

## MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026 from 7.30 pm

#### **Present:**

Cllr Chris Pickering Grey (in the Chair)  
Cllr Roisin Burge  
Cllr Michael Agyeman  
Cllr Steve Turner  
Cllr David Irwin

#### **In attendance:**

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright and the Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan

#### **Open Session:-**

Cllr Pickering-Grey (in 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 Alison Cook

#### **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 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 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.

**4.2) Ward Councillor** Ward Cllr Toni Fagan was present at the meeting. She had noted that the Much Birch Parish Council had adopted the Herefordshire Charter for Councils. There was an opportunity to consider the “child friendly” initiative and reflect on young people’s views. There were some comments about the confusion that had arisen over attendance at the March 2026 virtual parish summit via a link. The Clerk would send the e mails to the Ward Cllr. Hopefully things would go smoother the next time around. The Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council would be leaving the county council soon and so would the Section 151 Officer. These posts would be undergoing recruitment. The Ward Cllr advised that Lee Fishwick was back as the Locality Steward for the area. The Ward Cllr would be checking regarding the resurfacing timetable for Tump Lane and also what was happening with Parish Lane. Pothole reporting was ongoing and potholes should continue to be reported. The Ward Cllr made the comment about lengthsmen being enabled to fill potholes? “Local areas could respond to local issues.” The Ward Cllr had been undertaking litter picking. Some of the picking exercises had uncovered issues for drivers and sanitation. Could toilet facilities/cubicles be supplied and improved? The Clerk would put the Ward Cllr in contact with a knowledgeable force in connection with all things away from home facilities and hygiene related matters.

The Ward Cllr left the meeting at 7.57 pm.

#### **4.3) Locality Steward**

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

Cllr Agyeman left the meeting at 8.00 pm

#### **5.0) Update on Correspondence and Neighbourhood Development Plan**

##### **5.1) To receive any correspondence – Information Sheet**

##### **Correspondence from Herefordshire Council**

Talk Community bulletins

NALC – IT Policy and data protection changes

##### **5.2) To receive any update on matters relating to the Neighbourhood Development Plan**

There was no update regarding numbers of properties from the Herefordshire Council to date. Policies under review: **MB7** – Housing development and **MB9** – Meeting Housing Needs. Comparisons were evident between earnings and property prices. The key planning issues, with the relevant policies being referred to, would form a “ready reckoner” for reviewing planning applications in the future iteration of the NDP. This table was being worked on.

##### **5.3) Parish Assets (land and property) to update regarding review of parish land**

One land parcel had been visited. The other would be visited as soon as all parties were available. Update reports would be tabled once both visits had taken place.

#### **6.0 Financial Report**

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

@ 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2026 HSBC Community Account	£11095.11
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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 2026

HM Revenue & Customs (tax) £95.20

Little Birch Village Hall (Newsletter contribution) £350.00

Dore Community Transport Donation £500.00

**Resolved:** that the payments were passed for payment - unanimous

The Dore Community Transport had approached the parish council for support with their work in providing community transport. The parish council resolved to make a donation of £500.00 to support their work for the community.

##### **6.3) To consider adoption of MBPC IT Policy and review AGAR assertion 10**

The parish council resolved to adopt the MBPC IT Policy as circulated. The AGAR assertion 10 would form part of the website review.

#### **7.0 Planning Matters**

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

There were no new applications for consideration of comments.

The Clerk would send the parish council details of a proposed paper that may impact on the ability of local councils to have a say in planning policy going forward.

**8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths**

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

Road U71606 was described as being in a “diabolical and dangerous state2 due to potholes and surface breaking up.

Road U71603 Thorn – Cllr Burge to provide details of location for reporting large pothole

**8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and actions**

Some works were booked in for end of March. Drainage works commissioned.

**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. There were some steps that required replacing on path MB22. This was a substantial job, requiring road closure, and was on the list for PROW Team action. Three further bridges on paths MB16A, MB5 and MB4 were awaiting assessment. “Enviroability” were booked in for works on 30<sup>th</sup> March. The FPO advised that he was undertaking strimming and hedge trimming courses. One could hire or borrow kit, or use own kit if wished.

The FPO meeting had outgrown a front room setting and a hall would be sought going forward, due to the increase in numbers attending.

There would be a Dawn Chorus Parish Walk on 5 April 26 with breakfast at Merrivale Farm.

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

The Clerk was chasing up the booked work activity on drainage.

**8.5) Water Quality Monitoring – to receive any update**

Cllr Turner advised that a representative from the Monitoring Team would be visiting to make an assessment. Cllr Turner would arrange a visit and the survey would then take place. The process could then start, if the site was deemed suitable.

**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.

9.2) Consideration of website, website hosting etc. going forward – if applicable

This would be discussed at the April 2026 meeting

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

All the usual items would be included, also parish assets/land review report and water quality monitoring, plus Much Birch website update

**11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting**

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026, from 7.30pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall.

***The meeting closed at 8.55 pm***

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date