

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present:

Cllr. Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr. Andrew Crum
Cllr. Stephen Turner (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Terry Cook
Cllr. Jon Norris

In attendance:

Parish Clerk Alison Wright
4 Members of the public

Public Participation Time –

There had been a meeting held for Parish Council Chairs at Brockington. There had been discussion re the Localism Bill and the idea of cluster co-operation between councils. The suggestion of taking forward cluster meetings is to be put on the next agenda.

The meeting was formally opened by the Chairman at 7.30pm

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies apart from Cllr. Hamilton and CSO Witcher

2.0 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

3.0 Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st November 2012 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman. The School Governor representative was asked if there were any updates to report and although none at present the item would be moved up the agenda for the next meeting.

4.0 Reports

CSO Witcher, West Mercia Police Absent. The latest Crime Update sheet had not reported anything remarkable for Much Birch, thankfully.

Cllr Hamilton Absent Some details had been advised and Cllr A. Cook detailed the following items for those present. The Herfordshire Council were experiencing severe budget pressures in many areas including adult social care. The recommendation re the Council Tax for 2013/2014 was for a rise of 1.9 percent (just below the referendum 2.0 percent figure). There would be some changes to boundaries under the Ward Boundary proposals and the loss of Kynaston, Hoarwithy and Hentland to the Hollington Ward represented a 10.0 percent reduction to the ward, as it stands at present.

5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The information provided on the update sheet was noted.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1 The following bank balances were noted:

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| @ 13 th Oct HSBC Community Account | £ 13,561.68 |
| @ 13 th Oct HSBC Community Projects Account | £9,408.00 |

6.2 The following payments were approved:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Clerk's salary | £205.15 |
| Expenses (mileage £22.05) | £22.05 |
| Tax due on salary | £51.20 |

Resolved :- The payments were approved and passed for payment

7.0 Bank Signatories

All signatories had now been set up with the bank and the bank representative had confirmed that all was in order. Cllrs A and T Cook plus S Turner and A Crum were now all able to sign cheque payments when required.

8.0 Planning Matters

There had been two new applications and the papers had been passed to councillors for response and comment.

- 1) Site: The Ungalbow, Kingsthorpe, Herefordshire, HR2 8AU Description: Proposed two storey extension to provide ancillary accommodation Application No: S123221/FH Grid Ref : OS 350274, 231935 Application Type : Full Householder. It was resolved that the application be approved, in principle, by a majority of 3 to 1. There was a concern expressed re the potential reduction in parking space meaning that vehicles may park out on the highway so making cars pull round and then adding further to the damage to the metalled highway.
- 2) Site: Hunters Lodge, Kingsthorpe, Herefordshire, HR2 8AL Description: Proposed first floor extension with roof terrace Application No: S122931/FH Grid Ref : OS 349838, 231415 Application Type : Full Householder. It was resolved that the Parish Council approve the application.

The responses and comments will be sent to the Planners by the Parish Clerk.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

- 9.1) The Wrigglebrook/Thorn pothole issue had been resolved by Amey filling the holes.
- 9.2) Road was breaking up from the top road down the Thorn near to ref point MB27, water flows outside the ditch and then freezes and becomes a "skid pan".
- 9.3) The road at the end of the junction with the A49 going towards Hereford (C1263 Junction) road is splitting open
- 9.4) The ditches in the area, in general, are not taking the water down as there are seemingly no effective "grips" to channel the water. It was agreed the lengthsman be asked to install some grips where "hot spots" of flooding were occurring. An ongoing problem with hedge clippings blocking drains and gullies had been identified. It was important that those trimming hedges cleared up the trimmings to help avoid this problem.

- 9.5) Report on Footpaths by Footpath Officer. Cllr Crum reported that Footpath MB13 had been reopened and “taped” by Herefordshire Council. The barbed wire had been removed and the stile, that had been previously fitted, would now enable access. The Council had placed tapes indicating that the right of way had been reopened.

10.0 Self-help winter gritting

Cllr Turner had met with Bob Mason and Alison Clark from Little Birch. It was resolved that Much Birch Parish Council would be prepared to purchase the “Vicon” Spreader attachment that, when fitted to the appropriate vehicle, would provide the agitator “wig-wag” motion necessary to distribute the grit/salt mixture across the road surface efficiently. Mr Mason had kindly agreed to spread the grit/salt and he would hold the stocks of same. The gritting would be on selected minor routes and not the routes gritted by Amey contractors. The situation would be monitored by Little Birch, and Much Birch, and the spreader attachment would be purchased with reimbursement for it to be made, by Much Birch, when the invoice is presented. If anyone notices that the roadside self use grit bins need refilling then please inform the Clerk who will contact Amey to request that this be done.

11.0 Correspondence

The following had been received:-

- 11.1 E mail Letter from resident concerning path overgrowth on approach from Kingsthorne to the Much Birch School. This had previously been cleared by Amey using a bobcat digger. Clerk to request that the clearance be done again as the path was so overgrown as to push pedestrians out closer to the road when walking along it. The other part of the letter concerned the hedge below Bank House towards the Skippett. This hedge was not in the parish.
- 11.2 A letter had been received from a further resident concerning highways and other local issues. Cllr Cook had taken the letter and would be investigating the concerns expressed. Any follow up items would be advised to the Clerk to progress.

Other correspondence received were as detailed on the Information Sheet and included notification of the Lengthsman Grant remittance, planning application updates plus updates from HALC on information and training and Electoral Reform of Herefordshire draft recommendations.

12.0 Parishes’ Newsletter and Much Birch Website

- 12.1 The Clerk would supply a précis for the Parish Newsletter by the 17th December.
- 12.2 The Twitter account had so far received a minimal response.

13.0 Standing Orders

The Standing Orders Document was now complete and ready for adoption by the Parish Council. Changes had been made and renumbering of items done. It was resolved to adopt the new model Standing Orders and the revised copy would be on the website.

14.0 Precept 2013/2014 and feedback from the Finance Sub-committee

The Finance sub-committee had met to discuss the budget and the setting of the precept for 2013/2014. This had been a useful meeting and a detailed budget analysis of the headings would be put together by the councillors, who had attended the meeting, for the next Parish Council meeting in January. It had been thought that the precept should remain at £6000.00 for the year, as reserves were held. In real terms this represents a reduction in the amount set when other costs are rising. It was resolved that a sum of £250.00 per year should be set aside

for contested election expenses and this could be put back into the budget in future years, should it not be required. As regards expenses for the councillors, it was decided that this was not the appropriate time to introduce them. The Parish Council reserved the right to revisit the suggestion at a later date, should it be felt necessary to do so, in terms of expense due to increased expectations, of parish councillors, under the localism arrangements. Mileage would still be payable when travelling on Parish Council business.

15.0 Matters to be raised on the Agenda of the next meeting

Precept and declarations of interest absolution to 2015 for councillors to discuss it (details from HALC Information Corner dated 26/10/12), Cluster co-operation meetings re localism initiatives, Gritter update, future of the Website, donations and contributions to local enterprises/activities.

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 3rd January 2013 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date