

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present:

Cllr. Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr. Andrew Crum
Cllr. Keith James
Cllr. Jon Norris
Cllr. Steve Turner
Cllr. Tim Jones

In attendance:

Parish Clerk, Alison Wright, and 9 members of the public including the Locality Steward, Mr Dave Atkinson and Mr Dick Brimacombe from the Much Birch Old Charities

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the open session and invited those present to address the Parish Council. A member of the public commented that the hedge below the Thorn and towards the bottom of Barrack Hill was again overgrown and required cutting. The Locality Steward agreed that Balfour Beatty would pick up this issue as it was an ongoing problem each year and contact the landowner. He asked the Clerk to confirm the details in an e mail as authority to follow up and the Clerk said that this would be done. The Open Session then closed.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There was one declaration of interest, from Cllr Crum, in relation to a planning application that he had put forward (details under planning agenda item).

3.0 Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising

3.1 The Minutes of 2nd October 2014 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

4.0 Reports

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

PCSO was not present. Kevin Powell had moved off the patch and a new PCSO will attend if and when possible. Bulletins with updates were still being received and circulated.

Ward Councillor Cllr Norris said that he would intersperse his responses to issues as the meeting progressed without giving one report. He did state that he would not be joining the governing body of the Much Birch CE Primary School. He would be joining a patient participation group at the Much Birch Surgery. He asked that if any other groups were known of to advise the Ward Councillor and he would see if he could join those also, where appropriate to do so.

5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted including an update on the status of Footpath MB4A, with the Locality Steward confirming that it was a scheduled footpath. There was then a discussion regarding the ongoing issues of the yellow lining around the property known as Fairview and the Much Birch School. The Locality Steward explained that in order to instigate any changes the Parish Council

would need to make a formal request for the Traffic Regulation Order, as in force, to be revisited and potentially amended. There were ongoing issues for the resident of Fairview when receiving deliveries at his property. It was explained that there had been some consultation meetings held, including one at the school where the head teacher did not attend but the Chair of the Parish Council, Cllr Cook, had met with a Police Inspector and Andrew Lee-Jones (Officer in charge, since retired) at the school. There was comment from a previous governor at the school that there may be records available to help rework the Regulation Order and it was believed that issues surrounding buses “jamming up” traffic around the school had been previously documented. It was agreed that before contacting Graham Hornsby, of Herefordshire Council, formally to re-open the discussion on the Traffic Regulation Order the School should be contacted once more to ask if they wish to contribute any information or background to the situation. The Clerk would write to the Head teacher to invite the school to send in any information as they may wish to do.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1 The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th Oct 2014 Community Account	£10417.38
@ 13 th Oct 2014 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

6.2 The following payments were approved:

Clerk’s salary	£328.50
Expenses (mileage £22.05, ink £10.00, stationery £2.00)	£34.05
Room hire	£52.50

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment

6.3 Parish Precept for 2015/2016 – Report from Finance Working Party

The Finance Working Party had met to discuss the budget and precept requirement. There was a potential for there to be election costs in May 2015 when the entire parish council was facing re-election. There were also considerations for potential salary increases for the Clerk and other possible increases, for example in insurance and subscription charges. Overall, and in reflection of the amount of funding currently held in reserve, it was proposed that the precept be increased from £6390.00 to £6500.00 for 2015/2016. There would be a new funding arrangement for the lengthsman service from April 2015 and a base grant based on the number of kilometres of “C” and “U” class roads in the parish (£752.00) would be payable in the first instance. Further to this amount the Parish Council would have the opportunity to commit an amount which would then be match funded again by the Herefordshire Council. It was resolved that an amount of £752.00 would be allocated by the Parish Council and this would attract a further £752.00 making the overall total lengthsman fund £2256.00 for Much Birch for 2015/2016. The lengthsman invoicing would move to quarterly reimbursement claim frequency, from twice yearly, to assist cash flow. At this point the Locality Steward explained how often roads should be examined but that given funding issues the responses were largely reactionary or acted on only when reported as a problem requiring attention. It was agreed that a full survey and mapping of the roads in the parish and logging of issues should be undertaken at some point, possibly by the lengthsman and areas such as blocked drains and ditches could then be targeted as funds etc. allow. It was also stated that pot hole filling would not be match funded.

A question was asked regarding the latest valuations obtained on the two parcels of parish land owned by the Parish Council, these being at Rosebank and Barrack Hill. The last valuations obtained were £60,000.00 and £15,000.00 respectively.

It was unanimously resolved to apply for a precept of £6500.00 and the precept form was completed with the request for £6500.00 and then signed by the Chair. This form would be returned to the Finance Officer, at Herefordshire Council, by the Clerk.

7.0 School Parking and related issues update

This item was covered under item 5.0 Clerk's actions.

8.0 Planning Matters

8.1) To consider planning applications as detailed in the information sheet

The applications listed were discussed and commented as follows:

SITE: Tan-y-coed, Little Birch, Hereford

DESCRIPTION: Proposed erection of a detached house, with alterations to existing access to serve both properties and erection of new shared garages.

APPLICANT: Mr & Mrs A Crum

APPLICATION NO: P143169/F

GRID REF: OS 350361, 232206

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

The Ward Councillor read out an anonymous objection to the application which contained the views of 15 residents. Amongst other issues concern was expressed about the Hill becoming a "street". Following all considerations the Parish Council did comment as follows:

"The Parish Council has no objections to raise in regards to this application".

Planning Application P143248/F Land to the rear of Wingfield Lodge

There was also a further detailed received for an application at Wingfield Lodge and following consideration the Parish Council determined that there was no objection to the application.

There was an update regarding Court Farm and the application for 18 houses. This was going to Planning Committee on the 19th November. The Ward Councillor would speak about the crossroads and subsiding road. There were allegedly no problems with the highway as far as the Committee were concerned.

8.2) To discuss possible use of 106 monies as may be available from planning applications
A request for information, and questions on this topic, has been sent to the Parish Liaison Officer by the Chair, a reply to this had not been received as at the date of the meeting. 106 monies are payable on developments of over 5 houses and the developer will hand the monies over to the Planning Authority for use. This money may be allocated in certain ways, it will be important to provide a wish list in advance and to make sure that a tangible shopping list is attached to requests for the 106 money so that it can be utilised by the local community.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

9.1) Balfour Beatty:-

The cone at the Thorn. Junction of Ticklewithy Pitch with Cress Cottage, gully full of silt at junction of Wrigglebrook Lane U71606

Junction to A49 opposite the church, problem with fields on one side, mud on road, eroded verge and previously cut ditch had caused an issue. There has been an ongoing issue with this field over the years and a pipe is needed to drain the water down the field and away to the brook. There is shared responsibility in dealing with drainage under the Land Drainage Act and the principles of this have been incorporated into a leaflet to assist landowners with understanding their responsibilities and a there is a policy for Balfour Beatty to engage with local landowners under due diligence.

Roads recommended for attention under the tarmac initiative: U71603 and the U71606, these are the roads past the Much Birch Surgery plus Wrigglebrook Lane from the area previously resurfaced to Pages Pitch.

- 9.2) Lengthsman: - To look at ditches and report back if blocked. To clear if possible. The Locality Steward kindly agreed to arrange new suitable maps showing all items.
- 9.3) Footpaths: - No issues to report
- 9.4) To consider the use of Tump Lane past the pinch point and at the top including possible chicane.

There was a discussion over the road past the pinch point. The Locality Steward explained that there is no minimum width to a road but new roads are constructed to a width of 5.5 to 5.6 metres.

Following the explanation of the road widths it was explained that there is a licence held to plant daffodils on the A49 past the Hollybush Lane turning and on both sides of Tump Lane. The licence could be extended to cover the island at the top of the road if a group of people could be found to take care of it. There was also discussion about grassy verge, stone wall and nettles. This would require work to get it into order before anything further could be done. There may be scope for a community project or even funding for a safer route to school from 106 monies. Speed indicator devices (SIDs) were also mooted as was a crossing. Cllr James would look into the possibility of forming a group to look at possible projects for improving the Lane and would report back.

- 9.5) To discuss removal of play equipment from site in Tump Lane and possible follow up. Herefordshire Housing had moved the play equipment. This was probably because it required maintenance. No-one appears to have informed anyone as to what was happening. More children than ever before are using the play area. It was resolved that the Clerk would write to Herefordshire Housing to ask what was happening, when the play equipment might be returned and to please keep the Parish Council informed.

10.0 Parish Plan- to consider review of 2004 Parish Plan

The Ward Councillor is now on board with this idea too. A starting point of an area map poster will be the model for an "ideal village". There will be the opportunity for others to join in with the review and take it forward. It will be important to identify and take care of vulnerable people in the community and a "good neighbour" scheme would be looked into plus liaising with local care agency provision.

11.0 Correspondence

11.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and also there had been further correspondence from the "Oil Club" with fliers inviting people to join up and potentially save money when purchasing their heating fuel oil. There was a publication called Clerks & Councils Direct with updated information on strategies concerning traveller sites and information about the Core Strategy having gone away for consideration by the Inspectorate. There had also been further communication from the Much Birch Charities about the Poores Acre. It was acknowledged that there did appear to be some historical evidence to support the fact that the Parish Council had been involved in previous decision making. Of the options proposed, Option C was the preferred choice of the Trustees and this stated "To consider the possibility of selling part of the Poores Acre as 1 or more building plots for houses and possibly a strip to give access to Bigglestone Farm."

There was a discussion around likely costs for pre-planning advice and concern over the likely cost of this in relation to monies held plus the tenancy agreement between the tenant and the Charity which did not appear to have been formalised. The Parish Council requested that the Clerk formalise a written request to the Trustees to ascertain the legal position concerning the length of any tenancy agreement before considering any option as may be proposed.

12.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

- 12.1) Clerk to supply a précis for the next edition of the newsletter.

The précis to contain further information regarding keeping ditches clear, opportunities for getting involved in the Parish Plan Review and letting residents know that the Self Help Gritting Scheme was again ready for action this winter.

Mention was made at this point regarding bonfire nuisance. Guidelines would be re-circulated. Advice was to keep a record and make a complaint to the Local Authority if deemed appropriate.

13.0 Self Help Winter Gritting Scheme

Cllr Turner had corresponded with Little Birch and the good news was that the Scheme is fully stocked with grit and is ready to run again this winter by kind co-operation of those involved.

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

All usual updates and items and including update re play equipment from Tump Lane

15.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 4th December 2014 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

Due to the confidential nature of the business of this agenda item, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (3) it is proposed to put forward a motion to exclude members of the public during discussion of this agenda item

Members of the public duly left the Hall.

16.0 To discuss the Clerk's Incremental Progression following successful attainment of the CiLCA Qualification (Certificate in Local Council Administration) on 20/10/14

Following discussion, it was resolved that the Clerk be awarded an incremental point on the Pay Scale from 20/10/14 in recognition of her success in obtaining the CiLCA Qualification.

The meeting closed at 9.26pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date