

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 3rd November 2016

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Andy Crum
Cllr Steve Turner (Vice Chair)
Cllr David Baldwin

In attendance:

Parish Clerk: Alison Wright, Locality Steward: Dave Atkinson, Lengthsman: Paul Wright,
Ward Cllr: David Harlow and 2 members of the public

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies received from Cllr Tim Jones.

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There were declarations recorded for Cllr Turner in Planning Application Number 162955. This would be discussed later in the meeting.

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting

4.1) The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 6th October 2016 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting. There was an amendment made to the fact that Cllr Turner was not present, as shown at the top. His apologies had been recorded in the minutes. Cllr David Baldwin was also added to the attendees. A revised set of Minutes would be sent to the Web Master, once amended.

4.0 Reports

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

The Bulletins with updates had been received and circulated.

4.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Harlow had sent his report as detailed here (sic):

Much Birch Parish Council

Ward member report, November 2016

Herefordshire Council votes to maintain libraries

The Cabinet recently voted to maintain libraries across the county; within a tough financial climate Herefordshire Council has bucked the national trend and has agreed to continue with its library network across the county. The opening hours will be maintained and investment is planned to bring them up to date. This decision is in addition to the investment being made by Herefordshire Council in Hereford Library and the establishment of a new library in Ledbury part of the award winning Masters House development. I know that several residents of the parish were concerned about the future of the libraries and hope that their worst fears have been allayed.

Farmer banned for life from keeping sheep

William Edward Hyde 62 of The Furlongs Farm Little Hereford was banned from keeping sheep for life, ordered to pay £1000 in costs, and £5000 in a compensation order, after pleading guilty to several animal welfare offences at Hereford Magistrates court last week.

This case came about after Trading Standards Animal Welfare Officers from Herefordshire Council accompanied by vets from the Animal Plant Health Agency (DEFRA) visited The Furlongs in

February this year. During this visit a number of ewes and lambs were found without water, along with a ewe with a prolapse that had not received treatment. The officers also found a dead calf along with a large amount of dead sheep. Some of the dead sheep were left where they had fallen while others had been put into piles.

Subsequent visits revealed no improvements and further welfare issues were found including a sheep that was so ill and thin that the vet was shocked that it was still alive, three sheep were found suffering and 2 pigs without water. Therefore officers made the decision to seize 218 sheep due to the likelihood of further suffering. Fourteen of the sheep had to be put down because they were unable to travel.

Of the 12 offences, 4 related to unnecessary suffering, 4 related to failing to provide a suitable environment, 2 were in relation to the disposal and storage of the dead animals, 1 was for failing to keep veterinary medicine records and 1 for failing to record cattle movements.

Mr Hyde has to stop keeping sheep by 15th December 2016. This case reflects a tougher line against animal cruelty by Herefordshire Council.

Car parks in Hereford & Ross

Integral UK Ltd, on behalf of Herefordshire Council will be undertaking a programme of maintenance work in some of the county's car parks from 7-11 November.

The maintenance programme will require some short term and partial closures of car parks across the county so that white lining renewal and improvements can be undertaken. Full details can be found on herefordshire.gov.uk

Fastershire

We want to bring faster broadband to more homes and businesses in Herefordshire.

Herefordshire and Gloucestershire have been allocated funding from Central Government, matched by both authorities, with the aim of everyone in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire to be able to access the broadband services they need by the end of 2018.

Phase one of the rollout aims to deliver around 90% fibre coverage across Gloucestershire and Herefordshire by the end of 2016. Additionally, every home and business in the eligible area will have access to the government's Universal Service Commitment of a minimum of 2Mbps.

How are we doing - phase 1

96,516 faster homes and businesses enabled

702 Kilometres of fibre 'laid'

99 exchange areas made 'live'

447 cabinets made 'live'

As we gain a clearer picture of what has been achieved under the current contract and with new funding opportunities becoming available, we can continue to plan for the future. With new providers entering the market as potential suppliers and with funding opportunities we can plan further how we will reach those homes and businesses which have not yet experienced an uplift in speed. The next stages of the Fastershire project will focus on areas that have not been reached and will enable us to reflect changes in technology and procure new solutions that are more suited to deploying fibre in rural and hard to reach areas. Wormelow exchange covering most of Much Birch has been enabled as has most of area 11 with 101 cabinets enabled in this area. I would like to hear from residents of Much Birch parish who can't access faster broadband. Learn more, register for fastershire and keep up to date visit <http://www.fastershire.com/>

The Ward Councillor updated the meeting regarding the bids that Herefordshire Council had put forward for funding for, amongst other items, the University. The funding amount available for bids had been considerably reduced from the original amounts put forward.

4.3) Locality Steward Dave Atkinson the Locality Steward was present. Bulletins had been circulated. The Locality Steward updated the meeting regarding the hedge in Tump Lane which was now in the hands of the Grounds Maintenance Team for cutting in the next two weeks. There was only one Grounds Crew operating across the whole county now so delays were possible. The drain at the "hammerhead" in Tump Lane had been inspected and "looked fine."

Another drain in Tump Lane had suffered old utility damage and a camera would be required to inspect it pending use of a jetter and/or repair.

The kerbstone by the Church was on the list of repairs and potholes previously reported had been filled. Some of the hedges requiring attention had been trimmed back, however the one on the Duchy property would be chased up.

The drain by the "white house" in Wormelow had grass growing out of it and this was also the case with the drain outside number 39 Tump Lane. The drain by the bus stop near to the school was on the list to be done.

Also noted was the drain on Barrack Hill on the left hand bend before the Little Birch Road, by the Chalice, this was full of mud.

On the Little Birch Road there was a driveway with the wall coming over from the road, this had been fitted with brass nails, (indicator pegs), and was being monitored for movement. The property resident was responsible for the wall.

The public footpath from the school up to the Thorn (past the 30 mph sign) has no dropped kerb to facilitate wheelchair or push chair use.

Outside the School the manhole cover has come adrift.

There was a new pothole on the A49 in the newly surfaced portion near the 50mph sign. There were also potholes on the road up from the A49 and going towards Kingsthorpe.

Also highlighted was the end of the Callow Road, at the junction of the A49, where the road surface had broken up significantly and the road markings have all but disappeared.

The Locality Steward made note of all of these items.

5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted and included information regarding the BT Kiosk survey and Broad Band perception survey which had been circulated to invite responses.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th Sept 2016 HSBC Community Account	£9,638.60
@ 13 th Sept 2016 HSBC Community Projects Account	£12,941.75

6.2) The following payments were approved:

Clerks salary (Oct)	£298.40
The Post Office Ltd (Tax)	£10.00
Expenses (mileage £24.30)	£24.30

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

6.3) To consider recommendations of the Finance Working Party - in regard to the budget and to precept setting for 2017/2018 year.

The Finance Working Party had met and discussed the budget for 2017 to 2018, plus the precept requirement. Following analysis of all budget considerations and, given the carry forward balance, it was the recommendation of the Working Party that there would be no increase in the precept for the year ahead and that it would remain at £6750.00. There would be consideration given to the deployment of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and the existing bases would be used. The Parish Clerk had challenged some invoices for SIDs from 2014 which were not for the parish of Much Birch. It was agreed that the Birches Newsletter would receive £700 at the next time of requesting a donation, for the current year plus the year ahead. Extra hours for the Lengthsman/Contractors would be met from reserves for the following year. The Parish Council agreed to meet the requirement to qualify for grant funding for both the Lengthsman and Footpath Schemes for 2017 to 2018. The parish Council unanimously accepted the recommendations made by the Working Party. The relevant submission requests would be completed and sent, to the relevant departments, by the Clerk.

7.0 School Parking and Village issues update

7.1) To receive related correspondence and any updates concerning position of TRO's.

No further update, at present.

7.2) To consider any feedback regarding the Wormelow Phone Kiosk

Following enquiries made by Cllr Turner and work by Miss Rigby, it was announced that the Millennium Green Trust would be purchasing the phone kiosk and there would not be any involvement with it, going forward, from the Parish Council. Thanks were recorded to Cllr Turner for his work in finding out the information on this.

7.3) To consider Parish Land update

The Chair had visited the tenant at the location of "Rosebank" and seen that the lawns were mown, and that there were fruit trees etc. on the parish land parcel. Some cutting back would possibly be desirable but overall there did not appear to be a problem there.

The other piece of land did appear to be in the use of someone other than the tenant. When the tenancy was due to be renewed the tenant may be offered the opportunity to relinquish the agreement with the Parish Council. If this were to happen, then the tenancy would then be advertised.

8.0 Planning Matters

8.1) To consider any planning applications as circulated.

There had been one new application for consideration:

Cllr Turner, who had declared an interest, left the room at 20.22 for the duration of the discussion on planning application number 162955.

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: 162955 – Rifle Club adjacent to the Village Hall, Kingsthorpe, Herefordshire, HR2 8AL

DESCRIPTION: Proposed demolition of redundant former village hall and rifle range to facilitate erection of three detached dwellings

APPLICANT(S): Mr C J Jones

GRID REF: OS 349838, 231790

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

The comment to be submitted by the Parish Council was to be as follows:

"Much Birch Parish Council has considered the application and would comment that there are no objections to the application but there is just the concern regarding the advancement of property building into agricultural land, which may be green field. The PC would like to see containment of development on this stretch at the level proposed and no further extension of development beyond this."

Cllr Turner rejoined the meeting at this point.

There was also the consideration of approval of reserved matters for the following:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: 163203 - Land adjacent to Village Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch, Herefordshire

DESCRIPTION: Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval planning reference 152991.

APPLICANT(S): Mr & Mrs John Dillon

GRID REF: OS 350612, 232452

APPLICATION TYPE: Approval of Reserved Matters

It was resolved that Much Birch PC did not have any comment to make on this application.

8.2) To receive any update on Planning Application 130945, Land at Tump Lane Communications were in progress regarding the updated report from the Highways Officer. The items could not readily be accessed and clarification was sought on how the revisions might affect changes to parking, within the actual development. The plans did not appear to be anywhere accessible in the public domain where the public can view and interpret them. The Clerk was asked to contact the case officer, Mr Prior, and to copy in the Head of Planning plus the Ward Councillor. This was to be done with a view to finding out where the material considerations may be found. It was not believed that the plans could go forward for a decision by committee until people had been able to consider the revised documents.

8.3) To discuss and decide on policy of engagement with developers, prior to possible planning application submission

It was resolved that the stance taken by the Parish Council previously would remain, in that discussion would take place when a planning application was actually presented for consideration.

9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

9.1) To note any defects to be reported to Balfour Beatty

Details were in hand with the Locality Steward, as noted before under item 4.3.

9.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman

As advised and included clearing the overgrowth from the path going past the school and up the road towards the Thorn. Consideration would be given to the safety report on the Horse Chestnut Tree at Conker Corner. The tree could be left alone, removed or reduced to prolong the life but this could increase the rotting area. There was not felt to be an immediate risk but the tree had been found to be diseased and was rotting from the inside. Balfour Beatty and the Highways Agency would be made aware of the concern regarding the condition of the tree.

9.3) To receive Report from Footpath Officer

Not present.

10.0 Neighbourhood Plan- update

Cllr Burge provided the following update from the Steering Group Meeting:

Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Plan Inaugural Meeting of Steering Group 27 October 2016, 7.30pm at Much Birch Village Hall

Agenda (based on Herefordshire Council Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 28 "Setting up a Steering Group)

1. Introduction and exchange of information about interests, experiences, skills of those who were willing to volunteer their services for the Steering Group

The need throughout the ND planning process to consult with and encourage contributions from a broad/diverse range of local residents was noted.

2. Election of Chairman and Formal establishment of Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Planning Steering Group.

Chairman: David Goldsmith

Budget plan: Chris Grover

Parish Council members: Steve Turner, Roisin Burge

Steering group members: Shirley Coates, Geoff Nichol (three prospective members sent apologies so this information will be updated.)

Members of the Steering group Steering Group confirmed acceptance of the need to abide by the principles and practice of the Parish Council code of Conduct including declarations of interest

3. Terms of Reference for Steering Group.

A draft (based on a model provided by Herefordshire Council) was discussed and subsequently agreed by the group. A copy to be passed the Parish Council

4. Service Level Agreement: Detail and responsibilities.

The main areas of responsibility as set out in templates 'Draft Project Plan and Budget sheets', were discussed and the need for clarification about whether the SLA had been signed on behalf of the PC. RB to make contact with Karla Johnson (MB designated support Officer) and arrange for Karla to attend next meeting of steering group

5. Next Steps. Developing a Vision and Objectives

It was agreed that as a starting point the group would undertake basic research to gain up to date information and statistical data/evidence upon to build a picture of Much Birch Parish today.

Information about the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 as it applies to Much Birch and Housing development needs would be sought from the Support Officer.

Members of the group were encouraged to read the ND Plans of areas that have had a successful outcome including Weston under Penyard.

This would inform initial ideas for development of a draft vision and objectives for further community consultation.

Date of Next meeting Thursday 1 December 2016 7.30pm

References: Herefordshire Council web site under Neighbourhood Planning Guidance.

Guidance note 28 "Setting up a Steering Group" (Appendix 1 includes model terms of reference)

The next meeting of the Steering Group would be held on the 1st December from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall. Clerk to arrange hall booking.

11.0 Self-Help Gritting Scheme

There was nothing to report this time. Scheme is ready to go.

12.0 Correspondence

12.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included a new edition of Councils and Clerks Direct.

13.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

13.1) Clerk to send a précis to the Newsletter.

13.2) To consider acceptance of Much Birch "Face book" Policy Document, as circulated The Parish Council unanimously resolved to adopt the policy for use of the Parish Council Face book Page.

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

All the usual items would be included plus Planning Application 130945 for Tump Lane.

15.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting was confirmed as Thursday 8th December 2016 from 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.17pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date