

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 6th March 2025 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Michael Agyeman
Cllr Steve Turner
Cllr David Irwin (also Footpath Officer)

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright and Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan plus a representative from Enviroability and two members of the public

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no further comments during the Open Session.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence received from Cllr Chris Pickering Grey

2.0 Declarations of Interest

There was one declaration of interest made. This was in relation to an invoice for a new notice board and for reimbursement for this to Cllr Irwin.

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting

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

There was a discussion between the parish council and the representative from Enviroability who were happy to provide support lengthsman services in respect of activities such as sign and bus stop cleaning, possible stile replacement and clearance works. There would be a 4 to 6 week lead time for works. Flexible working was advised. There were a core team of two people and an additional eight supported workers who could assist. The certificates of insurance had been supplied. The representative advised that the Enviroability Team were working with other councils too. The representative left the meeting at 7.42 pm.

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 about the resurfacing works being carried out at Laskett Lane. The top end was being done where there were some big holes. Barrack Hill was also being attended to. There would be diversions in place while the works were being carried out.

The Herefordshire Council budget setting had identified a potential overspend and revisions were being made to action plans to reduce costs. A housing delivery organisation would be incorporated within the council itself. The Local Plan was going back to the beginning and it was noted that the county “cannot accommodate” the proposed 70% increase in housing construction. A full council meeting would be taking place on 7th March 2025. There was a proposal to reopen the minor injuries unit at Ross on Wye.

The challenge of inheritance tax changes for farmers was mentioned and the fact that this had “hit rural communities very badly” was stated.

There was an update on the Castle Pub which may involve a change of use going forward. Details about this had been discussed at the recent Little Birch Parish Council Meeting.

The Ward Cllr advised that she had stood back from the planning consultation 232807 for Larkrise due to a declaration of interest. She would not be involved and another councillor would cover any role in the planning process on her behalf.

The future of the play area in Tump Lane was very much dependent on the planning application for Larkrise. A new Chief Executive Officer for Connexus was reprioritising things. The Ward Cllr was still pushing for the play area.

Littering was noted. The National Highways were responsible for keeping the A roads clear and a more proactive approach to clearing litter generally was needed.

The Ward Cllr left the meeting at 7.50 pm.

4.3) Locality Steward

The parish council had been advised about the new Locality Steward, Craig Sandman. 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 February 2025 HSBC Community Account	£12325.91
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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 2025

HM Revenue & Customs (tax March)	£89.80
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D. Irwin (Notice Board)	£193.99
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Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment - unanimous

7.0 Planning Matters

To consider any planning applications and appeals as may be advised

There were new and revised applications for consideration of comments:

7.1) Planning Consultation - 250312 – Land at Eden House, Eden Lane, Barrack Hill, Little Birch, Herefordshire

The parish council had no objections to the proposals in 250312. They were in support of the application.

7.2) Planning Re-consultation - 243018 - Land at Helenswood Farm, Kingsthorpe, Herefordshire, HR2 8AL

The parish council resolved that, in spite of the alterations that had been made to the application, they still objected to the proposals in application 243018 and would reiterate the objection, and reasons, to the planning authority.

7.3) Planning Re-consultation – 232807 – Field adjacent to Tump Lane

The parish council resolved to make no additional comments on application 232807. There may be an opportunity for public speaking on offer at the planning committee meeting. This would be advised.

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. A working party would be regrouping to tackle the review program.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

Defects were being reported weekly. The issue of the missing 30 mph speed repeater signs on Barrack Hill had still not been resolved, although raised by the previous Locality Steward in May 2024. This would be chased up.

8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and to consider drainage issues/feedback from parish visit (as applicable)

The parish tour had taken place and a summary of prospective drainage related works had been received by the parish council. There were some matters for clarification and these would be sent to the lengthsman to respond. Barrack Hill had a number of drains that required clearing out. The Thorn area had likewise. There were also considerations of works close to Cress Cottage. There was a lot of mud on the highway between the A49 and Cress Cottage that required clearing.

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**](mailto:MBfootpaths@btinternet.com)

The Footpath Officer, Cllr Irwin, had sent his report. The new footpath information notice board was up and the map was in. Further details would be added. The FPO was co-ordinating stile and step works through the Public Rights of Way Team. There were still issues with responses and deliverables from the PROW Team Administration.

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.

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

All the usual items would be included. Agenda would include a separate drainage item.

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 3rd April 2025, from 7.30pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall. Cllr Irwin gave his apologies in advance for the April Meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date