

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 9th February 2017

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Steve Turner (Vice Chair)
Cllr Andy Crum
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr David Baldwin

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright, Lengthsman; Paul Wright and 2 members of the public

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members of the public present thanked the Parish Council for their representation at the recent Planning Committee Meeting where the Larkrise Planning Application for Tump Lane had been determined. Commendation and congratulations were recorded following an award made to Miss Rosemary Rigby MBE. The Prime Minister had awarded Miss Rigby the "Points of Light Award" for her work in keeping the memory of war heroine, Violette Szabo, alive in the Tump Lane Museum. No other matters were raised specifically during the Open Session. Open Session closed 7.40pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies received from Cllr Tim Jones, Ward Cllr David Harlow and Miss R. Rigby MBE.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations recorded.

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting

3.1) The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 5th January 2017 were signed as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

4.0 Reports

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

The Bulletins with updates had been received and circulated.

4.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Harlow had sent his report as detailed here (sic):

Much Birch Parish Council

"Ward member report, February 2017"

Planning

The Tump Lane 'Larkrise' application was turned down at committee in January. This was a hot topic in Tump Lane with 20 or so residents in attendance at the site visit. The general feeling was that whilst we are in much need of affordable houses in the countryside, Tump Lane was the wrong location (road too small and no realistic possibility of a decent pavement all the way up and down). We await news as to whether the application will go to appeal.

Much Birch has granted permission for 30 out of 57 new properties required before 2031 and yet the original decision had been in favour of granting permission. This once again illustrates the pressure on parishes, the sooner NDPs are complete the more control residents will have over where the new homes should go.

Hereford Library

Hereford library, museum and art gallery reopened on Tuesday 31 January, following the phase one completion of building work at Broad Street.

The building was closed due to asbestos found on the site, but this has provided the opportunity to modernise the library for the many users. Spaces have been reconfigured to improve the customer experience, a suite of new PCs are available to use for free and the ceiling has been raised with new lighting. The county library will also welcome WISH (Wellbeing Information and Signposting for Herefordshire) which will operate from the main library as a shared facility to make the most of the building.

Hereford museum and art gallery will launch an exhibition celebrating the life and work of Herefordshire artist Brian Hatton, with additional opening hours during the first two weeks.

<https://www.facebook.com/herefordshirelibraries>

Budget

Last Friday full council met to approve the 17/18 budget; public sector money is tight but we are proud of our recent track record – 16/17 will be the 4th successive year that the council has worked within budget whilst carefully building reserves against future needs.

The council has directed its resources at delivering the key services required by its residents whilst reducing overall costs to demonstrate efficiency. In making substantial savings to date the council will have delivered savings of almost £70M by the end of 17/18 in response to an 80% drop in central government funding since 2010.

The budget which is proposing an increase in council tax of 3.9% has been discussed at both Scrutiny committees as well as Cabinet.

Whilst ensuring that the overall budget is balanced. The council has been carefully building reserves to protect itself from financial risk and to support future needs. Over the past three years the council has delivered improvement, achievement and positive change along the way, including:

- * Major public realm improvement in Hereford
- * 368 miles of road resurfaced in the last 3 years (19% of the highway network)
- * Filled in over 200,000 potholes
- * Winning 'most improved Council award for public satisfaction with roads' at local government awards
- * Rolled out Fastershire broadband to over 80% of our residents
- * Core strategy and Local transport plans in place to 2031
- * Major progress on Enterprise Zone
- * Introduction of first Multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH) in West Mercia
- * Increased number of local foster carers by 9% (national backdrop of reducing numbers)

Choose how you move

Herefordshire Council has been awarded a £1.5 million share of the £60 million Sustainable Travel Access Fund awarded by central government.

The funding has been awarded to support the council's 'Destination Hereford' project, which aims to make the city a beacon for walking and cycling in the UK.

It will support a programme of local projects over three years from 2017 to 2020, with the aim to make walking and cycling a part of everyday life.

Keep Herefordshire warm

Organisations from across Herefordshire are coming together to tackle fuel poverty with a special event as part of the national Warm Homes campaign. People will be able to get advice on energy efficiency at the event, as well as information on grants for replacement heating, financial support and other free services such as Home Fire Safety Checks and gas boiler servicing. Energy saving gadgets including LED lightbulbs and energy monitors will also be up for grabs

The event takes place between 10am and 2pm on Wednesday 15 February, in Hereford High Town. For impartial advice and support residents can contact Keep Herefordshire Warm on 0800 677 1432."

4.3) Locality Steward Dave Atkinson the Locality Steward had sent his bulletins. He was not present at the meeting.

5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted and included a request for chicken farm odour to be discussed at the next meeting. The conditions relating to the planning permission would be reviewed.

The Parish Annual Maintenance Schedule had been completed and sent to Balfour Beatty.

The Clerk had written, once more, to Highways England regarding the overgrown pavement on the A49 from Tump Lane and going towards the Axe and Cleaver Public House. The Chair would advise of an alternative e mail address.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th Jan 2017 HSBC Community Account	£10,914.21
@ 13 th Jan 2017 HSBC Community Projects Account	£12,941.75

6.2) The following payments were approved:

Clerks salary (Feb)	£298.56
Tax Refund to Clerk	£64.60
Expenses (mileage £15.30)	£16.65
Skyfire Consulting (Web hosting)	£111.00

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment: (proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Burge) Unanimous.

7.0 School Parking and Village issues update

7.1) To receive related correspondence

No additional items to report.

7.2) To discuss Herefordshire Road Safety Partnership and local speeding initiatives

The Parish Council resolved to look into the possibility of a Community Speed Watch initiative with the trained public members using speed gathering equipment to collect data which could then be used to warn speeding drivers. The Clerk would contact Ian Connolly, the co-ordinator for West Mercia Police, to express the parish interest in the scheme.

8.0 Planning Matters

8.1) To consider any planning applications as circulated.

There were no new applications up for consideration.

8.2) Update on Planning Application 130945 – Land at Tump Lane, Much Birch

The Planning Application 130945 had been rejected by the Planning Committee.

The Parish Council had been advised of the possibility of land at the Wormelow Kennels being made available for building at a later date. If this were to be formalised, the developers would be invited to attend a future parish council meeting to present their proposals. The Policy of the Much Birch Parish Council is to discuss planning applications when proposals have been formalised.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

Matters were in hand following previous reporting and some potholes in Wrigglebrook Lane and Ticklewithy Pitch had been filled. The top end of Barrack Hill, at the end of the Little Birch road near to Wrigglebrook was subject to silting up and the Chair would liaise regarding the situation with the Environment Agency.

The issue of the number of caravans sited at the site at the end of Laskett Lane on the junction with the A49 appeared to have more vans than were believed to be permitted. This would be checked in terms of allowable numbers.

9.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman

The Lengthsman was congratulated for doing a "great job" in clearing the pavement past the school. Works for future projects were in hand.

The hedge past the Old School House on the path leading to the Pilgrim was encroaching on the footpath. Highways Agency would be advised.

9.3) To receive Report from Footpath Officer

MB26 path – stile situation would be checked. Footpath MB2 requiring clearance – situation to be checked.

10.0 Neighbourhood Plan- update

Cllr Burge updated the meeting and had sent the following report:

Record of Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering group meeting 2 February 2017

Present. Dave Goldsmith (Chairman), Chris Grover (Finance/budget), Shirley Coates, Steve Turner (PC) Roisin Burge (PC) Lesley Gare, Rosemary Rigby.

1. Apologies Trisha Egerton

2. Record of meeting 1 December 2016.

The minutes of the meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting and were agreed to be a correct record.

3. Matters arising

(1) The Terms of reference' and responsibilities of the 'Codes of conduct' were confirmed together with a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Steering group and Parish Council. It was agreed that 'Declarations of Interest' would become a standing item for all meetings of the Steering group.

(ii) It was agreed that the proposal to invite Ms Swinglhurst to address the group (and share experience of NDP development) would be discussed at a later date.

(iii) Dates of Meetings. The Chairman circulated and a list of dates of meetings for the year was confirmed. Where possible meetings are planned to take place one week in advance of meetings of the parish Council (and thus facilitate early reporting back on developments/ recommendations) Dates of Steering Group meetings (2017) to take place at Much Birch Community Hall 7.30pm 2 March; 30 March; 20 April; 1 June; 29 June; 31 August; 28 September; 26 October; 30 November Should additional meetings become necessary information will be circulated via web site and notices.

Members of the Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering group (updated)

Dave Goldsmith (Chairman) goldsmith509@btinternet.com Chris Grover (Finance)

cjgrover@waitrose.com Shirley Coates shirleycoates35@btinternet.com

Trisha Egerton tricia_egerton@btinternet.com

Miss Rigby Cartref, Tump Lane, Wormelow Steve Turner (Parish Council rep)

turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com Roisin Burge (Parish Council rep) roisinburge@hotmail.com

Lesley Gare Lesley@lgare.orangehome.co.uk

4. Discussion re Consultant Engagement.

The Chairman (Dave G) reported back on a meeting (January 2017) which he had attended together with Chris G (Finance) and members of the Herefordshire Council NDP advisory/support group.

The Council advisors were clear that they were not able to advise on the suitability of Consultants but did provide a list of Consultants who have experience of working with Neighbourhood Development planning groups in and around Herefordshire and some at a regional and national level.

The Chairman had written to invite proposals of interest to seven from the list and reported the following response.

2 declined

2 no response to date.

3 information returned and details circulated to members of the Steering Group.

Action It was agreed that two of the Consultancies would be invited to make a 20 minute presentation (with time for questions) the next meeting of the Steering Group 2 March 2017.

Members of the Steering Group were asked to send any questions which they would like to be asked to the Chairman by 19 February. The Chairman will then draw up an agreed list of questions to be put to both representatives attending on behalf of consultancies and circulate.

5. Application for funding grant.

Chris G reported that further study of 'NDP Funding documentation' together with guidance from Karla Johnson and Dave Tristram (Meeting January 2017) indicated that the Steering group would require the assistance/experience of the Consultant (yet to be appointed) in order to complete the complex task of completion of a budget forecast for the Much Birch NDP project. The draft application would then be passed to the Parish Council who have responsibility for submitting the application to the Herefordshire Council.

Subject to the appointment of a Consultant it is anticipated that the draft budget plan will be drafted in March for presentation to the Parish Council meeting 6 April 2017.

It was agreed that when the funding application has been agreed the Steering group would require a monthly budget update from the Consultant which d any other miscellaneous items would be reported upon to the Parish Council.

6. Communications.

The Steering group are committed to interesting and engaging with as many local people as possible to contribute to the development of the Much Birch NDP. In order to ensure this and to demonstrate Transparency (ref agenda item 2) members of the group discussed ways in which information might be effectively circulated within the community and the development of a communications strategy.

The Chairman agreed to take responsibility for taking forward discussions about communications via the PC web site and will make early contact with web master Terry Cook to take this forward.

The Newsletter for King's Thorn, The Birches and Aconbury, Local Notice Boards, Pub notice Boards, The Surgery, and Hereford Times Village notices were identified as possible sites for distribution of information.

7. Action Plan.

The Chairman noted that this item had been addressed in discussion of previous agenda items.

In summary:

Confirmation of arrangements to ensure transparency of work of steering group

Arrangements for appointment of Consultant

Budget development

Communications strategy development

8 AOB

Date of next meeting 2nd March 2017, 7.30pm Much Birch Community Hall.

11.0 Self-Help Gritting Scheme

There was nothing additional to report at this time. Scheme was still in place.

12.0 Correspondence

12.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included information about a Waste Charges Consultation co-ordinated by Herefordshire Council.

13.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

13.1) Clerk to send a précis to the Newsletter. This would again include details of the next Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meetings. Dates of Parish Council Meetings would be advised for the Newsletter Diary page.

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

All the usual items would be included plus update on the Hereford Safer Roads Partnership and local speeding initiatives. Also to be included chicken broiler houses plus Environment Agency and silt issues.

15.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting was confirmed as Thursday 9th March 2017 from 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall. Cllr Cook gave her apologies for the March Meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date