

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 11th January 2024 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey
Cllr Andy Crum
Cllr Joseph Goldsmith

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright, Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan and Footpath Officer; David Irwin

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished those present a happy new year.

The Footpath Officer asked a question regarding about a previous planning application for the Kingsthorpe Memorial Hall, two bungalows, which was advised to have now “lapsed.”

The Chair gave some information about the management changes at the Much Birch Surgery. Taurus Health Care would be taking over the management and the staff would be transferred across to work for Taurus. There would be a period during which the surgery would not be dispensing items from the premises.

The Open session closed at 7.35 pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr Michael Agyeman.

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 7th December 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 a report. The Ward Cllr explained that the Herefordshire Council Budget for Revenue and Capital expenditure was at Scrutiny Committee. It was advised that any vacant posts at Herefordshire Council were being “eliminated”. Early retirement was being offered to a number of staff. The job losses were putting pressure on services. Balfour Beatty had seen a big reduction in budget allocation. They would need to make efficiency savings. There would be a meeting focussed on Balfour Beatty the week following the parish council meeting. Adult social care was described as “hugely expensive” and costs were

“rocketing”. The social care departments were also subject to staffing issues. The Children’s Social Care Budget had doubled in the past four years. Agency staffing was being used to fill the posts. Eleanor Brazil, who had been advising on the Children’s Care improvement program had advised that Herefordshire Council would be retaining control of the service, but there was a “concise list of things needing to be done.” The Ward Cllr advised that diverting funding to roads and the Shire Hall could prove to be a “money pit.” A National Highways representative was working at Plough Lane one day a week. The Ward Cllr was setting up a meeting with the person. A new Footpaths (Public Rights of Way) Co-ordinator had been appointed. The Ward Cllr advised that she had been contacted regarding damage occurring to property walls in Hollybush Lane. The Ward Cllr was keeping a log of incidents regarding the situation.

The Ward Cllr left the meeting at 7.45 pm.

4.2) Consideration of correspondence concerning parish land

There followed a recap on previous activities. The letter regarding relinquishing the parish land adjacent to “Valley View” had been signed by the outgoing tenant. A letter from the tenant of the parish land adjacent to “Rosebank” would be considered at the February Parish Council Meeting. The Clerk would write to the tenant and advise regarding this.

5.0) Update on Correspondence

5.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet

Correspondence from Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

There were moves in the edition dated 18 December 2023 to try to boost online readership of the Bulletins. Links to publications would be on the website.

There had been information about a broadband scheme. The contact was Cllr Coles from Little Birch Parish Council. The Much Birch Parish Council would not be actively involved in this but would circulate the information and people could sign up direct if they wished to do so.

5.2) To update 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. The Parish Council would react when contacted.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) **The following bank balance was noted:**

@ 13 th December 2023 HSBC Community Account	£16748.46
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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 January HM Revenue & Customs (tax)	£148.60
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Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment: Unanimous.

6.3) To consider request for support from Dore Community Transport

The Parish Council discussed the request and noted that 184 journeys had been made on behalf of the parish during 2023. The council resolved to make a donation of £500.00 towards their work. The Clerk would request advertising information.

7.0 Planning Matters

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

There were no new applications for consideration of comments.

The Park Hall, Wormelow application for the fifteen log cabins had been given permission. There had been a number of objections. There were 34 conditions pertaining.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

No new reports.

8.2) To discuss recruitment of a new Lengthsman

The vacancy for a new Lengthsman was being advertised.

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. The paths were advised to be muddy and very wet.

Path MB19 at Helen’s Wood – was still awaiting attention by tree surgeons

Path MB24 from Much Birch Parish Church through Court Farm to the B4348- a diversion of the path was under a notice pending possible action.

Parish Walk scheduled for Sunday 28th January, meeting at the Much Birch Community Hall at 1.45 pm.

Eight Footpath Officers were meeting up bi-monthly to discuss all things relating to footpaths.

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

The Chair had written to the Police Commissioner about the lack of progression within the scheme. A liaison person had replied and they had apologised for the delay. The local PCSO was the contact point. Forms had been submitted for vetting. Training was now pending and the Chair would follow up on this.

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). Clerk would send a précis to the Newsletter. This would include a summary of the responses to planning items, as applicable.

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 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 8th February 2024 from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall.

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

The meeting closed at 8.34 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date