

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 3rd October 2024 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey
Cllr David Irwin (also Footpath Officer)
Cllr Michael Agyeman

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright, Lengthsman; Terry Griffiths, one member of the public and two representatives from West Mercia Police

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan.

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 5th September 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. Two police representatives were at the meeting. They were Tally and Jenny. They advised that there were no massive community issues. There had been some incidents, including a horse on the highway, a dog on the highway, traffic collisions and a tree down. An ongoing situation was with the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) in respect of burglaries and other criminal activity. The Officers urged people to report any suspicious vehicles and to advise regarding registration numbers. Speeding was still a main issue and the new “tripod” camera had been out a few times plus the Community Speed Watch team had identified an additional watch spot. This had been communicated to the police and the officers said that they would follow up on this by reminding PCSO Carol Marsh. Any issues with vehicles over the 7.5 tonne weight restriction for Tump Lane should be reported to the Traffic Department. The officers would try to get some feedback regarding the police speed watch initiatives. Reminders were given to keep things safe, use CCTV, lock gates, keep people informed via “Police Chat” or “Farmers Whats App” groups. Report anything suspicious. The Officers left the meeting at this point.

4.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan had sent her apologies. She had advised via an update that the Public Realm Enforcement Team were looking at the footpath issues on Tump Lane from the A466. There had been some signage requests for pedestrian awareness on Tump Lane. The Larkrise application was ongoing. Connexus were looking at play equipment possibilities for the area in Tump Lane. The Ward Cllr was waiting to hear back regarding public rights of way issues and she had asked questions of Cabinet on the topic.

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

Precept for 2025 – 2026

Begin discussion of precept for 2025 – 2026.

5.2) To consider the way forward regarding the parish land and to consider tenancies

The Chair had spoken with the prospective tenant. The Chair explained how the council would see the tenancy working, with a timeframe for the clearance aspect and a work specification with realistic timescales to reflect when work could be done. The parish council would need to protect both parties in the agreement. There would be a main agreement with a schedule of 1) works required and 2) a project plan. There would be monitoring by the parish council to check on progress with right of access and right of reply.

The annual rental amount charged for the parish land parcel adjacent to Rosebank was discussed. It had not been subject to a review since 2014/2015. It was agreed that the rental would be increased to £175.00 per annum becoming effective with the next billing. The Clerk would write to the tenant to confirm the increase.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13th September 2024 HSBC Community Account £13888.02

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 October

HM Revenue & Customs (tax October) £84.80

Much Birch Community Hall (hall hire) £36.00

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

6.3) To adopt new Financial Regulations 2024

The Financial Regulations 2024 were adopted by the parish council.

7.0 Planning Matters

7.1) 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 - 242231 – Park Hall, Wormelow, Herefordshire

DESCRIPTION: Application for removal or variation of a condition following grant of planning permission 222687 (Proposed demolition of former Park Hall Ballroom and Erection of 5 dwellings and 15 timber holiday lodges, reception area and associated works) – to provide details of garages as shown on the approved layout plan and vary the design of plot 2 to show attached garage as per the layout plan.

GRID REF: OS 349093, 230271

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

The parish council resolved to make no further comment on the application as submitted.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

Top of Tump Lane onto the A49, missing 30 mph sign (left hand side – disappeared)

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

The Lengthsman

The newly appointed Lengthsman was present at the meeting. He would ask his assistant to supply copies of the relevant insurance policies as required by the Lengthsman Contract Agreement. The parish council would draw up a list of works that were required and ask the Lengthsman to advise in regard to number of full or half days required to carry out the identified tasks. The Lengthsman advised that he had been on a parish tour and looked at the gullies, ditches and drainage systems. The Lengthsman explained about the structure of the service and it was agreed that a work schedule would be drawn up. There was an out of hours emergency service provision and various equipment available such as diggers, flails, tractor units etc. There were limited numbers of gates and stiles held in stock and these could be purchased from “Centrewire”. The company could not install bridges over 3 metres in length. The Clerk would send the Lengthsman an agenda for the meetings of the parish council. The company would spend 20 minutes maximum on a spot job before referring back to the customer for confirmation of what action to take. The Lengthsman advised that drainage and public rights of way were back with Herefordshire Council and “communication was not coming through.” It was agreed that Cllr Irwin would be the Lengthsman Co-ordinator for liaison.

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, Cllr Irwin, had sent a further update. The Footpath Officer advised about possible map availability. It was agreed that the Clerk would check whether a map could be placed in the Community Hall Notice Board. Footpath updates were featuring on social media and a number of comments were being generated. The Enviroability Insurance Certification had been supplied. The Public Rights of Way Grant was being used for gate purchase (2 x for path MB7). The Footpath Officer had looked into the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). There was nothing to report back on this. A reply would be sent in regard to steps being provided on a footpath MB4 which when subject to a risk assessment were deemed to be not appropriate and that the ability to use the path, as it was, would need to be self regulating.

The Chair noted that it was desirable that the whole parish council were kept informed in regard to any possible enforcement cases that may affect the parish footpaths.

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.

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

All the usual items would be included. Also:

- Co-option of new councillor
- Correspondence - EV charging
- Wreath for Remembrance – payments listing

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 7th November 2024 from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall.

Future Meetings for 2024: December 5th

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date