

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 4th February 2016

Present:

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

In attendance:

Parish Clerk: Alison Wright, Ward Cllr David Harlow and 8 members of the public

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Open Session commenced. There were congratulations recorded to Cllr Turner who had just become a grandfather to a baby grandson.

There was a request for the removal of plastic and flowers from the accident spot near to the Pilgrim Hotel.

A member of the public made a representation concerning the telephone kiosk at Wormelow. The pros and cons of kiosk purchase and ownership were highlighted. The kiosk in question had previously been damaged but was believed to still be in use and no notification of it being for sale had been advised. Other parishes had purchased and converted kiosks to libraries etc. and they had been shelved and stacked with donated books. It was agreed that should the box become available the matter of purchase etc. would receive due consideration

The Open Session closed at 7.38pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received.

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 7th January 2016 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

There was a discussion regarding the bus shelter at Kingsthorpe. The bus stop was actually located in Much Dewchurch Parish and Much Birch had been asked to give an opinion on what should happen in terms of its removal and replacement. There had been a meeting held in June 2015 and again on the 28th January. The idea was for there to be an electronic solar powered display board to advise passengers of the bus whereabouts. After the 2015 Meeting nothing further was heard until January when all seemed to be urgent in order to obtain time limited funding. Designs of proposed shelters had been circulated and key issues of concern were that the replacement should allow for disabled access. Following further discussion of the size of shelter and ability to accommodate all users it was resolved that the comment by Much Birch PC to the contractor would be that: *"The Much Birch Parish Council support the principle of the removal of the existing shelter, due to the considerations and information made available, and it's subsequent replacement. The Parish Council have looked at the options,*

as supplied in the illustrations by you, and have concluded that they wish to be included fully in the dialogue concerning the choice of replacement shelter and that the preference would be for a wooden shelter of sufficient dimensions to allow wheelchair users to access and turn within the interior."

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

This had now become the subject of a planning application and would be detailed under the Planning Agenda Item, number 9.0.

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, February 2016

NDP

Much Birch – No NA designated – meeting arranged in February

Much Birch have not designated a neighbourhood area so are not producing a neighbourhood plan as far as H.C.C are concerned. The options are as follows:

** Produce a neighbourhood plan - this will devolve the plan making powers to the parish council. The local community can produce locally specific policies and proposals. Technical advice and support is available from the Neighbourhood Planning team. Grants and support is still available for any parishes who wish to produce a neighbourhood plan. I know that Sam Banks from HC has arranged a meeting to talk to the parish council.*

** Be included within the Rural Area Site Allocation DPD – this document will be produce by Herefordshire Council and consultation will be undertaken with the parish council and local community in line with the Statement of Community Involvement.*

Detailed work on the Rural Area Site Allocation DPD will commence in the summer. The Rural Area Site Allocation DPD will contain settlement boundaries and site allocations to assist the delivery of Policy RA2 and RA3 of the Core Strategy. It will not contain any other development management policies or protection policy, this will default to the policies within the Core Strategy. Therefore for those parishes undertaking a neighbourhood plan the opportunity exists to devise additional local policies and proposals for their area.

2016-17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Update for MBPC. The following were recommended to Council:

- i. approval of a 1.9% increase in council tax in 2016-17;*
- ii. approval of an additional 2.0% increase in council tax in 2016-17. This will result in a total council tax increase of 3.9% increasing a total band D charge from £1,275.10 to £1,324.83 for Herefordshire Council in 2016/17;*
- iii. approval of the draft 2016-17 revenue budget (at appendix 1 to this report);*
- iv. approval of the draft medium term financial strategy (MTFS) which incorporates the capital programme approved by Council on 18 December (at appendix 2 to this report);*
- v. approval of the draft treasury management strategy (TMS) (at appendix 3 to this report); and*
- vi. in the event of final central government funding allocations being above or below the provisional settlement level any variation is managed by an adjustment to general reserves.*

Background

Central government has reiterated its commitment to achieve a budget surplus by 2020, as a result of this Herefordshire Council is having to address challenging financial conditions, entering year seven of a ten year 'austerity period'. The council is on schedule to meet these challenges, delivering savings of £59m by the end of 2015/16.

Whilst focused on delivering services to residents it has been necessary to reduce the size of the council, demonstrate efficiency and ensure good use of resources by:

- * Reducing the workforce.*
 - * Rationalising buildings we owned in order to centralise in fewer business centres.*
 - * Making stronger connections across public sector organisations – making resources go further.*
 - * Reducing wasted expenditure on paper, and shifting as a first choice to digital, in our offices.*
- Council will be asked to approve the 2016-17 budget on 5 February 2016. It will also approve the medium term financial strategy and the corporate plan to 2019-20.*

Autumn statement

The Chancellors autumn statement on 25 November included the following specific announcements that impact Herefordshire:

- * Support (as yet unquantified) to secure launch funding to create a new university in Hereford, focused on engineering, in 2016.*
- * Provision of £250m nationally over the next five years to tackle potholes, details awaited.*
- * The introduction of a national funding formula for schools, high needs and early years; detailed consultation will be launched in 2016 and the new formulae will be implemented from 2017/18.*
- * Better care fund to increase nationally by £1,500m by 2019-20, starting in 2017/18. This will include increased disabled facilities grant funding and will be funded by reform to the existing new homes bonus scheme. Consultation on the method of redistributing new homes bonus grant funding has begun.*
- * The introduction of a new apprenticeship levy at 0.5% of employer wage bill from 2017/18, £200k for Herefordshire plus a further £200k for schools.*
- * Reductions to the education support grant by 75%, 10% in 2016/17. Herefordshire receives £1.5m. The local authority role in running schools is expected to be reduced and a number of statutory duties will be removed. However, Herefordshire has already reduced or removed a number of activities covered by the current non-ring fenced grant. Consultation on the policy and funding proposals will start in 2016.*
- * The public health grant will remain ring-fenced until 2017/18 but there will be a real terms cut of 3.9% per annum.*
- * Higher costs for rural areas to be recognised by quadrupling the current sparsity grant by 2020.*

Provisional funding settlement

The provisional local government settlement 2016/17 – 2019/20 was announced on 17 December 2015 and included additional reductions in revenue support grant (RSG). It was subsequently updated by the department for communities and local government (DCLG) on 23 December 2015 and for Herefordshire:

- * Reduces RSG by £25.9m (98%) in 2015/16 to just £0.6m in 2019/20.*
 - * A standalone sparsity grant of £1.3m in 2016/17 rising to £4.1m in 2019/20.*
 - * Care act funding (£1.7m in 2015/16) is no longer a grant but included in the reducing RSG.*
- RSG reductions have been higher than expected in Herefordshire, due to government re-distribution of overall grant to metropolitan and London authorities.*
- The rural delivery services grant has been removed from the revenue support grant (£1m in 2015/16) and allocated as specific grant funding (£1.3m in 2016/17) in recognition of the additional costs incurred when providing services in sparse areas such as Herefordshire.*
- Other grant allocations are expected to be announced in January including the better care fund, public health, independent living fund and capital grants.*

The settlement confirmed the council tax referendum threshold at 2%.

There was further discussion of the report and the comments regarding the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) status. If there were to be no NDP then a Rural Area Site Allocation DPD may be implemented. It would take approximately 18 months to complete an NDP. The Meeting on the 9th February would be going ahead to find out more about the NDP process. There may be an application coming for Tump Lane. The Full Council would discuss the proposed Council Budget on the 5th February. Things were very tight indeed regarding funding going forward. There was some discussion on

the subject of immigration concerning asylum seekers and refugees. It was resolved that the Clerk would write to MP Jesse Norman for clarification on policy regarding numbers etc.

Thanks were recorded to Cllr Harlow for his report and information.

5.3) Locality Steward Dave Atkinson had sent his apologies. Bulletins had been circulated.

6.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted and included some further information on the lengthsman scheme and reducing grant funding awards.

7.0 Financial Report

7.1) The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th Dec 2015 Community Account	£10,431.75
@ 13 th Dec 2015 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

7.2) The following payments were approved:

Clerks salary	£286.32
Expenses (mileage £16.88)	£16.88
Much Birch Community Hall	£52.50
Skyfire Designs (web hosting)	£90.00

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

8.0 School Parking and related issues update

8.1) To receive related correspondence and any updates.

No further information received.

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

The Ward Cllr would send new list of TRO positions.

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

Additional prices were being obtained as per details in a previous Locality Steward's Report. This had been chased up.

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

Sgt Freer had made contact with the Parish Council and a follow up by the Safer Roads Partnership would be actioned although no formal details were advised. It had been recommended that Pedestrian Awareness signage may be a good idea for Tump Lane. The Clerk would enquire re costs from Balfour Beatty.

9.0 Planning Matters

9.1) To consider any planning applications as circulated.

There had been further applications received for consideration and the comments were returned, following consideration, as follows:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: 160206 – Cartref, Tump Lane, Wormelow, Hereford, HR2 8HN

DESCRIPTION: Proposed replacement garage.

APPLICANT(S): Miss Rosemary Rigby MBE

GRID REF: OS 349488, 230353

APPLICATION TYPE: Full householder

The Much Birch Parish Council have no objections to the proposal.

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: 160039 - Land at Former Mushroom Farm, Much Birch, Hereford

DESCRIPTION: Proposed reserved matters of ref 140554 5 no. detached dwellings and garages and access onto A49.

APPLICANT(S): Mr Gary Thorne

GRID REF: OS 351400, 229718

APPLICATION TYPE: Approval of Reserved Matters

The Much Birch Parish Council have no objections to the proposal.

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: 153630 - Land at Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Herefordshire,

DESCRIPTION: Site for erection of a single dwelling.

APPLICANT(S): Mr Brimacombe c/o Berrys

GRID REF: OS 351314, 230187

APPLICATION TYPE: Outline

The Much Birch Parish Council support the proposal.

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: 153552 - Land adjacent Rangers Lodge, Little Birch Road,

Kingsthorpe, Herefordshire,

DESCRIPTION: Proposed new 3 bedroom detached dwelling.

APPLICANT(S): Miss Leah Roberts

GRID REF: OS 350370, 231787

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

The Parish Council have reviewed the application and are still minded to **object** to it due to the concerns raised previously and reiterated here over the size of the plot in relation to the proposed dwelling in that the plot appears too narrow, there is concern for the potential of overlooking and overshadowing of the neighbouring property and consequent loss of privacy. There are also concerns regarding drainage, and the land below the proposed building, and also the access with such a tiny space available for vehicular access and with no foot path etc. at the location. The proposal appears to be of an overbearing nature in relation to buildings adjacent to the site.

Planning permission had been **granted** in respect of the following applications:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: 153516 - Land at Lyndhurst, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HJ

DESCRIPTION: Proposed demolition of existing chalet bungalow and erection of replacement dwelling.

APPLICANT(S): Mr Davies

GRID REF: OS 349852, 231041

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: 153313 - Land adjacent to Highland Cottage, Parish Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, Herefordshire

DESCRIPTION: Proposed cottage and alterations to existing access.

APPLICANT(S): Mr Josh Reynolds

GRID REF: OS 350483, 232168

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

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 were progressing. There had been some repairs made to Little Birch Road but not a full scale resurfacing which is still required.

- A situation was advised near to Rosemond Cottage, the Little Birch Road appeared to be pushing the wall out. Photographs of this had been sent to the Locality Steward. An appointment for the Locality Steward to meet with Cllr Turner had been cancelled but would be rescheduled to visit the site. The issue of water being diverted in the area would also be discussed.
- Drain by the bus stop on the **C1263**, on the opposite side of the road to the school, severely blocked and water lying, can jetter be arranged?
- Chase up...promised verge protection markers, same as supplied for Barrack Hill, following information re verge erosion for **Tump Lane**.
- Request made for junction identification reflector markings on the **C1263** past the school as junction is difficult to see

10.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman

Ditching works were still on request and in hand. The Clerk had attended the Balfour Beatty Briefing on the Scheme and updated the Parish Council regarding funding reductions to come in future years. It was resolved that the Clerk would apply for funding for 2016/2017 for both the Lengthsman and Footpath Schemes.

10.3) To receive Report from Footpath Officer

Replacement footpath gates, as required, were on order and in progress. Footpath sign on Tump Lane on north side opposite an Acacia tree had fallen over. To be re-erected by contractor when Page's Pitch signs erected.

10.4) To consider possible provision of a bin at the bus stop

A litter bin was proposed for the bus shelter on the A49 southbound opposite the Much Birch Church. Following the feedback from Balfour Beatty and prices plus permissions required, and ongoing emptying charges, it was resolved that the idea of a bin would not be pursued at this time.

10.5) To consider possible provision of a road name sign for "Page's Pitch"

Following a request by residents of Page's Pitch for road name signs to help with location of the road, the Parish Council had obtained costs for the supply and installation. It was resolved that the signs would be ordered (cost including VAT and delivery - £ 319.39). The posts would be fitted by a local tradesperson at half the cost quoted by the supplier. The purchase and installation were proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Roberts.

11.0 Neighbourhood Plan- update

The Neighbourhood Plan Information Event for Much Birch would be held on the 9th February, from 7.30pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall. All would be welcome to come along and find out more about what would be involved. Sam Banks from the Neighbourhood Planning Team, at Herefordshire Council, would be in attendance. The Clerk would check regarding provision of equipment needed for the evening and any handouts etc. The Chair would obtain tea, coffee, milk, sugar and biscuits for refreshments for the evening.

12.0 Self-help winter gritting scheme

Grit supplies had still not been needed as yet, but the scheme was ready and on standby.

13.0 Correspondence

13.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included information from the Bank and feedback regarding the cost of installing and emptying litter bins.

14.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

14.1) Clerk to supply a précis for the next edition of the newsletter. This would include a reminder about littering and taking litter home if no bin available.

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

All the usual items, plus possible ideas for a Queen's 90th Birthday Event, litter picking, Neighbourhood Plan Evening feedback.

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 3rd March 2016 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall. The Chair, Cllr Cook, and also Cllr Jones gave their apologies for absence for the March Meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date