

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish and Annual Statutory Council Meetings of Much Birch Parish Council held consecutively at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 11th May 2023 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (re-elected as Chair)
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Joseph Goldsmith (elected as Vice Chair)
Cllr Andy Crum

In attendance:

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

Annual Parish Meeting and Public Question Time:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no members of the public at the meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting closed at 7.31pm.

1.0 Co-option of councillor

2.0 To elect a Chairman

Cllr Cook was proposed by Cllr Goldsmith and seconded by Cllr Crump. There were no further nominations for the role. Cllr Cook accepted the role of Chair.

3.0 To elect a Vice Chairman

Cllr Goldsmith was proposed by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Burge. There were no further nominations for the role. Cllr Goldsmith accepted the role of Vice Chair.

4.0 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies received from Cllr Chris Pickering Grey.

5.0 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

6.0 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held at the Hall on the 6th April 2023, were approved as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

7.0 Reports

7.1) P.C.S.O. from West Mercia Police

Golden Valley Briefing sent when received.

7.2) Ward Councillor Ward Cllr Toni Fagan said that it was “great to be back” following the May 2023 elections of Ward Council Members for the Herefordshire Council. The Ash Farm application for change of use for heavy machinery had not been sent to committee for a decision in spite of the Ward Cllr’s request, as there were said to be “too few objections” to warrant this. Ward Cllr Fagan was “not happy” about the recommendation for approval and said that the surveys on traffic had been carried out as “non-representative” times. The Ward Cllr said that she would like to see the issues of speed and the footpath resolved for Tump Lane.

There was uncertainty as to who would take control of the newly elected Herefordshire Council, and this was to be determined. No overall majority of seats for any party.

Priorities for the new council would be overseeing improvements to childrens' services keeping within budget. The budget had been balanced without going into reserves. The "net zero" initiative (by 2030) was being pursued. Transformation and investing in council leaders and employees were also priorities. There would be a review of school transport and better communications instigated between systems. The by-pass would be a "major issue" going forward.

7.3) Locality Steward James Howells, the Locality Steward, had sent his bulletins.

8.0 To appoint councillors to the following working groups

Finance Working Group – all

Employment Working Group – convene if required

Self Help Winter Gritting Working Group – convene if required

9.0 Information and Correspondence

9.1) Written report received and contents noted including:

Herefordshire Council:

Talk Community bulletins

Election bulletins and updates – stop press – Toni Fagan had been re-elected as the Birch Ward Councillor

Expenses forms would need to be filled in and returned, even if a nil return. This was most important as was deadline sensitive. Councillors only needed to fill in new Registrable Interest Forms if there were any changes to advise, e.g. change of address.

The Chair had spoken with a trustee of the Much Birch Poor Acre and had been advised that the land had now been sold. There were two trustees currently. The Chair would communicate with the trustees regarding trustee liabilities etc. ahead of any consideration of parish council trustee membership. An existing trustee of the charity may be invited to a future parish council meeting to give an update etc.

9.2) To confirm receipt of "Safety Audit carried out on Tump Lane by WSP consultants as requested by Highways"

The parish council members acknowledged receipt of the "Safety Audit carried out on Tump Lane by WSP consultants as requested by Highways" and commented that they were not in a position to comment on it unless it should form part of a future planning consultation.

10.0 Financial Report

10.1) The following bank balances were noted:

@ 13th April 2023 HSBC Community Account £15,194.69

10.2) To approve list of payments (circulated separately)

The following payments were approved:

Payments to be made from main account

Clerk paid in accordance with contract

HM Revenue & Customs (tax) £96.80

Much Birch Community Hall (hall hire) £60.75

Arthur J Gallagher (PC Insurance) £406.47

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment: Unanimous. It was agreed that the parish council would not renew the HALC subscription for 2023 – 2024. This would be kept under review.

10.3) To adopt new Code of Conduct (circulated separately)

The new Code of Conduct 2023 was adopted by the parish council and a copy would be sent to the Web Master for the website.

11.0 Planning Matters

11.1) To consider any planning applications as received

One new application had been received for comments:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: Planning Consultation - 230992 - Land at Eden House, Eden Lane, Barrack Hill, Little Birch, Herefordshire

DESCRIPTION: Outline planning for a detached self build dwelling and garage

APPLICANT(S): Mr Whitehead

GRID REF: OS 350325, 232341

APPLICATION TYPE: Outline

The Parish Council discussed the application 230992 and resolved to comment about the drainage changes and with reference to comments made about the Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Chair would circulate the comment wording with NDP references.

12.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths including appointment of Footpath Officer

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

Overgrown hedge was on the Kingsthorn Road from the “Thorn” end to the School, not as previously noted by Locality Steward.

Drain on Wrigglebrook Lane U71603, 100 yards from junction of Barrack Hill U71609 surround is disintegrating.

Welsh Water activity noted in the area, water running down road and area fenced off.

12.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman

Strim path by the school plus speed signs at kerb edge (clear)

12.3) To appoint Footpath Officer and to receive any previous report

David Irwin was reappointed to the position of Footpath Officer. He was “happy to continue” in the role. Footpath MB2 in Wrigglebrook Lane had had the obstructing posts removed and there was now good access. Path MB23, the fallen branch had been removed and there was now good access. Path MB24 past the Community Hall down to the B4348 had been moved to the other side of the hedge by a big culvert could not be accessed and had been reported to the PROW Team.

13.0 Community Speed Watch – village speeding initiatives update

The parish council were awaiting further details in regard to possible speeding initiatives. No movement at present.

14.0 Parishes Newsletter and Much Birch Website

To consider items suitable for inclusion in the newsletter and on the website plus Twitter. Clerk would send a précis to the Newsletter with planning update and also vacancy details for a new parish councillor.

15.0 Matters to be raised on the Agenda for the next meeting

All the usual items would be included. Also co-option of councillor, plus passing of the annual accounts for 2022 – 2023

16.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 8th June 2023, from 7.30pm, at the Much Birch Community Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.16pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date