

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 8th October 2015

Present:

Cllr. Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr. Ben Roberts
Cllr. Steve Turner (Vice-Chair)

In attendance:

Parish Clerk: Alison Wright, the Locality Steward: Dave Atkinson, the Ward Cllr David Harlow, Ward Cllr and Cabinet Member: Paul Rone and 5 members of the public

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Open Session commenced. There being no matters raised, the Open Session closed again at 7.31pm.

1.0 **Apologies for Absence and co-option of councillor(s) plus signing of forms**

There were apologies received from Cllrs Crum and Jones. There were no further co-options made.

2.0 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations made.

3.0 **Minutes of previous meetings and matters arising**

3.1) The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on the 3rd September 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**

There had been no further update received.

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

"Road safety

On 21.09.15 I invited the Cabinet member for roads & transport issues, Paul Rone, to the ward. We walked from the middle of Tump Lane to the school and then up to the section of national speed limit road. Paul was able to see the various transport issues for himself especially the parking issues outside the school (it was 'going home time').

We agreed that the issues should probably be split into two schemes – firstly Tump Lane and secondly King's Thorn, please see Paul's comments in italic bold:

Tump Lane - If the parish council would like to put forward their request for a solution which could include a speed limit and engineered vehicle width limitations, I will support the application going forward.

King's Thorn - The length of road from Kingsthorpe to the A49 junction adjacent Much Birch School should be considered as a whole, with a constant speed limit, a review of the double yellow lines and even look for an opportunity to have off road parking for the School.

I will, as discussed, liaise with Graham Hornsby who deals with the TROs at BBLP regarding the lines outside of Mr Paddens house Fairview and try and remedy what is seen by everyone as a mistake.

Actions – Paul Rone suggested that the clerk and Chair speak with Dave Atkinson on the best way to move these projects on as swiftly as possible. The PC will also need to request a solution to the Tump Lane issue (HCC would then send out a surveyor to propose a scheme.)

Public meeting

We looked at some dates for a public meeting on the future spending needs survey but were unable to find a date before the deadline. The Parish council have advertised the survey as best they can.

Planning

The full council is meeting on 16.10.15 to discuss and vote on the core strategy. The likelihood is that this will be adopted which makes it even more important for parishes to have a neighbourhood plan. It may be worth considering joining forces with another parish such as Little Birch. I have shared an existing final stage plan with Cllr Turner.

Business

The leader of HCC has asked me to take on a role in the business department specifically to encourage business development in the county. If anyone has any thoughts on business or economic activity in Herefordshire then I'd love to hear from you.

David.harlow@herefordshire.gov.uk"

Both Ward Cllr David Harlow and Cabinet Member Paul Rone were present at the Parish Council Meeting. There was a discussion over the traffic regulation orders and their position in the order in which they would be assessed for prospective implementation. The traffic regulation orders currently in waiting for Tump Lane were the proposed weight restriction to 17.5 tonnes in position 18 of 113 pending orders and this would likely not be looked at until 2017. The speed limit reduction from 40 to 30 mph was number 63/113 and not likely to be reviewed until during 2020.

It was explained by Cllr Rone that implementing a TRO involves a considerable amount of consultation and there is a lot involved with carrying them through. Statutory consultees have to be consulted, assessments made and likely consequences addressed. The question was asked as to whether the two orders would be done at the same time, so as to avoid duplication of work, and the answer to this was that they would not as that would mean that the second request for the speed limit reduction would be actioned out of order. The issue outside Fairview would have to go through the process again to be corrected because what had been requested had been implemented. With the benefit of hindsight this was clearly not what had been intended but Cllr Rone explained that actual enforcement visits were infrequent and that there was not likely to be a problem with parking penalty imposition outside Fairview. He did say, however, that if a parking charge were to be placed then it would need to be paid.

Questions were asked about the e mail in July 2015 which had said that the Fairview lines would be resolved in a "six month" time frame. This information had been conveyed to the resident of Fairview, in good faith, and now this was not, seemingly, going to be the case. It was agreed by Cllr Rone that he and Cllr Harlow would pay a visit to the resident of Fairview to explain the situation fully concerning the lines outside his property.

A question was asked as to whether the orders can be reprioritised and the answer was "no" as this may cause disappointment elsewhere, when the items others were waiting for were moved to accommodate this.

Cllr Rone also commented that more responsibility was being delegated to Parish Councils, that councillors were to be "cherished" and that he had in fact received letters

both for and against items such as regular grass cutting meaning that there are two sides to most situations.

Cllr Rone did explain also that he was trying to utilise funding to increase the number of people administering the orders as the council's reputation was being damaged because they were being seen as "inept at getting things done".

Cllr Rone left the Meeting at 8.00pm.

The discussion continued with comments about "mayhem outside the school", "nasty" situations, issues and meetings at the school. There was a revisiting of the discussion about the nunnery car park. There had previously been a suggestion of the possibility of using part of the grounds for parking spaces for parents etc. Ward Cllr Harlow would speak to the new head at the school, and the Rev Mark Johnson, with a view to discussing the possibility of revisiting the suggestion.

Ward Cllr Harlow left the meeting at 8.15pm.

5.3) Locality Steward Dave Atkinson reported that there were frustrations over the traffic regulation orders. The only person who could potentially alter the priority order was the Member for Highways, Cllr Rone. He suggested that the dialogue should be "kept going". The Locality Steward had been trying to get the overgrown hedge in Tump Lane cut. He had approached Herefordshire Housing but they had come back to say that it was not their responsibility. Efforts were ongoing to get the hedge cut back. There was a discussion of the requirement for a full inventory of assets to be compiled so that it would be easier to establish ownership and consequent responsibility for a required action. This was a work in progress.

It had been, again, relatively quiet and, although late, the mowing contract was now sorted out and the mowing had taken place. The two damaged grit bins, as brought to the attention of Balfour Beatty by the Chair, would be replaced by Balfour Beatty. There was a question regarding a blue barrel open topped improvised bin at the top of Hollybush Lane. A request was made to the Locality Steward for this to be replaced with a bona fide bin and for it to be moved closer to the A49.

A parishioner who was present enquired of the availability of some verge markers for Barrack Hill. Four were required. The Locality Steward would arrange for these to be sited.

The Locality Steward left at 8.25pm.

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

No Tump Lane Toppers update. This item would be removed from the Agenda, unless requested for an update.

6.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items

The updates were noted including matters relating to actions taken regarding the hedge in Tump Lane, the traffic regulation orders, the Highways Agency, the actions for the lengthsman and obtaining an update on the Tump Lane play equipment situation.

7.0 Financial Report

7.1) The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13 th Sept 2015 Community Account	£9266.37
@ 13 th Sept 2015 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

7.2) The following payments were approved:

Clerks salary	£357.90
Expenses (mileage £15.30, home office £50.00)	£65.30

Skyfire Consulting Ltd (web maintenance)	£30.00
Lengthsman (Mr M Dyer)	£252.00

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

7.3) To consider and adopt new Communications Policy

This item would be considered at the next meeting.

7.4) To consider possible assistance with Public Liability Insurance for the Millennium Green

This was discussed and it was resolved that Miss Rigby should be asked to supply details of the accounts and this would then be considered, once these had been made available. The Finance Policy would include the requirement to see accounts when donations were requested.

8.0 School Parking and related issues update

8.1) To receive related correspondence and any updates.

Update discussed under the Ward Cllr item, No.5

8.2) To consider the traffic regulation order (TRO) outside the Much Birch School

Update discussed under the Ward Cllr item, No.5

8.3) To consider Speed Indicator Device (SID) options and or speed survey at the Thorn

These would only be used for calming and not data collection. This item would be placed on the next Agenda.

9.0 Planning Matters

9.1) To consider any planning applications as circulated.

There had been no further applications received.

10.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

Ongoing reports, as discussed with Locality Steward previously

10.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman

Works, as previously put forward, had been completed. Further ditching and grip works were planned.

10.3) To receive Report from Footpath Officer

There were no further updates and the Footpath Officer was not present.

11.0 Neighbourhood Plan- to re-consider undertaking

To consider undertaking Neighbourhood Plan and revisit Parish Plan 2004

The Ward Cllr had sent a copy of the Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Draft Neighbourhood Plan to Cllr Turner. He explained about the document and said that a planning officer had enquired as to whether Much Birch was undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan. It was clear that “buy-in” to the process, by the wider parish, would be required. There was a description of the categorisation of the settlement areas. The Plan, when completed, would assist with the determination of areas of “settlement”, style of houses etc. The Core Strategy, Local Development Plan, was not referring to “villages or parishes” but “settlements”.

12.0 Self-help winter gritting scheme

Mike Morley, the Chair of Little Birch Parish Council, who was present at the meeting, confirmed that the stocks of grit were held in readiness.

13.0 Correspondence

13.1) Items were noted as per the information and correspondence sheet and included a request for financial support from Age UK. The Parish Council confirmed their policy to support only local charities. Donation to national appeals would be personal ones only. There was also information about a planning seminar to be held at the HALC Office all day on Saturday 10th October.

14.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website

14.1) Clerk to supply a précis for the next edition of the newsletter. To include enquiry for Neighbourhood Plan volunteers to be repeated plus seasonal advice for bonfire parties and firework safety.

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

All the usual items plus Much Birch Community Hall request for donation and setting the precept demand for 2016/2017. Also, item to confirm Cllr Roberts as a new member of the Finance Working Committee.

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

Next meeting – Thursday 5th November 2015 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date