

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 3rd December 2015

Present:

Cllr. Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr. Ben Roberts
Cllr. Steve Turner (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Tim Jones
Cllr A Crum

In attendance:

Parish Clerk: Alison Wright, the Locality Steward: Dave Atkinson, Police Sergeant Emma Freer, PCSO Lowri Anderson and 6 members of the public

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone, including the representatives from West Mercia Police, to the meeting and the Open Session commenced.

A local resident commented firstly on the drain between the A49 and the Kingsthorpe Road on the junction where the road meets the A49 as it appeared to require clearing. The staggered barriers at the crossing, at the top of Tump Lane, were then highlighted as it was felt that the draught caused by passing vehicles, particularly large ones, felt as though it was pulling you through the gap. The residents were not clear why the original barriers had been replaced. The new barriers were felt to be unsuited to the location given lack of pavement space and were commented as being in the "wrong" place. Contact was being made with Highways England and this matter would be highlighted.

Sergeant Freer and PCSO Anderson then introduced themselves and there was a discussion on recent road traffic accidents, including, tragically, two recent fatalities on the A49. Sergeant Freer stated that road safety had been high on the agenda for a number of years, Speed enforcement had been carried out on the A49 until up to around six months previously but had been ceased at the location due to no prosecutions. The speed data obtained had not indicated that speeding was an issue on the road. Liaison with the Safer Roads Partnership was suggested and the Parish Council were trying to re-institute contact with Highways England and would be continuing to try to bring representation to them to make an assessment of the road A49. The A49 had now been named as a "high harm route" and the area was being regularly patrolled. It was acknowledged as being one of the busiest routes in the county. There was further discussion around driving behaviours, passing places, vehicles pulling over, and also crime figures and results in general. There was some concern expressed that many crimes did not appear to ever be resolved. Information could be sourced as to success rates and crimes were recorded under "beat" code. A lack of police resources was mentioned as a possible issue in regards to following up reported crime etc. There was no speculation as to the events that may have occurred in the recent days leading to the deaths of the two drivers on the A49 and both incidents were the subjects of their own investigative enquiries. There was further comment on the use of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and also training and awareness initiatives to try to promote and encourage safer driving practice. This was discussed in the context of general information.

The Chair thanked the Police Officers for their attendance, time and for the information given. They then both left the Meeting.

The Open Session closed at 8.00pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence and co-option of councillor(s) plus signing of forms

There were apologies received from Ward Cllr Harlow.

A new Councillor was co-opted. She is Mrs Roisin Burge and she was proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Turner. Cllr Burge signed her Acceptance of Office Form and completed her Declaration of Registrable Interests Form. The Clerk would advise the Elections Team of details of the co-option.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations made.

3.0 Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

3.1) The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 5th November 2015 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

4.0 To receive any update regarding the Much Birch Old Charities concerning the Poor Acre

There had been an e mail update received from Dick Brimacombe, Trustee:

"Dear Alison,

I have been told by Berry's that they have now applied for outline planning permission for 1 dwelling on the Poor's Acre, I expect it will come before the Parish Council at their Jan. Meeting.

Best wishes,

Dick"

5.0 Reports

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

The Bulletins with updates had been received and circulated.

5.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Harlow had sent his report as reported here (sic):

Ward member report, December 2015

Road safety

A49

I would like to invite Highways England (HE) to a parish council meeting early in 2016 if MBPC is in favour. There have been two fatalities within a month and we should be asking them (HE) what options they have for making the road safer. I will contact HE if MBPC is in agreement.

Tump Lane

I met with a representative from Beau homes on 23.11.15 to discuss possible solutions to the traffic issues in Tump Lane (also present were Cllr Paul Rone, Dave Atkinson from BBLP, Hayley Crane from HC and several others). Beau homes (working with Herefordshire housing) are looking to resubmit planning on the 'Larkrise' development (10 market homes and 10 affordable), for more information - <http://www.hhl.org.uk/who-we-are/new-homes/planned-schemes/> The developers are proposing several benefits to the residents of Tump Lane if the scheme goes ahead, they are as follows:

** A footpath all the way up Tump Lane to the A49*

** Traffic calming measures in Tump Lane (speed and weight)*

** More parking spaces (to alleviate parking problems on the lane)*

** An enlarged and fully refurbished play area.*

This scheme may well divide opinion on Tump Lane between those who object to any development and those who see (speeding & heavy) traffic as the main issue.

It may be sensible for the parish council to host a residents meeting early in the New Year and I am happy to help in any way possible.

Core Strategy

In the absence of a Neighbourhood development plan it will be difficult for the local community to challenge the Larkrise planning application. This further emphasises the need to have an adopted Neighbourhood development plan.

Petition

I have supplied Eric Joseph with the necessary details for presenting his 330+ name petition to the full council on 18.12.15. We hope that the Hereford Times will be in attendance to record the story.

5.3) Locality Steward Dave Atkinson reported that increased rainfall had led to potholes erupting and over 100 had been added to the log just that week. Continued heavy rain would continue to exacerbate the road surface problems. Balfour Beatty were keeping up with blocked drains and verge markers would be installed on Tump Lane as per Miss Rigby's request to try to halt the road edge erosion by vehicles.

Prices and information had been obtained regarding Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and thanks were noted to Dave for this. He was continuing to try to find a less costly source of the products and was making headway with this. Once the firm costs are known then the options can be considered by the Parish Council. Dave gave his personal opinion that he believed SIDs to be effective.

The Kissing Gate required for Path MB4 would be liaised between Cllr Turner and Dave. Dave to order the gate and there would then be two gates to fit, one already with Cllr Turner. Cllr Turner said that the gates could be delivered to his property. The Lengthsman had been approached and was willing and able to fit them. Cllr Turner to liaise with the Lengthsman on this when the gates were ready.

There was a discussion on potholes with an explanation as to how it could be 50/50 as to whether plugs would stay in place or come out again. Often the continued erosion makes the edges break down around the new filling, water gets in and they pop out again. The Little Birch Road (U71603) from Barrack Hill has a lot of degradation down the side and repairs made were starting to go again. When the Annual Plan Resurfacing program details were known, Dave would advise. Thanks were noted for the new salt bins that were all in and filled ready for use.

There was then a brief discussion regarding ditch filling and piping and responsibility. Pipes are required to be in line with the size of ditch served. If there is a case of flooding then responsibility would need to be re-established.

Dave Atkinson left the meeting at 8.10pm.

6.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted and included contact with the Police Service, Lengthsman and Balfour Beatty plus actions as required regarding contact and communications from residents and signed paperwork had been returned as required.

7.0 Financial Report

7.1) The following bank balances were noted:

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|---|------------|
| @ 13 th Nov 2015 Community Account | £11451.48 |
| @ 13 th Nov 2015 HSBC Community Projects Account | £14,408.00 |

7.2) The following payments were approved:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Clerks salary | £357.90 |
| Expenses (mileage £22.05) | £22.05 |
| The Post Office (Tax) | £4.40 |

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment: (prop. Cllr Jones sec. Cllr Turner)

7.3) To consider precept recommendation and feedback from the Finance Working Party

The Finance working Party had met to discuss the budget, proposed expenditure and the precept recommendation for 2016/2017. The recommendation was put forward that the precept request should be for £6750.00, an increase of £250.00 on the previous year's amount. This was proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Jones. The proposal was carried and the relevant request form was completed and signed. This request would now be submitted to the Finance Department, of Herefordshire Council, by the Clerk.

8.0 School Parking and related issues update

8.1) To receive related correspondence and any updates.

The Parish Council were advised that the Head teacher had that week communicated by letter with all parents on the subject of parking and a copy of the letter was noted.

8.2) To consider the traffic regulation order (TRO) outside the Much Birch School and those for Tump Lane

A request had been sent to Ward Cllr Harlow

8.3) To receive any update re Speed Indicator Device (SID) options

Prices were being obtained as per details in Locality Steward's Report.

8.4) To consider an approach to the Safer Roads Partnership Scheme regarding the A49 and adjacent roads within the Parish

A continued effort to make contact with Highways England to ask for an assessment of the A49 would be maintained.

9.0 Planning Matters

9.1) To consider any planning applications as circulated.

There had been updates received as to the granting of permission for applications 151993 and 152855, both of which had been previously commented by the Parish Council.

10.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

10.1) To note any defects to be reported to Balfour Beatty

Ongoing reports, as discussed with Locality Steward previously

10.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman

Ditching works were on request and in hand

10.3) To receive Report from Footpath Officer

Replacement gates as required were in progress

11.0 Neighbourhood Plan- update on position

No update apart from the fact that a letter of information details had been circulated. The idea of obtaining a full page in the Newsletter to describe what the Plan is and objectives, benefits etc. was discussed. It was noted that the Parish Council could not go ahead with a Neighbourhood Plan without taking the community with it. An evening of information, with appropriate expertise, would be arranged and Cllr Cook would edit the draft information page and re-send to all for comments and suggestions. The Clerk would obtain hall and Herefordshire Council Neighbourhood Planning Officer availability details. Details of others finalising their plans would be looked at and the Chair would also look at the Herefordshire Council website. It was hoped that a meeting could be held to raise local interest by the end of January 2016.

12.0 Self-help winter gritting scheme

Grit supplies were confirmed as being in readiness.

13.0 Correspondence

13.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included a fire safety checking opportunity:

Check your home is fire safe!

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service provide advice to everyone and for the more vulnerable such as the elderly, people living alone and those with reduced mobility the Service offers a free of charge fire safety check in the home.

As its name suggests, a Home Fire Safety Check involves representatives from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service calling by at your home to offer safety advice specific to your household and personal circumstances.

During the visit, they will check your smoke alarms and install new ones if needed. They will ensure that you are doing all that you can to avoid the risk of a fire in your home and will also help you work out an escape plan in the event of fire.

We would urge anyone who might be vulnerable themselves or knows an elderly family member, friend or neighbour who lives on their own or has reduced mobility who might benefit from a visit, to get in touch using the number below and request one on their behalf.

To see if you qualify for a FREE Home Fire Safety Check contact the Community Risk team on 0800 032 1155 quoting reference PN14.

Note that those doing the Homes Fire Safety Checks will always make an appointment in advance of their visit, and will always carry identification which they will be very happy to show you.

Also:

A "Thank you" letter had been received from Dore Community Transport for the donation towards their running costs.

There had been no further information regarding the Millennium Green.

There had been a request for a road sign to be sited at each end of the road known as "Pages Pitch". Clerk to ask Balfour Beatty about this.

14.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

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

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

All the usual items plus bin by bus stop

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 7th January 2016 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date