

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 3rd April 2025 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Michael Agyeman
Cllr Steve Turner
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright and Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan plus Reverend Mark from Much Birch Church

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Reverend Mark explained that the Church was seeking to undertake a project in relation to the war memorial clock, as housed on and in the church tower at Much Birch. The aim was to revamp the clock and to check on the stability of the wooden beams supporting the mechanism which were over 100 hundred years old. The wish was to alter the mechanism to reinstall the bell ringing and hour chimes. There was a hope that the refurbishment could tie in with the marking of the 80th anniversary of VE day. A company had sent an engineer to look at the clock and would be providing a quotation for the works. There would also be a second quote obtained. The Reverend Mark explained that the hope was to fund raise and obtain possible grants to facilitate the carrying out of the works. He asked if the parish council would be in support of the project, and if they would possibly provide a donation towards the project once it was up and running. A formal agenda item in regard to this would be on the next agenda. The clock face of the Much Birch clock did not require refurbishment, just the mechanism. The Reverend Mark advised that there were two war graves in the Much Birch Churchyard. The project would publicise the fundraising via newsletters, social media and via fundraising and sponsorship.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr David Irwin

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held at the Much Birch Community Hall on the 6th March 2025, were approved as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

4.0 Reports

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

Golden Valley Briefing – Newsletter circulated when received.

4.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was in attendance at the meeting. The Ward Cllr advised that she would be sending through county news ahead of the meetings. She updated regarding some local planning and advised that the Helen's Wood planning application was being referred to the Planning Committee for a decision due to public interest. The Ward Cllr

would raise the question as to why the parish council did not appear to have received an invitation to speak at the committee meeting.

There were some concerns about the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Ward Cllr advised that the Much Birch NDP was covered until 2026. There was to be a new Local Area Plan, currently under construction, and this would work alongside any new NDP for the parish. The Footpath Officers were advising that none of the Public Rights of Way deliverables had been forthcoming. Progress was being made with an induction program underway and support coming. New grants would be available from June 2025 and the old grant system had been extended until June 2025. There would be revenue available to support the reopening of paths and possibly small equipment availability.

The next Parish Summit would take place on April 8th at Plough Lane. The Agenda had been circulated.

The Ward Cllr left the meeting after her report.

4.3) Locality Steward

The Monthly Update had been received and also street works updates from Balfour Beatty.

5.0) Update on Correspondence and Parish Land

5.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet

Correspondence from Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

Parish Summit Information for April 8th

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13 th March 2025 HSBC Community Account	£11943.33
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6.2) To approve list of payments (circulated separately)

The following payments were approved:

Payments to be made from bank account

Clerk paid in accordance with contract for April 2025

HM Revenue & Customs (tax April)	£112.20
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Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment - unanimous

Internal audit 2025 - 2026

Cllr Cook would contact Mrs Wathen to see if she would be able to undertake the internal audit for 2024 – 2025.

7.0 Planning Matters

7.1) To consider any planning applications or appeals, as may be advised

There were no new applications or appeals for consideration of comments. The Larkrise application was going ahead.

7.4) To consider the Neighbourhood Development Plan and planning changes re any action required

This would remain as a standing agenda item while planning changes were evolving. Details of the position were outlined during the Ward Cllr's Report at item 4.2)

The previous chair of the NDP Working Party would be approached to see if he would be able to join a new NDP Working Party.

The Chair would contact Herefordshire Council to ask about prospective housing targets for the parish area.

Cllrs Burge, Pickering Grey and Turner would liaise regarding the new NDP Working Party.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

Further progressive erosion of Hollybush Lane had led to the road being less than a single carriageway in width in places, with extensive breakdown of the road edge. This would be reported as a matter of urgency given large vehicular use of the lane etc.

8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and direct/determine actions

New funding would be available for 2025 – 2026. The Chair would e mail Cllr Irwin regarding the position. Enviroability would undertake some tasks.

8.3) Parish Drainage Matters – to receive any updates and make decisions on action

Terry Griffiths Lengthsman Services would be retained and the Clerk and Cllr Pickering Grey would meet with Terry to discuss his forecast works quotation and any elements that were thought to require clarification.

8.4) Footpath Officer – to receive any update or action points and funding /activities

Mr David Irwin, the Footpath Officer can be contacted on **07766 135068** or by e mail at MBfootpaths@btinternet.com

The Footpath Officer, Cllr Irwin, had sent his report and his apologies for absence for the April Meeting. A defect on path MB4 was noted from the report.

9.0 Parishes Newsletter and Much Birch Website

9.1) To consider items suitable for inclusion in the newsletter and on the website plus X (formerly known as Twitter).

The Clerk would send a précis to the Newsletter. This would include a summary of the responses to planning items.

10.0 Matters to be raised on the Agenda etc. for the next meeting

All the usual items would be included. Also parish council support for the parish memorial clock refurbishment project, as outlined by the Reverend Mark.

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meetings of the Parish Council, the Annual Parish and the Annual Statutory, would be held on Friday 9th May 2025, from 7.30pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.36 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date