

## MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Much Birch Parish Council held at the Much Birch Community Hall on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025 from 7.30 pm

#### **Present:**

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair)  
Cllr David Irwin (from 7.38 pm)  
Cllr Michael Agyeman  
Cllr Steve Turner  
Cllr Chris Pickering Grey  
Cllr Roisin Burge

#### **In attendance:**

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright, Ward Cllr; Toni Fagan and five members of the public

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Residents were present at the parish council meeting. There was a discussion about the condition of Parish Lane and a resident outlined the hopes for obtaining some grant assistance with improvements to the lane and the drainage. There had been a site meeting with representation from Little Birch and Much Birch Parish Councils and the Flood risk drainage team. The Chair of Much Birch Parish Council had made her position clear as that of being present as a “representative” only and not as a decision taker. The Ward Cllr was also involved in the drainage discussions and was in touch with the resident who was leading on the initiative to try to improve the position. It was noted that the Much Birch Parish Council were generally supportive of the aim to improve the conditions at Parish Lane, but that they could not commit financially due to not knowing how much was involved.

There was also a brief resume during the Open Session from the architect involved in the revival of a housing development at Court Farm. There would be a proposed mixed tenure of houses, and with various sizes of property included, plus amenity land and additional public parking spaces. The parish council would look at the paperwork, as and when supplied, and also be ready to consider any comments on receipt of the official planning consultation documents.

A further local resident outlined some water main issues and the potential requirement for a new pipe. The Chair asked the resident to also clear his area to help assist with the overall flow in the area.

#### **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 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025, 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 in attendance at the meeting. The Ward Cllr said that she would send her report. The Ward Cllr updated regarding the further £2 million investment being made by the local authority for additional flood risk measures. They would be looking at schemes to try to make a difference around the county. There would need to be a handover of an inventory or asset register regarding the drainage systems. The Ward Cllr advised that the planning officer had noted that the local authority was close to signing the 106 Agreement for the Larkrise Development. This would then go forward for implementation. The Ward Cllr left the meeting at 8.02 pm.

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

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

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

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

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

Talk Community bulletins

##### **Letter regarding the Memorial Clock and Mowing of the Churchyard in Much Birch**

A letter from the Much Birch Parochial Church Council (PCC) had been received concerning the memorial clock and the mowing of the churchyard. Donations to the PCC for the annual service of the clock were on a discretionary and donation only basis and not as the parish council having any responsibility for the clock per se. It would not, therefore, be appropriate for the parish council to be sent the invoice for the annual servicing direct as had been suggested. The parish council would consider any request for support with the clock service, and the mowing, at the appropriate time, following written application by the PCC, and this position would be confirmed to the PCC.

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

Cllr Burge outlined the meetings that had been held in regard to the NDP. The group had met twice over the summer and with access for members of the public. The full Much Birch NDP was on the parish website. A new iteration of the NDP was being worked at with tracked changes highlighting the suggested amendments. Areas for strengthening the position were being looked at and a change list was being collated. The Chair said that she would check on the numbers of houses required planning portal position and pass on the details. Policies MB2 and MB4 were being looked at and changes would be brought to the next parish council meetings for consideration ahead of any ratification.

**5.3) Parish land – update and any actions required** – the old shed was down and the land had been cleared and with the new gate having been installed at the Barrack Hill land parcel. The situation regarding reported brambles, and the overgrown condition of the land, at Rosebank had been discussed with, and was in hand, with the tenant.

#### **6.0 Financial Report**

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

@ 13 <sup>th</sup> August 2025 HSBC Community Account	£12278.70
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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 September 2025

HM Revenue & Customs (tax September) £90.00

EnviroAbility (Lengthsman works and PROW) £2150.70  
Much Birch Community Hall (hall hire) £54.00  
Information Commissioner (ICO) £52.00

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

## **7.0 Planning Matters**

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

There was one late application for which an extension to the deadline for comments would be sought. This was Consultation Number 252458 for 5, Pilgrim Park.

## **8.0 Parish Roads and Footpaths**

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

As previously advised

### **8.2) To put forward work for the Lengthsman and direct/determine actions**

Clearance of the road sign at the bottom of Little Birch Road, footpath up from the school, Cllr Irwin would check on the footpath. The grant application process was still ongoing for the drainage elements. A plan of which ditches were to be cleared had been requested.

### **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 and he updated the meeting about the contents. A lot of work had been completed. Bus shelters had been cleaned, paths cleared, stiles replaced and steps mended. The Footpath Officers Meeting was still ongoing and maps were being put together with QR codes to add further information. A new “Footpath Tab” on the parish website was a further work in progress. There would be a parish walk with a cream tea to follow on the 14<sup>th</sup> September.

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

The position regarding the issues at Parish Lane was discussed in the Open Session. It was noted that those wishing to look at the upgrading of Parish Lane were “struggling to obtain quotes” to undertake the works. The parish council made it clear that they could not commit to any action in advance of any quotation, or knowledge of the costs.

## **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. This would include a summary of the responses to planning items. A separate article reminding about bonfires would be sent after the October PC Meeting.

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

All the usual items would be included, also parish land update and drainage issues. Neighbourhood Development Plan and Precept for 2026 – 2027.

## **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> October 2025, from 7.30pm, in the Much Birch Community Hall.

Due to the confidential nature of the business of these agenda items, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (3) it is proposed to put forward a motion to exclude members of the public during discussion of the following agenda item (12 only)

**12.0 To discuss implementation of 1/04/25 pay award (back dated) and increment from 1/04/25 in line with NJC correspondence**

The Clerk and Public left the meeting for the discussion of Agenda number 12. The parish council resolved that the NJC Pay Award should be implemented, together with an incremental uplift, with effect from 1/04/25, and the arrears backdated.

***The meeting closed at 9.15 pm***

Signed:

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Chairman

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Date