



BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Angela Balcombe

6 Shires Close, Great Notley, Braintree, Essex CM77 7FT

Tel: 01376 550927 E-mail: clerk@birchparishcouncil.gov.uk

www.birchparishcouncil.gov.uk

Minutes of a meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on Tuesday 2 September 2025, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.

Present: *Cllrs: Bowtle, Boyce, Monks, Ninnim & Westby.*

In the Chair: *Cllr Bowtle.*

Clerk: *Angela Balcombe.*

Also present: *3 members of the public and County Cllr Bentley.*

Birch Pit, Maldon Road – Ben Ayres (Land & Minerals Resources Manager) and Alex Hemming (Landscape Manager) from Heidelberg Materials UK gave a report on plans for Birch Quarry and the proposals for the area allocated for mineral extraction in the current Minerals Local Plan.

A site meeting for parish councillors to be arranged prior to holding a public meeting.

25/49. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

25/50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cottrell and Harris.

25/51. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 1 July 2025 were approved as a correct record of events.

Proposed: Cllr Boyce. Seconded: Cllr Ninnim. All agreed.

25/52. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests on any matters covered by this agenda. No interests were declared.

25/53. REPORTS.

Essex County Council (ECC).

Colchester City Council (CCC).

Cllr Bentley updated the Council on Local Government Reform (LGR), a decision on the number of unitary authorities should be available in March 2026, a Mayor will be elected in May 2026.

Cllr Bentley would like to organise a meeting to present the LGR proposals to the Colchester parish councils. Neighbourhood Delivery Committees with a budget and powers to be set up for local decision making. Each parish council will have a place on the Committee with voting rights.

The Government are no longer going ahead with the widening of the A12, which could affect housing proposals in the Local Plan.

Details of the cost for the repair of the Memorial Cross to be sent to Cllr Bentley to apply for funding from the City/County Locality Budgets. Funding for the decoration of the Village Hall to be applied for.

Cllr Bentley was asked about the application for the white village gateways, which is in the system, but he will check progress.

25/54. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

- Is the big stone going to be put back on corner of the green by the War Memorial?
- The Heckford Angel is now up for sale.
- Birch Inspire – it was noted that they were granted another six month extension (until January) to come up with a fully costed business plan.

25/55. PROGRESS CHECK.

No matters raised.

25/56. PLANNING.

Application 251688. Proposed detached garage.

Location: Dunnet, Fountain Lane, Birch CO3 0SR. No objections.

Application No: 251689. Demolition of front and rear single storey extensions and garage and proposed single storey front, side and rear extensions.

Location: Dunnet, Fountain Lane, Birch CO3 0SR. No objections.

25/57. FINANCE.

Payments made / money received:

101991 £126.00 Hare & Hounds (Play Area Funding Refreshments)

101992 £79.20 Clacton Business Services (Payroll)

101993 £621.80 A Balcombe (Salary/Expenses – Ink/Stationery)

101994 £444.00 BAA Groundcare Ltd (Churchyard Grass Cutting)

101995 £440.00 M J Ince (Grass Cutting)

101996 £513.20 A Balcombe (Salary/Expenses)

101997 £880.00 M J Ince (Grass Cutting)

101998 £880.00 M J Ince (Grass Cutting)

25/58. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.

Essex Highways – temporary road closure of Birch Park to commence on 1 September 20:00 – 06:00 for 9 nights for carriageway patching and signing.

CALC – Minutes June 2025 and Agenda 4 September 2025.

Chelmsford Diocese – the Trustees have granted Birch Inspire an additional six months to provide a fully costed Business Plan. This will need to be the final extension given the problems that the derelict building continues to cause. If the conditions of this extension aren't met and a fully costed, viable and robust business plan isn't delivered within this six-month timeline, the trustees will move to progress the memorial garden project without further negotiation.

Essex Highways - A Better Connected Essex - Public consultation on Essex transport strategy. The consultation runs until 24 September 2025. To view the strategy and give your feedback please

visit <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/essex-highways/better-connected-essex/>

25/59. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.

- Village Hall Decoration – Funding.
- 31 bags rubbish collected over last couple of months.
- Complaint re dead pigeons.
- Trees outside Village Hall need cutting back – this has been reported to landowner.
- 30mph signs obscured by vegetation plus solar sign not working by Birch Village sign opposite The Gallery.

25/60. MEETING DATES 2025.

7 October, 4 November (Budget Meeting), 2 December.

CLOSE OF MEETING: *The meeting closed at 20:50*

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):

DATE: