

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 5th March 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 and 7 members of the public

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Open Session commenced. Mike Morley spoke about the Birches Newsletter. He was handing on the “editorial baton” to a new editor, Liz Hall, who would be compiling the next edition. Mr Morley had been editing the Newsletter for many years and thanks were recorded for his contribution to this. The Clerk ascertained that the same e mail address was to be used for future contributions, as had been used previously. The Open Session then closed

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 5th February 2015 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

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

Cllr James had attended a meeting with representatives of the interested parties on site at the Poor Acre. It was commented that the site was “a wide agricultural field”. Cllr James gave an overview of the meeting. Mr Brimacombe, Trustee and present in the audience tonight, was in receipt of some new information which had provided some assurance on previous points. It had been agreed that the Trustees would commission and fund pre-planning advice to determine the best way forward. This advice would likely cost £300.00 and the Planning Officer would be able to provide an indication of how best to proceed in terms of how many properties etc. There may be between one and four plots designated, dependent on the outcome of the pre-planning advice. Land Agents would be assisting with the application and would ultimately receive a commission of between 10% and 15% of the value of the sale of the plots (exact percentage to be determined by the number of plots designated). Solicitors would be engaged to sort out any tenancy arrangements and other legal paperwork. The Trustees details needed to be updated to the correct names and the Rev K Garlick would be replaced with the Rev. Johnson’s details.

The Chair of the Parish Council reiterated, at this point, that the Parish Council would reserve the right to evaluate and comment on any application submitted for the land, on the merits, as presented. There was felt to be a good chance of developing part of the Poor Acre. The Land Agent would be operating on a “no win, no fee” basis. The item would remain on the Parish Council Meeting Agenda for any updates to be advised.

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.

5.2) Ward Councillor Cllr Norris gave a summary of his report including a discussion on traffic speeds and how to go about reducing them.

He was involved in trying to raise funds to assist with the development of the \much Birch Community Hall.

There was comment regarding Balfour Beatty in that they need to be clear on their roles and responsibilities in terms of what they were providing and what was potentially falling to the community to carry out.

The Hereford Enterprise Zone should be able to host many thousands of jobs going forward although only a couple of units were currently let.

The Core Strategy was under review and there may be some comment as to how villages are judged to be capable of growth. The general perception appeared to be that this aspect had been “badly thought through” in terms of sizes and capacities of halls, bus routes and provision etc. It was commented that there need to be better work for the future and the Herefordshire Council had provided many documents for inspection. Some foundation items could not be examined and there had seemingly not been sufficient money allocated for health and social provision.

A question was asked regarding gritting by Balfour Beatty and the bus route up Barrack Hill. This road had not been gritted during a recent cold spell and a road deemed less crucial, Coyd Moor Road, had been. It was commented that the Contractor may grit the bus stops.

5.3) Locality Steward Dave Atkinson had sent his apologies

5.4) The “Tump Lane Toppers” (including any update on the Play Space)

Cllr James reported that the Toppers had held their first meeting on site, at the top of Tump Lane, on Friday 6th February. Representatives of thirteen households plus professional helpers from the Pilgrim Hotel were available. A general assessment would be carried out as to the best way forward. There were some decisions to be made over some trees, three small ones plus a chestnut, on the site which may need to be felled, and various other matters would need to be agreed.

Cllr James also updated the meeting regarding the ongoing concern and correspondence concerning the missing play equipment on the Tump Lane play space. The Much Birch Mothers consortium was actively on the case of the missing equipment. Cllr James had published a paper “Tump Herald” which had led with the story highlighting the playing equipment issue. It was resolved that the Parish Clerk would contact Herefordshire Housing to find out the latest position regarding the equipment and when it might be likely to be back on site, either restored or replaced. Requests to put pressure on the department to replace the equipment were on the increase.

6.0 Clerk’s Update on Action Items

The updates were noted including items as advised on the Communications Sheet and also the election packs, as collected by the Clerk at an Election Briefing, were annotated with the Polling District and passed to each councillor. The deadline for the return of completed forms was stated as the 9th April by 4.00pm. Forms must be hand delivered, into the Elections Office itself, within the Town Hall. They may not be faxed, scanned or posted. It was advisable not to leave the delivery to the last date and, when at the Town

Hall, to ask someone to check the form before leaving it there as any mistakes may render the form as disqualified.

A request for the collection of speed data on the road past the Much Birch School had been submitted to the relevant authority.

7.0 Financial Report

7.1 The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th Feb 2015 Community Account	£8924.05
@ 13 th Feb 2015 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

7.2 The following payments were approved:

Clerk's salary	£245.20
Expenses (mileage £16.83)	£16.83
The Post Office (Tax)	£32.00
Herefordshire Council (Planning applications)	£44.00

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment (prop Cllr Turner sec. Cllr Crum)
The Chair declared an interest in the Herefordshire Council invoice.

8.0 School Parking and related issues update

The Clerk would chase up the request with the Highways Agency regarding a future meeting of interested parties and with their input to be included.

9.0 Planning Matters

9.1) To consider planning applications as circulated.

Planning comments have been sent to the Planning Office in respect of:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: P150171/F - The Underhills, Holly Bush Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 8HX

DESCRIPTION: Proposed mixed use of an agricultural barn to B1 light industrial and agricultural use. Siting of display hut in adjacent paddock

APPLICANT(S): Mr Stephen Turner

GRID REF: OS 350929, 230372

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

The Much Birch Parish Council sent the following response:

"The Parish Council of Much Birch has no objections to raise to the application. The Parish Council supports the initiative for encouraging appropriate change of use and diversification of farm buildings, where practicable".

A further revised application had been advised:

Application P140554/O Site at former Mushroom Farm

The Parish Council had noted that there did not appear to be any revised plans on the web but a comment by the Highways Agency had indicated that outstanding issues regarding the roadway had been satisfactorily addressed, in their opinion.

The Parish Council resolved that the original comment made previously stood (see below*) and with the additional comment regarding the concern over the diverse changes in speed limit around 40mph and 50mph which it believed should be consolidated to 40mph, along the entire stretch of road, past the site and the "Axe and Cleaver".

* "Whilst the Council would like to encourage development of the site, there are concerns as to access to and from the A49 given that the developer does not own the

land on either side of the access/exit point. The Council are minded to object to the application on the grounds of unsafe access and egress from the proposed site.”

- 9.2) To consider fencing requirements on parish land. The fencing had seemingly not been erected at Rosebank, Barrack Hill in accordance with the specified conditions. It was agreed that the Clerk should ask the tenant to advise when he would be in a position to comply with the conditions, regarding fencing and access, on the parcel of parish land known as Rosebank.
- 9.3) To discuss and clarify due process regarding planning applications in the absence of paper copies from the Planning Authority
There had been some discussion over protocols around the treatment of planning applications, for all parties, and this included parish councillors themselves. For the preservation of clarity and transparency, in all cases, it was felt that applications should be discussed in public at the meetings where possible. To this end it was proposed that the Ward Councillor should request **a longer lead time for all applications** to allow them to be openly discussed at Parish Council meetings. This was proposed by Cllr Norris and seconded by Cllr James. Carried

10.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

- 10.1) Balfour Beatty:- It was agreed that the Clerk should ascertain the cost of supplying, and siting, two new grit bins in the Hollybush Lane area of the Parish.
- 10.2) Lengthsman:- To be contacted regarding a chase on drains and grips survey and actions. The Balfour Beatty requirement to now supply an entire years worth of invoices to obtain the final tranche of funding for this year was though somewhat unreasonable as the goal posts had moved. The Ward Cllr would take this up.
- 10.3) Footpaths:- There were no issues to report. The P3 Footpath Funding had been applied for.

11.0 Parish Plan- to consider review of 2004 Parish Plan

No meeting had been held to date. The question was asked as to whether a review was actually required. The actions determined by the Plan would be evaluated and due process initiated, on the identified areas, if needed.

12.0 Correspondence

12.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included election packs and items identified under the appropriate headings.

13.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

13.1) Clerk to supply a précis for the next edition of the newsletter. Cllr James would send items for inclusion on the website directly to the Web Master. There would be a meeting concerning the community shop enterprise on Monday 9th March from 7.30pm at the Pilgrim Hotel. An item for feedback from this meeting to be placed on the next Agenda

14.0 Self Help Winter Gritting Scheme

No further details to report. Weather had been mild. The item would be taken off the Agenda for the time being.

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, Pilgrim Hotel Meeting.

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 2nd April 2015 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

The meeting closed at 8.43pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date