

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 5th February 2015

Present:

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

In attendance:

Parish Clerk, Alison Wright, the Lengthsman and 34 members of the public

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the principles of the Open Session. She then introduced Mrs Valerie Harvey who had requested the opportunity to address the meeting. The Open Session began with a presentation by Mrs Valerie Harvey with ideas for a Village Shop. She thanked the Parish Council for allowing her the opportunity to address those present. The meeting then heard her vision for the creation of a community shop providing opportunities for local people to obtain goods and services and to share community based activities. There may be the opportunity for an incorporated coffee shop and for community interest items such as books, art and related items to be available. The principles of selling local produce and of providing a service for local people were being explored. Research into possible locations, costs, other current outlets and customer expectations were also being undertaken. A questionnaire had been produced and was being circulated. "Drop off" points had been arranged for completed questionnaires including at the Much Birch and Steiner Schools, Black Swan Public House and the telephone kiosk in Orcop. The community were being asked to indicate their requirements, and to contribute information, which would then be collated and used to form an opinion on the best way to progress the ideas. Research had indicated that a large number of community shops were thriving and it was hoped that something could be done to recreate the idea for the local community. A Steering Group would be created to take things forward once the information and opinions had been collected. Mrs Harvey answered questions from the floor and then left the meeting, along with a large number of the attendees. Questionnaires were made available to those present and were required to be returned by the 16th February. The Open Session then closed at 7.55pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies received from the Locality Steward, Dave Atkinson and the PCSO.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations made

3.0 Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

3.1 The Minutes of 8th January 2015 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

4.0 To receive information and consider response to a proposal from the Much Birch Old Charities Trustees concerning the Poor Acre

Trustees of the Old Charities, Mr Dick Brimacombe and the Rev. Mark Johnson, were present. They presented a proposal to the Parish Council that the Charities should seek outline planning permission for the erection of two houses on the Poor Acre. This proposal had followed a meeting of the Charities representatives with Mr Derek Cook of Lanyon Bowdler, Agricultural law, charities and trusts specialist. Mr Cook had said that the Trust had a reasonable chance of getting planning permission and that it may be seen as negligent of them if they did not at least attempt to do this. Building properties on the land would be the only reason for seeking to terminate the existing tenancy agreement. The solicitor had suggested that a site meeting, including a land agent representative, would take place and that parish council representation at said meeting would be welcomed. The Trustees were formally requesting the support of the Parish Council in their aim to apply for outline planning permission.

Following consideration of this request, the Parish Council resolved to support the Trustees in their attempt to obtain outline planning permission but this was subject to their being allowed to reconsider their position when the actual details of any subsequent, and more detailed, planning permission application(s) were made known. Mr Brimacombe would advise the Clerk of the time, date and location of the site meeting.

5.0 Reports

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

The PCSO was not present. Bulletins with updates had been received and circulated. A catalytic converter had been stolen from a four wheel drive vehicle in Much Birch recently.

5.2) Ward Councillor Cllr Norris gave a summary of his report including details of the bus route 412 which had been reinstated and the bus now goes back into Hereford. He explained about the Core Strategy which was currently under public consultation and available for examination at Hedley Lodge. A Cabinet decision for the villages was imminent which could mean whether they would “live” or “wither”. Speakers were being invited to contribute to the discussion of the Strategy and support was welcome. It was hoped that the Inspector would be convinced that aspects of the Plan require reconsideration.

5.3) Locality Steward Dave Atkinson had sent his apologies

6.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted including items as advised on the Communications Sheet and the outcomes of the Lengthsman Meeting held at Balfour Beatty on the 3rd February. Further requirements would need to be met, going forward, and schedules of work would be required to reclaim funding.

7.0 Financial Report

7.1 The following bank balances were noted:

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|---|------------|
| @ 13 th Jan 2015 Community Account | £9463.21 |
| @ 13 th Jan 2015 HSBC Community Projects Account | £14,408.00 |

7.2 The following payments were approved:

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| Clerk's salary | £277.20 |
| Expenses (mileage £23.94, stationery £6.00) | £29.74 |
| Skyfire Designs Ltd (Web hosting for Parish Website) | £90.00 |

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

8.0 School Parking and related issues update

As documented in separate minutes of meeting document.

In summary, eight people had attended a meeting at the school to discuss the various road issues. The meeting had been a good one with positive discussion. Graham Hornsby had been present on behalf of Balfour Beatty and had outlined the negatives as well as the positives. A temporary arrangement regarding “drop offs” for school was being trialled from 9th February. A member of the Governing Body would be speaking with local residents to try to engage them in observing parking habits to try to minimise pinch point issues. A future meeting with the Highways Agency represented was being instigated.

The Herefordshire Council to be requested to carry out speed data audits on the far side of the school on the road from Kingsthorpe and approaching the school. The speed audits to be requested for both directions. The road is currently a 60 mph speed limit and the aim would be to seek to get this reduced, with a 20mph zone in direct proximity to the school. The outcomes of the speed data collection would be considered alongside the possibility of Speed Indicator Devices and other potential measures. The Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) would also be reconsidered with possible timed waiting restrictions implemented. Unfortunately, there is currently a long lead time for TRO changes and this potential delay was lamented by parties at the meeting. Cllr Turner would advise the exact speed limits and locations on the road.

The full report can be viewed on the parish website at: www.muchbirchparish.org.uk

9.0 Planning Matters

- 9.1) To consider planning applications as circulated. One lately received application, received the day of the meeting, would be reviewed, commented and reported at the next meeting. There were no further applications to consider at this time. The plans for the adaptations to the Community Hall have been approved as per the application below.
APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: P143757/F – Much Birch Community Hall, Court Farm Road, Much Birch, Herefordshire HR2 8HT
DESCRIPTION: Proposed side extension to provide improved ancillary accommodation
APPLICANT(S): Mr J H C Jones
GRID REF: OS 350382, 230543
APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

10.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

- 10.1) Balfour Beatty:- Barrack Hill half way up and about 30 metres on from the Little Birch sign the road has dropped to the side by the drain/culvert (this had been attended to). There was no grit in the bin at the top of Hollybush Lane. The pot holes at the top of the Thorn have been marked out with warning cones and Ticklewithy Pitch is scheduled for remedial attention also. There were concerns about the “dip” in the A49 at the Surgery junction. This had been reported and would be chased up.
- 10.2) Lengthsman:- would follow up ditch review and location of drains etc. The Locality Steward is to liaise with the Lengthsman and grips, drains and gullies to be audited. New maps have been delivered to Cllr James.
- 10.3) Footpaths:- There were no issues to report. It was resolved that Much Birch would register an interest in rejoining the P3 Footpath Scheme and obtaining the funding as available.

11.0 Parish Plan- to consider review of 2004 Parish Plan

No meeting had been held to date but one was to be arranged to progress the review.

12.0 Correspondence

12.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included HALC updates regarding the forthcoming elections and the “purdah” conditions pertaining to council decision making powers.

13.0 Parishes’ Newsletter and Much Birch Website

13.1) Clerk to supply a précis for the next edition of the newsletter with the inclusion of information about the Village Shop and the School Parking Issues Meeting

14.0 Self Help Winter Gritting Scheme

Grit was in stock in quantity of 6 bags full. Some areas had not been gritted but it was reminded that the gritting was to a designated route and was being carried out on a voluntary basis.

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

To include all of the usual updates and items, and also play space, “Tump Lane Toppers” update on actions, fencing issue on parish land.

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 5th March 2015 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date