



## **BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL**

*Clerk – Angela Balcombe*

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### **Minutes of a meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on Tuesday 3 March 2026, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.**

**Present:** *Cllrs: Bowtle, Boyce, Cottrell, Harris, Monks, Ninnim & Westby.*  
**In the Chair:** *Cllr Bowtle.*  
**Clerk:** *Angela Balcombe.*  
**Also present:** *3 members of the public and County/City Cllr Bentley.*

#### **26/29. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

#### **26/30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

There were no apologies.

#### **26/31. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.**

The minutes of 3 February 2026 were approved as a correct record of events.

**Proposed: Cllr Cottrell. Seconded: Cllr Ninnim. All agreed.**

#### **26/32. 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.

#### **26/33. REPORTS.**

**Essex County Council (ECC).**

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

Cllr Bentley explained that a large pothole at the bottom of School Hill that damaged a residents car should be repaired very soon. Potholes should be reported on the Highways map: [www.essexhighways.org](http://www.essexhighways.org) which will generate a reference number which makes it easier to follow up. Locality budgets will be available to apply to from April 2026.

#### **26/34. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

Birch InSpire – a number of questions were raised following the announcement from the Chelmsford Diocese that they have contributed £300,000 of the projects estimated cost, at just over £3,000,000. It was noted that should this project be granted planning permission it would have an impact on the Local Plan and could encourage more development in Birch. Cllr Harris assured residents that all questions raised would be considered by the Parish Council when they submitted their list of questions to Birch InSpire.

#### **26/35. PROGRESS CHECK.**

No matters were raised.

**26/36. FINANCE.**

Payments made / money received:

102020 £526.50 A Balcombe (Salary/PAYE/Expenses)

102021 £85.80 RCCE (Annual Subscription)

**26/37. IT POLICY.**

To adopt an IT Policy. Parish councils must now have an IT Policy which explains how clerks and councillors should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.

**It was unanimously agreed to adopt the IT Policy.**

**26/38. COMMUNITY LITTER WARRIORS.**

Cllr Bowtle gave a report of a 'Community Litter Warriors' event hosted by the Borough Council to thank volunteers for all their work collecting litter from around their areas.

**26/39. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.**

**CALC** – agenda for the next meeting to be held on 5 March 2026 at Stanway Village Hall.

**26/40. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.**

- 58 bags of rubbish were collected in February. Cllr Ninnim suggested that a steam cleaner could be used to clean the play equipment and some of the street signs.
- Costing for CCTV for the Village Hall due to waste being dumped.
- Village Gates – still being looked at.

**26/41. MEETING DATES 2026.**

7 April, 5 May, 2 June, 7 July, 1 September, 6 October, 3 November, 1 December.

***Due to the confidential nature of the following item of business, members of the public will be excluded (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.***

**26/42. BIRCH INSPIRE BUSINESS PLAN.**

To discuss the Business Plan and collate questions that may arise. A comprehensive list of questions and observations to be submitted to Birch InSpire, copying in Cllr Bentley and the Chelmsford Diocese. It was suggested that a meeting with Birch InSpire and the Diocese may be beneficial once the questions have been answered.

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

**SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):**

**DATE:**