

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present:

Cllr. Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr. Andrew Crum
Cllr. Stephen Turner
Cllr. Keith James
Cllr. Jon Norris (also Ward Councillor)
Cllr. Tim Jones (co-opted at this his first meeting)

In attendance:

Parish Clerk, Alison Wright, and 8 members of the public

Public Participation Time -

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and the issue of a blocked drain near to No. 30 Tump Lane at the end of the Cul-de-sac was raised. This drain, and the ones below it, need to be checked as the first one is blocked with mud to road level and the others are likely to be blocked too as rain water is not draining away properly. The Tump Lane Sanctuary application would be back to the Planning Committee on 12th March.

Concern over the breaking down of the road edges in Tump Lane by heavy traffic was raised and questions of the potential for a footpath discussed.

The yellow lines outside the school have led cars to be parked down both sides of the road down Tump Lane and obstructions have been pushed further out in consequence. The matter of the lines and existing implemented parking restrictions has been referred back to the Highways Agency and the Herefordshire Council to consider the best way forward. The yellow lining directly outside "Fairview" and the school does appear to look somewhat excessive and the Clerk would make a request to see if the "excess" painted lines on the kerbstones could be "toned down". The petitions submitted at, and just after, the last meeting had both been sent to Herefordshire Governance Services who had forwarded them to the appropriate authority.

The drains outside the Pump House and School also appear to be blocked.

In regard to the planning application for the Pump House, it was noted that there were pre-determined conditions on the land and that further development had been disallowed by said conditions. There was some information in circulation about the possibility of caravans being placed on the site. The Parish Council would look at and consider any new application proposal for the land, if and when presented, on the merits of the application itself and in due consideration of the legal position, and material factors, relating to the application.

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. A new councillor was co-opted and everyone introduced themselves. The new councillor is Tim Jones and he is resident in the parish. Proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Crum. Declaration of interest form and acceptance of office form to be sent.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There was one declaration of interest, by Cllr Cook, in item 6.2 Payments regarding an invoice for Herefordshire Council for planning notifications.

3.0 Minutes

3.1 The Minutes of 6th February 2014 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting with the additional note of the cost of the website set up of £180.00 and yearly maintenance charge of £36.00 being added to the minutes. The point was stated that the Webmaster had started looking after the parish website over ten years previously and whilst the Parish Council was presided over by a different Chair.

4.0 Reports

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

PCSO Kevin Powell was not present.

Ward Councillor Cllr Norris gave his report.

The Ward Councillor spoke of the aspiration for Hereford to become a University City. The idea was for a stand-alone and unlinked University to be set up to cater for up to 5000 students per year. The idea was to launch the University in 2017 and to offer stem subjects such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. It was hoped that the location would be in the City Centre and a suitable location was being sought. There would be a Hall of Residence and the scheme had across party support.

Balfour Beatty was getting back on track with road improvements and would soon be appointing the Locality Stewards to help co-ordinate local issues in conjunction with land owners, parish councils and residents. There was a pilot scheme for the Lengthmans initiative being worked through and possibilities for things such as pot hole filling were being investigated and evaluated.

Public transport was under review and subsidies for routes were being looked at. There was an ongoing problem with uneconomic routes and how to manage the service.

Broadband for the county may not now be delivered by BT.

Ward boundaries were being redrawn to equalise wards and would end with a reduction of members from 58 currently to 53 ward councillors.

5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

Actions were noted as per sheet including feedback from the Assistant Director, Richard Ball, from Herefordshire Council in regard to the petition for changes to the parking regulations, traffic and crossing issues outside the school. The Clerk read out the letter and it is reproduced here:-

“The petition submitted by the Parish Council and signed by residents, school parents, request the council to implement the following:

- a lower speed limit within the proximity of the school.
- provide additional warning signs at the entry and exit to the school.
- make a safer crossing point for children and parents on the A49.

The concern relating to the issues follow the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and the double yellow lines in the vicinity of the school. The TRO was introduced following concerns expressed by the Local Member, Parish Council and the head teacher of the of Much Birch Primary School. The aim was to help control parking in the vicinity of the school and junction with the A49, easing concerns over the safety of children attending the school. The issues relating to the crossing and the speed limits were raised in response to the TRO consultation. In regards to extending the 30mph speed limit and lowering to a 20mph speed limit in the vicinity of the school, from the photograph provided showing the parking, the main problem appears to be the hedgerow where by this limits the inter visibility of vehicles and drivers trying to negotiate the parked vehicles. If the hedgerows were maintained or even removed, the visibility for drivers would increase and as such, could reduce the speed of vehicles in this location. This would appear to be a benefit without the speed limit. In regards to the extension of the 30mph speed limit and possibly the

introduction of the 20mph limit in the vicinity of the school, our service provider Balfour Beatty Living Places will review the current situation in regards to the request and the current TRO implementation. The main problem appears to be cars parking to pick up and drop off children and the lack of off-street parking for the school. This was subject of an application from the school but never implemented. I understand the school has a Safer Routes to School Travel Plan and this process would be worth revisiting to bring this up to date. The previous travel plan was reviewed in 2012, prior to the introduction of the TRO. The introduction of warning signs for the school are being looked into and subject to funding will be introduced. The crossing of the A49 and the introduction of a controlled pedestrian crossing is subject of the Highways Agency who manages the A49. I have contacted the Highways Agency for an up to date position in regards to this request.

I regret I am unable to completely answer the points raised by the petition but will arrange for Bruce Evans, Engineering Manager to update the Parish Council as soon as the relevant information becomes available.

Yours sincerely

R BALL

Assistant Director Place Based Commissioning

6.0 Financial Report

6.1 The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th January 2014 Community Account	£8430.99
@ 13 th January 2014 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

6.2 The following payments were approved:

Clerk's salary	£203.40
Expenses (mileage £23.85)	£21.30
Tax due on salary	£51.00
Herefordshire Council (4 x £4.00 Planning applications)	£16.00
Skyfire Designs (Parish Web update and maintenance)	£270.00

Resolved :- That the payments above were approved, and passed for payment (Cllr Turner signed the authority for the Herefordshire Council Invoice as Cllr Cook had declared an interest)

7.0 School Parking and crossing update

This item had been covered in the Open Session and Clerk's actions No. 5 but in addition it was noted that Cllr Turner had written to the school governors in regard to the parking and the strip of land between the school and the convent with some ideas and suggestions on how some land may be put to use as a car park to obviate some of the parking problems. It was thought that a meeting between the School Convent and Parish Council may bring some resolution although no hopes were pinned on a satisfactory outcome. So far, only one reply to the suggestions and ideas had come back to Cllr Turner.

8.0 Planning Matters

There was one new planning application but as it was for Little Birch it was not considered as had been sent erroneously.

It was noted that the Sanctuary Application was back to the Planning committee on 12th March. Cllr Cook, Cllr James and Mrs Rigby would again be speaking to the meeting. The footpath request could not be made a condition but was still an issue for safe passage to school etc. The Ward Councillor expressed his regret that the landowner had not made comment on this to date.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

9.1) Balfour Beatty: - Drains and blockages as identified in Tump Lane and outside the Pump House and the School. Plus potholes on the U71606 in the vicinity of the dugout verge.

9.2) The Lengthsman: - Ongoing works as required. Clerk to ring Lengthsman and invite him to a meeting so that councillors could meet him.

9.3) Footpaths: - No further issues at present

10.0 Parish Plan-to consider review of 2004 Parish Plan

This was moved to the agenda for the April meeting.

11.0 Correspondence

Noted as per sheet and including a request from the BBC for people to help with the making of a program about home swapping. The HALC invoice for 2014/2015 had been received, with a considered increase in the amount, and the Clerk was asked to find out about alternative provision for similar cover and the costs involved.

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 issues of dog fouling and the dangers of this in the Parish.

13.0 Self-Help Gritting Scheme

This had not been required to date, due to milder than usual weather but was still in place and ready if required. Health and safety issues and insurance for slipping were on most policies.

14.0 School Governor's Report

There was no further update as a meeting had been held since the last Parish Council meeting.

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, dog fouling and HALC subscription

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 3rd April 2014 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date