MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 3rd February 2022 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr David Baldwin
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Andy Crum
Cllr Joseph Goldsmith
Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey

In Attendance:
Ward Cllr Toni Fagan; and one member of the public.

Open Session:
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the member of the public, who had recently moved into the parish. Councillors introduced themselves briefly to the new parishioner.
There were no other comments during the open session, which closed at 7.33 pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence
Apologies for absence were received from the Clerk (Mrs Alison Wright), the Lengthsman (Mr Paul Wright), and the Footpaths Officer (Mr Al Davies).

2.0 Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations of interest.

3.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting
The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at the Much Birch Community Hall on 6th January 2022 were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

4.0 Reports

4.1) PCSO from West Mercia Police
The Golden Valley Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) Newsletter had been circulated amongst councillors.

4.2) Locality Steward
Mr James Howells, the Locality Steward, had sent his periodic bulletins, which had been circulated amongst councillors.

4.3) Ward Councillor
Ward Cllr Toni Fagan provided her report to the meeting.
Mr Ian Stoddart, of Fastershire (which is the organisation responsible for the roll-out of faster broadband in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire), would be attending to take questions at the March meeting of the Little Birch Parish Council on 2nd March 2022 at 7.30 p.m.
A budget meeting of Herefordshire Council would be held in the week commencing 7th February 2022. It was likely that the Council would approve an increase in Council Tax of 2.99% (of which 1% would be attributable to social care). This would be the maximum increase that the Council could approve without holding a local referendum.

It was also likely that Council Tax relief would be retained by the Council at the rate of 100%. This would be relevant to approximately 11,000 households in the county. By way of context, Cllr Fagan noted that there had been a reduction in the region of £109m in the annual revenue funding available to the Council from central government in the period since 2010.
Cllr Fagan reported that from March 2022, responsibility for the maintenance of public rights of way in the county would be brought back in-house from Balfour Beatty. It was considered by the Council that this would be more cost effective.
Herefordshire Council had passed a motion at its previous meeting in relation to a water-protection zone. Steps were also being taken in relation to the amelioration of noise from fireworks.

5.0) Update on Correspondence

The following correspondence had been received:

- From Herefordshire Council, containing details of various road closures in February 2022.
- From National Highways, giving notice of rockface maintenance on the A49 near to Llandinabo, requiring full carriageway closure in both directions from 14th February to 12th March 2022, between 8 pm and 6 am.
- Various Talk Community newsletters.
- From Dore Community Transport, a letter of thanks for the donation of £500 agreed at the Parish Council Meeting on 6th January 2022.
- From a member of the public, relating to various local issues (dealt with at item 7.2 below).

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) Bank balances:

The following bank balances as at 13th January 2022 were noted:

HSBC Community Account	£10,945.48
HSBC Community Projects Account	£6,384.61

6.2) Approval of list of payments (circulated separately)

The following payments were proposed:

Payments to be made from main account:	
Clerk to be paid in accordance with contract	
HM Revenue & Customs (tax)	£69.20
Much Birch Community Hall (room hire)	£54.00
Herefordshire Assoc. of Local Councils (subscription 2022-23)	£729.31
Payments to be made from projects account:	Nil

The Parish Council resolved unanimously that the payments be approved for payment.

7.0 Village Issues Update and Parish Land

7.1) To receive any update on village issues

No further updates were received, save for those dealt with at item 7.2 below.

7.2) To consider local issues raised in correspondence

Various issues had been raised in correspondence received from a resident of Tump Lane.
Grass clippings: In relation to the issue of whether grass clippings could be removed after mowing, the Ward Councillor agreed to make enquiries. She noted that there had been moves to look into obtaining grass collection machines, which would facilitate wildflower growth.

Footpath along A466: The footpath along the A466 to the Carrot & Wine Store lay in the parish of Much Dewchurch. Accordingly, the Clerk would be asked to refer the issue to the Much Dewchurch Parish Council.
Speed indicator device (SID) on Tump Lane: Speed checks on Tump Lane had been carried out in the past. It was thought that SIDs had to be hired (at a cost of *c.* £1,000) and required the approval of Herefordshire Council and the police. It was also thought that temporary SIDs could be used only for a limited period and on a limited number of occasions per year (*e.g.* no more than 28 days at a time, up to four times a year). Nevertheless, the consensus was that SIDs worked well (see the A49 at Peterstow and the B4348 in Much Dewchurch). In principle, therefore, an SID on Tump Lane would be welcome. If possible, a permanent installation would be preferable to hiring a temporary SID several times a year. It was resolved to carry out further investigation on the matter, initially in consultation with Mr Ian Connoly of the Safer Roads Partnership.

7.3) Parish land – update
The Clerk had not received a response from the builder, despite sending him a reminder. It was agreed that she would write again in terms that, unless we hear back from him, it will be assumed that the summary of the outcome of the site meeting is agreed.

7.4) Talk Community hubs
The first Llanwarne Talk Community Hub would take place for two hours on Saturday 5th February 2022 at 10 am at the Llanwarne and District Village Hall. The Ward Councillor would report back on its success at the next meeting.
A discussion ensued as to the desirability of setting up a similar hub in Much Birch. It was felt that the idea was a good one. It might be particularly helpful for those people who had felt isolated as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and might need assistance as we emerge from it, particularly in relation to mental health issues, digital isolation, or financial concerns relating to expected rises in the cost of living.
It was noted that the Community Café goes a long way towards operating as a hub: all that would be necessary is a laptop computer to access the Talk Community directory.
It was also noted that the directory could be accessed by anyone via a link on the Talk Community website (https://www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/); it was not reserved to the hubs alone. It was agreed that this resource could usefully be highlighted in the parish magazine, on the parish Facebook page *etc.*
Further consideration would be given to the matter at the next meeting.

7.5) The Queen's Platinum Jubilee
It was noted that an event was planned for Much Birch Community Hall for Saturday 4th June 2022. Cllr Crum reported that Little Birch was intending to light a beacon on the evening of Friday 3rd June.
A discussion ensued as to the desirability and feasibility of organising a separate event in Much Birch. The organisational difficulties (*e.g.* in relation to public liability insurance *etc.*) were noted, as was the more geographically divided nature of the parish as compared to Little Birch. It was also felt that the organisers of the Community Café might well have a better idea of how to involve a wide cross-section of the public, including perhaps church groups and Much Birch Primary School. Cllr Pickering-Grey agreed to speak to those involved with the organisation of the Community Café and report back at the next meeting.

8.0 <u>Planning Matters</u>
The following planning applications were considered.

APPLICATION NO. & SITE ADDRESS: Planning re-consultation – 214166 – walled garden adjacent to Stable Cottage, Much Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8HT.

DESCRIPTION: Proposed single-storey dwelling located within the walled garden; new vehicular opening to be formed within the existing wall.
GRID REFERENCE: OS 350475, 230474.
APPLICATION TYPE: Listed building consent.

The Parish Council had **NO OBJECTION** to the revisions to the application and no further comment to make.

APPLICATION NO. & SITE ADDRESS: Planning consultation – 220145 – land at Closeburn, Ladywell Lane, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorne, Hereford, HR2 8AW.
DESCRIPTION: Outline application with all matters reserved, save access, for the development of a single dwelling house and access.
GRID REFERENCE: OS 350046, 231925.
APPLICATION TYPE: Outline.

After detailed consideration, the Parish Council resolved to **OBJECT** to application no. 220145 for, *inter alia*, the following reasons. Neither the Block Plan nor the Location Plan showed the approved dwelling (193067) to the north-east of the site in the garden of Lindenbrook, which is a 1.5 storey, three-bedroomed property. The plot was isolated in the corner of an existing garden and bore no relation to the existing street scene. It was considered that the application failed to comply with Policy MB7 (sensitive infilling) and subsections 6 and 8 of Policy MB10 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), given that the amenity space available for the new property was very small compared to its neighbour. The parking area allowed only for in-line parking for two cars, with no turning space, thereby preventing access to the highway in a forward gear. The application form stated that there were no trees or hedges on site; this was incorrect as there was a roadside hedge, the majority of which would have to be removed to allow for the required visibility splays. With the removal of a significant amount of the hedge for such visibility reasons, the part of the dwelling fronting the highway would have no privacy. Whilst drainage was not part of the matters included in the application, it was felt that consideration needed to be given as to whether an acceptable accommodation could be found (in accordance with Policy MB4 of the NDP) given the small plan size and the close proximity to the Wriggle Brook.

APPLICATION NO. & SITE ADDRESS: Planning consultation – 220146 – land at The Wriggle, Ladywell Lane, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorne, Hereford, HR2 8AW.
DESCRIPTION: Outline application with all matters reserved, save access, for the development of a single dwelling house and access.
GRID REFERENCE: OS 350084, 231888.
APPLICATION TYPE: Outline.

After detailed consideration, the Parish Council resolved to **OBJECT STRONGLY** to application no. 220146 for, *inter alia*, the following reasons. The application could not be seen in any way as meeting the criteria set out in Policy MB7 of the NDP regarding sensitive infilling. The overbearing nature of the proposal did not respect the amenities and privacy that the occupants of The Wriggle had a right to expect and currently enjoyed. The subdivision of the existing garden gave a development squeezed into a plot that was out of keeping with the area and the current street scene and, accordingly, did not comply with subsections 6 & 8 of Policy MB10 of the NDP. In order to accommodate a parking area, the plot extended by more than 50% across the frontage of The Wriggle: the screening would result in loss of light and possible loss of privacy. The site plan did not indicate any splay and, accordingly, there were concerns as the sufficiency of the visibility. Whilst drainage was not part of the matters included in the application, it was felt that consideration needed to be given as to whether an acceptable

accommodation could be found (in accordance with Policy MB4 of the NDP) given the small plan size and the close proximity to the Wriggle Brook.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

9.1) To note any defects to be reported to Balfour Beatty

It was noted that the white lines at the top of the Thorn had been repainted.
A member of the public had reported that the potholes in Aconbury Close were causing pain when being driven to and from medical appointments.

9.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman

It was noted that the Lengthsman was unwell. No work was put forward for him and councillors expressed their best wishes for his speedy recovery.

9.3) Footpath Officer – to receive any update or action points

The Footpath Officer had reported that Footpath MB20, from Aconbury Close to Forge Lane, needed strimming.

10.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

As noted at item 7.4 above, information regarding the Talk Community directory could usefully be included in the newsletter and appropriate links added to the Much Birch website and Facebook page.

11.0 Matters to be Raised on the Agenda for the Next Meeting

In addition to the usual items, further consideration would be given to Talk Community hubs and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

12.0 Confirmation of the Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 3rd March 2022, at 7.30 pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.27 pm.

Signed:

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Chair Date