



BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Angela Balcombe

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Minutes of a meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on Tuesday 3 June 2025, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.

Present: *Cllrs: Bowtle, Harris, Monks, Ninnim & Westby.*
In the Chair: *Cllr Bowtle.*
Clerk: *Angela Balcombe.*
Also present: *2 members of the public, Mike Watkins (Neighbourhood Warden) & County Cllr Bentley*

25/23. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

25/24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Boyce and Cottrell.

25/25. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 6 May 2025 were approved as a correct record of events.

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

25/26. 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.

Mike Watkins, the new Neighbourhood Warden was welcomed to the meeting, he said Birch was the first parish council to invite him to a meeting. Mike explained how the Neighbourhood Warden scheme now works; all issues are logged (Task Smart), he would prefer contact by email: michael.watkins@colchester.gov.uk as this makes it easier to log the details. Mike works four days a week, another colleague covers Mondays. They are trying to gather evidence of fly-tipping and have had some success with prosecutions, they issue fixed penalty notices for smaller issues. Any dumped asbestos is contracted out to specialists for clearing. Fly-tips are taped off to make the area appear like a crime scene to draw attention to the crime.

Cllr Harris suggested that the Council would be willing to put their mobile camera in any hot spots and Mike agreed to look into this.

25/27. REPORTS.

Essex County Council (ECC).

Colchester City Council (CCC). Apologies were received from Cllr Ellis.

Cllr Bentley gave an update on the Local Plan and advised the Council to get a wish list in to the City Council for any s.106 money. Cllr Ellis is now the Deputy Mayor at CCC. Councillors Locality Budgets are now open for application with £2,000 and £5,000 available from the City Council and ECC. Cllr Bentley confirmed that the Local Highways Panel (LHP) has not been suspended due to Local Government Reform and existing approved schemes will remain in the LHP.

25/28. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Cllr Bentley was updated on Birch Church and the email sent to the Bishop of Barking and her reply. There is a Diocese Trustees meeting on 17 July, it was agreed to invite the Bishop to the next Parish Council meeting and to also ask again for a copy of the most recent structural survey report of the Church.

25/29. PROGRESS CHECK.

No matters raised.

25/30. PLAY AREA.

Quote received for the skate ramp bearings, awaiting delivery of parts.

25/31. FINANCE.

Payments made / money received:

101981 £1,953.90 Colchester City Council (Bin Emptying/Litter Pick Services)

101982 £572.10 A Balcombe (Salary/Expenses)

101983 £880.00 The Turf Guy (M J Ince) (Grass Cutting)

101984 £444.00 BAA Groundcare Services (Grass Cutting Churchyard)

25/32. PLANNING.

Application No: 242439. Application for a Lawful development Certificate for existing dwelling.

Location: Lynch Cottage, Mill Lane, Birch CO2 0NH. **Approved.**

25/33. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.

CALC - agenda for the next meeting to be held on 12 June 2025 plus meeting on 13 June to discuss CCC Preferred Options Plan.

Highways - temporary closure of Birch Park commencing on 9 June for 9 days whilst ECC undertakes carriageway patching and signing.

CCC - the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) will run again this year.

25/34. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.

- 14 bags of rubbish collected in May/June.
- Crazy Alien Competition - Cllr Harris is happy to organise an event again this year.

25/35. MEETING DATES 2025.

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

CLOSE OF MEETING: *The meeting closed at 19:28 pm.*

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):

DATE: