

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 7th March 2013

Present:

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

In attendance:

Parish Clerk, Alison Wright, CSO Fiona Witcher and Ward Cllr Russell Hamilton
17 Members of the public

Public Participation Time –

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting
Councillors were addressed by members of the public about the possible affordable housing ventures to be built within the Parish. There would be a further consultation event in April, but at the time of the meeting, the Parish Council had not received notification of any application by Larkrise or Sanctuary or dates or times of the future consultations. When agreed, the Parish Council would be advised of the dates and times by e mail. It was stated that a special council meeting would be held to discuss any applications.
The Open Session then closed.

The Parish Council meeting was formally opened by the Chairman

1.0 Apologies for Absence

No Apologies had been received

2.0 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

3.0 Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on the 7th February 2013 were accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman with one amendment to the spelling of the school's head teacher's name .

4.0 Reports

CSO Witcher, West Mercia Police CSO Witcher reported the latest crime trends including some crimes in Kingstone, a quad bike being stolen and container break ins. She then gave an informative and interesting talk on the property marking solution known as "Smart Water". This was effectively "chemical DNA" and each kit had a unique composition making property marked with it traceable to the owner. The chemical would not wear off, could not be washed off and has been carbon dated to 115 years longevity. To use it you dab a small amount onto your item(s) and also register the kit to the secure data base. The chemical is invisible to the naked eye but shows bright green under ultra violet light. Signage is displayed which acts as a deterrent because any stolen property can be identified, as such, by checking the smart water markings and registration. Kits are available directly from the Police (Contact CSO Witcher) at a reduced cost.

Peterchurch Police Station is closing but no date has been set as yet. The area map of West Mercia is being rewritten so catchments will be changing and will include Hinton and Hereford Rural South. The new area will be policed by one Police Officer and two CSO's.

Cllr Hamilton

Cllr Russell Hamilton gave an overview of the draft Core Strategy for Herefordshire and advised parishioners that they could comment and consult on the proposals via questionnaires and on the Council Website. The document contained a blueprint for the future of Herefordshire, for a twenty year period, and was supported by a large number of documents (339) that could be viewed on the Council website. There was also an opportunity to consult on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which outlined pounds value per square metre levies for developments within designated areas. Cllr Hamilton had met with Herefordshire Housing, Larkrise and Sanctuary Housing bodies and had spoken of concerns over road safety, flooding, HGV traffic and school places. He explained the issues facing the Herefordshire Council and said that some decisions would be made at the next full Council Meeting on March 8th. The Local Transport Plan 2013/14/15 was subject to approval by the full Council and would address public transport concerns, park & ride, park & share, cycling and shared transport initiatives. He spoke of the adverse weather conditions that had been experienced and the knock on effect on road damage, flooding etc. There would be a plan to start to address the road issues countywide and a high priority would be the repairs in this ward. He explained some detail about the Police Commissioner and Chief Constable meeting and the value of the PC's and PCSO's. Unfortunately in real terms it all added up to a reduction in officer numbers across West Mercia. There had been the appointment of a new Chief Executive for Herefordshire Council, Mr Alistair Neale, who came into post on March 4th.

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 th Feb HSBC Community Account	£1 3,106.35
@ 13 th Feb HSBC Community Projects Account	£9,408.00

6.2 The following payments were approved:

Clerk's salary	£164.08
Expenses (mileage £15.30, Ink £16.00, stationery £3.75)	£35.05
Tax due on salary	£41.00
Lengthsman	£231.00
HALC Subscription 2013/2014	£342.52

Resolved :- The payments were approved and passed for payment

7.0 School Governor's Report

Cllr Turner, School Governor, gave a resume of the last meeting of the Governing Board of Much Birch School. There had been some changes to the governing board but things were moving ahead and the board had agreed the primary aim of the school to be "to ensure that MB school continues to work on improvement across all areas in order to achieve the standards set for (Ofsted rating) "Outstanding" and to work in partnership with other schools whilst attaining independence as a primary school within the Local Authority." A new clerk was to be sought, following the resignation of the previous clerk, after fourteen years of service with the school.

8.0 Planning Matters (including Housing Developments)

No applications to consider at present.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

- 9.1) Matters for Amey Herefordshire
- Footpath issue on MB16, path overgrown
- Large pothole at U71606 near to property known as Bellvue
- Pothole outside Much Birch Surgery and Community Centre (very deep)
- Deep gully at bottom of Wrigglebrook Lane where it crosses under the road U71608 and U71606 Near bungalow known as Linnet – barriers have been erected around collapse. This is potentially dangerous and requires attention.
- Japanese Knotweed is back in force at Parish Lane, Kingstorne on land farmed by Elwyn Brooks
- There is Japanese knotweed at the end of the service layby for the new houses approximately three metres past this on the bank and on the same side as the houses. Believed to be on property of Grant Rogers, Oak House (double gated residence), Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingstorne.
- 9.2) Nothing further to instruct this time. Residents are pleased with works carried out so far to date following parishoner's meeting, and parish walk, with the Lengthsman.
- 9.3) Report on Footpaths by Footpath Officer. Cllr Crum had checked on the following paths and reported MB29, MB22, MB30, MB23, MB27, MB28, MB20, MB19 and MB2 all to be in good shape. MB1 was partially blocked by a fallen branch approximately 20m from the bottom end. Cllr Crum kindly agreed to deal with said branch.

10.0 Self-help winter gritting

The grit store had been pretty much exhausted. The Clerk would highlight the requirement for more grit to be delivered to the holding site at Merrivale Farm, Aconbury to Amey. The future plans for the scheme would be devised and possible new areas for gritting explored via talks with the contractor. The item would remain on the agenda going forward.

11.0 Correspondence

Other correspondence received, as per update sheet. The request for a donation from the Hereford Citizens Advice Bureau was declined as it did not meet the Parish Council's Donations Policy criteria in that beneficiaries must be seen to be of benefit to all in the parish. A Neighbourhood Planning consultation evening had been arranged for 25th April.

12.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

12.1 The Clerk would supply a précis for the Parish Newsletter by the 18th March. This would again 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. There would also be details about the Smart Water Property Identification initiative as described by CSO Witcher.

12.2 Website update. The Web Site was a work in progress and some developments were moving ahead. Word Press was being used and the site was currently described as being "embryonic". The potential for collaboration with Little Birch on a Website was to go on the next agenda, to be discussed.

13.0 Grit Bins

No immediate new venue for these had been identified. Existing ones were to be refilled following extensive use of the contents earlier in the year.

14.0 Update re Cluster co-operation re Localism Act

There would be further details on this after the Neighbourhood Planning Consultation had been held. Some of the contacted Parishes wished to collaborate, Little Birch did wish to do so and possibly also Llanwarne but not Much Dewchurch and Aconbury had not replied to the enquiry.

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

Neighbourhood Plan, Cluster meetings, Gritter scheme, housing developments, collaboration with LB on website, response to Core Strategy documents.

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 4th April 2013 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

At this point members of the public were asked to leave the Hall due to the confidential nature of the final item. The Clerk also left the room.

17.0 Clerk’s Review

The Councillors discussed the Clerk’s review and following this the Clerk was recalled and advised of an incremental point rise on the Parish Clerk’s pay scale to point 17 from 1/04/2013.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed:

.....
Chairman

.....
Date