

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 March 2024 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Michael Agyeman
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. There were no actual items raised in the Open Session. The Chair asked the Clerk to record the parish council's thanks to her for attending, although not very well and also sent best wishes to her husband, the previous lengthsman, for a speedy recovery.

The Open session closed at 7.32 pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

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 8th February 2024, 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 was present at the meeting. The Ward Cllr gave an update about advances regarding fibre broadband. There had been a meeting held in Little Birch regarding the aim to get as many people to sign up to the scheme as possible. It was felt that it would be a good idea to arrange for another meeting, this time in Much Birch to help promote the idea, future proof the broadband provision and get the area moved onto full fibre. The objective would be to get the broadband service upgraded so that everyone could receive a good service. The Ward Cllr would issue a press release to publicise the information, check that representatives were available and Much Birch Parish Council would seek to hold a further information meeting in the Community Hall. The Hall availability would be checked and the meeting arranged for later on in March. People just needed to see what it could mean for them with a simple explanation of what was on offer.

The Ward Cllr advised that information regarding Neighbourhood Development Plans had been circulated. The plans were to be valid for a further five years. Consultation dates were being published for the Local Area Plan Consultation.

The Ward Cllr advised about home upgrade grants that were available for property insulation etc. and also about grants for festivals and events.

Information about planning enforcement regarding the planning, wetlands and phosphates issues may be found on the Herefordshire Council website.

The Ward Cllr advised that there were no longer any “asylum seekers at the Three Counties Hotel”.

4.2) Consideration of forward action concerning parish land, as recently surrendered at Barrack Hill

Some of the councillors had been to have a look at the land parcel. There was a potential for someone to clear the patch, flail the hedges and remove the trees. The prospective person would be asked for a proposal. There would need to be a note made about any prospective bonfires. A timescale, with expectations and any potential cost to the parish council, would need to be ascertained. A new gate would likely be required. Replacement of this would be at the parish council’s expense.

5.0) Update on Correspondence

5.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet

Correspondence from Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

Rural Parishes Consultation – any attendees to book in for this.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13 th February 2024 HSBC Community Account	£14361.99
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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 March

HM Revenue & Customs (tax)	£84.80
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Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment: Unanimous.

6.3) To consider request for support from The Millennium Green Trust (via Rosemary Rigby MBE)

The Parish Council discussed the request for support with the annual insurance and the relevant due diligence under the parish councils Donations Policy. It was resolved that the Chair would draft a letter to the Trust representative outlining the fact of the public funds element and website considerations. The letter would be agreed before being sent by the Clerk.

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 parish council had been advised of a committee referral in respect of the following application, 240148, but had declined to take up the offer of a speaking slot at the meeting.

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: Planning Consultation - 240148 - The Pilgrim Hotel, Much Birch, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 8HJ

DESCRIPTION: Proposed replacement of existing rear conservatory and terrace with a larger single storey extension and terrace.

GRID REF: OS 350005, 230835

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning Permission

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

The meeting heard about a recent road closure due to water issues on Barrack Hill. This was advised to fall under the responsibility of Little Birch. It would be helpful if Balfour Beatty could advise parish councils in an affected area if emergency closures were required. The Ward Cllr would take this suggestion forward.

The road from Wrigglebrook Lane to the A49 was advised to be covered in silt and with having numerous potholes.

8.2) To discuss recruitment of a new Lengthsman

A person, possibly interested in the vacancy for a new Lengthsman, would be contacted.

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 path MB19 at Helen's Wood – a fallen tree had been cleared but the path was still technically closed.

Path MB24 from the Much Birch Church to the B4348 was awaiting an Enforcement Officer decision.

The fallen fence, as reported near Court Farm, had been moved to "somewhere safe".

A branch had been cleared on path MB7 between Hollybush Lane and the A49.

The next Bi-Monthly FPO Meeting would be on the 22 March 2024. The FPO would be meeting up with the new Volunteer Development Officer, Steve Organ.

There would be a further parish walk on 24th March 2024, starting at the Community Hall, from 2.00 pm and with tea and cake afterwards, in the Hall, at 4.00 pm.

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

The Chair advised that two sites had been monitored in the week of the meeting, these being Tump Lane and the A466. Five drivers of vehicles had been reported for exceeding the speed limit. Two speed watch sessions were planned for the following week. Car details were recorded and letters would be sent to persons speeding, going forward and based on certain parameters.

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 and also the appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2023 – 2024. Cllr Cook gave her apologies, in advance, for the April Meeting.

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 4th April 2024 from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall.

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

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date