

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 3rd April 2014

Present:

Cllr. Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr. Andrew Crum
Cllr. Stephen Turner
Cllr. Jon Norris (also Ward Councillor)
Cllr. Tim Jones

In attendance:

Parish Clerk, Alison Wright, and 6 members of the public

Public Participation Time –

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

A request was put forward for the Parish Council to fund the purchase of some daffodil bulbs to be planted in the parish. This would be placed on the next agenda.

It was requested that the Clerk chase up the issue of the yellow lines. A bullet point list of actions and responses had been produced, by the Chair, regarding school parking issues and actions so far which had included the submission of petitions, letters to the Highways Agency and Herefordshire Council and action regarding the Governing Body at the School. There was a suggestion that the de-restriction sign could be removed keeping the speed limit at 30mph all the way from Kingsthorpe Hill. A raised kerb was reported outside Fairview and the Much Birch School, raised by approximately 3". This to be reported to Balfour Beatty.

The Open Session then closed at 7.45pm

The Parish Council meeting was formally opened by the Chairman

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There was one apology for absence, from Cllr James. The Declaration of Interest and Acceptance of Office Forms were signed by Cllr Jones.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3.0 Minutes

3.1 The Minutes of 6th March 2014 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

4.0 Reports

P.C.S.O. from West Mercia Police

PCSO Kevin Powell was not present.

Ward Councillor Cllr Norris gave his report.

There had been a meeting held to discuss insulation standards regarding sustainability and affordability. The Government had taken away the control over the stipulation of housing standards and there was a national standard in regards to new building control. There would be a meeting with Jesse Norman MP on 4th April to discuss the frustration regarding the fact that less can be done and that in the absence of the Core Strategy appeals were being made if the Planners said "No". Matt Tompkins was the new area planning person and he had proved to be very helpful. Cllr Norris reported on legal moves around the Neighbourhood Plan in regards to a case in Cheshire where it is to be established whether a Neighbourhood Plan can be ratified before adoption of the Core Strategy it affiliates to. The outcome is awaited with interest. An

update was given on Balfour Beatty who were appointing their new Locality Stewards and hoping to assume more control over locality issues. There was also an update on the Broadband Fastershire initiative, in collaboration with Gloucester and answers were being sought as to what was happening about moving things forward. Surveys would be required and replacement Boxes (grey cabinets) were needed, one of which would be sited on the A49. The necessary fibres to convey the signals were supposed to be being put in place by the end of 2014. Plus Net, Sky and many other providers would be making contact with customers to progress the take up.

5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

Actions were noted as per sheet including bus scheduling and subsidy meeting were to be rearranged.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1 The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th March 2014 Community Account	£7462.79
@ 13 th March 2014 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

6.2 The following payments were approved:

Clerk's salary	£203.40
Expenses (mileage £15.30, home office £50.00)	£65.30
Tax due on salary	£50.80
HALC Training session People Power	£30.00

6.3 End of year Audit and Grant Thornton

It was confirmed that the Internal Auditor was, very kindly, once again happy to audit the accounts for the Parish Council before submission to the External Auditor.

6.4 HALC Subscription for 2014/2015

After consideration it was resolved that the subscription cost of £344.98 should be paid.

Resolved :- That the payments above, including HALC at item 6.4 were approved, and passed for payment

7.0 School Parking and crossing update

The Clerk would continue to keep pressure on the relevant bodies to try to achieve outcomes regarding the lines and restrictions outside the School. The School were not involved in the issue and at a governors meeting held the previous week there did seem to be perceived reluctance on the part of the school to take an active role in trying to suggest solutions to the problems of parking and congestion. The Head teacher had written to parents asking them to be quick when dropping off and collecting and to please leave promptly afterwards and also explained the logic of the yellow lines and that enforcement would continue following complaints. Parents etc. need to take responsibility for trying to ease the congestion by not staying around after their charges had gone into school. The Parish Council would highlight this point in the précis for the next Newsletter. Cllr Turner had tried to raise interest with the Governing Body regarding the possible use of a strip of land, adjacent to the school, for parking but the school did not seem keen to pursue the idea and only two replies from governors had been received. The idea of using some of the convent land was no longer an option at present. The Head teacher, some governors and many pupils do not actually live in the area and so either drive or bus in. The Governing Body questioned why the Parish Council were not supporting "safe access to the school" and they were informed that the Parish Council is supporting the idea and this is evidenced in comments made by the Parish Council in response to the recent planning applications made for Tump Lane.

8.0 Planning Matters

No current applications at present to consider. The Sanctuary Application for twelve houses went before the Planning Committee. Cllr Cook spoke on behalf of the Parish Council and Cllr James and Miss Rigby also spoke on a personal level. The response from the councillors was perceived as a surprise and everyone who spoke did not support the application. Cllr Norris, as Ward Councillor, also made a valid point about potential siting of a footpath. There was a unanimous decision to refuse permission for the application. The applicant had stated they would appeal. It was refused on quality reasons as opposed to quantity and highway and pedestrian safety were the prime reasons behind refusal. There was no further information about the Larkrise Application at present.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

9.1) Balfour Beatty: - Bottom of Ticklewithy Pitch U71606 along from Cress Cottage there is a huge pothole. Several large potholes in Wrigglebrook Lane going down to the Thorn

The issue of mud on roads is still a big problem. It is hoped that the Locality Stewards will be able to talk to land owners to encourage them to keep the roads clear of mud. Cllr Turner will speak to one farmer in particular to try to find a way forward for a particularly muddy stretch of road.

9.2) The Lengthsman: - Top of Paiges Pitch there is a triangular patch where it meets Barrack Hill which requires clearing. Cllr Cook to obtain OS reference to enable location to be identified.

9.3) Footpaths: - No further details to report

10.0 Parish Plan-to consider review of 2004 Parish Plan

It was resolved to appoint a working party (sub-committee) to look at the Parish Plan and this would comprise Cllr Turner as Chair and also Cllrs Norris and Crum. The Sub Committee would report back to main council and the item would be standard on the agenda.

11.0 Correspondence

Noted as per sheet and including a late entry of information regarding declaration of interest forms, and spouses interests, from Herefordshire Council and this included a Guide for Councillors on "Openness and transparency on personal interests".

12.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

12.1 Clerk to supply précis for the next edition of the newsletter and to include details of bonfire protocols and asking people to drop off and pick up promptly at the school to help alleviate congestion at peak times.

13.0 Offer of trees from the Woodland Trust

The offer was discussed but Much Birch Parish Council is not in a position to be planting trees as no land owned by the Council was available. It was suggested that the Millenium Field may be a possible site but Miss Rigby would need to be asked.

14.0 School Governor's Report

The majority of Cllr Turner's report was relayed under the Much Birch School and parking issues item. The School was undertaking a review of Safeguarding and there were some issues to be resolved. There had been some recent governor training sessions held.

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

Update from Parish Plan Sub Committee (if applicable) Update on School parking and road issues

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

Next meetings Annual Parish and Statutory – Thursday May 8th 2014 from 7.00pm in
The Much Birch Community Hall

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date