

# MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Parish and Annual Statutory Council Meetings of Much Birch Parish Council held consecutively at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024 from 7.30 pm

### Present:

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

### In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright and Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan plus one member of the public

### Annual Parish Meeting and Public Question Time:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was member of the public at the meeting. The meeting heard that a recent meeting concerning broad band provision in the community had been well attended.

The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 7.33pm.

### The Annual Statutory Meeting opened

#### 1.0 To elect a Chairman

Cllr Cook was proposed by Cllr Goldsmith and seconded by Cllr Pickering Grey. There were no further nominations for the role. Cllr Cook accepted the role of Chair.

#### 2.0 To elect a Vice Chairman

Cllr Goldsmith was proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Pickering Grey. There were no further nominations for the role. Cllr Goldsmith accepted the role of Vice Chair.

#### 3.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies received from Footpath Officer; David Irwin.

#### 4.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

#### 5.0 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held at the Hall on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024, were approved as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

#### 6.0 Reports

**6.2) Ward Councillor** Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was present at the meeting. The Ward Cllr updated regarding the correspondence from the Environment Agency in regard to the silt and flooding issue (more detail at agenda item 8.3).

The play area question for Tump Lane had gone to the Connexus Board for consideration. The Larkrise application would be going to the Planning Committee for a decision.

There was to be a Waste and Recycling Webinar on 25<sup>th</sup> June, the council were looking at possible new contractors and apprenticeships for "care leavers".

The consultation on the new Local Area Plan, and elements within, was open to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024. There had been new toilets installed at the Maylord Shopping Centre and a set of 8 murals/sculptures had been painted/installed on a City Art Trail. The Community Infrastructure Fund was open for expressions of interest until 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 via the Talk Community Website. The Herefordshire Council had confirmed that the Balfour Beatty contract would terminate in June 2026.

The Ward Cllr left the meeting at 7.48 pm.

#### **6.2) P.C.S.O. from West Mercia Police**

Golden Valley Briefing had been sent when received.

**6.3) Locality Steward** James Howells, the Locality Steward, had sent his bulletins.

#### **7.0 To appoint councillors to the following working groups**

**Finance Working Group** – all

**Employment Working Group** – convene if required

**Parish Land Working Group** – all

#### **8.0 Information and Correspondence**

##### **8.1) Written report received and contents noted including:**

Herefordshire Council:

Talk Community bulletins

Cabinet decision to end contract with Balfour Beatty (2026)

##### **Electoral and Governance**

Request to complete a new **Registrable Interest** declaration form.

##### **8.2) To discuss enquiry about the Tree Warden role**

This would be deferred to the June Meeting as correspondence.

##### **8.3) To update regarding the Environment Agency and recent flooding in the parish** **Environment Agency**

A response to communications from the Environment Agency about recent silt deposits and flooding from Dougal Ziegler:

*“Dear Alison, Toni & Steve*

*As an update to this problem site...*

*The farmer responsible for these fields dropped the tenancy last autumn. I spoke to the landowner’s land agent and expressed my continued concern. I have now spoken with the new tenant and made him aware of the history and the high-risk nature of these two fields.*

*Obviously- given the wet autumn/winter the fields were going to wash off and erode given the condition they were left in. The new tenant assured me that he is aware of the issues and suggested that he will be taking measures to improve the soil condition and put the fields into either a wildflower or bird seed scheme. This is best done in late summer/autumn, so I believe the intention is to plant a spring cereal crop (barley I think) to cover the soils this spring/summer.*

*Fingers crossed that we see an improved situation!”*

##### **8.4) To discuss correspondence received about Hollybush Lane and HGV/Tractors**

The parish council had received a letter concerning damage to the highway from large vehicular traffic from the A49 to Bigglestone Farm. The Chair commented that there was not really any action that the parish council could take as the road was a farm access point. The vehicles have a right of access. The parish council was sympathetic to the concerns but there was not really anything that they could do apart from report the degradation, of the road edge, to the Highways Department. The Clerk would respond accordingly to the writer of the letter.

## **9.0 Financial Report**

### **9.1) The following bank balances were noted:**

@ 13<sup>th</sup> April 2024 HSBC Community Account      £13,241.92

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

The following payments were approved:

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

Clerk paid in accordance with contract	
HM Revenue & Customs (tax)	£105.80
Much Birch Community Hall (hall hire)	£76.50
Arthur J Gallagher (PC Insurance)	£406.47

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

## **10.0 Planning Matters and Parish Land**

### **10.1) To consider any planning applications as received**

One new application had been acknowledged for comments however the parish council had not been formally notified:

**APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS:** Planning Consultation - 233376 – Land at Highbury, Parish Lane, Little Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8AT

**DESCRIPTION:** Proposed three bed dwelling house

**GRID REF:** OS 350426 - 232185

**APPLICATION TYPE:** Planning Permission

The Parish Council discussed the application 233376 and resolved to comment that there were no additional points to be made, further than their previous response, but that it should be noted that the parish council had not received formal notification of the revised consultation.

### **10.2) To update regarding future initiatives for parish land on Barrack Hill**

The Parish Land Working Party had not met as at the date of the meeting. The parish council would look at the need for new gate/posts to secure the land parcel. A quote for the repair/renewal of the gate arrangement would be obtained. Cllr Goldsmith would arrange a working party meeting and the team would report back to the June Parish Council meeting.

## **11.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths including appointment of Footpath Officer**

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

There did not appear to be the required number of speed limit signs on Barrack Hill? Were some missing? Potholes had been filled but the ground around the drain at Wrigglebrook Lane, at the Barrack Hill end, was again breaking up.

### **11.2) To discuss the appointment of a new Lengthsman**

The parish were still seeking to appoint a new lengthsman. The Clerk was waiting for people, who had previously expressed an interest, to come back with their details etc.

**11.3) To appoint Footpath Officer and to receive any previous report**

David Irwin was reappointed to the position of Footpath Officer in his absence. Thanks were recorded for all of his work in regard to the local public footpaths.

**12.0) Community Speed Watch – village speeding initiatives update**

The Team had carried out eleven sessions of speed watch and 41 vehicles had been reported for exceeding the speed limit. There was to be a session on the A49, the week following the meeting. The overall impression was that the sessions were having a positive effect. The parish council thanked the team for their time and contribution towards highway safety.

**13.0 Parishes Newsletter and Much Birch Website and X**

To consider items suitable for inclusion in the newsletter and on the website plus X. Clerk would send a précis to the Newsletter with planning update.

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

All the usual items would be included. Also passing of the annual accounts for 2023 – 2024 and update from Working Party on Parish Land

**15.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting**

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024, from 7.30pm, at the Much Birch Community Hall.

***The meeting closed at 8.47pm***

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date