

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 8th January 2026 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr David Irwin
Cllr Michael Agyeman
Cllr Steve Turner
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright and Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan and PCSO; Carol Marsh from West Mercia Police

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no residents present at the parish council meeting. There were no items raised during the Open Session.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr Roisin Burge.

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 4th December 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. The priority charter form had been completed and submitted. PCSO Carol Marsh was in attendance at the meeting. She updated regarding local crime trends. There had been some issues with cold calling – “the Nottingham Knockers”. Advice was given regarding not engaging with cold callers, keeping doors locked and possibly displaying a “no cold callers” sign. PCSO Marsh would supply appropriate leaflets. Police contact details had been circulated. Issues of parking at the school had been raised and passed onto the appropriate officers. Ongoing speed checks were in progress in locations such as Tump Lane. The bus shelter at the junction of the A49 had been sprayed with graffiti. This would need to be cleaned off. PCSO may be able to help identify if the graffiti was a known “tag”.

PCSO Marsh left the meeting at 7.49 pm.

4.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was present at the meeting. The Ward Cllr updated the meeting regarding issues about the scheduling of the 33 bus timetable and lack of availability.

Details about the wish list of parish roads for resurfacing should be sent to the Ward Cllr who would have them added to the list being compiled by Ed Bradford of the Highways Department. The Government had advised Herefordshire Council on their three year term funding allocation settlement. Budget setting was in progress. The allocation was falling far short of the forecast council running costs. Savings of £19.5 million would need to be made and there was a further

£10 million deficit on top of this. There would be a 4.99% uplift on the council tax demands to residents for the next three years.

The Ward Cllr left the meeting at 7.52 pm.

4.3) Locality Steward

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

5.0) Update on Correspondence and Neighbourhood Development Plan

5.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet and to consider looking at an update regarding the Much Birch Poor Acre Charity.

Correspondence from Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

Much Birch Poor Acre Charity

It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Reverend Mark, Trustee of the Poor Acre, to ask about a personal update, or possible written report, on the Much Birch Poor Acre Charity position.

5.2) To receive any update on matters relating to the Neighbourhood Development Plan and also:

5.2.1) To affirm the draft changes made to the Much Birch NDP

5.2.2) To confirm the ongoing assessment/review of the Much Birch NDP content

Cllr Burge had sent her apologies. The items on the NDP were postponed for inclusion at the February 2026 Meeting. Cllr Cook would advise on numbers of houses completed and running totals as and when required.

5.3) Parish Assets (land and property) to review parish assets as at January 2026

The parish assets review item was deferred to the February Parish Council Meeting.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13th December 2025 HSBC Community Account £12920.90

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 2026

HM Revenue & Customs (tax) £118.80

HM Revenue & Customs (Employers National Insurance due) £66.28

D Irwin (reimburse notice board header for footpaths) £28.57

EnviroAbility (Public Rights of Way Works) £474.00

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment - unanimous

Much Birch Website update

It was noted that the current website host was giving notice of termination of the service in the summer of 2026. The web master was looking at quotes. Several prices had been obtained. The details would be sent to Cllr Agyeman for review and further website providers would be contacted to enquire about quotes for the website provision.

7.0 Planning Matters

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

There was one new application for consideration of comments:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: Planning Consultation - 253502 - The Wriggle, Ladywell Lane, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 8AW

APPLICATION TYPE: Full Householder

DESCRIPTION: Demolition of garage and side extension to bungalow.

GRID REFERENCE: OS 350080, 231893

The parish council resolved that there were no objections to the proposals in 253502, but a comment would be made concerning a recent permission for a building plot, next to the site, that did not appear to be included in the submitted drawing.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

A temporary repair had been carried out to a pothole on Barrack Hill. Cllr Fagan had expressed her disappointment that Balfour Beatty would not clean the graffiti off the bus shelter. Details of the graffiti would be sent to the PCSO.

8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and actions

Work had been carried out on Public Rights of Way by EnviroAbility. There were some further works coming up for PROW in September and annual path clearances taking place around the end of March.

8.3) 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 he updated the meeting about the contents. There was not much happening with enforcement issues on the footpaths. These were being pursued by the FPO. The footpath IT Group had met again and the map had been improved upon. The cost of improving the maps was being looked into and the QR codes were in progress to provide additional information. There was to be a further LAF (Local Access Forum) Meeting coming up in the next few weeks.

8.4) Parish Drainage – to receive any correspondence and determine any actions re grant

The parish council resolved to enquire of the Lengthsman as to his availability to carry out some of the identified drainage grant works from the prepared list in relation to the lower third of Barrack Hill plus into Wrigglebrook Lane in respect of clearing gullies and grips and associated drains around the locale. The Chair would confirm the exact specification for the works in line with the original grant submission and available funding of £2200.00.

8.5) Water Quality Monitoring – to receive any update

This would be updated at the February Meeting.

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. The Chair would do a newsletter update for using grit from the grit bins to ensure that supplies went round adequately when needed.

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

All the usual items would be included, also parish assets review and the Neighbourhood Development Plan with the two additional agenda points, the Poor Acre Charity - for consideration of an update. Cllr Irwin gave his apologies, in advance, for the February Meeting.

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 5th February 2026, from 7.30pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.32 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date