

**Birchwood Forum Members Meeting  
Wednesday 18 April 2007  
At Birchwood Fire Station, Birchwood**

**MINUTES**

**Present**

Peter Crompton	BE Group
Mike Anderson	Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
Julie Fitzpatrick	Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
Gary Jones	Birchwood Shopping Centre
Judith Bayley	Birchwood Copy Centre
John Keeney	Birchwood Town Council
Gareth Keith	Carphone Warehouse/Opal Telecom
Lisa Flannery	Claremont Group Interiors
Poul Gosney	FESI
Kristian Marsh	Highways Agency
Nicola Crowley	Holiday Inn Warrington
Corinne Reynolds	Holiday Inn Warrington
Suzanne Whitelaw	MEPC Birchwood Park
Elaine Peet	MEPC Birchwood Park
Louise Metcalfe	MWH
Wendy Fenlon	MWH
Claire Taylor	NDA
Jenny Bamber,	The Genesis Centre
Lesley Marsland	The Centre at Birchwood Park
Amy Abbott	University of Chester
Mike Anderson	Volex
Carsten Kressel	WBC / Economic Development & Warrington 2000+
Lesley McAllister	Warrington Borough Council / Transportation
Pam Rose	Birchwood YMCA
Jacqui Johnson	CPRE
Tania Young	Financial Futures / Golden Gates Housing
David Smith	Financial Futures / Golden Gates Housing
Dieter Blanck	Risley Environmental Protection Group (REPG)
Phillipa Sudlow	Birchwood Forum

**Apologies:** Karen Lea, Entwistle; Derek Jones, Warrington Disability Partnership; Neil Anderson, WBC; Wright, JobCentre Plus; Bernadette Bell, Frontis; Sam Charles, Airmiles; Emma Peters, Airmiles; Ian Currie, BNES; Moira Beale, The Birchwood Bureau.

- 1. Host Safety Introduction by Mike Anderson, Cheshire Fire & Rescue.**
- 2. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited attendees to introduce themselves.**
- 3. Chairman's introduction**
  - a. Peter Crompton welcomed new members to Birchwood Forum: Claremont, MWH and Atkins. He also welcomed Gary Jones, the new Travel Reporter for Radio Lancashire☺

- b. Warrington 2000+ - Peter Crompton took up his new role of Chairman from 1 April 2007. Phillipa Sudlow has been accepted as the new Birchwood Forum representative.
- c. Jenny Bamber of The Genesis Centre is moving on to pastures new in Bolton. Thanks were given to Jenny for all her support of the Forum and Peter wished her well in her new role.
- d. Membership Fees for the new year: Invoices have been sent out, prompt payment would be welcomed.
- e. July Meeting Date: changed to 18 July due to both Peter and Phillipa away on the normal meeting date (previously 11 July) – not at the same place!
- f. Vision of Birchwood feature due for promotion by the Warrington Guardian. Publication date June 2007. More details to follow.
- g. An Admin Assistant is sought to support PS in her roles with Birchwood Forum and The Birchwood Partnership. 15 hours a week, £7 per hour, flexibility required is to cover Forum Monthly Members meetings and Partnership evening Community Meetings as well as general admin functions.
- h. The Birchwood Partnership: a community website is in design stage. All organisations in Birchwood will be able to input information, have links to their websites if required and be able to use the site to keep up to date with what is happening in Birchwood.
- i. The 8<sup>th</sup> Property Report launch is on Thursday 19 April at Lingley Mere. Peter will give a short report at the next Birchwood Forum meeting and will feature Birchwood activity during 2006.
- j. Birchwood Area Wide Travel Plan work ongoing with travel survey finished and a report presented to the Highways Agency. Further meetings being held between Halcrow (the consultants undertaking the work), WBC and Highways Agency to identify additional support to fund the development of the Area Wide Travel Plan. Already Car Share software has been acquired and this could be made available to all employees across Birchwood. A presentation will be made to Forum members in the near future.

#### 4. Presentation: Mike Anderson, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service – Update on Birchwood Fire Station and Automatic Fire Alarm Policy

- a. **Birchwood Fire Station** is undergoing a Duty System Review. While committed to keeping a round-the-clock service at Birchwood there is a need to match a rota system with the needs and risks of the local business and residential community. Fire Service fire fighters have decided not to opt out of working time directives and this needs to be considered in determining a viable system.
- b. **The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) has been agreed for 2007.** This consists of the results of a community risk assessment, a statement of intent to manage the risk and a five-year Corporate Plan.
- c. A major part of this plan is the Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) Policy. Most AFAs are **Unwanted Fire Signals**. This is a problem for the Fire Service and businesses. The need for call out of appliance and crew and the subsequent business downtime is costly and inconvenient to both. For the Fire Service, a wasted journey precludes attendance at a real emergency. The Fire Service wants to work with businesses to address these unnecessary incidents.
- d. There is a belief that public perception of Fire Service fire fighters is out of date. During time when personnel are not attending to fires, they are involved in community activity, training and undertaking home safety checks among other things. A need to reduce accidental domestic fires by 2010 has generated a target of 47,000 safety

checks across the service. Trading Standards regulations stipulate that where a fire risk assessment has been arranged following a leaflet drop and follow up visit, the visit must take place. Unwanted fire alarm call-outs reduce the opportunity to honour this responsibility as well as to attend fire or highways emergencies.

- e. During 2005/06 false call-outs amounted to a wasted £5.6 million which could have been used to prevent genuine emergencies.
- f. The new Fire Safety Order Regulations of October 2006 (previously presented to Birchwood Forum members) means that the Fire Service is not obliged to attend false alarms if they are not accompanied by a 999 call. Cheshire has not decided to follow this principle. BUT, the Service is looking at improving information about real fires. A reduction of 17.5% of AFAs in commercial premises has been made since 2003 although there has been an increase in domestic occurrences.
- g. Intervention Officers are in place to fulfil a business liaison role with businesses that have repeat false alarm occurrences.
- h. Conflict between domestic rate payer and business rate payer?
- i. Why have AFAs during business working hours? Consideration being given to premises 'coming off watch' during normal working hours of 8am – 6pm unless callouts accompanied by a 999 call. All AFAs will be treated with a Level 2 response. If a 999 call is received as well, the location will receive a full response. Most premises will be serviced on a level 1 basis, with AFA level 1 appliance attending on a 'drive to arrive' policy ie no blue light and subject to normal driving regulations. If a callout to premises is accompanied by a 999 or other calls a full response is given.
- j. It is the responsibility of business to identify the source of fire or false alarm. If not in place, businesses should consider investment in a suitable addressable system with appropriate technology that locates fire alarm sources.
- k. The new Fires Safety Order places the responsibility of managing own fire precautions for premises on the occupiers – tenant or owner occupier.
- l. Where premises have a history of false alarms they will need a 999 call to activate a response. History: 2 in a one month period / 3-5 in a 2 month period.
- m. The Fire Service priority is to investigate and make appliances available for emergency. In the event of arriving at the location of a fire alarm without business personnel or key holder present, the Fire Service investigates the scene and determines the need to leave or force entry. It is the responsibility of the business to make someone available to attend in the case of a fire alarm.
- n. What response to COMAH (Control of major accident hazards) sites? MA: appropriately trained and equipped callouts are made. (Leon Parkes, commander of Birchwood Fire Station, currently on five weeks' training in managing hazard accidents.)
- o. The Fire Service is not responsible for evacuating a building, that is the responsibility of the business so all precautions must be taken to protect able bodied and those with disabilities. The DDA makes allowance for escape.
- p. Is there a value in training security personnel in basic fire fighting techniques? Gary Jones, Birchwood Shopping Centre: all their security personnel are trained in fire extinguisher use. Mike Anderson: If it is a bigger incident that a '1 extinguisher fire' the Fire Service must be called out. MWH: staff attends training at Chorley Training Centre.

## 5. Networking Break

**6. Police Update** (no Police staff present)

- a. The first Business Community Action Meeting has taken place in Birchwood with little attendance and little outcome. No future date provided at this stage.
- b. Recent informal visits have been made by PCs and Police Community Support Officers to liaise with Phillipa Sudlow when in Chadwick House. Information has been shared. A recent series of commercial criminal incidents have ceased; a person charged with offences now on remand.

**7. Members Information for Others**

- a. Warrington Business Awards now open for nominations. All details appear in the Warrington Guardian. The Awards Dinner is on 20 July 2007 at the Park Royal, Stretton.
- b. A Birchwood Brochure is being produced by MEPC Birchwood Park. Birchwood Forum will be involved in some way and members may be approached for case studies to illustrate the benefits of locating a business in the area – business, retail, leisure, green area, motorway networks, staff, training etc.

**8. Time and Date of next meeting**

**Wednesday 9 May 2007 at Birchwood Community High School**

**Agenda Change**

There will be a summary presentation of the Warrington Property Report, by Peter Crompton, BE Group; an opportunity for some members to share what their business does to increase knowledge of one another; and an introductory talk about business waste collection and recycling.

Starts at 9.30am (tea/coffee from 9.00am) Bacon Butties on the Agenda!

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