



## **BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL**

*Clerk – Angela Balcombe*

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### **Minutes of a Meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on Tuesday 4 March 2025, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.**

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

#### **25/80. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

#### **25/81. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

There were no apologies

#### **25/82. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.**

The minutes of 4 February 2025 were approved as a correct record of events.

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

#### **25/83. 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.

Registers of Interest - Cllr Windsor's Register needs to be taken down from Colchester City Councils website and Cllr Harris's Register needs to be added.

#### **25/84. REPORTS.**

##### **Essex County Council (ECC).**

**Devolution Essex** is now on the priority list with agreement from all councils.

Cllr Bentley is going to organise a meeting at Birch Memorial Hall for all parish councils in Essex, to include the Chairmen of both the EALC and CALC to discuss the devolution plans.

**Budget 2025/26** an increase of 3.75% (a 1.75% general increase and 2% increase in the adult social care precept) is the second lowest in Essex. Adult Social Care is 'under control' as it is regulated, however there has been a huge increase in cost for Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) which is not regulated. An extra 13m is going into Highways.

**Potholes** - some of the reported potholes have underground springs which needs proper investigation before being repaired otherwise it will just come back.

**School Parking** - cars are parking on the bank outside the school causing the bank to collapse, which will become a serious problem if there is heavy rain. Agreed to write to the school (copying in Cllr Bentley) asking if they could speak to the parents.

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

## **25/85. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

Mr Lea Westby introduced himself to the Council, he is interested in becoming a Parish Councillor to fill the current vacancy. If no election is called he can be co-opted at the next meeting.

Birch InSpire - there was no further news. Access to the graveyard is still restricted. Cllr Bentley will pick this up with the planners regarding the structural survey. Although it has been asked for previously, the Parish Council will ask the Diocese for a copy of the latest structural survey as a matter of concern for residents.

## **25/86. PROGRESS CHECK.**

Cllr Bowtle had taken the cheque to the pre-school - they are very grateful for the donation of £5,000 from the Parish Council.

## **25/87. BIRCH VILLAGE GATEWAYS.**

It was unanimously agreed to go with Option 2. There was some confusion over who was going to pay for the gates so this will be looked into. It was suggested that the Parish Council could contribute to the cost.

The Gateways at Hardys Green have still not been put back up, the Clerk will check the reference number on the Highways Map, to be chased up.

## **25/88. PLANNING.**

**Colchester Local Plan** - Regulation 18 (Preferred Options Local Plan). Land at Birch Green 15 proposed new homes (small development). Nothing has yet been discussed or agreed.

**Application No: 250391.** Proposed extension to the ground floor to infill and square off the footprint, with an extension of the existing habitable roof space over.  
**Location:** Parc Gwyn, Maldon Road, Birch CO2 0LT. **No objections.**

**Application Nos: 242498 & 242497.** Proposed extension and alterations.  
**Location:** Conduit Farm, Birch Park, Birch CO2 0LS. **Approved conditional.**

**The Heckford Angel** - Construction Management Plan - the start date could be June this year with a proposed 52 weeks for the build.

## **25/89. FINANCE.**

Payments made / money received:

101963 £542.72 A Balcombe (Salary/Expenses)

101964 £228.66 D Ninnim (Ernest Doe New Strimmer)

## **25/90. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.**

**CCC** - Interest in Community Energy - possible event (info circulated).

**CALC** - next meeting 6 March, 7pm at Stanway Village Hall.

**ECC** - Essex-wide Bus Shelter Contract. Work to start this month in Colchester to start upgrading and replacing existing bus shelters (info circulated).

*It was reported that Heddingham Buses are going to be phased out and replaced by Connect Bus.*

**EALC** - Devolution Newsletter.

**Residents email** - regarding work to be carried out at Church View CO2 0NA (replacement wall) next month.

**Colchester Zoo Stampede** - Sunday 18 May 2025.

**25/91. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.**

- 73 bags of rubbish were collected during February.

**25/92. MEETING DATES 2025.**

1 April, 6 May (Annual Meetings), 3 June, 1 July, 2 September, 7 October,  
4 November (Budget Meeting), 2 December.

**CLOSE OF MEETING:** *The meeting closed at 20:26 pm.*

**SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):**

**DATE:**