

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 7th December 2023 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Michael Agyeman
Cllr Andy Crum
Cllr Joseph Goldsmith

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright and Footpath Officer; David Irwin

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

No matters were raised during the Open Session

The Open session closed at 7.31 pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr Chris Pickering Grey and Ward Cllr Toni Fagan.

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 9th November 2023, 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.

Locality Steward

James Howells the Locality Steward had sent his bulletins. Also Members Monthly Update received and Street works updates received from Balfour Beatty.

Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan had sent her apologies and report.

4.2) To receive any further update in regard to parish land/assets

Cllr Crum had been advised by the tenant of the parish land parcel adjacent to “Ashgrove”, Barrack Hill that he wished to surrender the tenancy. Cllr Crum would take an appropriate letter to the tenant for signature. The Clerk would draft the letter and circulate for approval.

5.0) Update on Correspondence

5.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet

Correspondence from Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

5.2) To update following working party meeting on a parish council trustee for the Much Birch Poor Acre Charity

Cllr Goldsmith advised that there had not been a further update to the situation. He had offered consultant support with the upgrading of the Charity documents. Cllr Goldsmith would follow up on this with the Rev. Mark.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13th November 2023 HSBC Community Account £17806.75

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 December	
HM Revenue & Customs (tax)	£77.60
G P Sims Builder (parish land fence – Rosebank)	£552.00
Little Birch Village Hall (newsletter donation)	£350.00
Herefordshire Council (election recharge 2023)	£151.63

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment: Unanimous.

6.3) To determine the budget/precept request for 2024 - 2025

The budget and precept were discussed. Given all considerations and current reserves it was resolved that the precept request for 2024 – 2025 would remain at £6750.00. This request would be communicated to the Herefordshire Council Finance Department by the Clerk.

7.0 Planning Matters

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

There were four new applications for consideration of comments:

Planning Consultation - 232938 – Wenallt, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 8AL – New access to main road from driveway. Proposed first floor to bungalow. New rear raised decking area.

The parish council considered the application 232938 and resolved to comment:

"The Much Birch Parish Council has discussed the application 232938 for Wenallt and whilst having no objections wish to record that the application appears to contain an inaccuracy concerning hedge removal as the application states that none is required when some hedge removal is necessary to form the new access point. There are also some concerns over the height of the proposed structure in terms of potential overshadowing of neighbouring properties. Policy MB10 of the Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Plan refers in regard to potential conflict in the height of the building within the landscape."

Planning Consultation - 233376 - Land at Highbury, Parish Lane, Little Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8AT - Proposed 3 bed dwelling house

The parish council considered the application 233376 and resolved to comment:

"The Much Birch Parish Council has discussed the application 233376 for land at Highbury and would comment that, whilst there are no objections to the proposal they would like to express disappointment that the planning agent would appear to have referenced the Neighbourhood Development Plan for "Little Birch" as opposed to the correct NDP of "Much Birch". This may have

a consequence as to the credibility/relevance of resultant comments by the agent? The Much Birch Parish Council would further comment that there are concerns about the drainage plans for the proposal and that they would wish to defer to the professional judgement of the relevant council department to determine the suitability of the proposed solution for foul water drainage at the site."

Planning Consultation - 233331 - Land at Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Herefordshire - Proposed variation of condition 2 of planning permission 232316
Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval of 200884 (Proposed site for erection of a single dwelling) - to formalise the adjustments in the scale and layout of the proposed scheme

The parish council considered the application 233331 and resolved to comment: *"No objections"*

Planning Consultation - 233211 - Chamonix, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 8AW - Proposed single storey side extension to provide guest room, en-suite and utility

The parish council considered the application 233211 and resolved to comment: *"No objections"*

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

The height of the hedges, on the left hand side of the road leading from the A49 towards the school, was discussed again. The hedges had been reduced, since the last meeting, but there was still a concern that for high sided vehicles trying to pass safely under the still overhanging canopy.

There was also an overgrown hedge on Barrack Hill which was "destroying" the ditch and pushing vehicles out into the road. The hedge was below "Hillview."

8.2) To discuss recruitment of a new Lengthsman

The vacancy for a new Lengthsman had been advertised. A prospective applicant would be followed up.

8.3) Footpath Officer – to receive any update or action points

Mr David Irwin, the Footpath Officer can be contacted on 01981 345109 or by e mail at MBfootpaths@btinternet.com

The Footpath Officer was in attendance at the meeting. His report of footpath matters had been circulated to the parish councillors.

Path MB30 Little Birch Road to Wrigglebrook Lane – Balfour Beatty had put in a fingerpost and repaired the gate. The path was now accessible.

Path MB19 at Helen's Wood – awaiting attention by tree surgeons

Path MB24 Church to the fruit farm on the main road - a diversion of the path was under investigation, the path could not go "either way", as had been previously intimated by the Enforcement Officer.

Path MB17 – a broken hinged gate – new one being arranged

8.4) To receive any update on speeding in Tump Lane/Community Speed Watch (CSW)

The Chair reported that there had still not been any further update on the vetting process nor on the training. It was agreed that the Chair would send an e mail to the department concerned to express concern that the scheme was just not progressing.

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 entry that had been missing from a previous month had now been published. 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 for the next meeting

All the usual items would be included. Also the Lengthsman vacancy update, parish land, community speed watch and the Poor Acre plus any planning applications, as notified

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 11th January 2024 from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall.

Future Meetings for 2024: Feb 8th, March 7th, April 4th, May 9th, June 6th, July 4th, No meeting in August, Sept 5th, Oct 3rd, Nov 7th and Dec 5th

The Chair wished everyone a very Happy Christmas.

Due to the confidential nature of the business of these agenda items, 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 the following agenda item (12 only)

12.0 To discuss implementation of 1/04/23 pay award (back dated) and increment from 1/04/23 in line with HALC and NJC correspondence

The members of the public, and the Clerk, left the room for the discussion of item 12. The parish council resolved that the NJC Pay Award should be implemented together with an incremental uplift, with effect from 1/04/23, and the arrears backdated.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date