

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 8th January 2015

Present:

Cllr. Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr. Andrew Crum
Cllr. Keith James
Cllr. Steve Turner (Vice Chair)

In attendance:

Parish Clerk, Alison Wright, and 4 members of the public plus the Locality Steward, Mr Dave Atkinson

Open Session:-

A member of the public, Mr Padden, spoke about the suggestion of a crossing for the A49 from Tump Lane and reminded the Parish Council that he had submitted a petition against the suggestion of a crossing with the signatures of local householders on it. There were reasons behind this including the concern over grinding brakes and gears at all hours as vehicles came to a stop and then restarted off again close to his property. Other options may be considered such a tunnel or bridge crossing and there would be considerations regarding wheelchair access and pushchairs etc. There may be issues regarding tailbacks back to the Pilgrim Hotel and visibility issues as drivers come over the hill as regards stopping in time for any proposed crossing. There was a description given of different types of crossing, Pelican (timed), Puffin (sensor driven), Pegasus (for horse riders and with a higher control button) and Toucan (for cyclists).

It was noted that there had once been a crossing patrol person provided on the road. It was also commented that subways are out of favour due to anti-social behaviour. The Chair noted that no over road footway had been located in the County, so far, to use as a comparison.

Mr Padden would send his documents to the Clerk for consideration at the forthcoming meeting to be arranged with and held at the Much Birch School on the subject of local road concerns.

The Open Session then closed.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies received from Cllr Norris and Cllr Jones.

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 December 2015 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

4.0 Reports

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

The PCSO was not present. Bulletins with updates had been received and circulated.

Ward Councillor Cllr Norris had sent his apologies

Locality Steward Dave Atkinson gave an update on highways initiatives. He would be looking at the location of the Japanese Knotweed with a view to arranging for it's destruction via weed

control treatment. There had been a meeting with Little Birch Council and members of the community to look at a new system for registering defects including potholes. The system is map based and gives the opportunity to pinpoint the exact location of the defect onto a map. This can be found within the Herefordshire Council web site. The overall perception of the system is that logistically it is good because all defects reported in a given area can be targeted together to make the best use of contractor's time etc. The map is to become interactive on 1st February 2015 and will link straight into Balfour Beatty so that attention can quickly be deployed where required. It was agreed that Cllr Cook would arrange for there to be a link between the Parish Council web site and the new reporting tool.

The issue of the cone at the Thorn and the drainage is likely to be addressed through the Environmental Health route due to potential issues of foul drainage. Once samples have been taken, and the outcomes known, further action will be taken to resolve the drainage issues at the location. There were concerns, following jetting, that the pipe may either have collapsed or there may not have been one there in the first instance.

The Locality Steward advised that there were roads marked up for attention including Ticklewithy Pitch. It was commented that communications are more reliable and expectations are being managed better since the new system of Locality Steward operation has been introduced.

5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted including items as advised on the Communications Sheet and interactions as described within the Locality Steward's update.

It was noted that Cllr James had sent a letter about safety on the route to school to the Head at Much Birch School and he had subsequently had a fifteen minute duration telephone call with her to discuss the concerns. Matters such as the rescheduling of buses, barriers not being staggered on the A49 which may mean that a child could run out into the road were mentioned. A meeting was being arranged with the school, and previously agreed representatives, to discuss the concerns and options and to direct those concerns to the appropriate authorities. There would need to be a measured approach to, for example, potential for alterations to the bus timetable to alleviate the impasse potential outside the school but without inconveniencing others. Another point made was that of the undulation of the A49 through Much Birch and the consequent potential for there to be hidden dips on the road with implications for visibility. Cllr James also reported that the venture regarding Tump Lane now had eleven interested helpers and as soon as a suitable dry day was available works to clean up the area would commence.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1 The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th Dec 2014 Community Account	£9837.21
@ 13 th Dec 2014 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

6.2 The following payments were approved:

Clerk's salary	£358.22
Expenses (mileage £15.30)	£15.30
Humfrys & Symonds Solicitors (legal advice re tenanted land)	£180.00
Much Birch Community Hall (room hire)	£52.50

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

7.0 School Parking and related issues update

As documented under the Open Session and in Clerk's Action items.

8.0 Planning Matters

8.1) To consider planning applications as circulated.

The applications listed were discussed and commented as follows:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: P143757/F - Much Birch Community Hall, Court Farm Road, Much Birch, Hereford, 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

The Parish Council considered the application and discussed matters such as shared parking with the surgery and that the extension would offer enlarged toilet facilities with a stand alone less able person toilet and a larger kitchen space with improved access to the first floor and an additional room up there also.

In consideration of all aspects the Parish Council had no objections to the proposals.

The Chair asked for it to be recorded that, in line with the new process of no hard copies of planning applications being supplied for review, the Parish Council did need to take responsibility for looking at the applications online and reviewing them with a view to reporting back any findings, and comments, for return to the Planning Authority.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

9.1) 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.

The three road signs reported as being damaged on the A49 after a collision by a lorry are in the hands of being repaired with Balfour Beatty.

Highways Agency: On the A49 there is a hollow in the road at the junction by the turning to the Community Hall where there has likely been a structural failure of the road sub base. The signage to the Community Hall from the main road needs improving as it is difficult to see on approach, especially when it is dark.

9.2) Lengthsman: - To follow up ditch review and location of drains etc. It was important that any requests for action be accompanied by proper identifiers and locality with property names etc. to help pinpoint faults. The drain on the lane to the Pump House on the C1263 and at the end of footpath MB1 requires attention as it appears to be blocked. The Locality Steward entered this on the web page, at the meeting, for attention.

9.3) Footpaths: - No issues to report

10.0 Parish Plan- to consider review of 2004 Parish Plan

The Nature Trust will be undertaking a review of the Millennium Green to record items of interest and the Hereford Mammal Group will also be doing an assessment of the wildlife living in the environs.

11.0 Correspondence

11.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included items as detailed under appropriate sections and confirmation of details of the new Lengthsman Scheme.

12.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

12.1) Clerk to supply a précis for the next edition of the newsletter with the inclusion of another reminder about safe driving, in all weather conditions, and to remind everyone that when self gritting there is a need for only a small sprinkle of salt from the grit bins, which are there for road and not personal, e.g. driveway, use.

13.0 Self Help Winter Gritting Scheme

There is a good stock of grit held in readiness for icy and snowy weather. Gritting would be undertaken in extreme conditions. Balfour Beatty had been trialling a surface de-icer solution and had some drums available to anyone interested. A sample would be delivered to Cllr James by Dave Atkinson along with the additional parish and top of Tump Lane maps, as requested at the last meeting.

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

To include all of the usual updates and items, and also to include an update from the forthcoming meeting with Much Birch School and the extension of the Lengthsman Scheme considerations. There was a discussion on pothole filling at this point and various methods used to repair them. It was commented that any involvement in pursuing this venture would need to be given very careful consideration.

15.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 5th February 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