

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 4th December 2014

Present:

Cllr. Andrew Crum
Cllr. Keith James
Cllr. Jon Norris
Cllr. Steve Turner (Vice Chair)
Cllr. Tim Jones

In attendance:

Parish Clerk, Alison Wright, and 4 members of the public plus the Locality Steward, Mr Dave Atkinson

Open Session:-

The Chair had given her apologies and the Vice Chair, Cllr Turner, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the open session and invited those present to address the Parish Council. Avril Shaw, who lives on Tump Lane said that she was pleased about the initiatives to try to help improve things in Tump Lane, in particular ideas being explored to make it safe. Cllr James said that he had been to see the residents at the top of Tump Lane next to the little green area to discuss ideas for a community group venture to sort out some of the issues. One person had been out and cleared the leaves from the footpath. There were some ideas to adopt the area as a village green with some railings and possibly the installation of a pavement at the corner which was described as dangerous. There were local opinions that had said that they would like to have seen this done some years ago. There is generally the opinion that people will look after the area if it is reordered. Cllr James said that he would be contacting the School to advise the Head that he would be continuing to photograph children making their way to school down the Lane to try to highlight the traffic dangers being faced. If money is available from developments it is generally spent in that exact area. It would be good to try to obtain funding to help keep the Millennium Green and the Tump in good order as amenities. Currently children are crossing the A49 and there is strain placed on the parking at the school by parents electing to drive their children to school, further adding to the traffic issues.

A resident gave thanks to the Parish Council, and Clerk, for continuing to try to resolve some of the highway markings under the Traffic Order. The Clerk had made contact with the School and a meeting of all interested parties was to be arranged in the New Year. A comment was made that in future it would be appreciated if any prospective changes to highway markings be communicated to those most likely to be affected. There was mention made of Eric Pickles who, as Secretary of State, was a campaigner against the "over zealous" use of parking restrictions. The Ward Councillor had spoken with the Member responsible for highways, Paul Rone, and a full paper trail of the issues was held. The Locality Steward stated that an application from the Parish Council to amend the order would put the situation back into the priority list. Further action would be reviewed at the meeting of all parties.

The Open Session then closed.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There was one apology from Cllr Cook.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There was one declaration of interest, from Cllr Turner, in relation to planning application P143339/F as he was a trustee of the Estate involved. This was to be discussed under the Planning Item on the agenda at number 8.0.

3.0 Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

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

4.0 Reports

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

The PCSO was not present. Bulletins with updates had been received and circulated. The key issues highlighted had been lamping and poaching. It was believed that the openness of some of these activities may mean that they were being employed as diversion tactics for other crimes, such as thefts from outbuildings. Members of the public are urged to continue to report any suspicious activity or vehicles.

Ward Councillor Cllr Norris highlighted the Quality Commission Report on the Hereford Hospital. The Hospital had failed the inspection and there were areas of concern. There had been a Health Scrutiny Committee held with representation from Powys Hospital and eighteen councillors, including Graham Powell, and Hereford carers. There had been training programs on End of Life care. There was further information about patient participation and the need for there to be “joined up” thinking in the profession with Matrons and points of contact within hospitals etc. being essential. There was comment about how carers had gone out of business due to tenders disallowing rural transport costs and this did appear to have been a problem nationally. There will be the potential to set up systems of carers under new initiatives to be introduced next year.

There was an update on Arts in the Group, the Art Classes at the Tump Inn had ceased when the funding stopped. It was hoped that something could be set up again in the future because the idea had been well received. There was the ongoing issue of looking after vulnerable people and providing things as for example the shop which had recently closed. Local access to shops is important and suggestions had been made for a possible outlet at the pub. Planning for two houses on the rear of the old shop site was going forward for planning permission. There was a hope that the shop would be retained. This may mean access for any potential houses across the shop car park? In order to close down a facility there has to be demonstrated that over a twelve month period every effort has been made to sell it as a going concern.

Locality Steward Dave Atkinson gave an update on highways initiatives. He commented on the Cone at the Thorn that the jetting crew had attempted to jet a 10 – 15 foot range but could not proceed as there did not appear to be a pipe there. He asked if there was local knowledge as to whether there had ever been a pipe there and said that it may be necessary to send a mini digger crew up to establish how things were placed. If the site had been developed without a pipe in place it may be that any benefactor of the site would need to reinstate this. It was commented that no developers have filled it in and there had “always been a drive up there”. There may be a pipe further up to transfer rain water into the ditch. This was undergoing further investigation.

Inspections for U class roads were being completed in the following week. Local gritting routes were being inspected. In terms of action re the flood water at the junction of the A49 the owner may be willing to have a pipe installed. The overgrown hedge at Barrack Hill had been cut. The road requests for the tarmac schedule had been submitted.

There was advice on killing knotweed and information to contact James Powell, at Customer Services, once the decision regarding the Lengthsman Program had been confirmed.

Further to the supply of new annotated maps, the councillors requested some further maps and a large scale map of the area at the top of Tump Lane. Dave said that he would obtain these for us.

5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted including contacting the Highways Agency regarding school crossing patrol and school warning light enquiries from the Much Birch School. A suggestion of a parent name for inclusion with the January meeting was made and this was noted for inclusion. Contact had been made with the School and communications received. One of the factors that was hoped to be introduced was for there to be lobbying for a speed limit reduction near to the school.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1 The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th Nov 2014 Community Account	£9748.63
@ 13 th Nov 2014 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

6.2 The following payments were approved:

Clerk's salary	£277.50
Expenses (mileage £16.20, postage £1.72)	£17.92

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment (prop Cllr Norris, sec. Cllr Crum)

7.0 School Parking and related issues update

As documented under the Open Session item.

8.0 Planning Matters

8.1) To consider planning applications as circulated.

The applications listed were discussed and commented as follows:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: P143339/F - Former village hall and rifle club, Kingsthorpe, Herefordshire

DESCRIPTION: Proposed demolition of redundant former village hall and rifle range and erection of two detached dwellings.

APPLICANT(S): Trustees of C O Manning (deceased)

GRID REF: OS 349840, 231804

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

Cllr Turner declared an interest in the application and left the Hall. The other councillors discussed the application but it was noted that the papers had not been considered in terms of the actual detail of the application. There was no knowledge, within the Hall, regarding the appearance of the proposed houses and Cllr Turner was invited back into the meeting to give advice on the style of the proposed dwellings. There did not appear to be any objection, in principle, to the proposal but due to the fact that the councillors needed to familiarise themselves with the finer points of the application, before confirming a comment, it was agreed that the plans should be reviewed and any comments circulated for a final position to be realised. This would be done before anything was communicated to the Planning Department.

Sanctuary Development in Tump Lane

It was noted that the appeal for the Sanctuary Development in Tump Lane (Appeal Ref APP/W1850/A/14/2221854) against the Planning Authority's refusal to grant planning permission had been dismissed. The details of this were described with the issue of standard of construction and affordability being key points.

In regard to the Court Farm development it was noted that the proposer had stated that he was to double the number of parking spaces to be made available and also to increase the insulation

standard in the properties. This was noted and thanks recorded for the parking increase initiative.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

- 9.1) Balfour Beatty:- The condition of the Little Birch Road No. U71603 was commented. This is one of the “resurface request” roads for the Parish as submitted to Balfour Beatty under the resurfacing program.
- 9.2) Lengthsman: - had been asked to look at ditches and general trimming. New maps were circulated, as kindly supplied by the Locality Steward
- 9.3) Footpaths: - No issues to report
- 9.4) To consider possible options regarding crossing for the A49 – This matter would be discussed along with walking in Tump Lane, speed, weight restrictions, junction concerns and safety initiatives in the joint meeting in January.
- 9.5) Update of removal of play equipment from site in Tump Lane – six people had e mailed with enquiries as to where the equipment had gone. The Clerk had been advised that the items of play equipment had not passed their routine safety inspection and had been removed in consequence. The Clerk had requested that Herefordshire Housing keep the Parish Council up to date with developments regarding the potential for repair or replacement of the equipment. It was hoped that funding could be made available for replacements/repair.

10.0 Parish Plan- to consider review of 2004 Parish Plan

The Millennium Green was remarked as being the only one in the whole of South Herefordshire. The Hereford Nature Trust is to undertake a survey to potentially identify it as an area of special interest.

11.0 Correspondence

11.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included items as detailed under appropriate sections.

12.0 Parishes’ Newsletter and Much Birch Website

12.1) Clerk to supply a précis for the next edition of the newsletter.

13.0 Self Help Winter Gritting Scheme

There is a good stock of grit held in readiness for icy and snowy weather.

14.0 Matters to be raised on the Agenda for the next meeting

All usual updates and items and including meeting with Much Birch School to be arranged

15.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 8th January 2015 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