

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 2nd July 2026 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Steve Turner
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey
Cllr Michael Agyeman (until 8.07 pm)
Cllr David Irwin

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright and two members of the public

Open Session (Public Question Time):-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were two members of the public present. One of the members of the public asked about recording public questions in the minutes. The previous meeting questions, in June, had been documented on a full front page of notes. The Ward Cllr had been following up on the matters raised. The Chair advised that the speeding issues had not flagged up as significant numbers, when a speeding survey was undertaken on Tump Lane. More details on Tump Lane actions in Ward Cllr Report (4.3) and also in (8.6) Tump Lane – update on actions regarding June Meeting.

The Open Session closed at 8.10 pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr Roisin Burge and 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 3rd June 2026, 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.

4.2) Locality Steward

The street works updates from MGroup/Herefordshire Council had been received. A query was raised that there did not appear to be any weekly updates from the Locality Steward since the move over to M Group/Herefordshire Council. The clerk would query why this was and copy in the Ward Cllr.

4.3) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan had sent her apologies. She had sent her report on recent matters. The Ward Cllr was still engaging with Connexus over the issues about the grass cutting and play area in Tump Lane.

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
New CEO appointment and introduction from Paul Satoor

Parish Summit Invitation

Next summit Tuesday 14th July at Plough Lane

5.2) To receive any update or actions on matters relating to the Neighbourhood Development Plan and adoption of changes

Cllr Pickering Grey advised that there were no further amendments or updates for the July Meeting.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13th June 2026 HSBC Community Account £10652.01

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 July and August 2026

HM Revenue & Customs (tax July) £95.00

HM Revenue & Customs (tax August) £118.80

HM Revenue & Customs (Employer's NI due) £44.28

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 two new applications for consideration of comments. Both were for neighbouring parishes and the parish council resolved not to comment on applications 260810 for two shepherd huts at Gamberhead Farm and 250953, a re-consultation (part retrospective) for gabion basket garden level changes at Wenallt.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths plus parish land

8.1) To note any defects to be reported to the Public Realm Contractor

Ticklewithy Pitch to Bellevue U71606 from path MB2 to the A49 – surface requires repair.

Tump Lane – surface dressing to be taking place, anticipated date to be August 2026.

8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and actions

The hedges outside the school were overgrown. The lower end of Tump Lane - hedges not cut near the flats at the bottom (number 2 Tump Lane).

8.3) Footpath Officer – to receive any update or action points

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

The Footpath Officer, Cllr Irwin, had sent his report and he was in attendance at the meeting. He explained that everything was growing very quickly and the footpaths were overgrown.

Remedial actions had been earmarked for a new stile at MB22, action regarding a broken gate at MB23, a broken rail at MB20 and broken steps at MB18. Decisions were awaited on bridges and some issues were in the hands of the Enforcement Team. Enviroability were to come and do the repair works under the Public Rights of Way Grant Scheme for 2026 -2027. The maximum recoverable labour cost was £400.00 per day, so the additional £90.00 chargeable per day was proposed to be met by the parish council. This was agreed up to a maximum of four days, i.e. 4 x £90.00 = £360.00. The contingency would form part of the forthcoming budget discussion.

There was to be a Duchy Walk arranged on a July evening.

It was noted that the proposed Footpath Officer Job description prevented certain actions thought necessary, so more flexibility on the job description was believed to be required.

8.4) Parish Land – update and actions plus rental for Barrack Hill

The Chair challenged a comment from a councillor that had possibly inferred that the tenancy agreement for Rosebank had not been advised to the members. This was refuted. There was a discussion about the agreement and the current agreement did contain conditions but enforceability was questionable. The councillors wanted the paddock cleared up. The original letter drafted was considered “not strong enough” and a revised letter would be circulated, before sending, for approval by the councillors. The brash pile to be removed and the general condition of the paddock attended to.

The Barrack Hill Plot was being worked on. There were some dead trees to be removed. The parked car was in place for security.

The rental to be charged was discussed. The two year rental free period would expire in November 2026. The sum of £200.00 for the first year was proposed and carried.

Cllr Agyeman left the meeting at 8.07 pm.

The Barrack Hill rental would be reviewed in November 2027 as this was then three years into the tenancy (2024 – 2027). A letter explaining the annual rental, and review period, would be sent to the tenant, after it had been validated by the parish councillors.

8.5) Water Quality Monitoring

Cllr Turner advised that contact had been made with the co-ordinator. The hay harvest was imminent and there would be a further update in the September meeting.

8.6) Tump Lane – update on actions regarding June Meeting

The Ward Cllr had advised that she had received a response from Connexus. The parish council had noted the actions as a reference point and would keep a watching brief. It was stated that regular grass cutting would help the situation as the grass would be shorter at the point of cutting. It had been stated, by Connexus, that they were not obligated to pick up the clippings after cutting the grass.

Speed Indicator Devices, including the possibility of funding for these, would be looked at when the parish council were considering the budget for the next year and the precept setting.

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.

The Clerk would send a précis to the Newsletter. This would include a summary of the responses to planning items, if applicable. The Chair advised the meeting about the new look to the website and encouraged councillors to take a look. It was “running well.”

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

All the usual items would be included. Also parish land and update regarding Tump Lane

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 3rd September 2026, from 7.30pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.43 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date