

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 6th September 2012

Present:

Cllr. Alison Cook (Acting -Chairman)
Cllr. Andrew Crum
Cllr. Stephen Turner

In attendance:

Parish Clerk Alison Wright
Ward Cllr. Russell Hamilton
CSO Fiona Witcher
3 Members of the public

Public Participation Time –

A question was asked as to whether the Parish Boundaries had been altered, especially in regard to Llanwarne. The answer was that no the boundaries had not changed. There was a discussion over flooding, silt and water supplies at Gamber Head Farm and in relation to the adjacent properties. It was agreed that the Clerk would highlight the issues to the relevant Herefordshire Council Departmental Officers.

There was also a discussion over a red car that had been parked close to the bus shelter in Much Dewchurch Parish. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact the Clerk of Much Dewchurch to find out if anything was known about what was happening as the car was allegedly there for a lot of the time and there were some concerns re visibility. Cllr Hamilton agreed to talk to the Ward Councillor for Much Dewchurch and the Transportation Manager.

The meeting was formally opened by the Chairman at 7.30pm

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

3.0 Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on the 5th July 2012 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman with one typing error corrected in the spelling of “Hamilton”.

4.0 Reports

CSO Witcher, from West Mercia Police, gave an update on crime trends. She highlighted that thefts of artefacts from churches was becoming widespread. Details of the stolen items, mainly stone, were being circulated to antique dealers nationally in a bid to recover the items. There had also been fuel oil thefts, machinery and tools. An initiative to catch uninsured drivers and

confiscate their cars, until appropriate insurance had been obtained, was proving successful. The cars would be destroyed if not reclaimed by the driver with proper insurance within a time frame. Registration numbers could be read and tracked by an "auto read" facility on the police cars and uninsured cars quickly identified.

Cllr Hamilton would be e mailing his report update but, in summary, highlighted initiatives regarding flooding issues asking that flooding events were reported so that intelligence could be built up for problem areas. The Council information service would also seek to notify re flooding dangers and pinpoint the need for sandbags etc.

Neighbourhood Planning had been given the "green light" to proceed. Guidance notes on the Council website.

A new timetable had been announced for the LDF Core strategy including the Transport Plan. There would be another round of consultation for the Community Infrastructure Levy in early 2013.

The Herefordshire Council were undertaking a "root and branch" review of circa 700 services to try to streamline and arrive at better ways of delivering services. "Your Community- Your Say" had been launched to give people a chance to get involved and comment. A timetable of venues and times for the sessions would be published.

5.0 Clerks report

The Clerks report on action items was noted. The Clerk would try to ascertain on whose land the Japanese Knotweed was growing.

6.0 Selection of new Parish Councillor

Following on from three resignations, the Parish Council were just quorate with three remaining councillors. No request for an election had been made, in response to the advertisements, so the Council could now co-opt. Terry Cook had offered to stand and was proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Crum. Welcome to Cllr. Terry Cook. There would be a councillor recruitment and information evening, organised in conjunction with HALC, on Monday 1st October 2012 7.30pm at the Much Birch Community Hall (Arthur Harris Room). Councillors asked the Clerk to request that HALC highlight the purpose of the evening more clearly on the advertisement leaflet. The advert would be placed in the Notice Boards, Hereford Times, Newsletter and Website.

7.0 Financial Report

7.1 The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th July HSBC Community Account	£ 11,954.47
@ 13 th July HSBC Community Projects Account	£9,408.00

7.2 The following payments were approved:

Clerk's salary	£328.16
Expenses (stationery £12.00, mileage £40.01, stamps £9.60)	£61.61
Tax due on salary	£82.00
Lengthsman (Mr M Dyer)	£22.00
Much Birch Community Hall (Hire of upper room)	£16.00
Ico. Data Protection Registration (Annual fee)	£35.00
Donation to the Birches Newsletter	£350.00

8.0 Bank Signatories

It was resolved that all of the councillors should be signatories, with a proviso that the two Cllr Cooks would not sign a cheque together unless it were absolutely unavoidable. A separate minute authorising the additional signatories had been recorded for the purpose of administration at the bank. The relevant mandates would be completed and signatories set up.

9.0 Planning Matters

No further Planning Applications had been received since the last meeting.

10.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

Two letters had been received from local residents re parish issues, bins, grass cutting weeds and roads. The Clerk would acknowledge the letters and forward the specific requests to the relevant departments.

10.1) There was a request for spraying weeds at Tump Lane and the Clerk would check with the Lengthsman in this regard.

10.2) The grass areas around the Notice Boards required cutting

10.3) The grass around the grit bins at the junction of Wrigglebrook Lane and The Thorne needed cutting as the bins were disappearing from view

10.4) Bins required emptying at various locations

10.5) There was a damp patch appearing in the footpath leading from the new houses near to Wrigglebrook Lane and The Thorne. May be leaking from underneath.

All of the above issues would be reported to Amey and the Lengthsman for their attention.

10.6 Footpath Officer Vacancy Cllr Crum would speak to Alex Godding to see if he was interested in the position.

10.7 Following a representation from a local resident the Clerk would follow up the issues around flooding at Gamber Head Farm with the Highways Department of Herefordshire Council.

11.0 Self-help winter gritting

A meeting had been held between the two councils of Much and Little Birch and representatives of both had discussed the way forward. Amey had confirmed that the scheme was still in place and supplies of grit were assured but there were issues over storage of the machine, manpower to use it and insurance. It was agreed that members of both councils would need to meet again to discuss and to look at tenders for the work etc. It was agreed that they would look at how other councils had managed their schemes and Cllr Turner would contact Cllr Morley, of Little Birch, to set up a meeting.

12.0 Correspondence

12.1 Invitation to WI Quiz Night on 5th October. Clerk to send note to decline the invitation but to thank them for considering the Parish Council.

12.2 Pride of Herefordshire Award. No further details or action

12.3 2 letters from residents re Parish and road issues (as at 10.0)

12.4 Cllr Turner had a copy of a letter from Jesse Norman MP in regard to the Declarations of Interest. There would still seem to be differing advice on the subject. Clerk to attend briefing on the 18th September at Brockington and report back.

13.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

13.1 Action: The Clerk to provide a précis of the meeting to be published in the newsletter by the 18th September. The Information Evening on 1st October to be published in Notice Boards, Website, Hereford Times and Newsletter where possible.

13.2 Cllr T Cook, the Webmaster raised concerns re the continued publication of the Birches Newsletter on the Website. There were two main concerns. Firstly, the size of the file was filling up the Website capacity at a rapid rate. Secondly, the incorporation of adverts all the way through the newsletter was making their editing out impossible and there was an issue re the resultant free advertising on the Parish Council Website. It was felt that this did not sit well with the ethos of the Website. I was agreed that the Clerk would write to the Editor to raise these concerns.

14.0 Code of Conduct

It was resolved that the Code of Conduct, in the same format adopted by the Herefordshire Council on the 20th July 2012, should be adopted by the Much Birch Parish Council.

15.0 Items for next Agenda

- Self-help gritting
- Footpath Officer update on vacancy
- Councillor Vacancy
- Feedback from Open Evening on 1st October

16.0 Next meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 4th October 2012 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

The meeting closed at 9.04pm.

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date