

# MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 from 7.30 pm

### Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)  
Cllr Roisin Burge  
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey  
Cllr Michael Agyeman

### In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright, Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan and four members of the public

### Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr David Irwin (also Footpath Officer)

#### 2.0 Co-option of Councillor

No candidate was presented at the meeting this month.

#### 3.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

#### 4.0 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held at the Much Birch Community Hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024, were approved as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

#### 5.0 Reports

##### 5.1) P.C.S.O. from West Mercia Police

Golden Valley Briefing – Newsletter circulated when received.

**5.2) Ward Councillor** Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was present at the meeting. The Ward Cllr advised that she was engaged in an ongoing discussion with Connexus about the play area in Tump Lane. The Ward Cllr updated about a cross head artefact that was hoped to be restored to the local church, from its current housing at the Archive Centre.

There would be a Hereford Histories Festival in May 2025 to look forward to. Cllr David Hitchiner was organising this. Herefordshire Council were still awaiting direction on matters relating to devolution and similar was true regarding the National Planning Policy Framework. The Herefordshire Planning website had been updated but enforcement was in question, currently. Conditions were not being met and cases were being closed only to be reopened. Drainage Grant details had been sent round. Balfour Beatty were described as believing that the culvert draining in Wrigglebrook, near Cress Cottage, was adequate? The culvert in question had a right angle in the flow which was making dispersal of the water difficult. It did not go straight under the road. The Ward Cllr advised that issues with drainage and flooding should continue to be flagged up.

The Ward Cllr advised that matters relating to public footpaths do not now go through Hoople Ltd. but through Herefordshire Council. Footpath gates were being awarded and distributed. The advice was to try to develop your own parish public footpath strategy.

### **5.3) Locality Steward**

James Howells the Locality Steward had sent his bulletins. Also Members Monthly Update received and Street works updates received from Balfour Beatty.

### **6.0) Update on Correspondence and Parish Land**

#### **6.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet**

##### **Correspondence from Herefordshire Council**

Talk Community bulletins

#### **6.2) To update regarding the parish land and consider tenancy**

The Chair advised of a change of notice period for both parties within the agreement, it would now be 12 months. The parish council resolved to delegate the signing of the document to the Chair who would sign the Tenancy Agreement, with the tenant, on behalf of the Much Birch Parish Council.

### **7.0 Financial Report**

#### **7.1) The following bank balance was noted:**

@ 13<sup>th</sup> October 2024 HSBC Community Account £15690.41

#### **7.2) To approve list of payments (circulated separately)**

The following payments were approved:

##### **Payments to be made from bank account**

Clerk paid in accordance with contract for November

HM Revenue & Customs (tax November) £105.80

Hugh James (Skyfire Designs) Web services £105.00

Little Birch Village Hall (newsletter contribution) £350.00

Mrs A Cook (Remembrance wreath 2024) £50.00

**Resolved:** that the payments were passed for payment: Unanimous.

### **8.0 Planning Matters**

#### **8.1) To consider any planning applications and appeals as may be advised**

There were no new applications for consideration of comments.

### **9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths**

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

Drains at the lower end of Parish Lane between Windswept Cottage and the junction with the Little Birch Road required clearing.

Hollybush Lane - the road degradation was being monitored.

Drainage issues opposite Cress Cottage.

#### **9.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and to consider drainage issues and possible action for Wrigglebrook Lane and other locations**

The parish council was awaiting paperwork from the Lengthsman.

Some local roadside ditches required clearing and trees trimming back.

Some local residents were present at the meeting and they conveyed experiences of recent flooding issues and flooding at Parish Lane. Recent storms had seen water running down the road and the residents were asking if some new drainage could be installed. The last time works had been carried out on the lane had been 2019 when the refuse company had been unable to traverse the access. The lane was classified as a BOAT (Byway Open to All Traffic). There had been discussions over the years and the Chair explained that the Herefordshire Council only had responsibility for access on a BOAT for pedestrians and horses. Resurfacing by scalping and

chippings just got washed away. It was the responsibility of the residents along the lane to take account of the drainage. The council were not responsible for putting in drainage on the lane. The Chair agreed that she would try to get an Inspector to look at the situation and if possible they would also be accompanied by a Drainage professional to provide some advice. The Chair advised, again, that she did not believe that the drainage would be installed by the Herefordshire Council but would rather have to be self funded by the residents. The Ward Cllr left the meeting at this point. 8.04 pm.

**9.3) Footpath Officer – to receive any update or action points and funding /activities**

**Mr David Irwin, the Footpath Officer** can be contacted on 01981 345109 or by e mail at [MBfootpaths@btinternet.com](mailto:MBfootpaths@btinternet.com)

The Footpath Officer, Cllr Irwin, had sent his apologies. He had sent his footpath update report. Cllr Agyeman and Cllr Irwin would look at the possibility of a Footpath Information Pamphlet.

**10.0 Parishes Newsletter and Much Birch Website**

9.1) To consider items suitable for inclusion in the newsletter and on the website plus X (formerly known as Twitter).

Clerk would send a précis to the Newsletter. This would include a summary of the responses to planning items.

**11.0 Matters to be raised on the Agenda etc. for the next meeting**

All the usual items would be included. Also: Precept for 2025 – 2026, drainage issues/feedback

**12.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting**

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall.

Due to the confidential nature of the business of these agenda items, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (3) it is proposed to put forward a motion to exclude members of the public during discussion of the following agenda item (13 only)

**13.0 To discuss implementation of 1/04/24 pay award (back dated) and increment from 1/04/24 in line with NJC correspondence**

The Clerk and Public left the meeting for the discussion of Agenda number 13. The parish council resolved that the NJC Pay Award should be implemented, together with an incremental uplift, with effect from 1/04/24, and the arrears backdated.

***The meeting closed at 8.40 pm***

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date