

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 5th October 2023 from 7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)
Cllr Roisin Burge
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey
Cllr Michael Agyeman

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright, Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan and Footpath Officer; David Irwin plus two members of the public

Open Session:-

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A resident present advised that the bottom of Tump Lane required clearing of overgrowth of vegetation to clear the view when turning right out of Tump Lane onto the A466. There was also a comment made that the 30 mph restriction on speed zone could be revised and brought further back. Another resident advised that traffic was still speeding on Tump Lane, drivers did “not appear to be mindful of their surroundings” and “children live there.” The Chair commented that traffic calming measures appeared to be being held back until after the Larkrise footpath/development had been reconciled. It was commented that the “path may have a calming effect?” The area from “Cartref” to the A466 turning needed calming measures too. It was commented that the impact of the path, if installed, would have to be evaluated once in before additional calming would be considered. Speed checks had been carried out in Tump Lane. The Community Speed Watch Team would be looking at the situation too. The resident suggested that maybe signs to say “Please drive carefully through our village” would be a good idea? The merits and demerits of speed indicator devices (SIDS) were discussed. Recent diversions had increased the volume of traffic using the lanes. It was commented that the newly resurfaced A49 junction stretch with improved surfacing had led to “vehicles going faster!” It was noted that the three plots of land near Hollybush Lane had been sold. There were still concerns being expressed about possible future use of the land. Currently it was agricultural.

The Open session closed at 7.45 pm.

1.0 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Andy Crum had sent his apologies. Cllr Joseph Goldsmith was not present.

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 7th September 2023, 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 in attendance at the meeting. The Ward Cllr advised that the reduction in the speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph had seen some progress achieved. A reduction to 20 mph had been put forward in the previous administration at the Herefordshire Council however there was “no appetite for this in the current administration.” The Ward Cllr would keep on pursuing this. The Herefordshire Council Highways Team had extra pothole repairing funds that had to be spent by the end of the financial year. There were “capacity issues” at Balfour Beatty. The issue of a crossing at Wormelow had been raised with the Ward Cllr by a resident. The Ward Cllr advised that she had declared an interest in the Larkrise Planning application which had been put forward. Another Ward Cllr would be standing in for Cllr Fagan and dealing with this instead. This was Cllr Jenny Bartlett. The Parkhall application had been redirected to Planning Committee.

The Ward Cllr advised that the speed zones around schools did not “appear to be viable.” The new administration at Herefordshire Council wanted to review the capital program so money was coming off hubs and being refocused on roads. The Pontrilas rail link would not be supported by the Infrastructure Cabinet Member. Proposals would be going to full cabinet for decisions the following week.

The waste collection service contract – the Government had stalled on a decision regarding changes so a renewal had been done on the current contract. Changes to this were pending.

The Ward Cllr left the meeting after giving her report.

4.2) To receive any from the Assets Working Party re village assets

The Chair had drafted letters for parish council approval and these had been sent from the parish council to both tenants occupying the parish land areas. Contact had been made with one of the tenants and the other tenant would be followed up regarding the request to make contact. The tenant, who had communicated with the parish council, had sought an extension to the deadline to complete some works until the end of October. This was agreed by the parish council.

5.0) Update on Correspondence

5.1) To receive any correspondence – noting the Information Sheet

Correspondence from Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

Lengthsman

The Lengthsman had tendered his resignation from 30 November 2023. There was a formal vote of thanks for his work and this would be confirmed by the clerk. The strimming jobs and the hall notice board refurbishment would be completed before he actually left.

5.2) To update on situation regarding a parish council trustee for the Much Birch Poor Acre Charity

Cllr Goldsmith had indicated that he would be willing to stand as a “non ex officio” trustee as a personal arrangement and not representing the parish council. Cllr Goldsmith had been going to talk with the Reverend, also a trustee. The issues about a Constitution or governance document still required clarification and it was again commented that the objectives of the charity required revisiting now that additional funds were available. The clerk would arrange a meeting of the existing trustees and the parish council members to further the discussion on these matters.

6.0 Financial Report

6.1) The following bank balance was noted:

@ 13th September 2023 HSBC Community Account £15631.14

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 October
HM Revenue & Customs (tax) £77.60

Resolved: that the payments were passed for payment: Unanimous.

6.3) To begin consideration of the precept request for 2024 - 2025

This would be placed on the November 2023 Agenda.

7.0 Planning Matters

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

There were two new applications for consideration of comments:

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: Planning Consultation - 232705 – Bramble Tor, Kingsthorpe, Herefordshire HR2 8AW

DESCRIPTION: Proposed three bedroom dwelling to replace the existing dwelling and associated works including the demolition of the existing dwelling, relocating the site access and landscaping.

GRID REF: OS 350099, 231963

APPLICATION TYPE: Planning permission

The parish council discussed and considered the proposals in application 232705 and resolved to comment that there were concerns in regard to the application in terms of non-observance of some elements of the pre-planning advice. There were also concerns about the overbearing stature of the new dwelling within the street scene and it being incongruous with the environment within the plot.

APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: Planning Consultation - 232741 – Ash Farmhouse, Tump Lane, Much Birch, Herefordshire HR2 8HP

DESCRIPTION: Proposed timber panels between the gates and Cart Shed/corner of the Threshing Barn

GRID REF: OS 350199, 230749

APPLICATION TYPE: Listed building consent

The parish council discussed and considered the proposals in application 232741 and resolved to comment that there were no objections to the application.

The parish council declined to comment on application **230485** for Turvey Cottage, proposed single storey garage/workshop at rear of house.

The planning consultation **232807** – Field adjacent to Tump Lane for the proposed erection of 20 dwellings etc. would be discussed at the 9th November parish council meeting. An extension to the deadline for comments would be accordingly requested.

8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths

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

Resurfacing required at the top of Tump Lane, particularly with heavy vehicle use related to recent planning decisions.

8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman

As previously: Upgrade the community hall notice board (algae and preservative) and to trim round the grit bins, plus clear weeds on the pavement by the school. The Lengthsman had submitted his resignation from the post with effect from 30 November 2023. More details under correspondence item.

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 David.Irwin13@btinternet.com

The Footpath Officer was in attendance at the meeting. The Ward Cllr stated that the parish was “lucky to have such a diligent FPO”. The FPO was meeting up regularly with other FPO’s and seeing how best to resolve issues. The Footpath Officer had updated the parish council regarding action points. Details were supplied regarding action for paths MB19 at Helen’s Wood where a tree branch was down. The public right of way required closure and Hoople PROW Team were dealing with this.

Path MB24 from the church through the farm to the B4348, the path had changed to a different side of the hedge and there was no easy access to the B Road. The PROW Inspector had been advised and changes would be referred to enforcement. It was suggested that PROW items and issues could be publicised on Facebook to raise awareness? Path MB30 at Little Birch Road, non visible finger post situation was in progress with the Inspector. The method of reporting by the FPO was declared “absolutely fine” and “tracked changes” would be employed to indicate changes and highlight uplifts. Maps highlighting walking routes were suggested and there could be a possibility for adverts, “Footpath of the month” etc. It was agreed that the FPO and Cllr Agyeaman would work together on this.

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

The Chair reported that the scheme was still moving forward. The PCSO had been to Much Birch and “vetting” forms had been completed. Training was now pending and the Co-ordinator had set up a “WhatsApp” Group for the team members.

9.0 Parishes Newsletter and Much Birch Website

9.1) To consider items suitable for inclusion in the newsletter and on the website plus Twitter. Clerk would send a précis to the Newsletter. This would include a summary of the responses to planning items and a reminder about being seen in the dark as the nights draw in and mornings are darker.

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

All the usual items would be included. Also further update on parish council trusteeship of the Much Birch Poor Acre Charity, budget/precept and planning applications, as notified

11.0 Confirmation of the date of the next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday 9th November 2023 from 7.30pm in the Much Birch Community Hall.

Future Meetings for 2023: Dec 7th

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date