The Clerk reported that Lisa Doran, Head of Refuse Services at the Borough Council, is arranging a meeting to investigate whether the Town Council can 'bolt on to' their collection service with 'Bulky Bob's' in some way.

The costs for our free bulky waste collection service have risen significantly; in May this year the average cost of each collection was almost £30 – this did not take into account the cost of running the vehicles or of the Maintenance Team's time – just the skip and disposal charges.

Councillor M. Hearldon suggested that we start to make a charge to collect items.

Councillor Bowden said we would probably start to see a lot more flytipping if we did charge for collections.

Councillor Fitzsimmons stated that it has always been the Town Council's policy to keep the area tidy and the free bulky waste collection service was a part of this policy.

The Clerk informed Members that we do have a number of residents who use the service regularly. Some collections are for items such as mops or ironing boards – not really bulky waste.

Members would like to consider setting a policy with regards to the bulky waste service.

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

311/2012 **PLANTERS**

The Clerk reported that have been given verbal approval from Warrington Borough Council to install the planters; we are still awaiting the receipt of the actual licences. Our Maintenance Team can now start to prepare and install the planters.

312/2012 **LIGHTING ISSUES ON THE 'SPINAL PATH'**

The Clerk reported that the lighting is now operational.

313/2012 **UPDATE ON PLANNING MATTERS**

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

Councillors Fitzsimmons declared an interest

We have not yet received any update regarding this application.

- (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.**
- (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 (b) (c) and (d) above; it has been suggested that Officers of the Borough Council's Planning Department are minded to deal with the applications under delegated powers with a recommendation for refusal, but Councillor Bowden stated that he believes the applications should go to committee.

A further discussion took place regarding these applications.

- e) **Application No. 2012/19763 34 Rockingham Close, Birchwood, WA3 6UY. Proposed demolition of existing garage and construction of two storey side extension.**

The Clerk reported that this application had been withdrawn but we have since received: **Application No. 2012/20108 34 Rockingham Close, Birchwood. Proposed two storey side extension (resubmission of application 2012/19763).**

Members discussed the new application and agreed that it still appears to be overbearing and there are also windows now in the wall overlooking the neighbouring property. They asked that another letter of objection be sent along similar lines to their previous comments.

Action Clerk's office to contact the Planning Officer attached to this application regarding the above.

314/2012 **WILDFLOWER MEADOWS**

Councillor Fitzsimmons asked if an area near the 'Dogbone Island' had been missed when the seeding had taken place, as there didn't seem to be any flowers appearing.

The Clerk stated that some of the wildflower meadows appear to be slow to germinate this year, so in places it seems that they haven't been seeded. This is probably because of the recent wet weather conditions.

315/2012 **FIRE STATION ROUNDABOUT**

At the May meeting the Clerk had reported on the difficulty being experienced with an infestation of Horse's Tail on the fire station roundabout.

At tonight's meeting the Clerk reported that the roundabout has been strimmed and reseeded with grass seed.

316/2012 **BIRCHWOOD CARNIVAL**

Councillors M. Hearldon and T. Hearldon declared an interest.

It was reported that the Carnival had been 'very wet' this year as it had rained almost non-stop all day. Councillor M. Hearldon stated that local singer, Hollie, had done an excellent job in keeping everyone entertained during her sets, despite the inclement weather.

A Carnival 'debrief' meeting had been held on 20th June 2012 at Parkers Farm. The Committee is looking for new Members or ideas for next year's Carnival; particularly ideas from the younger members of our community as to what they would like to see at the Carnival, if financially and practically possible.

If anyone would like to get involved with next year's Carnival or join the Committee, they are asked to call David Hazlehurst, Ranger at Birchwood Forest Park on 01925 824239.

317/2012 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - PROPOSED AREA MEETINGS**

The Clerk reported that she has sent an email to ChALC, as requested, stating that the Town Council has no objection in principal to a local area meeting.

318/2012 **BUILDING WORK AT BIRCHWOOD PARK**

At the April meeting, the Clerk reported that she has written to Jonathon Walsh at MEPC to ask whether there is any possibility of some additional large evergreen trees being planted and we were awaiting his feedback.

We are still waiting for feedback regarding this matter.

319/2012 **PARISH LIAISON MEETINGS**

The Clerk reported that she has contacted the Borough Council, as requested, stating that the Town Council believes that Parish Liaison meetings are useful on an 'ad hoc' basis – when there is something particular to be discussed.

320/2012 **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT AMENDMENT ACT 2010**

The Clerk confirmed that, as requested, she had written to our local MP, Helen Jones regarding this matter.

321/2012 **RISLEY LIAISON MEETING**

Received – From Biffa – Minutes of the Risley Liaison Meeting held on 14th June 2012 at which ongoing issues resolving the restoration of the site was discussed. Slides from a presentation were also attached.

The next meeting has been moved to Thursday 20th September, 4pm, Rixton Old Hall.

A brief discussion took place regarding the waste site.

The Clerk reported that she had received a telephone call from Mike Harty at Biffa Waste, who wanted to make Councillors aware that there would be four new planning applications submitted relating to the site. These will relate to a) a proposed further extension for landscaping of the site until 2014, b) soil treatment, c) the haul road and d) the transfer point of leachate.

The Clerk stated that she made Mr. Harty aware that if these plans are submitted after our meeting on July 24th the Council will be in Recess and it will be difficult to consider the proposals fully.

Mr. Harty has said that he will send copies of the plans directly to the Town Council, at the same time as he sends them to the Borough Council, in order to allow Members the chance to comment prior to Recess.

322/2012 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

- (a) At the May meeting the Town Council was asked for support in contributing to the lobbying on Planning Appeals and Planning Applications. Members had discussed this matter and agreed that the Town Council would support the lobbying.

At tonight's meeting the Clerk reported that a letter had been sent regarding the above.

- (b) The Clerk reported that our Chair, Councillor M. Hearldon is booked on to a Chairmanship training course taking place in July, for which there is a cost of £30.

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

323/2012 **WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- (a) Sent –email confirming our new Chair for 2012/2013 is Councillor. Muriel Hearldon.
- (b) Received – Golden Gates Housing Trust ebulletin – May 2012.
- (c) Received – Details of some 'Carers Safer Moving and Handling Sessions'.
- (d) Received – 'Warrington LINK/Healthwatch' newsletter May 2012.
- (e) Received/sent – Correspondence re: a request for an updated speed survey on Locking Stumps Lane following a telephone received from a resident; also other related emails.

This was also discussed earlier in the meeting during Recess (see Minute 301/2012 (a) (ii)).

The Clerk added that the resident had been pleased that we had arranged for shrubbery to be cut back from the speed signage so quickly and confirmed that the statistics that PCSO Jones had quoted must be old statistics as the resident had informed us that new traffic ribbons had only just been put down earlier in the week.

- (f) Received – Email re: a meeting on 13th June, about the proposed formation of a Community Tennis Club at Birchwood Tennis and Leisure Centre.
- (g) Received – Peel Ports Member Briefing Minutes.
- (h) Received – Link to ‘Warrington Wellbeing Strategy – Consultation’.
- (i) Received – Invitation to Mayor’s Civic Service and Parade. Due to late notice, the Chair was unavailable to attend this event.
- (j) Received – Invitation to Penketh Parish Council’s Civic Service taking place in July. The Chair will be attending; a reply has been sent.
- (k) Received – Draft agenda for Warrington Rights of Way Forum – 29th August 2012 with Minutes from the previous meeting.

In the Minutes it was noted that, *‘This year surfacing of Culcheth footpath no. 146 is being put forward for approval. It needs surfacing . . . and has potential to serve as a greenway access in future to a Culcheth–Birchwood greenway via junction 11 on the M62.’*

Councillor Balding stated that the path around the back of the Biffa site is very boggy and legal agreement is being sought to make it in to a bridleway, which would lead to it being surfaced.

- (l) Sent/received – various items of correspondence and a leaflet regarding the ‘Love Where you Live’ initiative; the Town Council is working in partnership with WBC and Frontis regarding the local aspects of this initiative.

The Clerk reported that an event regarding this initiative had taken place in Heather Close on 22nd June. It had been a very wet day. The idea is to tackle issues such as litter, flytipping, dog fouling, etc. She suggested that the local schools might like to get involved in litter picking events within their own grounds; but formal agreement with the schools has yet to be reached and then dates would need to be arranged

- (m) Received – information re: the closing date for the ‘Warrington Wide funding pot’.
- (n) Received – link to the ‘Older People’s Guide’ – www.warrington.gov.uk/olderpeoplesguide
- (o) Received – reminder re: the Cheshire and Warrington Sustainability Alliance AGM.
- (p) Sent/received – correspondence re: items requiring attention at the John Keeney Play Area.

The Clerk reported that someone had set a fire underneath the zip wire line and also one of the gates has been damaged. The Borough Council will be looking into and rectifying both these issues. The damaged gate has been padlocked as a temporary measure prior to it being properly repaired.

- (q) Sent – various emails regarding landscaping issues following the receipt of enquiries from residents in several areas of Birchwood.
- (r) Received – Invitation to the Chair to a reception to honour the Armed Forces community in Warrington commencing at 11am on 30th June 2012. The Chair hopes to attend the reception, but will be unable to attend the events later on in the day due to prior commitments.

Received – details of a consultation regarding the proposal for Birchwood Community High School to become an Academy.

Members discussed this matter in some detail and some Members had concerns and questions over whether the full implications of the school becoming ‘divorced’ from the local authority will have been taken into consideration.

These included:

- a) The school would, under the proposals, have to pay for services it currently receives for free of charge from the Local Authority, or at a subsidised rate from a supplier, e.g. legal advice; recruitment; payroll, broadband services etc.
- b) Councillors are concerned about the potential impact on pupils who do not meet the school’s entry requirements. Will pupils who don’t meet certain educational standards be refused entry despite living in the local catchment area? How will the school ‘select’ children? Who decides? If a pupil is unable to secure a place at their local school, where would they go and how would they get there? Will it remain a community school?
- c) If the school is suffering financially (which academies can apparently do), what would happen? Would the school ask parents to pay? Not all parents are in a position to be able to pay.
- d) What will happen to all the community facilities the high school currently enjoys – will the community still be able to access them in the same way as they do now, e.g. Library, Leisure and Tennis Centre, MUGA? Will the same fees apply (as applicable)? Which organisation will have the benefit of Birchwood Library, the Tennis and Leisure Centre facilities, MUGA as assets? These are supposed to be community facilities. Would this change complicate legalities of ownership and use?
- e) The Town Council has put a lot of money into the MUGA pitch located within the school’s grounds on the understanding that the facility is for community use out of school hours. Will this still be the case?
- f) The new school buildings were built with a commitment that they would be available for community use. Will they still be available to the community? Would charges for these facilities increase to offset costs elsewhere to such a level that it becomes untenable? What is the school’s view on this?
- g) Councillors commented that a lot of money, given by the Town Council, had been invested in the high school for things such as play equipment, the multi-use games area, funding for a number of events and litter picks each morning. They asked what the impact would be on these facilities and events.

Councillor Bowden commented that despite these concerns raised above, if Birchwood Community High School is not supported in becoming an academy, if this is what the parents want, there is an alternative concern that the school could find itself compromised as so many other schools in the area are also planning to become academies.

Councillor Balding noted that his children had attended a school that worked along similar lines to an academy and it had worked well.

Action Clerk’s office to respond to the consultation with Members comments and queries.

325/2012 **BIRCHWOOD FORUM**

- (a) Received – Invitation to the May and June meetings; with agendas.
- (b) Received – Article re: the official opening of Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub.
- (c) Received – Update and details of the launch date (27th June 2012) re: the new Birchwood Forum website.
- (d) Received – Business Warrington emagazine – June 2012.

326/2012 **MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE**

- (a) Received – Leaflet regarding ‘Mid Mersey Age UK’.
- (b) Received – ‘StopLoanSharks’ newsletter – issue 5.
- (c) Received – An urgent request for support to ensure the adoption of the ‘Planning Applications (Appeals by Town and Parish Councils) Bill (Early Day Motion 2824). An email was sent to Helen Jones MP. Her reply states that Early Day Motions are a way for backbench MPs to make their views on specific issues known; as she is a member of the Opposition Front Bench she is unable to put her name to the Motion.
- (d) Received/sent – correspondence with a resident regarding the ‘Birchwood in Bloom’ gardening competition; no longer running.
- (e) Received – Notification that Culcheth & Glazebury Parish Council will now meet on the second Tuesday of every month, not the third as previously.
- (f) Received – Details of the ‘Frogtastic’ in the park event, Tuesday 10th July, as part of Disability Awareness Week.
- (g) Received – Details of the new Birchwood Job Club, taking place each Monday from 11am – 1pm at the Encounter Centre Community Room, Birchwood. To book a free place Tel: 01925 765884 or email info@rocketemployment.com
- (h) The mobile speed sign was returned to Westcotec Ltd for repair as the display did not appear to be working correctly. It was repaired under warranty and returned.
- (i) Received – update regarding ‘Superfast Broadband’ from the Connecting Cheshire Partnership, including details of a public consultation which ended 22nd June 2012, along with information about a ‘Digital Champions Event’ taking place on that date in Northwich.
- (j) Received – details of Friends of Gorse Coverts Mounds Group Meeting (12th June) – poster was displayed on our notice board.
- (k) Received –Parklife e-bulletins.
- (l) Received – Details of next local blood donor sessions. Posters displayed on notice boards
- (m) Received/sent – correspondence with the company that hosts our website re: the EU e-privacy Directive on cookies; a law that came into effect recently, that requires notices to be put on all websites regarding cookies, requiring a response from visitors to the site. The e-Directive plug-in is now operational on our website.
- (n) Sent – A follow up letter to McDonalds asking whether they might consider funding some new litter bins for the area; as we been unable to make contact with the relevant representative over the last few months.

We are awaiting a reply.

- (o) Received – Poster advertising the Birchwood Youth and Community Centre AGM – Wednesday 25th July 2012, 7pm – 8pm at the Youth and Community Centre on Delenty Drive. Posters displayed on our notice boards.

327/2012 **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) Residents are reminded about scam emails appearing to be from HM Revenue & Customs. HMRC would not inform people of a tax rebate or demand via email, or invite them to complete an online form to receive or claim tax. Those who are affected will receive written confirmation.
- (b) Be aware of ‘prize draw winner’ letters stating you have won a major prize, but need to phone to make your claim - BEWARE the number is a premium rate number and you will probably be kept on hold for a long time. If you receive a text message or voicemail informing you that a ‘prize’ is waiting for you just delete or ignore it.
- (c) Counterfeit vodka which could be fatal if drunk has been found on sale in the North West. The bottle is marked ‘Revolution’ and its fake label wrongly suggests that it is produced by Aldi. The ‘vodka’ contains Butanol which can cause blindness and even death if ingested.
- (d) Recently two men pressurised an elderly lady in buying compost from them which she didn’t want. If you are approached by anybody and feel pressurised/tricked into paying for goods or services contact Cheshire Police on 101 immediately.
- (e) Residents should be aware of rogue telephone cold callers offering a plug in device which they claim can save them 40 per cent off their energy bills. A number of items have been tested and pose a risk of fire and electrocution - a safety recall has been issued for the items traced so far.
- (f) Residents have recently been contacted by a company offering to challenge the council tax band that their property is in. The company operates on a ‘no win no fee basis’ but charges a fee of 25% + VAT of any refund. This could amount to hundreds of pounds. Any householder has the right to contact the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) themselves on 03000 501501 or by email ctnorth@voa.gsi.gov.uk to check that they are in the right council tax band. For more information visit www.voa.gov.uk/

328/2012 **FRONTIS**

- (a) Received – Frontis’ estate pruning programme for 2012.
- (b) Received – Copy of a flytipping data sheet, with a letter asking if WBC would undertake a ‘no fly tipping’ campaign in the Redshank Lane area, in partnership with Frontis.
- (c) Received – Email correspondence relating to the ‘Love Where you Live’ campaign; including a follow-up invitation (with poster – displayed on our notice boards) to join Frontis for a ‘Big Clean Up’ in the Heather Close area on 22nd June.
- (d) Received/sent – correspondence regarding an invitation from Frontis to a ‘Respect Roadshow’ held on 14th June. Subsequently an email was received thanking the Clerk and Councillor Evans for attending the Roadshow, along with a note of thanks for the grant awarded by the Town Council towards this event.

The Clerk reported that approximately 50 residents had attended the event. The Clerk had taken the opportunity to talk to some teenage boys about what they would like to see included if the recreational facilities at Birchwood Forest Park were upgraded.

- (e) The Clerk reported that another clean up event is planned to take place on Thursday 12th July 2012 in Strawberry Close between 1pm – 3pm.
- (f) Councillor Bowden reported that he had received correspondence from Frontis regarding their funding bid to create ‘The Birches Family Zone’ and that Frontis were delighted to be able to announce that they had been awarded £64,855 from WREN to fund the project.
- (g) Received – Details of the Birchwood Youth and Community Centre AGM taking place on Wednesday 25th July 2012, 7pm – 8pm at the Centre on Delenty Drive. Posters have been displayed on our notice boards.

329/2012 **SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS**

Received – E-newsletter, June 2012.

330/2012 **CHESHIRE POLICE**

- (a) Received – Birchwood News Bulletin – June 2012.
- (b) Sent – notice that a gate has been installed at the entrance to Parkers Farm, with a post that narrows the space available for vehicles to enter the car park or use the entrance to manoeuvre (as vehicles going to/from the Police Station sometimes do). A similar email was also sent to Frontis and to Councillors for their information.

The Clerk reported that keys for the gate lock had been distributed to Council Officers and some staff including our caretaker, the caretaker of the Youth and Community Centre, the Police and the Fire Service.

331/2012 **CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

- (a) Received – Details of some Clerk’s vacancies.
- (b) Received – June Newsletter.
- (c) Received – Introduction to ChALC’s new Administration Assistant, Nicola Hewitt.
- (d) Received – 2012 Training Programme.
- (e) Received – Correspondence re: a proposed Neighbourhood Plans Workshop; asking if Councillors might be interested in attending.

The Business and Finance Officer stated that the Town Council does already have its own form of a Neighbourhood Plan in place (which the Town Council had entitled ‘The Community Plan for Birchwood 2006 – 2012’). This Plan has just come to the end of the six years that it initially covered and updating the Plan is something to be discussed at a future meeting.

Members discussed the proposal briefly and agreed that they would not object to someone representing the Council at a meeting, if it was deemed necessary.

Councillor Balding asked if he could have a copy of the Plan.

Action Clerk’s office to send Councillor Balding a copy of the Plan.

Action Updating the Community Plan to be put on the agenda for discussion at a future meeting.

- (f) Received – A ‘Code of Conduct briefing note’ regarding new codes of conduct and disclosable pecuniary interests, sent on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council; which states that, ‘*Authorities are advised to adopt a new code of conduct as soon as possible.*’

This was discussed at the beginning of the meeting when it was agreed that the Clerk’s office would publish the Code of Conduct circulated by Warrington Borough Council and adopted by the Town Council at tonight’s meeting (possibly temporarily) in the absence of alternatives; in order to comply with the new regulations by 1st July 2012.

332/2012 **PRESS ARTICLES**

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

333/2012 **PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED**

LGC - 19/04/2012, 26/04/2012, 10/05/2012 (back copies), 17/05/12, 24/05/2012
LCR – Summer 2012

334/2012 **MEMBERS’ REFERRALS MADE VIA THE CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING FOR CONSIDERATION AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING**

There were no Members’ referrals made prior to the time of writing this report.

335/2012 **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR COMMENT AND OBSERVATION AND OTHER RELATED PLANNING ISSUES**

(a) **Warrington Borough Council**

- (i) Received – Notifications re: the Planning Applications Sub-Committee meetings on Wednesday 30th May and Wednesday 20th June 2012.

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

- (ii) Received – Notification re: the Development Management Committee meetings on Thursday 31st May and Thursday 21st June 2012.

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

- (iii) Received – Link to Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan Core Strategy.

(b) **Query re: Erection of a Fence**

Correspondence received/sent re: a complaint about the installation of a new fence at an address in Locking Stumps. After consulting with local Councillors who live in the area, the resident was advised that this may have to be dealt with as a civil matter, if it contravenes stipulations in the deeds of the local properties relating to open plan frontages. The resident was also advised to confirm with the Borough Council that the fence did not contravene any planning regulations.

336/2012 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

- (a) Application No. 2012/19763 34 Rockingham Close, Birchwood. Proposed demolition of existing garage and construction of two storey side extension. **Withdrawn**
- (b) Application No. 2012/19845 138 Rockingham Close, Birchwood. Proposed single storey rear extension and garage conversion. **Approved with conditions**

- (c) Application No. 2012/19809 26 Falstone Close, Birchwood. Proposed single storey side extension (lawful development certificate). **Planning certificate not required**
- (d) Application No. 2012/19726 Birchwood Shopping Centre. Application for approval of details reserved by condition 4 (air extraction and filtration) on permission 2011/17845. **Condition discharged**
- (e) Application No. 2012/19729 10 Benson Road, Birchwood. Proposed change of use of Unit 43 from A1 Retail to A3 Café. **Approved with conditions**
- (f) Application No. 2012/19915 2 Sovereign Court, Birchwood. Addition of single storey utility room to existing bungalow. **Approved with conditions**
- (g) Application No. 2012/19973 86 Armstrong Close, Birchwood. Proposed two storey side extension. **Approved with conditions**

337/2012 **PLANNING APPEAL**

Appeal Reference APP/M0655/D/12/2172730 9 Ecclestone Close, Birchwood, WA3 7NL. Proposed two storey rear extension (Re: Planning App No. 2011/19284 - resubmission of 2011/18878) **Appeal dismissed**

338/2012 **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. 2012/20067 45 Fisherfield Drive, Birchwood. Proposed single storey front extension.
- (b) Application No. 2012/20068 45 Fisherfield Drive, Birchwood. Proposed single storey rear extension.
- (c) Application No. 2012/19999 20 Adlington Court, Birchwood. Proposed construction of new 2.4m high security fence and sliding cantilever gate, creation of additional car parking spaces involving minor landscaping works.
- (d) Application No. 2012/20233 2 Sovereign Court, Birchwood. Proposed addition of single storey utility room to existing bungalow (resubmission of 2012/19915)
- (e) Application No. 2012/20237 31 Ringwood Close, Birchwood. Proposed 1 ½ storey side extension.

There were no objections to the above applications.

- (f) Application No. 2012/20108 34 Rockingham Close, Birchwood. Proposed two storey side extension (resubmission of application 2012/19763).

This was discussed earlier in the meeting (see Minute 313/2012 (e)) when the Clerk reported that the initial application (2012/19763) had been withdrawn but we have since received: Application No. 2012/20108.

Members had discussed the new application and agreed that it still appears to be overbearing and there are also windows now in the wall overlooking the neighbouring property. They asked that another letter of objection be sent along similar lines to their previous comments.

Action Clerk's office to send an objection regarding Application No. 2012/20108.

The meeting concluded at 9.10pm