

November 2020 Birchwood Town Council Meeting:

(1 to 4) Apologies, Declarations of Interest, Public Participation (including the Police Report) and the approval of the October 2020 Council Meeting minutes.

Clerks Report to the Council / Part I Finance

(5) Progress Report - Copies of the main correspondence sent out/received since the Council Meeting in October 2020
(6) New Items for the consideration of the Council not otherwise raised in the Progress Report (7) Members' Referrals
(8) Planning Matters (9) Strategy & Action Plan Update (10) Accounts for Payment (11 to 13) Part I Finance; including approval of Minutes, main correspondence sent / received (progress) and new items received since the October 2020 meeting (14) Budget and Strategy 2021-2022

6 New Items

6.1 **Warrington Borough Council (WBC)** (*majority not copied in papers as A/circ. and/or available in the office*)

- 6.1.1 Sent/received – various emails / online reports following contact from residents re: flytipping, concerns about graffiti, trees, overgrown footpaths, height of shrubbery, footpath maintenance and road signage.
- 6.1.2 At the Parish Council Liaison Meeting on 15th November, Matthew Cumberbatch referred back to a document, 'Protocol for the use of social media by Councillors', initially raised by WBC, for the consideration of local Councils, just as the country went into the first lockdown. At the meeting last week, he commented that Parish Councils may wish to consider adopting the protocol. **Do Members wish to adopt this Social Media Protocol?**
- 6.1.3 Received – a request from the Census Engagement Manager for Warrington and St Helens, asking if he could speak to someone at the Town Council to ask some questions and fact finding about the area.
- 6.1.4 Received – Engagement Leaflet regarding the Warrington Western Link.
- 6.1.5 Sent/received – emails regarding a new traveller encampment at Rutherford House

6.2 **Your Housing Group (YHG)**

- 6.2.1 Sent/received – various emails / online reports re: flytipping and overflowing bins.
- 6.2.2 To note that the Clerk continues speaking to / corresponding with YHG about various issues, including ongoing and significant flytipping around the container.

6.3 **Miscellaneous Correspondence** (*majority not copied in papers – available in the office*)

- 6.3.1 Received – Various update/information emails from Warrington Voluntary Action.
- 6.3.2 Received – Some information about driving in the EU in 2021.
- 6.3.3 Sent/received – emails re: disability access at Birchwood Station.
- 6.3.4 Received/sent – emails re: supermarket trolleys being removed from the shopping centre.
- 6.3.5 Received – request from Locking Stumps PTA to borrow the sleigh again this year. We have agreed, with conditions, which will be included in a 'disclaimer'.

6.4 **Cheshire Police** (*Alerts already circulated - not copied in papers – available in the office*)

- 6.4.1 Received - Various Neighbourhood Alerts.
- 6.4.2 Sent/received – emails re: the most recent traveller encampment at Rutherford House.
- 6.4.3 Sent – email re: increase in graffiti in Robert's Fold Subway, and books being burned. We have request that the Police monitor the area when possible.

6.5 **Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC), National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)** (*already circulated – not copied in papers – copies available in the office*)

- 6.5.1 Received – NALC Chief Executive's Bulletins.
- 6.5.2 Received – ChALC weekly e-bulletins with various attachments, details of training sessions, etc.
- 6.5.3 Received – from SLCC – details and Minutes of branch meetings, news updates, etc.
- 6.5.4 Received from NALC – details of its #MakeACahnge campaign – in relation to promoting local elections. NALC has produced some resources for local Councils to use to help residents stand for election.

6.6 **Publications Received**

Various LGC magazines and e-mail briefings, and Clerks & Councils Direct November 2020.

7 **Members' Referrals made via the Clerk prior to the meeting for consideration at this Council Meeting**

There were No Members' referrals received prior to the publication of the Clerk's Report.

8 Current Planning Applications for Comment and Observation and Other Related Planning Issues

8.1 (a) Warrington Borough Council - Development Management Committee (DMC)

The DMC that took place on 11th November 2020 had no items of specific relevance to Birchwood on the main agenda for consideration.

8.2 Enforcement Cases (Already circulated if there is a relevant Birchwood item on the list)

Lists of enforcement cases recently opened/closed have been received.

8.3 Planning Decisions

- (a) Application No. 2020/37640 208B Cavendish Place, Birchwood, WA3 6WU. Proposed change of use of industrial unit to a small scale bulking up and transfer of sanitary and clinical waste (offensive, non offensive and hazardous waste streams sanctioned under the EA Standard Rules 2008 No. 24, clinical waste & healthcare waste transfer station). **Approved with conditions.**
- (b) Application No. 2020/37495 8 Adlington Court, Birchwood, WA3 6PL. Proposed signage. **Approved with conditions.**
- (c) Application No. 2020/37603 Site of former Fox Wood School, Chatfield Drive, Birchwood, WA3 6QW. Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition, Numbers: 3, 7, 9, 10, 15, 19, 21, 24, 25 and 26. **Conditions discharged.**

8.4 Planning Applications (Already circulated – not copied in papers) - all plans can be viewed via:

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

Certain applications are not Planning Applications; therefore there is no statutory opportunity to allow 21 days for comments, e.g: Non material amendment applications, Lawful development certificates (S192) and 28 day prior approval/determination applications. These types of applications are received for information only.

- (a) Application No. 2020/38031 Oakwood Gate Service Station, Birchwood, WA3 6RW. Proposed installation of 8 vehicle charging points with canopy. Installation of associated electrical infrastructure within 2.4m high timber enclosure and new retaining wall.
- (b) Application No. 2020/37964 62 Strawberry Close, Birchwood, WA3 7NT. Retention of use of land as a private garden.
- (c) Application No. 2020/37925 Unit 5 Prestwood Court, Birchwood, WA3 6SB. Proposed change of use from light industrial to sports rehabilitation and sports therapy.
- (d) Application No. 2020/38150 682 Warrington Road, WA3 6AU. 42 Day Householder Prior Approval – Proposed rear extension to extend beyond the rear wall by 6m, maximum height 4m & height at eaves 3m
- (e) Application No. 2020/38155 79 Mansfield Close, Birchwood, WA3 6RN. Proposed single storey side and rear extension.

9. STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN UPDATE

To receive any further updates re: the Birchwood Town Council Strategy and Action Plan.

PART I FINANCE ITEMS – INCORPORATING THE BUDGET & STRATEGY MEETING

10 Payment of Accounts

Members are asked to consider and approve the payment of accounts.

11 To receive the Minutes and recommendations of the Part I Finance, Audit and Personnel Meeting held on 27th October 2020.

12 Progress Finance, Audit & Personnel Items / Budget & Precept Items

12.1 Birchwood Youth and Community Centre (BYCC) New Lease

To note the BAFO has written to the solicitor to suggest a remote meeting be held with the solicitor, himself, and Councillor D. Ellis in his role as Chair of BYCC Trustees, to discuss some elements of the proposed new lease that require further clarification.

To receive any further update, if available, from the BAFO regarding progress relating to the proposed lease agreement.

12.2 Parkers Farm Estate

- (a) To note that work has started on the repairs to Parkers Farm. However, internal works cannot be completed on the ground floor, as the damp proof specialist cannot return until April 2021. It is therefore proposed that the work in the meeting room, entrance hall and downstairs office, be reprogrammed for April/May 2021.
- (b) To receive an amended Schedule of Works for the Parkers Farm repairs.
- (c) To receive photographs of the site to illustrate the extent of the scaffolding in place, the steel beam that requires plating/bolting to another beam and the barn doors that require repainting.
- (d) To receive notes from a site meeting that took place on 12th November with the Clerk, a representative of Cube, and a representative of Trinity Restorations.
- (e) To note that a Works in Progress insurance policy has been arranged with our insurance company to cover the works to Parkers Farm for the duration of the project (£1,003.63 including IPT). No hot works are to take place on site.
- (c) To receive a verbal update regarding other matters relating to the works to Parkers Farm (if any).

12.3 IT / Yellowbus

The quarterly Security & Compliance Check report was received from Yellowbus, with no issues to report.

12.4 Birchwood Carnival

To receive any updates, if available, regarding the 2021 Birchwood Carnival.

12.5 Interim Internal Audit

To note that we have booked our internal auditor, to undertake the interim internal audit for 2020/2021 on 26th January 2021. We hope that circumstances will allow for him to attend our offices for this appointment.

12.6 Data Protection / GDPR

The Clerk is continuing to liaise with our IT consultants and website provider for advice on some of the queries raised on a checklist received.

12.7 Cheshire Pension Fund

To note the receipt of the Cheshire Pension Fund Administration Strategy document, and Minutes from the meeting held on 16th October 2020, along with slides from a 'Approach to Climate Change' presentation.

12.8 BTC Vehicles

- (a) To note that ND58 BZR recently had a full service and MOT. We experienced similar issues as With our other transit van. It required significant repairs and welding, etc. before it could pass its MOT. The cost of £1,141.13 +VAT was approved by the Chair, and Leader of the Council.
- (b) To note that tipper HK64 NNM, at the time of writing the Clerk's Report, has been towed to the garage for repairs. We do not yet know the extent of repair required, or the associated costs.

13 New Finance, Audit & Personnel Items

13.1 Bank Account Reconciliation

To receive the Town Council's Income and Expenditure Statements and Bank Reconciliation Schedules for the account periods 1st April 2020 – 31st October 2020.

The payroll figure for September 2020 was £12,779.64 and £13,570.99 for October 2020 (including wage increase for 3 x staff backdated to April 2020).

After consideration and approval by Members the schedules will be signed by the Clerk or BAFO, and the Chair, as soon as is practicable.

13.2 Grant Application

To receive a grant application from the CPR Group C.I.C requesting grant aid assistance in the amount of £897.00. They are working with the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS).

The grant would be used for the installation of billboards in local schools, showing a step by step guide of CPR.

We requested additional information, asking whether local schools have been consulted, and do they wish to have these billboards, and how (apart from size) the boards differ from information freely downloadable from the NWAS website? The response is included in Members' papers. **Members to consider this application.**

13.3 Cheshire Pension Fund

To report we have received the date for the Pension Consultative Form Meeting on 22nd October 2021.

14 2021-2022 BUDGET AND STRATEGY

- 14.1 The BAFO has circulated the preliminary figures in the papers for consideration, regarding the Town Council's Budget and Strategy 2021-2022 deliberations (which, by association, will include some preliminary consideration of the precept for 2021/2022).

The following documents were enclosed to allow early consideration of (draft) budget figures:

- Birchwood Parish Precept Letter 2021/2022 from WBC
- Birchwood Parish Precept Worked Example for 2021/2022 from WBC
- BTC Projection – Year End 2020/2021 Balance
- BTC Schedule A - the income & expenditure projections for the 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 financial years

14.2 **Matters for consideration that will affect the formal completion of budget considerations including:**

(a) **Tax base for 2021/2022**

To note that for funding purposes the 2021/2022 tax base for Birchwood has been calculated as 3129; up 1 from 3128 for 2020/2021; which equates to an increase in income of £109.00 if using last year's Band D charge for calculation.

(b) **Staffing levels and costs**

To note the increase for £9.30 to £9.50 per hour (just under 2.2%) in the National Living Wage – as set by the Living Wage Foundation; the Town Council has previously resolved to mirror this wage rate for the Maintenance Team Operatives, the Senior Maintenance Team Operative, and the Caretaker. If Members are still minded to reflect this rate it, and any other potential wage increase decisions, will need to be formally ratified at the March 2021 meeting in order for any increases to be implemented in the April 2021 wage cycle, for the start of the new financial year.
Do Members have any initial thoughts?

(c) **Vehicle Replacement Programme**

To discuss putting a formal vehicle replacement programme in place for the Town Council's fleet; including the consideration of more environmentally friendly options.

(d) **Bus Shelters**

To consider options for replacing the Town Council's two silver bus stops in Locking Stumps.

(e) **Community Projects**

To consider whether the Council has any future community projects in mind.

(f) **Parkers Farm Repair/Renovation Scheme Costs**

To note the reduced cost relating to the Parkers Farm repair/renovation scheme.

(g) **Birchwood Carnival 2020 and 2021**

To note that the cancellation of Birchwood Carnival 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic has reduced the Town Council's spending for 2020/2021 by approximately £1,510.00. We do not yet know if an event can be held in 2021.

14.3 **Precept Meeting**

To propose that the formal Precept meeting for 2021-2022 takes place in December 2020; and to ask Members what date they wish the December meeting to take place. It is usually brought forward by a week, as it falls in Christmas week. This year it would fall on Tuesday 22nd December. A week earlier would be Tuesday 15th December. **What is the preferred date for Members?**