



BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Angela Balcombe

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Minutes of a Meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on Tuesday 5 September 2023, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.

Present: *Cllrs: Bowtle, Campion & Ninnim.*
In the Chair: *Cllr Bowtle.*
Clerk: *Angela Balcombe.*
Also present: *County Cllr Bentley and one member of the public.*

23/40. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

23/41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Boyce, Cottrell, Harris and Windsor.

23/42. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 4 July 2023 were approved as a correct record of events.

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

23/43. 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.

23/44. REPORTS.

Essex County Council (ECC) - Cllr Bentley updated the Parish Council on the Reinforced Autoclave Aerated Concrete (RAAC). This is a matter Essex County Council (ECC) has been reviewing for some time, earlier than most, which has resulted in some of the schools identified having remediation works undertaken over the summer holidays. There are approximately 550 schools in Essex with 54 having been identified as having known RAAC requiring immediate action following the change in Department of Education (DfE) policy made on 31 August 2023. Of the 54 schools on the list, 15 are local authority-maintained schools with the remaining 39 being the responsibility of academy trusts. 14 of the schools that ECC is responsible for are able to open next week due to mitigation measures having been put in place.

Cllr Bentley also drew attention to the Essex Waste Partnership's Waste Strategy; the consultation launched on the 13 September and will run for 10 weeks. Cllr Bentley encouraged the Parish Council and residents to respond:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/wastestrategy>

Colchester City Council (CCC) - no report received.

23/45. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Birch Church - the Chairman explained about the meeting held with the Save our Spire (SOS) group. It was reported that the Church was being lit up with very bright lighting at night. The Clerk was asked to check the legal position and whether this needed planning permission.

23/46. PROGRESS CHECK.

No matters were raised.

23/47. PLANNING.

Application No: 231612. Application for prior notice of proposed demolition (garage).

Location: Breton House, Birch Street, Birch CO2 0NW. No objections.

Application No: 231941. Two storey side and part two storey part single storey rear extension, addition of front porch and dormer windows as approved under application 230329 with minor alteration to roof design.

Location: 10 Birch Street, Birch CO2 0NF. No objections.

Application No: 231140. Front and rear ground floor extensions as well as internal modifications to Nelmes, Birch in Essex, to create an improved kitchen/ dining space at the rear in place of the existing conservatory, along with a new front entrance area. The existing garage is also to be replaced with an improved garage structure, and parts of the house are to be timber clad and painted.

Location: Nelmes, Mill Lane, Birch CO2 0NG. **Approved.**

Application No: 231248. Extension of front dormer and formation of front gable, extension of rear dormer and single storey rear extension.

Location: Terra Nova, Mill Lane, Birch CO2 0NH. **Refused.**

Planning Enforcement - reply received and circulated regarding planning permission for the retention of the container at 4 Birch Street, Birch.

Application No: 222664 & 222665. Listed building application for the renovation and refurbishment of the listed building, including demolition of modern additions, all as described on the attached drawings.

Location: Angel Inn, Maldon Road, Birch CO3 0SP. **Granted.**

23/48. MAINTENANCE OF THE CHURCHYARD.

Maintenance of the Churchyard was discussed, the Parish Council has been paying to have two cuts a year done although it is not really the responsibility of the Parish Council to cut the grass. It was agreed to get quotes from local contractors to cut the grass and to decide at the next meeting. It was also agreed to check if there is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the large yew tree.

23/49. FINANCE.

Payments made / money received:

101865 £50.00 E Bowtle (Prize Money for Crazy Alien Competition)

101866 £920.00 The Turf Guy (Grass Cutting)

101867 £474.90 A Balcombe (Clerks Salary/Expenses)

101868 £408.00 Playquip Leisure (Replace gate mechanism - Play Park)

101869 £1,725.00 The Turf Guy (Grass Cutting)

101870 £456.90 A Balcombe (Clerks Salary/Expenses)

101871 £35.00 CALC (Annual Subscription)
101872 £1,250.00 Push Energy (Birch) Ltd. (Refund of Overpayment)
101873 £74.00 Birch Memorial Hall (Hire)
101874 £378.00 PKF Littlejohn (Audit Fee)

Income £9,066.00 Colchester City Council (2nd installment Precept)

Closure of Audit 2022/23.

Except for the following issue no matters have been raised for concern.

- An asset has been added to the asset register prior to work being completed, therefore section 2, Box 9 should read £126,433.

This was due to the funding for the play area renovation being paid in two installments, one in 2022/23 and one in 2023/24.

23/50. CORRESPONDENCE.

RCCE - Village Hall Conference, Saturday 23 September at East Hanningfield Village Hall.

Essex Highways (Ref: 2855483) - overgrown hedge (Nightingales). 'We have investigated and risk-assessed this issue. Our recent investigation of this issue has concluded that it is not as serious as many other issues we are aware of, so we won't be taking any further action on it'.

CCC - Planning Training Session (Zoom Meeting run by Simon Cairns, Development Manager), Tuesday 26 September starting at 18.00.

23/51. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.

Cllr Ninnim asked if there was a definitive list of who is responsible for various paths/pieces of land throughout Birch. As far as the Clerk is aware there isn't. Cllr Ninnim referred to an article about oil boilers; any that break down and are in need of replacement in the next three years could be forced to accommodate a heat pump at their own expense. This was also communicated to Cllr Bentley.

23/52. MEETING DATES 2023.

3 October, 7 November (Budget Meeting), 5 December.

Cllr Campion gave her apologies for the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 20.10 pm.

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):

DATE: