

# MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2013

### 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  
7 Members of the public

### Public Participation Time -

There was representation at the meeting from Herefordshire Housing and a consortium known as Larkrise who were exploring the idea of building a community housing development of co-housing properties in the parish. The site would be built on land adjacent to Tump Lane. Outline planning permission was to be sought in the first instance. Kat La Tzsar of WM Housing Group was in attendance, representing the interests of Herefordshire Housing, and it was announced that there would be a Consultation afternoon, between 3.30 and 6.30pm on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January at the Much Birch Community Centre for those who were interested in coming along to find out more details about the project. There would be a Parish Council meeting arranged to discuss the application once the planning permission had been formally applied for. There would be in the region of 20 properties in the development and similar completed projects, such as "Threshold" in Dorset, were highlighted for residents to have a look at the ideas and principles.

**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 6<sup>th</sup> December 2012 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman, with one amendment in that Cllr Morley had not attended the Gritter meeting as stated.

#### 4.0 Reports

**CSO Witcher, West Mercia Police** Absent.  
**Cllr Hamilton** Absent

## **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:**

@ 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct HSBC Community Account	£ 13,598.38
@ 13 <sup>th</sup> Oct HSBC Community Projects Account	£9,408.00

### **6.2 The following payments were approved:**

Clerk's salary	£164.08
Expenses (mileage £22.05)	£15.30
Tax due on salary	£41.00

**Resolved** :- The payments were approved and passed for payment

## **7.0 School Governor's Report**

Cllr Turner, School Governor, gave a resume of the minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Body of Much Birch School. Andrew Best the Schools Improvement Advisor had given a PowerPoint presentation on the new Ofsted requirements for schools, in terms of judging achievement, quality of teaching, behaviour and safety, leadership and management and overall effectiveness. Karen Miles was the new Acting Head teacher and there was a new school development plan. There would be regular pupil progress meetings and classroom teaching observations for both teachers and non teachers. The next agenda, of the School Governors, would include the formation of a Building Committee and car parking issues would be discussed.

## **8.0 Planning Matters**

There had been no new applications to consider. The issue of charges for planning application paperwork, of £4.00 per copy, had been raised with the Planning Department by a large percentage of Parishes, including Much Birch. As yet no reply had been received in response to the large sway of feeling that this was not a good decision. The Clerk would highlight the fact that there had not been a response from Planning with Cllr Hamilton and ask him to investigate.

## **9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths**

- 9.1) Large pothole outside the Much Birch Community Centre
- 9.2) C1263 2 potholes between A49 junction and the Thorne right by the side of the Bus Stop sign.
- 9.3) Potholes at top of Paige's Pitch junction of ref U71608 and U71609.
- 9.4) Further details are awaited from reconnaissance of the area's problems by the Lengthsman.
- 9.5) Report on Footpaths by Footpath Officer. Cllr Crum had no further details to report at this stage.

## **10.0 Self-help winter gritting**

The attachment had been purchased to enable the gritting to take place and the invoice would be forwarded to the Clerk for reimbursement.

## **11.0 Correspondence**

The Parish Council had been made aware of a New Years Honour for Mr John Bryant. He is to receive the British Empire Medal for a lifetime of service to his community. The Clerk is to send a congratulatory letter to him to mark the occasion.

Other correspondence received, as per update sheet, and including HALC updates and information on budgets from Herefordshire Council.

## **12.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website**

12.1 The Clerk would supply a précis for the Parish Newsletter by the 18<sup>th</sup> January. This would include a list of councillor's contact details as it was agreed that it would be a good idea to let the Parish know how they could contact their councillors, and to ensure that everyone knew who they are. Also, a reminder would go into the newsletter that new councillors are still required.

12.2 The Twitter account had so far received a minimal response. It will not receive updates from the next agenda onwards

12.3 Website update. The Webmaster advised that the old version of "Front Page" is now obsolete. He has to "fire up" an old PC to make amendments to the site and this is unsustainable. After discussion of the issues of websites, and the way forward, it was resolved that the Webmaster would meet with Cllr Norris who had some suggestions as to a solution going forward for maintenance arrangements.

## **13.0 Precept 2013/2014 and declarations of interest absolute to 2015 for councillors to discuss it**

Following on from advice by HALC, in their October newsletter, the proposal that the Councillors are allowed to discuss, and set the precept, with exemption from the confines of the pecuniary element of their interest declarations be adopted until 2015. This was resolved. It was then resolved, by a unanimous vote, that the precept application should remain at £6000.00 for 2013/2014 and the Clerk would submit the application to the Herefordshire Council.

## **14.0 Cluster co-operation meetings re Localism Act**

Following on from suggestions of cluster co-operation, between local parishes, to achieve economies of scale in such matters such as the carrying out of a Neighbourhood Plan, for example, it was resolved that the Clerk should contact the parishes of Little Birch, Much Dewchurch, Aconbury and Llanwarne to enquire as to whether they would like to discuss the proposal.

## **15.0 Donations to local enterprises/initiatives**

These would be carried out under the terms of the Much Birch Donations Policy and would be subject to written application from any prospective beneficiaries.

## **16.0 Matters to be raised on the agenda of the next meeting**

To receive any feedback on the Tump Lane development meeting, as held on 22/01/13. The next Agenda will be sent to all councillors, and a window of opportunity given for suitable additions, before final circulation.

## **17.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting**

Next meeting – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

***The meeting closed at 9.05pm***

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date