

# MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024 from 7.30 pm

### Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)  
Cllr Roisin Burge (for part of the meeting)  
Cllr Andy Crum  
Cllr David Irwin (co-opted at the meeting)

### In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright, Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan and Footpath Officer; David Irwin (also co-opted as councillor), PCSO Carol Marsh and colleague, Ben, plus one member of the public

### Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There was mention of the letter sent to the Environment Agency concerning the flooding issues that had previously been highlighted. No formal response had been received back, at the time of the meeting. The resident mentioned that if there was no satisfactory response from the EA, then the MP could be contacted. There was to be a Flood Group Meeting, held at the Hereford Rowing Club, on the 16<sup>th</sup> July. There was a strong call for there to be a “water protection zone” and there was a person designated as “River Champion”. Those present at the parish council meeting resolved to “see what happens.”

### 1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr Michael Agyeman and Cllr Chris Pickering Grey

### 2.0 Co-option of councillor

There was one candidate presenting for co-option. David Irwin was proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Burge. Cllr Irwin was duly co-opted and he signed his acceptance of office form. His Registrable Interest Declaration Form would be sent to the Governance Support Team and the Clerk would advise Electoral Services of his appointment. Welcome to David as a new parish councillor for Much Birch.

Cllr Burge left the meeting after Cllr Irwin’s co-option, 7.35 pm.

### 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 16<sup>th</sup> July 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. PCSO Carol Marsh and colleague, Ben, were in attendance at the meeting. PCSO Marsh advised that a number of road traffic collisions had occurred. There had been incidences of drink driving and also of horses being loose on the road. There had also been some issues concerning an elderly gentleman who had been walking down the A49 and he had been taken home by the police. PCSO Marsh advised that the Community Speed Watch had proved successful since it had started. The police would

attend a CSW session. There may also be new sites to be added for CSW. The review of new sites would be chased up by the PCSO. The PCSO stated that she was also happy to assist other councils wishing to set up a CSW for their parish.

**5.2) Ward Councillor** Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was in attendance at the meeting. The Ward Cllr reported that she had received a response from Open Reach concerning the broadband and the scope and broadband schemes for Much Birch and Little Birch would hopefully be progressing. There was a question as to how one could obtain access to a place on the Local Area Forum and the Ward Cllr would advise on whom to contact about this. The issues around non realisation of deliverables in relation to the public rights of way set up at Herefordshire Council were being referred to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee. This was not a reflection on the PROW co-ordinator who had been trying to support the footpath officers.

The Ward Cllr advised that Tina Russell, previously working at Worcester, had taken up her post as Head of Children's Services in a temporary appoint until March 2025. Also the Section 151 Finance Officer had left recently and the Deputy Officer was standing in.

There was to be an extensive program of "surface dressing" carried out on U and C roads.

There was an opportunity presenting to get involved in nature and a bio-diversity strategy. A meeting would be held, in Ross on Wye, on 18/7/24 to facilitate.

There were warnings on how not to fall prey to fraud tactics. Also free school meals recipients would still receive support with food during the holiday period.

There was news of a Local Government Association White Paper looking at funding for local services and how to "make localism really count" going forward.

### **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. Some local potholes had been repaired.

## **6.0) Update on Correspondence**

### **6.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet Correspondence from Herefordshire Council**

Talk Community bulletins

### **Police Commissioner**

Parish Survey

The parish council declined to complete the survey again as it was believed that matters had not really altered from the previous submission.

### **6.2) To consider the way forward regarding the parish land and any recent correspondence**

A question about drainage, at one of the parish land sites, had been answered via circulated details. This was accepted.

The parish land adjacent to Valley View had been advertised in terms of the opportunity to express an interest in providing a quotation to clear the land. Some expressions of interest had been received and some suggestions on future usage proposals. Thanks were recorded to the previous lengthsmen, Paul Wright, for assisting with the drawing up of a clearance specification, in terms of the works required. There were a variety of tasks required including the removal of a non viable shed. It was agreed that the clearance specification would be sent to prospective enquirers and also it was agreed that the front access gate would be re-hung, on the new posts and as quoted and agreed, following completion of the clearance works.

## **7.0 Financial Report**

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

## **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 July and August

HM Revenue & Customs (tax July and August) £84.60 plus £106.00

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

It was also agreed that should an invoice be received, for interim works on lengthsman activities by a contractor during the holiday period, then payment may be raised, if required, under the interim payments provision.

## **7.3) To adopt new Financial Regulations 2024**

This item was deferred again to September so that any customisation required could be included before approval.

## **8.0 Planning Matters**

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

There were new applications for consideration of comments:

**APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS:** Planning Consultation - 241328 - Land at Closeburn, Ladywell Lane, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorpe, Hereford

**DESCRIPTION:** Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval - 220145 (Outline application with all matters reserved, save access, for the development of a single dwelling house and access).

**GRID REF:** OS 350046, 231925

**APPLICATION TYPE:** Approval of Reserved Matters

The parish council resolved to there were objections to the proposals in application 241328 due to the proposed size of the house within the available plot, the overbearing nature of the proposed house in the plot and the potential lack of amenity space. The parish council would also comment that the observations made by the Hereford Consultees on drainage, ecology and highways about more details required etc. should be heeded.

The planning consultation for 231114 at The Old Post Office, Wormelow had been amended to now include the building of one new dwelling, as opposed to two in the original submission. The parish council resolved to reiterate the objection to the building of any additional dwelling(s) at the location due to, principally, highways safety concerns.

## **9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths**

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

The notified degradation of the Hollybush Lane roadway had been flagged with Balfour Beatty and was being monitored by the Locality Steward.

The top of Tump Lane roadway was in need of attention as in a very poor state.

Roads that had been pre-dressed would now be receiving top dressing.

### **9.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman (and recruitment)**

A quotation had been circulated from a prospective lengthsman candidate. The parish council asked the clerk to clarify some details regarding flexibility on day rate, i.e. could half a day be used? Also; could a day share possibly happen with a neighbouring parish? Another question

was; could a day be split over say, half lengthsman, half public rights of way activity? The clerk would approach the contractor to see if these ideas could be possibilities.

**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](mailto:MBfootpaths@btinternet.com)

The Footpath Officer, Cllr Irwin, had sent a further update. The Footpath Officer advised that there had not been any further meetings since the last update in June. The Footpath Officer thanked the council for sending the letter about the situation prevailing in regard to there being no anticipated deliverables, such as training, website, manuals etc. whatsoever received in the preceding seven months. Cllr Irwin was going to try to obtain appointment to the Local Access Forum. The enquiry would be made. The Ward Cllr would assist with contact details for this. The list of Public Rights of Way objectives for Much Birch had been submitted and the grant needed to be spent by March 2025. The parish council needed to know when work could commence and this would be enquired about.

The Footpath Officer advised of a forthcoming parish walk on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July, starting at the Much Birch Community Hall from 2.00 pm.

Another meeting of local footpath officers was being arranged, by Cllr Irwin, on likely 8<sup>th</sup> August for a catch up.

Path MB19 at Helen’s Wood was now fully open and tree moved. A large number of defects had been sent in by the Footpath Officer for inspection and rectification. A day had been booked with a contractor, as previously agreed by the parish council, to clear some footpath overgrowth at identified locations. Thanks were recorded to Cllr Irwin and also to Cllr Crum who had cleared path MB20 of overgrowth.

**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.

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

All the usual items would be included. Also:

- Adoption of Financial Regulations 2024,
- Lengthsman
- Parish land

**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> September 2024 from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall. **No meeting in August.**

Future Meetings for 2024: No meeting in August, then Sept 5<sup>th</sup>, Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>, Nov 7<sup>th</sup> and Dec 5<sup>th</sup>

***The meeting closed at 8.26 pm***

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date