

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 December 2025 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr David Irwin
Cllr Michael Agyeman
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Steve Turner
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright and Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no residents present at the parish council meeting. There were no items raised during the Open Session.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

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, held on the 6th November 2025, were approved as a true and correct record of the Meeting. There was just one amendment to the LAF acronym which stands for “**Local Access Forum**” and not “Local Area Forum”.

4.0 Reports

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

Golden Valley Briefing – Newsletter circulated when received. A new priority charter form had been received. The new main priorities would be advised via the new form. Local concerns over poaching in neighbouring areas would also be mentioned.

4.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was present at the meeting. The Ward Cllr updated the meeting regarding issues with local bus services and an ongoing “battle” over the provision of the 33 service and in particular capacity problems in Ross on Wye, where the bus was frequently full and people could not access the service. There were also some conversations about the timing of concessionary opportunities which had been amended for more flexibility.

The Larkrise planning application had still not been officially approved. The issues around the 106 payments relating to the site were being “sorted out”. Connexus were not currently doing anything about the Tump Lane Play Area. Parish Councils could convey their 106 wish list items to Yvonne Coleman at Herefordshire Council.

The Public Rights of Way Team at Herefordshire Council was facing staffing level reduction and there were a lot of changes ahead for the Public Realm Contract in 2026. Parishes were still

waiting for the final notifications of their grant funding awards for the 2025 – 2026 scheme as the scheme had been oversubscribed.

The Herefordshire Council budget still faced massive overspends in areas such as adult social care and special educational needs transport costs.

Locality Stewards would be coming back into the direct employment of Herefordshire Council. The Ward Cllr advised that she would publicise her attendance at the Community Café so that residents would be able to catch up with her there.

4.3) Locality Steward

The Monthly Update had been received and also street works updates from Balfour Beatty.

5.0) Update on Correspondence and Neighbourhood Development Plan

5.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet

Correspondence from Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

Much Birch Parish Website

The Chair advised that the Web Master was giving advance notification of the prospective termination of the contract with the current web service provider who was wishing to step down from the role in September/October 2026. The Web Master was looking at new web service contract providers.

5.2) To receive any update on matters relating to the Neighbourhood Development Plan (as applicable)

Cllr Burge explained that there had not been much movement on NDPs from Herefordshire Council. The parish council would need to consider and agree the proposed amendments to the policies in MB2, MB5 and MB9. Housing targets would be subject to a quarterly review. Cllr Pickering Grey would make the changes to Version 1.1 to create Version 1.2. This would then go forward for parish council approval under the agenda items:

1) To affirm the changes made

2) To confirm the ongoing assessment/review of NDP content

Future note to be made of housing numbers and public open spaces would be included such as the play area in Tump Lane. Water monitoring results would also be incorporated.

5.3) Parish land – Rosebank – to consider correspondence and any actions required

The parish council had considered the proposal from the tenant of the parish land at Rosebank. After a review of the circumstances, and the request for the purchase of a partial portion of the land, the parish council resolved, unanimously, that there would be no sale of any portion of the parish land. The parish land should be protected for future generations and it was stated that no works should be undertaken to any property either on or under the parish land. There was some discussion over the tidying of the plot and hedge cutting deadlines. A draft letter for the tenant would be circulated for approval by the councillors before sending.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13 th November 2025 HSBC Community Account	£13553.24
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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 December 2025

HM Revenue & Customs (tax December) £95.20

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment - unanimous

7.0 Planning Matters

7.1) To consider any planning applications or appeals, as may be advised

There were no further applications for consideration of comments.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

There was red graffiti on the back of the recently cleaned bus shelter at the A49 junction by the parish notice board. This needed to be cleaned off. The 30 mph repeater sign was still missing from the top of the Thorn. Potholes had been filled in on Tump Lane. A compliment was made concerning this.

8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and direct/determine actions

Enviroability were scheduled to undertake identified works in the New Year.

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

Mr David Irwin, the Footpath Officer can be contacted on **07766 135068** or by e mail at [**MBfootpaths@btinternet.com**](mailto:MBfootpaths@btinternet.com)

The Footpath Officer, Cllr Irwin, had sent his report and he updated the meeting about the contents. Enviroability had not been able to carry out the scheduled works in December and were now booked for March 2026. The Footpath Officer was trying to get the March date brought forward. The Footpath IT Group were working on the maps and QR codes with information for the notice board. These would also contain details about forthcoming parish walks.

8.4) Parish Drainage – to receive any correspondence and determine any actions

The parish council had received confirmation of funding to the amount of £2226.90. The allocation would be on the Agenda for January 2026.

8.5) Water Quality Monitoring – information from the CPRE refers

The water quality monitoring would require a testing station in the parish and weekly testing for phosphate levels etc. The CPRE were feeding the data obtained into the Environment Agency to build up a picture regarding water quality. It was asked whether an additional site could be added for the parish and the Ward Cllr would send details to Cllr Turner to liaise with a contact regarding a second testing site. The data from the testing would be fed into the Neighbourhood Development Plan data.

9.0 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).

The Clerk would send a précis to the Newsletter. The Chair would do a newsletter update for police contact information.

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

All the usual items would be included, also parish assets review. Neighbourhood Development Plan, two agenda points, and the allocation of drainage grant to required works plus The Poor Acre Charity - for consideration of an update

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 8th January 2026, from 7.30pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.52 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date