

What is Birchwood Forum?

Birchwood Forum is a highly active organisation representing the interests of all those who live and work in the Birchwood area. It aims to improve and maintain Birchwood as a vibrant economic community where everybody works in partnership, investing in the future together.



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Who is Birchwood Forum for?

Birchwood Forum membership is open to Warrington based businesses and organisations keen to contribute to policy decisions that influence business operation within Birchwood and across the borough.

Members come from business, retail, education, public service and community sectors all of whom are keen to network with each other.

What are Birchwood Forum members concerned with?

There are many issues that concern Birchwood and Warrington businesses. Profile, environment, safety, business support and transport issues are often raised and acted upon – action being the main attraction to members. It offers an ideal platform for public sector organisations to consult with businesses about their views.

What does Birchwood Forum aim to do?

The broad aims of Birchwood Forum are to:

- Sustain Birchwood as one of the North West's premier investment locations.
- Provide a network for businesses in Birchwood and Warrington.
- Provide members with opportunities to participate in local and regional policy development.
- Provide an interface between private and public sectors.
- Promote solutions for local issues.
- Work with and support employers in the area, offering a focal point for information.
- Respond to members' concerns whatever they might be.
- Provide regular meetings for members to get together to learn and network.
- Offer assistance to organisations wishing to locate to Birchwood.

What does Birchwood Forum achieve?

Birchwood Forum was established in 1996. To date, it has made a number of achievements and continues to offer a focal point for information and meeting members' specific needs as well as participating in consultation and opinion forming.

More recent achievements include:

- The most visible achievement of the Forum has been the **gateway sculpture** at Junction 11 of the M62, on the westbound junction. Representing the coming together of community and business, **Encounter** has received national acclaim through national media helping to put Birchwood on the map. The image is used by local organisations in recognition of its quality association with Warrington.
- **Annual Business to Business Exhibitions** have allowed local businesses to raise their profile in Birchwood and have attracted many visitors wishing to network and build business skills.
- Representing members' on the **Warrington Partnership**, particularly business members through membership of the Thematic Group for Environment, Regeneration and Housing and sub groups looking more in-depth at targets for Regeneration and Waste management.
- Participated in **consultations** on Regeneration Strategy, Waste Strategy, Economic Development and Competitiveness Strategy, Changes in Cheshire Fire Service operations, the Second Mersey Gateway, M62 Croft Interchange improvements, the Local Transport Plan for Warrington and the Cheshire & Warrington and North West regional economic strategies.
- **Informing members** on new policies and national / European targets especially related to energy efficiency and waste minimisation and recycling policies.
- Establishment of **The Birchwood Partnership** which now brings together private, public, community and voluntary sectors and residents to support improvements across the Birchwood community. A Steering Group has been meeting since January 2004 and in 2005 projects are helping to identify how the Partnership can work with young people in improving local facilities that give them more to do. Further details can be found on the Birchwood Forum website.
- **A Security in Birchwood survey** conducted in Summer 2005 has identified an interest in businesses working together to share information about potential crime threats.
- **Transport Survey & Commuter Plan** conducted to identify how people commute to and from work. Working with the local bus and train companies to open dialogue to improve public transport. Created an awareness campaign to highlight potential problems and environmental damage caused by pollution from vehicles.
- **Useful contacts** for private and public sector organisations.
- **Regular Newsletters**, now available electronically.
- **Website** www.birchwoodforum.com – see the latest news and list of members. Dates of member meetings, minutes, surveys and newsletters are posted regularly.
- **Member meetings**: in the morning on the second Wednesday of each month (except August).

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