

## **Birchwood Carnival Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 1.00 pm**

### **Parkers Farm Community Centre**

Attendees: Chair – Cllr R Bowden (BTC), A Lord (WBC), G Kerry (Ranger, WBC), Cllr I Atkin (BTC), P Ives (Birchwood Lions),

G Crowe (BTC), F McDonald (BTC)

Apologies: B Collins (Birchwood Lions), D Hazlehurst (Ranger, WBC), P Nelson (BTC and WBC), H Findlay (resident), Cllr Muriel Hearldon, Cllr Terry Hearldon, J Howes (Warrington Wolves)

*NB: any reference to those attending in these notes will be made using initials*

#### **1. Welcome**

RB welcomed those present.

#### **2. Declarations of interest**

The Chair reminded those present of their responsibility under The Constitution to declare any interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when the item is reached.

#### **3. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

The Chair asked those present to approve the Minutes of the Meeting which took place on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017 as an accurate record.

The minutes were approved.

#### **4. Overview 2017 Carnival**

RB said that as the Carnival is the main annual event for the community of Birchwood, the Carnival Committee's main aims for the 2017 event had been as follows:

- To improve the 'offer' at the event by providing more entertainment/activities
- To engage with the community and promote community involvement

GK provided an overview of the event:

- the weather was good which was reflected in the turnout, believed to be in the region of 4,000
- the site was ready on time thanks to those who had been available to help out; more volunteers
- the Mayor took part in the procession
- the rides, attractions and entertainment were well received

AL reiterated the reasons for the event and added that if the intention was to provide a good day out, then it had achieved its aim.

Those present believe that although some improvements had been made this year, such as more local advertising and activities, there was still some scope for further development of the event.

AL commented that in other areas of Warrington, low cost events are held where the local community gets involved in putting it together. However, this approach may work better in some locations rather than others.

He informed those present that the Elf Hunt which is held in Risley Moss is put together by a local group who have, so far, been very successful in putting on a great event which has made money.

PI added that the Lions take part in many local events and, apart from Birchwood, he believes only Winwick, Croft and Woolston are still running a similar kind of local event. In his opinion, Woolston show was not as popular this year which could have been due, in part, to the poor weather.

He added that the Lions had access to more radios which could have been used on the day of Birchwood Carnival to aid communication, but all in all he thought the event went well.

IA stated that he had been litterpicking almost continually throughout the day, other than going to see the procession which he felt was well attended. Although there were only a few groups taking part, there were quite a number of people comprising each group.

He added that the Wolves Foundation fed back that their activity was 'out of the way' and they had fewer people taking part than they had hoped for. However, they had originally wanted to be based on the new MUGA which was even further away from the main carnival attractions.

Feedback from the community had been more positive than in previous years and it was felt that it was a better event. There had been no obvious comments (positive or negative) about prices at the Carnival.

RB said that it was encouraging if this was the case but the Committee needs to be careful not to do the same thing each year.

AL commented that the organisation of the event had improved, perhaps because there are more people on the committee and said that moving forward perhaps the tasks can be shared out.

He also said that although acts and attractions can be booked early as they are paid, it becomes difficult when estimating the number of stalls or volunteers attending as these are more dependent on other outside influences and it is difficult for people to commit their time that far in advance.

It was felt that the main attraction this year, 'Shadowquest', had been well received.

The Wolves Foundation and a couple of the food vendors had expressed an interest in returning to the event next year.

Other 'improvements' to consider are:

- Making the booking form for stalls more easily accessible, eg online
- Advertise the event earlier to engage with volunteers sooner
- Set a fee structure, pricing needs to be consistent
- WBC to resolve the insurance situation and provide guidance
- Ensure best prices are obtained for attractions rather than just booking the same people year after year

GK commented that because attractions are booked each year, they give a more competitive price.

The Committee set the date of the 2018 Carnival as the first Sunday in June, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018. September was not considered a good month as there are other local events taking place.

## 5. Finances, Carnival 2017

GC and GK gave an overview of the overall financial situation for the Carnival.

Expenditure for the Carnival	£5,045.81 (includes BTC paying for marquee and toilets)
Total income (including grants)	£6,044*

\*grants:           £4,000 (Birchwood Town Council)  
                      £500 Community Initiative

### £998.19 income over expenditure

GK informed those present that the Home Safari did not attend which would have cost £375. The reason given was that their insurance was not at the required level and they were reluctant to increase level of cover.

It was felt that the modest increase in expenditure for the Carnival was justified given that the event and its outcomes were improved.

A discussion then took place about the £998.19 income over expenditure and whether this should be returned to the Town Council, as had been the original basis on which the grant was awarded, or should it remain in the Carnival Committee's bank account to put towards the event next year?

After discussion, it was suggested that it should go on the agenda for the next Town Council meeting (26<sup>th</sup> September) so that the Council's elected Members can discuss how they wish to proceed.

PI commented that each year the Town Council bears the majority of the cost for this event and queried whether the Committee should approach some of the local businesses to perhaps sponsor the event, or make a contribution. He added that the event had been self financing in the past as revenue from the local bonfire supported it.

IA queried if this might be something which could, in the future, be supported via the Business Improvement District (BID).

As there are in the region of 160 businesses located in Birchwood the level of contribution need not be very high.

RB volunteered to take this item forward as an action.

An overview of the Carnival Committee's banking arrangements was given by GK. The current arrangement is that GK and Tracy Wilson can sign cheques. Ms Wilson is not a current member of the Carnival Committee, so it was deemed inappropriate that she should be a signatory for cheques and that a current member of the Committee should take on this role.

It was agreed that there should be three signatories for the account and that any two of the three can authorise a cheque payment.

RB and IA said that they would be happy to act as signatory, if required.

## 6. Carnival Committee Meetings

It was agreed that meetings should continue to take place on a Tuesday at 1pm at Parkers Farm as this was more convenient for those working.

There was also a consensus that the meetings should be for progressing items rather than revisiting and repeating items (unless absolutely necessary as had been the case regarding insurance).

## **7. Carnival/Event 2018**

It was agreed that as the Carnival is the main event in Birchwood which provides attractions and activities for local people and their families, it should continue as such with some adjustments and improvements.

Committee Members were also mindful of the financial burden on the Town Council, and agreed that, wherever possible, this should be reduced.

They also agreed that the time is fast approaching when arrangements for the 2018 Carnival need to start being made, but that the tasks should be distributed more evenly.

It was suggested that the new Friends of Birchwood Forest Park group may wish to be more involved and have a representative on the Carnival Committee.

RB said that a Friends Group meeting is scheduled for that evening and asked if AL, or someone else attending the meeting, could raise it with them then.

## **8. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at 1.00 pm, Parkers Farm.