

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 6th June 2024 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Michael Agyeman
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey (elected as Vice Chair)
Cllr Andy Crum

In attendance:

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

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

No comments were made. The Open Session closed at 7.31 pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence. The parish council had received a resignation letter from Joseph Goldsmith. The resignation was accepted. The parish council gave a vote of thanks for all of Joseph's work with the parish council and wished him every good wish for the future. The Clerk would write to Joseph to confirm the parish council's thanks. A casual vacancy process would be started. Joseph's resignation had left a vacancy for a Vice Chair. Cllr Chris Pickering Grey was nominated by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Agyeman. There were no other nominations. Cllr Pickering Grey accepted the role of Vice Chair and was duly appointed. The Chair proposed that Cllr Pickering Grey be added to the list of bank signatories and this was agreed. The Chair would obtain the required bank form to amend the signatories.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Parish and Annual Statutory Council Meetings, held at the Much Birch Community Hall on the 9th May 2024, were approved as true and correct records of the Meetings.

4.0 Reports

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

Golden Valley Briefing – Newsletter circulated when received.

4.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was in attendance at the meeting. The Ward Cllr reported that the Herefordshire Council had produced their Financial Report for the last year on schedule. There was an over spend on budget in the Children's Services Department of £11.7 million. Action was being taken to remedy the situation. The MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) was at the "front door" of the service. Early Team Help was supporting families. The Ward Cllr spoke of an ageing population and of housing issues in the county. More information on areas of council activity could be found via the Talk Community Website. A new Director for the Public Health Department was being sought. The Ward Cllr was asked to look at bulk e mail addresses not being blind copied in council e mail announcements. The Clerk would send some examples where this had occurred, leading to massive lists of e mails being visible.

The Ward Cllr left the meeting at 7.48 pm.

4.3) Locality Steward

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

5.0) Update on Correspondence

5.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet Correspondence from Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

Flooding and Drainage Issues as reported via the Environment Agency.

A local resident had some information to be sent to the Environment Agency on behalf of the Parish Council concerning recent flooding and silting events that had occurred in the parish. The resident would draft a letter with details of annual or bi-annual seed rotation schemes, including grass buffer strips on the land and sustainable farming incentive ideas to help inform the situation. The resident would liaise with the parish council on the response to be sent to the Environment Agency Officer.

Enquiry about a possible “Tree Warden” role

There had been an enquiry received concerning a possible Tree Warden role for the parish. The parish council did not consider that this role was required at the present time. This message would be conveyed to the potential applicant and the Tree Warden Co-ordinator.

5.2) To consider the way forward regarding the parish land and recent correspondence

The Chair agreed to, temporarily, lead the team in a meeting to discuss the parish land. There had been e mail from an interested party outlining suggestions for the way forward. The Clerk would explain to the enquirer that a “due process” would need to be followed to give access to all to apply regarding the land and to ensure transparency. The Chair would co-ordinate a site meeting for the councillors. A replacement gate arrangement had been sourced and the parish council agreed to accept the cost of the new posts, and installation of the gate, at a sum of £326.00. A question was asked about the drainage arrangements for the parish land adjacent to the property “Rosebank” and the Chair advised that she would circulate the details of the relevant application for the property.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13 th May 2024 HSBC Community Account	£16171.62
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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 June HM Revenue & Customs (tax)	£84.60
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Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment: Unanimous.

6.3) To sign Exemption Certificate for accounts 2023 – 2024

The Exemption Certificate for accounts 2023 – 2024 was approved by the council and signed by the chair

6.4) To sign and approve Annual Governance Statement 2023 – 2024

The Annual Governance Statement 2023 – 2024 was approved by the council and signed by the chair

6.5) To sign and approve Accounting Statement 2023 - 2024

The Accounting Statement 2023 – 2024 was approved by the council and signed by the chair

Thanks were recorded to the Clerk for the work in carrying out the annual accounts paperwork and also to the Internal Auditor for the work involved in auditing the accounts.

6.6) To adopt new Financial Regulations 2024

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

7.0 Planning Matters

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

There was one new application for consideration of comments:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: Planning Consultation - 241186 – Bramble Tor, Pages Pitch, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AW

DESCRIPTION: Application for variation of conditions 2 (amend drawing numbers for amended design as existing garage to be retained), 7 (amend to incorporate previously approved EV charging station), 9 (amend to incorporate visibility splays) & 10 (amend to incorporate CMP plan) following grant of planning permission 232705 (Proposed 3- bedroom dwelling to replace the existing dwelling and associated works including; the demolition of the existing dwelling, relocating the site access and landscaping).

GRID REF: OS 350099, 231963

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

The parish council resolved to that there were no objections to the proposals in application 241186.

A further application, number 241328, had been received and an extension to the deadline for comments would be requested, as the details had only just been sent to the parish council.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

No new defects were advised. Keep an eye on verges and splays and to report any visibility issues.

8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman (and recruitment)

There had not been any firm response following the recent adverts. Enquirers had not furthered their applications by submitting their details. New adverts would be published via the newsletter (separate advert) and social media.

8.3) 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 had sent an update. There had not been any further Footpath Officer Meetings held since the previous parish council meeting. There would be a Parish Walk on 14th July and on the 16th July a Wildlife Walk from Little Birch. The Footpath Officer commented that the new Public Rights of Way Co-ordinator did not appear to be getting the help needed in order to deliver on promised objectives such as literature, training, meetings and website support. It was agreed that a letter of support, for his efforts, should be sent to Cllr Barry Durkin and

copied to the Ward Cllr. in order to highlight the need for support etc. The Footpath Officer would compose the e mail.

Path MB19 Helens Wood remained closed as, although the tree had been removed, the path was still blocked. The Footpath Officer had identified a number of paths that required strimming to clear them: MB22 from Parish Lane across to the Little Birch Road, MB7 from the A49 to Hollybush Lane, MB20 from Forge Lane to Aconbury Close plus clearance was required at Canada Field and on MB2, part of the Hereford Trail. It was agreed that the Footpath Officer would liaise with a possible contractor "Envirobility" with a view to purchasing some of their time to clear paths. Details of prices etc. would be circulated and negotiated, before approval, by the parish council. The strimming project was agreed in principle, subject to cost.

The Footpath Officer was putting together a PROW (Public Rights of Way) Grant package application, for submission to Herefordshire Council, in order to secure potential funding for fourteen footpath items that had been identified as requiring replacement. A big "thank you" was recorded to the Footpath Officer for all of his work on the application and footpath feedback.

8.4) To receive any update on Community Speed Watch

Regular sessions were taking place. A Saturday session for the A49 was coming soon. This item would now be removed from the Agenda.

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). Clerk would send a précis to the Newsletter. This would include a summary of the responses to planning items. A new Lengthsman Advertisement would also be sent for publication.

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

All the usual items would be included. Adoption of Financial Regulations 2024

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 11th July 2024 from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall. No meeting in August.

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

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date