

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 4th April 2024 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Michael Agyeman
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey
Cllr Joseph Goldsmith (in the Chair)

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright, Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan and Footpath Officer; David Irwin plus one member of the public

Open Session:-

Cllr Joseph Goldsmith (in the Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A resident present highlighted issues at Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorpe, where run off from the fields and heavy rainfall had, again, flooded the road with water and mud. The road was under deep sludge and there were concerns about pollution of water courses and ultimately the River Wye. The situation had occurred previously and the Environment Agency had been involved. It was believed that advice on type of crop and ploughing etc. had been given to the farmer. The resident requested that the parish council write to the Environment Agency to highlight the repeated flooding problem. The Ward Cllr and the Herefordshire Council Flood Team had been looking into what was happening also.

Thanks were recorded to the resident for raising the issue and the parish council agreed to write to the Environment Agency with details of the recent occurrence, and with the possible environmental consequences to be emphasised. The Clerk would liaise with the resident regarding the letter content.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr Alison Cook and Cllr Andy Crum.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held at the Much Birch Community Hall on the 7th March 2024, were approved as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

4.0 Reports

4.1) P.C.S.O. from West Mercia Police

Golden Valley Briefing - Newsletter circulated when received.

Locality Steward

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

Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was present at the meeting. The Ward Cllr gave an update in Children's Services. The Director had resigned after a further Ofsted Report on the service. There was a new appointment to the role from 1 July 2024. It was commented that "a lot of good work has been going on but the journey continues." There had been issues with

doing a comprehensive review and people had not been in attendance. Progress was being made on taking things forward with a “whole society approach.”

The Ward Cllr advised that a decision had been taken by Cabinet to proceed with a Western Bypass.

The Ward Cllr had made contact with Connexus regarding the Tump Lane play area and an audit was taking place. A play area was to be provided. The Larkrise planning was “going back to the beginning”, going “through the planning process. Services were hugely stretched.”

Broad band sign up for contract was ongoing. People were warned about the possibility of a broadband related bogus email in circulation.

5.0) Update on Correspondence

5.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet

Correspondence from Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

E mail from Karla Johnson re NDP

“As you will have seen, the Local Plan Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan consultation has now gone live.

As part of the Local Plan consultation the Strategic and Neighbourhood Planning team is offering bespoke meetings with Parish and Town Councils to discuss any queries you may have with regards to your Neighbourhood Development Plans.

An opportunity to attend a “question and answer” workshop, on a selection of dates, was then offered.

Parish Land

E mail sent, by local resident, concerning proposals for parish land future use. (See Agenda Item 9.4)

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13 th March 2024 HSBC Community Account	£13939.98
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6.2) 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 April HM Revenue & Customs (tax)	£84.60
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Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment: Unanimous.

6.3) To appoint internal auditor

It was agreed that Mrs Rose Wathen would be appointed as the Internal Auditor for 2023 – 2024, with thanks to her, as previously.

7.0 Update on speeding and Community Speed Watch (as applicable)

The team had been out monitoring for speeding earlier in the week.

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

No new notifications.

9.2) To discuss appointment of a new Lengthsman

A person, possibly interested in the vacancy for a new Lengthsman, would be re-contacted.

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

Mr David Irwin, the Footpath Officer can be contacted on 01981 345109 or by e mail at MBfootpaths@btinternet.com

The Footpath Officer was in attendance at the meeting. His report of footpath matters had been circulated to the parish councillors. There were six new Footpath Officers at the bi-monthly meeting. An induction on 2nd March had seen 13 attendees. The parish walk held on the 24th March had seen 12 walkers and one dog enjoy a walk to Athelstans Wood and back again to the Community Hall for refreshments. Another walk was planned for the 7th April and this would involve an early start from 5.30 am for a Dawn Chorus bird watching walk.

There were still issues on path MB24 running down to the B4348, a “chunk” had been cut out of the fence and the Enforcement Officer believed the matter closed. The Helen’s Wood footpath was still closed, due to the fallen tree. The Footpath Officer outlined plans to open up footpath MB8 between the Axe & Cleaver and Llanwarne. Stiles were currently preventing passage due to being broken and faulty.

9.4) Update on parish land

A letter containing some proposals for the clearing of the parish land and future use had been received from an interested resident. The parish council discussed the content of the proposals. Thank you was recorded for the letter. It was agreed that a working party would look at the options surrounding the vacant parish land parcel, this with a view to being transparent with the community and in regard to being open to best value, the best options for the environment and with agreeing terms of tenancy to meet all requirements. Cllr Goldsmith would lead on the project. The NOLAN principles of conduct would apply to the deliberations.

10.0 Parishes Newsletter and Much Birch Website

10.1) 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, as applicable.

11.0 To discuss matters relating to the Local Area Plan (Core Strategy) revision consultation process – as applicable.

The Clerk had placed information on the consultation process in the notice boards and circulated information at the meeting. There were links to the consultation.

Consultation on a new Local Transport Plan for Herefordshire, details at: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/ltp

Consultation on the Draft Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 18) Consultation, more details at: <https://hlp.commonplace.is/>

The consultation runs from 25 March 2025 until 20 May 2025

12.0 Matters to be raised on the Agenda for the next meeting

All the usual items would be included and including parish land, lengthsman appointment and any update on Environmental Agency issues (as applicable).

13.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meetings (Annual Parish and Annual Statutory)

The next Meetings, Annual Parish and Annual Statutory, of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 9th May 2024 from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall.

Future Meetings for 2024: June 6th, July 4th, No meeting in August, Sept 5th, Oct 3rd, Nov 7th and Dec 5th

The meeting closed at 8.42 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date