

## MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 4th September 2014

#### **Present:**

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

#### **In attendance:**

Parish Clerk, Alison Wright, Balfour Beatty Locality Steward, Dave Atkinson, and 7 members of the public

#### **Open Session:-**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new Locality Steward from Balfour Beatty, Mr Dave Atkinson. Firstly, the meeting heard that the Larkrise Planning Application had come up again and that the drain was still blocked outside number 36 Tump Lane. Dave then gave an overview of his experience, having moved over from Monmouthshire Authority with 39 years of experience on the highways, and with 16 years experience as a Parish Councillor, nine of these as Chair. He lives in Garway and services the area encompassing wards such as Llangarron and Pontrillas. The object of the role is to introduce an interface for people to talk to about the issues they are experiencing. The role of the Steward is to then break down the problems and try to progress the issues to satisfactory outcomes. Balfour Beatty have professed to have a will to make make locality working work and they have a 10 year contract to deliver the works on behalf of the Herefordshire Council. Dave explained that he is available day and evening and with 16 parishes to look after, he will try to attend as many evening Parish Council Meetings as possible. He is hoping to get groups together to forecast issues like cleaning drains and to work smarter to make the money that is available bring as much benefit to communities as possible. The Meeting heard that there is residual sand in the gateway of the property Cartref in Tump Lane that requires cleaning up. Dave explained the benefit of the "Parish Walk" when issues can be identified, such as overgrown hedges etc. There would be a wish to collect information at a local level and a three stage approach would be taken to deal with overgrown hedges. Balfour Beatty were working in collaboration with the NFU to produce a leaflet to advise landowners of their responsibilities in regard to ditches, run offs etc. He explained about other drainage problems and about leaflets to explain about damage to main sewers caused by fats, oils and grease being poured down the drains. It was the objective of the Locality Steward to follow a program of visits to all roads in the patch on a guide rota of main A and B roads, monthly, C principle routes every 3 months and Unclassified roads on an annual basis. Key Performance Indicators are maintained but ultimately the "buck stops" with Paul Rone, the council member in charge of roads at present.

The meeting heard that the surgery pothole has been repaired more thoroughly than previously and is holding up at present. There is an income stream set aside for pothole repairs and resurfacing works. The filling is subject to a hierarchy basis and those deemed most serious are filled quickest. There are grants available from the Government for specific issues, the Bellwin Fund for flooding issues for example. There has also been an additional 2.5 million pound fund made available for pothole filling. There is ultimate responsibility for footpaths, lengthsman initiatives and a trial scheme for an enhanced lengthsman service is being trialled and will be reported upon shortly. It may be a good idea to check if Parishes could still join the Parish Paths Partnership (P3) Footpath initiative. The question would be asked as to whether funding was still available. The Locality Steward was designated as both co-ordinator and communicator for

the service. A question was asked regarding traffic surveys in Tump Lane, as three had been carried out but no results published re the initial monitoring in regard to an initiative commenced, under a previous Ward Councillor, to facilitate proposed HGV weight restrictions and speed limit reductions on Tump Lane. Clerk would ask Dave for these outcomes.

A Thank you was conveyed to Dave for attending the meeting and for his briefing.

The Chair updated the Meeting in regard to the Village Shop. Enquiries had revealed that the land had been sold to a developer, by private treaty, and it was unlikely to reopen as a Village Shop.

#### **1.0 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr S Turner

#### **2.0 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

- 3.1 The Minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2014 were signed as a true and correct record of the meeting. The Minutes of the Emergency Planning Meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> August 2014 were also signed as a true and correct record.

#### **4.0 Reports**

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

PCSO Kevin Powell was not present.

**Ward Councillor** Cllr Norris gave his report and said that he had requested that prayers be removed from the main Herefordshire Council agendas. This had now been done so that those who wanted to attend for the meeting only could come in after the prayers were finished. There had been some correspondence circulated, following the two shootings in Bosbury, and Cllr Norris had distanced himself from the reply sent to one letter contributor by the Leader of the Council. He expressed some concern over recent revelations on child abuse in the country and stated that we are in "loco parentis" for and on behalf of children in our care. He asked the question as to how do we know that things like those documented "are not happening here?" The Ward Councillor said that Much Birch would be a likely target area for the housing developers and that there was the requirement to identify a five year land supply. There was currently no appropriate infrastructure to support large scale development and there were issues with areas such as hospital provision. He also spoke about the Community Infrastructure Levy or CIL payments. Finally he spoke about the ongoing mission to try to reclaim verges from traffic as road sides are eroded and roads subsume the verges.

#### **5.0 Clerk's Update on Action Items**

The updates were noted including resolution of the hedge past the School and Monastery, the surgery pothole had been filled more substantially than before and works had been carried out by the Lengthsman, including the cleaning of the algae from the bus stop near to the school. The Clerk would reiterate outstanding issues with Balfour Beatty to Dave Atkinson, Locality Steward.

#### **6.0 Financial Report**

##### **6.1 The following bank balances were noted:**

@ 13 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2014 Community Account	£8771.73
@ 13 <sup>th</sup> Aug 2014 HSBC Community Projects Account	£14,408.00

<b>6.2</b>	<b>The following payments were approved:</b>	
	Clerk's salary	£320.45
	Expenses (mileage £47.70)	£47.70
	Tax due on salary	£80.00
	ICO Registration Renewal	£35.00

To discuss possible contribution of £25.00 towards Cilca fee for re-sit modules for the Clerk, this was discussed and approved.

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment

#### **6.4 To discuss possible sale of Parish Land at Barrack Hill**

The issue of the Parish Land, existing tenancy agreement and land valuation fee was discussed. It was resolved that the Clerk would contact Humfrys and Symonds Solicitors to seek legal opinion on the existing tenancy agreements. This course of action was proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Norris.

#### **7.0 School Parking and related issues update**

Lines issue ongoing and provision of Zebra Crossing not progressed. This item to be removed from the agenda and any updates presented under Clerk's action items.

#### **8.0 Planning Matters**

There were no new planning applications to consider.

There was however an appeal being heard against the decision by Herefordshire Council to refuse Planning Permission for Sanctuary Housing. The Parish Council did not object to the application but did seek conditions should permission be granted. The question was discussed as to whether additional material should be submitted to the appeal. It was resolved that the original three minute presentation should be circulated and reworked for submission to the Inspector.

It was noted that the Wingfield Lodge application had been withdrawn.

#### **9.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths**

##### 9.1) Balfour Beatty: -

- Ditch at the top of the Thorn (down to the road cone) ditch covered over and overgrown/blocked
- Fly tipping in Tump Lane (reported)
- Hedge at bottom of the Thorn overgrown
- Thorn down to A49 right hand side (Duchy Land) hedge needs cutting

##### 9.2) The Lengthsman: -

- Lower end of Wrigglebrook Lane, hedge and grass verge nettles, strim up to the A49 at the top, hedgerow and verges coming out onto the road

##### 9.3) Footpaths: - No issues to report

#### **10.0 Parish Plan- to consider review of 2004 Parish Plan**

No update this time.

#### **11.0 Correspondence**

These were noted as per sheet and included thank you letters for the donations to the parish clock maintenance and the churchyard upkeep. There was a request for funding support from Dore Community Transport and a councillor asked for "take up" information for the area to be provided. There had been a letter from the owner of the hedge who had kindly responded to the request to cut it back. There had been information about the proposal for a firework event from

Wormelow Cricket Club, information from Herefordshire Council that paper planning packs would cease and all would be electronic from November onwards. Clerk to ask Sylvia Jones about possible screen and projection facilities at the Community Hall. There had been a further traffic census and outcomes would be requested from Dave as in the Open Session report. It was also reported that The Golden Valley Carers had ceased trading on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August.

**12.0 Parishes' Newsletter and Much Birch Website**

12.1 Clerk to supply précis for the next edition of the newsletter. The précis would include details of the "Oil Club" as advised to the Parish Council, the object of which was to co-ordinate fuel oil deliveries. The Chair would draft a piece for the newsletter concerning Individual Electoral Registration. It was noted that the Locality Steward is a point of contact for the Parish Council and that parishioners should contact with any issues requiring attention through the Parish Council, as before.

**13.0 Planning Policy for Travellers Sites**

The Clerk had circulated papers, including a 95 page brochure, concerned with a consultation being held by Herefordshire Council, until 2<sup>nd</sup> October, in regard to looking at a land supply to accommodate travellers and showmen as they progress around the county. Each Council is required to consider and consult on providing a land supply for 5 years and beyond. Much Birch Parish discussed the paper and it was noted that no recommendations would be made, at that time, as no land was at their disposal for the purpose.

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

Budget setting, Parish Land update, it was noted that the second precept tranche had been paid ten days earlier than anticipated.

**15.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Ordinary Meeting**

Next meeting – Thursday 2nd October 2014 at 7.30pm in The Much Birch Community Hall

*The meeting closed at 9.30pm*

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date