

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting for Much Birch and the Annual Statutory Parish
Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at
Much Birch Community Hall on Friday 6th May 2016 from 7.00pm

Present:

Cllr. Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr. Andy Crum
Cllr. Steve Turner (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Tim Jones

In attendance:

Parish Clerk: Alison Wright and 3 members of the public

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.0 To elect a Chairman and receive Acceptance of Office form(s)

Cllr Alison Cook was proposed as Chair by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Crum. There were no further proposals. Cllr Cook was duly elected as Chair and she signed the Acceptance of Office Form.

2.0 To elect a Vice Chairman and receive Acceptance of Office Form

Cllr Stephen Turner was proposed as Vice Chair by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Jones. There were no further proposals. Cllr Turner was duly elected as Vice Chair and he signed the Acceptance of Office Form.

3.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies received from Cllr R. Burge and Ward Cllr Harlow.

A letter of resignation, as parish councillor, had been received from Ben Roberts. A big "Thank you" to Ben for his contributions to the work of the Parish Council was recorded. The Meeting heard that Ben was now Chair of Little Birch Parish Council and all present wished him every success in his new role.

4.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations made.

Annual Parish Meeting & Public Question Time

An extended 30 minute period from 7.00pm is allocated, before the meeting is opened, to enable members of the public to address the Parish Council during the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Meeting heard that the grass has been cut in Tump Lane and looks better for being cut regularly. The liquidambar tree war memorial proposal and prospective donation for the Queens's 90th Birthday Event would be discussed later in the meeting, under agenda items. The Wormelow Telephone Kiosk was discussed. Cllr Turner had made enquiries of BT and had ascertained that the kiosk was to be decommissioned. The current proposal was for it to be removed. A discussion over any potential adoption of the kiosk would need to be had and Cllr Turner would clarify the options.

The footpath sign was flat on the ground in Tump Lane. This had been earmarked for repair at the same time as the fitting of the Page's Pitch road name signs.

The floral tribute on the A49, by the Pilgrim, had the additions of a fluorescent vest in the hedge and a cross. The Clerk was asked to contact Ward Cllr Harlow to see if the area could be tidied of

wrappings and plastic when the road was closed for road works, possibly? There was a request for the cross to be left at the location.

The Annual Parish Meeting and Public Question Time closed at 7.15pm.

5.0 Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 7th April 2016 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting with the amended detail that Cllr Turner was not in the chair, as stated at the top of the minutes.

6.0 Reports

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

The Bulletins with updates had been received and circulated.

6.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Harlow had sent his report as reported here (sic):

Ward member report, May 2016

A49

Signs are up on the A49 advising of night time closures near the Pilgrim hotel, I will try to find out what these are for and will communicate any news through the clerk. I am hoping it is related to my recent meeting with Highways England.

Ward Councillor Surgery

The surgery on Tuesday 03.05.16 in Much Birch village hall for ward residents was a success with a couple of Much Birch residents joining residents from other parishes such as Llanwarne and Little Birch for a chat. Issues were mainly property/planning related.

The surgery was advertised on social media, local leaflets, in the newsletter and at parish council meetings; the fact that not more people attended suggests that people are generally content with the way things are going.

Education

With regard to the recent budget announcements and the publication of the 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' White Paper, I would like to touch upon the steps the council is now taking, including consideration of the current consultation about the schools national funding formula. Given the content of the White Paper and its proposals, these have the potential to radically alter the education system in Herefordshire (including Much Birch).

Firstly, we are pleased that the funding formula consultation may result in additional funding for education in Herefordshire. We have been lobbying national government for some years about the current unfairness in the funding arrangements, and it is pleasing to see some indications that this may improve.

The contents of the White Paper will be considered and debated at council level and there will be full engagement with schools and academies about this. We will be meeting with the two county MPs to ensure they are fully aware of the implications of the consultation for Herefordshire residents, in the light of the council's initiatives in the education strategy and particularly the schools capital investment strategy.

Whatever the outcome of the White paper which reinforces the council's responsibility towards children, we will ensure that our commitment towards improving the education, health, care and economic outcomes of our young people remains central to everything we do.

Herefordshire businesses invited to apply for a share of over £11m of European funding Organisations across the Herefordshire are being invited to apply for a share of more than £11 million of European funding for schemes which will provide support to businesses.

Applications are being invited for projects focused on research and innovation, business competitiveness, the low carbon economy and environment and resource efficiency.

The four themes have been identified as priorities for funding in the Marches European Structural and Investment Strategy.

The funding is part of the Marches LEP region's total allocation of around £92m and the maximum available for each priority area in this round of funding are:

* SME Support and Competitiveness - £3.5 million

* Research and Innovation - £4 million

* Environment and Resource Efficiency - £1,725,490

* Low Carbon - £2 million

The deadline for each funding call is May 27 2016 and the minimum application amount is £500,000. Projects will be delivered between now and 2020.

World War 1

Herefordshire First World War Centenary Committee and Herefordshire Council are holding an open day called 'the family at war' to give people the opportunity to come up with ideas of events and activities that could take place in Herefordshire to commemorate the incredible contribution to the war effort of 'ordinary' people in 2017.

The event is being held at the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre on May 7 between 10am and 4pm (Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas) and we invite community groups, schools, uniform clubs and anyone with an interest in commemorating the centenary to join us and help. Further information can also be found on www.herefordshire.gov.uk/fwwc

6.3) Locality Steward Dave Atkinson was not present. Bulletins had been circulated. It was reported that the tree, that had previously been the subject of concern in Aconbury Close, had now been removed.

7.0 To appoint councillors to the following working groups:

The following appointments were resolved:

- Planning Working Group – all councillors
- Finance Working Group – Cllrs Turner, Cook and Burge
- Employment Working Group – convene if necessary
- Self Help Winter Gritting Working Group - Cllrs Turner and Crum

8.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted and included the organisation of a further Neighbourhood Plan Launch with HALC's Chief Executive Lynda Wilcox on 5th July. The internal audit and end of year accounts had been prepared and were ready for the inspection process. The parish land invoices had been sent out to the tenants.

9.0 Financial Report

9.1) The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th April 2016 HSBC Community Account	£8076.41
@ 13 th April 2016 HSBC Community Projects Account	£13,408.00

9.2) The following payments were approved:

Clerks salary	£346.50
Expenses (mileage £15.30)	£15.30
The Post Office Ltd (tax)	£11.40
Came & Company (Parish Council Insurance)	£276.49
Much Birch Community Hall (Room Hire)	£66.00

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

9.3) To confirm appointment of internal auditor

The Chair had spoken with the internal auditor and she was available to carry out the internal audit once again this year. This appointment was approved.

9.4) To consider request for donation towards parish event for Queen's 90th Birthday celebration

The Parish Council discussed the request for a donation towards the 90th Birthday Event and the underwriting of the event expenses in the event of a shortfall in finances, to a maximum of £400.00, was resolved.

9.5) To consider request for keepsake for local children to commemorate the Queen's 90th Birthday

The request for the purchase of a keepsake for the Queen's 90th Birthday was discussed and the options for distribution also. It was resolved that 100 commemorative coins would be ordered and these would be given to the first 100 children to attend the Event on the 11th June. The funding for the coins would come from the Community Fund and if necessary it was agreed that a cheque could be raised between meetings in order to pay for the items. The proposal to purchase the coins, and authorise payment outside of a meeting, was made by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Jones. Carried. It was noted that the car boots to raise funds for the Event were being promoted.

10.0 Planning Matters

10.1) To consider any planning applications as circulated.

There had been no further applications received for consideration.

11.0 School Parking and related issues update

Cameras had been observed surveying near to Fairview and on the main road (A49).

12.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths including appointment of Footpath Officer

12.1) To note any defects to be reported to Balfour Beatty.

Defects were noted as follows: the issue of the wall at Rose Cottage had been looked at by the locality Steward and Cllr Turner. Balfour Beatty had confirmed that the wall was not a designated highways structure. Cllr Turner to supply details to the Clerk for a letter to be sent advising this.

A hedge on the right hand side of the road from Kingsthorpe to the A49 (Hereford) needed attention (Cllr Cook to advise re exact details). This is in Much Dewchurch PC area.

The grass around the new bus shelter was being cut. The trees there were rather tall and it was a viewing point. Much Dewchurch Clerk would be contacted regarding the possibility for cutting these?

12.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and update re recruitment to post

Adverts were out and one form had been received back so far.

12.3) To appoint Footpath Officer and to receive Report

Cllr Jones was proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Turner. The situation regarding the immediate notification by Balfour Beatty to cease the funding provision for gates and sundries etc. for footpaths was discussed and Much Birch Parish Council wished for their concerns to be conveyed to Cllr Rone, of Herefordshire Council, on this matter.

12.4) To consider cost of road side reflective verge markers for Tump Lane

The provision of verge markers for a portion of Tump Lane was discussed. It was made very clear that funding was no longer available for the purchase via Balfour Beatty and any spend by the Parish Council would need to be evaluated on its own merits. An advisory that the precept may need to rise to cover such projects was noted. There will be further central budget cuts next year and the Parish Council will discuss the possible precept increase. The decision was taken that four markers would be purchased in total, two to protect the Acacia Tree and two for close to Cartref. It was agreed that the contractor would liaise with the resident of Cartref (phone number supplied), when fitting the markers, to make sure of the optimum positioning.

12.5) To consider purchase of a Speed Indicator Device for Much Birch

The question was whether to purchase SID for Much Birch? The November e mail information from the Locality Steward had indicated prices of £2500.00 plus VAT minimum. There are

criteria for the placements and they would have to be rotated around the four possible sites in the parish. A permanent siting would require planning permission. It was agreed that the idea would be left, for now, but some research into other villages with SIDs would be done and fed back, e.g. Peterstow.

12.6) To co-ordinate litter pick as organised for Sunday 5th June

This was to be a community pick and not just a Parish Council one. The equipment had been reserved and the Clerk would be collecting this. Ben had been co-ordinating and Cllr Crum would now do this. The party of pickers would assemble at the Much Birch Community Hall at 9.30am on the 5th June.

12.7) To consider the state of the Wormelow phone kiosk

The Kiosk was discussed during the Annual Parish Meeting.

12.8) To consider designation of the liquidambar tree and plaque on the Millennium Green as a war memorial to the fallen of the parish

The Parish Council discussed the proposal and it was resolved that whilst the Parish Council do not have any jurisdiction over the assignment of memorials, Miss Rigby does have their support in the venture to dedicate the liquidambar tree and plaque for this purpose on the Millennium Green, Tump Lane. A letter to confirm this would be sent.

13.0 Neighbourhood Plan- update

There would be a further launch meeting held on the 5th July at the Much Birch Community Hall from 7.00pm and Lynda Wilcox the Chief Executive from HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils) would be in attendance and would give a presentation.

14.0 Correspondence

14.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included the resignation of Ben Roberts from the Parish Council, information from the bank and also more details regarding pension schemes and auto enrolment.

15.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

15.1) Clerk to supply a précis for the next edition of the newsletter. This would include details of the Neighbourhood Plan re-launch and a thank you to Ben Roberts who had resigned as a Parish Councillor. The Chair would also send an advertisement to the Parish Magazine regarding the Neighbourhood Plan Event.

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

All the usual items, plus the approval of the End of Year Accounts for 2015/2016, Speed Indicator Device feedback and phone kiosk considerations.

17.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 2nd June 2016 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Signed:

.....
Chairman

.....
Date