

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 September 2026 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Steve Turner
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey (In the Chair)
Cllr Michael Agyeman
Cllr David Irwin

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright, Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan, the Lengthsman; Mr Terry Griffiths and PCSO Lewis Thomas from West Mercia Police

Open Session (Public Question Time):-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

No matters were raised.

The Open Session closed at 7.31 pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr Roisin Burge and Cllr Alison Cook.

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 2nd July 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.

PCSO Lewis Thomas was in attendance at the meeting. He updated regarding local crime issues including the theft of a cable drum from a farm in the parish. No leads had been advised as to the situation, as at the date of the meeting. Security advice was being made available for both business and domestic premises. There had been thefts of tools from vans in the city and in town areas. Advice was to restrict access to property and strategically park vehicles (defence parking) to help prevent break ins. Also remove valuables and equipment plus tools, where possible. There were also local scams and organised crime to be aware of. A warning was issued to be aware of possible tactics and not to engage plus to use call blockers where possible. If receiving a suspect call, end the contact as soon as possible. A warning was also given to be aware of, and watch out for, rogue traders.

The PCSO left the meeting at 7.46 pm.

4.2) Locality Steward

The street works updates from MGroup/Herefordshire Council had been received.

4.3) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was at the meeting.

The Ward Cllr had been looking into the Locality Steward role and the absence of weekly reports. Ward Cllrs were being given portal access to monitor defect progress. Lee Fishwick was the current holder of the post of Locality Steward. The Ward Cllr was looking into pushing for

improvements to road marking/signage at the end of Tump Lane onto the A466 and also at the Thorn in terms of making the way safer for potential bus passengers and for people coming up the Thorn. Some changes were planned and had been referred to Strategic Planning. Parish Lane was also having an action plan.

The Ward Cllr mentioned the option of signing the River Charter in regard to the Wye. Place on Agenda for October.

The Connexus play area in Tump Lane, and those elsewhere in the County, would not be developed by Connexus. Existing play equipment was being removed if it had defects. There may be a future question regarding the asset transfer of play sites or the possible adoption of play sites by other groups?

In regard to the picking up of mown grass clippings, the contract did not provide for this and was a "minimum service".

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

The Chair

The Chair, Cllr Alison Cook, had suffered a fall and broken her leg (tibial plateau fracture). The parish council expressed their very best wishes for her recovery.

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 September Meeting.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13 th August 2026 HSBC Community Account	£9837.19
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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 September 2026

HM Revenue & Customs (tax Sept)	£95.20
HM Revenue & Customs (Ers NI due)	£44.28
Much Birch Community Hall (Hall hire)	£54.00
Information Commissioner (ICO)	£52.00
Enviroability (Public Rights of Way Works)	£545.00

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 no new applications for consideration of comments.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths plus parish land

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

The Clerk was asked to reiterate the concerns about the breaking up of the highway at Hollybush Lane. The entire land required checking with particular notice to the collapsed edges and being mindful of HGV use of the lane for the farm and access.

8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and actions

Enviroability had completed the footpath works, as identified, and the invoice had been sent. The full amount would be reclaimed from the Public Rights of Way grant pot. Mr Griffiths was in attendance and some of the drainage objectives were discussed. Confirmation of tasks to be undertaken would be determined.

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. The Footpath Officer advised that most of the footpaths were okay, given the fact that there were a few brambles. Enviroability had been booked for 12 September and 12 October to complete the identified works.

There would be a further parish walk on 20th September and a Footpath Officer Group meeting on 4th September.

8.4) Parish Land – update and actions

An enquiry had been received about the Rosebank Tenancy. The Chair was looking into the query and feedback would be given.

8.5) Water Quality Monitoring – update and actions

Cllr Turner advised that there would be more information on water monitoring in October. The Ward Cllr advised regarding River Wye Charter and the aim to protect the river and waterways.

8.6) Tump Lane – update on actions regarding previous correspondence

Ward Cllr Fagan had updated regarding the issues at Tump Lane. The lane had been resurfaced and Connexus had confirmed that there were no plans to develop the playing area off Tump Lane, at the present time. More details in the Ward Cllr Report item 4.3)

The Ward Cllr left the meeting at 8.35 pm.

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 Clerk would include seasonal items concerning bonfires, fireworks and related matters.

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 any update regarding Tump Lane plus NJC pay award and increment plus casual car mileage rate for Clerk. Also confirming drainage jobs for the lengthsman and consideration of the Wye River Charter

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 1st October 2026, from 7.30pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date