BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present: *Cllrs: Bowtle, Boyce, Cottrell, Harris, Monks, Ninnim & Westby.*
In the Chair: *Cllr Ninnim.*
Clerk: *Angela Balcombe.*
Also present: *1 member of the public & City Cllr Bentley.*

26/27. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.
The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

26/28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.
There were no apologies.

26/29. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.
The minutes of 6 October 2026 were approved as a correct record of events.
Proposed: Cllr Ninnim. Seconded: Cllr Cottrell. All agreed.

26/30. 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.

26/31. REPORTS.
Essex County Council. Apologies were received from Cllr Harding.
Colchester City Council. Apologies were received from Cllrs Ellis. Cllr Bentley gave a brief report of City Council matters.

26/32. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.
No matters raised.

26/33. PROGRESS CHECK.
Village Gateways – to be followed up.

26/34. PLANNING.
Application No: 261090. Single storey rear extension and conversion of existing garage to habitable accommodation.
Location: 46 Birch Street, Birch CO2 0ND. **Approved with conditions.**

26/35. FINANCE.
Payments made / money received:
102052 £598.30 A Balcombe (Salary/PAYE/Expenses/Poppy Wreath)
102053 £84.60 Clacton Business Services (Payroll)
102054 £360.00 Diverse Landscapes & Forestry (Tree Work)
102055 £84.00 Orton & Wenlock (Faulty Light Switch - Village Hall)
102056 £294.00 Playquip Leisure Ltd (Safety Inspection)
102057 £336.00 BAA Groundcare Ltd (Grass Cutting – Churchyard)

102057 £92.02 R Bowtle (Fuel – Litter Collection)

26/36. BUDGET & PRECEPT 2027/28.

To agree the budget and set the precept for 2027/28. To consider including the following in the budget:

- A family combined facility for the Play Area was suggested, such as outdoor table tennis, Pétanque or Boules.
- Speed Indicator Devices.
- Village Gateways.
- Village Hall – to investigate changing from oil heating to renewables.

The budget for 2027/28 was agreed at £41,015.00, taking into account current income and reserves it was agreed to set the precept at £30,000.00.
Proposed: Cllr Boyce. Seconded: Cllr Ninnim. All agreed.

26/37. MEETING WITH CHELMSFORD DIOCESE.

Cllr Boyce gave a report of the meeting held on 19 October 2026.

26/38. BIRCH INSPIRE - REQUEST FOR A DONATION.

A request for the Parish Council to pledge an amount to their £14,000 matched funding pot. The pledge would be conditional on Birch InSpire receiving a successful outcome to their NLHF first bid for reports and feasibility studies.

It was agreed that before the Parish Council can agree to pledge an amount it would need to know what would happen should the charity fail or the trustees die. What would then happen regarding ownership/liability of the building? Safety is still a major concern, and the Parish Council would also like to see an up to date structural survey carried out before any money is pledged.

26/39. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.

CCC Planning Services – new scheme of delegation (circulated).

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

- 26 bags rubbish were collected last month. The leaning tree in Straightway has been reported. The Jubilee Sign has rusted – quotes for repair to be obtained.
- The lid of the post box has been left at Hardys Green with barriers round it, the Clerk to contact Royal Mail.
- The Revd Michael Hatchett sent his apologies for this evening's meeting. Cllr Westby to lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish Council at the Remembrance Service.

26/41. MEETING DATES 2026.

1 December.

Meeting Dates 2027.

5 January, 2 February, 2 March, 6 April, 4 May (Annual Meetings), 1 June, 6 July, 7 September, 5 October, 2 November (Budget Meeting), 7 December.

CLOSE OF MEETING: *The meeting closed at 20:45*

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN): **DATE:**