

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 6th February 2014

Present:

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

In attendance:

Parish Clerk, Alison Wright, PCSO Kevin Powell and 10 members of the public

Public Participation Time -

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

There was an in-depth discussion over the yellow lining, and parking restrictions, outside the Much Birch Primary School. Residents expressed concerns which included being unable to legally receive deliveries, such as fuel oil, due to waiting restrictions and that there appeared to be no clear route, through the vehicles, past the school. It was generally commented that the lines had not improved the situation but rather had exacerbated the issues and pushed the problems farther up the road. There was still concern over crossing the main A49 road, traffic volumes and pedestrian safety. Some parents and residents had signed a petition, with suggestions of how they believed matters could be improved, which was passed to the Clerk to be sent to the Governance Team. After hearing the views of the public present, it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Contractor, and the Highways Agency, to express the concerns raised and to seek a reconsideration of the restrictions.

The Open Session then closed at 8.00pm

The Parish Council meeting was formally opened by the Chairman

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

3.0 Minutes

3.1 The Minutes of 9th January 2014 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting. Matters arising; The Pump house planning application had been refused but a new application would be made.

4.0 Reports

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

PCSO Kevin Powell gave an update on local crime trends including 3 recent notable crimes including burglary mainly targeting vehicles, catalytic convertors, fuel oil and tools. Some items stolen had been recovered. Parking issues around the Tump Lane area and outside the Much Birch School would be the subject of a meeting to be held at the Council Offices on 12th February.

Ward Councillor Cllr Norris gave his report.

The Ward Councillor outlined polling station reviews including the Much Birch Community Centre. The Tump Lane traffic survey counter would be installed during week commencing 10th February. The 412 bus service was under threat. The Ward Councillor's website would have details of subsidy costs research and how users can help to retain the service. Discussions were underway between cabinet and the member of parliament about the pot hole situation and ways to try to devise emergency repairs were being considered possibly without waiting for the main contractor whose capacity to deal with the numbers was stretched. The Herefordshire Council proposed budget was set to be discussed following presentation on the 7th February. Updates would be on the web. Council tax and grant funding would be topical. There was still no final outcome on the situation regarding the outgoing contractor, Amey, as regards phones, missing information etc. There may be an independent enquiry on the matter.

5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

Actions were noted as per sheet including notifications to Balfour Beatty, grit bins had been filled, some pot holes had been repaired although the quality and permanence of the repairs was questionable in some cases. Freelance pothole repairs had implications for insurance, health and safety and quality and would need to be considered carefully in any such scheme going forward. The lengthsman had carried out gully and grip clearance as requested.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1 The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th January 2014 Community Account	£9124.21
@ 13 th January 2014 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

6.2 The following payments were approved:

Clerk's salary	£203.60
Expenses (mileage £23.85)	£23.85
Tax due on salary	£50.80
Mr. M. Dyer (Lengthsman)	£341.00
Little Birch Village Hall (Newsletter donation)	£350.00

Resolved :- That the payments above were approved, and passed for payment

7.0 School Governor's Report

Cllr Turner gave the School Governors report during discussion of item 14 School Parking and Crossing issues.

8.0 Planning Matters

There was one new planning application to consider:-

1) Site:	Counties View, Much Birch, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR2 8HL
Description:	Proposed new access
Applicants:	Mr M Jenkins
Application No:	P140212/FH
Grid Ref:	OS 350101, 231046
Application Type:	Full Householder

The Parish Council resolved that they had no objections to the application.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

9.1) Balfour Beatty: -

- The Thorne, Kings Thorne - "water continues to pour down the road from the back corner of "Corner House" Years ago the ditch was maintained here and went into a pipe under the driveway there and out into the ditch a bit further down. As the water continues to pour down the road the road surface is deteriorating and when it freezes the road becomes covered in ice causing more problems.
- Between Minster Farm and Cress Cottage (Opposite junction of Wrigglebrook Lane and Ticklewithy Pitch) the state of the road is now rapidly deteriorating.
- Belview Cottage (U71606) below footpath MB1, - this gully was cut out after a visit by police and complaints had been made but unfortunately the bank has now collapsed rendering the edge of the field unstable. It has been suggested that the installation of a pipe is required to channel the water underground and enable it to drain into the brook at the bottom of the hill.
- The Lengthsman has reported a broken grit bin between the Much Birch School and the Bus stop - please could these be mended/replaced
- Barrack Hill - ditches on both sides require digging out (mini digger)
- 100 yards past the Castle Public House, on the first corner, the drain cover has been blown off due to water pressure and the pipes need blowing out.

9.2) The Lengthsman: - Ongoing works

•

9.3) Footpaths: - No further issues at present

10.0 Self Help Gritting Scheme including grit supplies and grit bins

Mr Morley provided the following information. The objective of the agreement on gritting is to keep critical roads open in case of severe snowfalls. For overnight frosts residents should take care and use grit from grit bins, if necessary. The current voluntary gritting arrangement by spreader cannot be extended to include occasional frosts.

11.0 Correspondence

Noted as per sheet and including a message from Mike Morley who had asked the question as to whether Much Birch Parish Council wished to be represented during discussions over a possible amalgamation of the Church and Parish Newsletters. The Parish Council stated that yes they would like to be involved in the discussions and the Clerk would confirm this to Mr Morley.

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 how the public could advise any defects and blocked gullies/ditches that may be observed.

The Web Master was in attendance and described how the original web site support arrangements had been withdrawn by the software house. Some research into organising a replacement package with new support and web provision had been carried out and an alternative provider had been sourced. Approval was sought for this to go ahead. It was resolved that the quotation from Skyfire Designs to provide website design, domain management and website maintenance for the Parish Website should be accepted. Thanks were recorded to the Web Master for his work involved in sorting out the issues regarding the website.

13.0 Parish Plan – to consider review of 2004 parish Plan

This item was moved to the next meeting's agenda.

14.0 School Parking and crossing issues

There was an involved discussion on the subject which followed on from the matters raised in the open session. The issues of safety, the restrictions and the feasibility of providing parking were all discussed. The information would be relayed to the decision making bodies and they would then be charged to evaluate all ideas and suggestions to come up with a solution to benefit the area as much as possible. Crossings, flashing warning lights, speed restrictions and movement of the lines were all mentioned but there were “for’s” and “against’s” on some issues. All of the details would be presented to the Highways Agency, and decision makers, so that they could consider the situation. Several councillors agreed to investigate the possibility of land being made available for the creation of a car park. This idea had been explored previously but had been ruled out initially on the grounds of cost. The school governor representative commented that, at the last governors meeting the view had been expressed, that the “experts” should come out and undertake a thorough assessment of the situation. As described in the open session notes, it was agreed that the Clerk should present all of the comments and points of view to the Highways Agency and the contractor’s representative for their assessment of the entire situation.

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

Review of 2004 Parish Plan, Update on School parking and road issues

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 6th March 2014 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed:

.....
Chairman

.....
Date