



BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Angela Balcombe

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Minutes of a meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on Tuesday 6 January 2026, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.

Present: *Cllrs: Bowtle, Boyce, Cottrell, Harris, Monks & Ninnim.*

In the Chair: *Cllr Bowtle.*

Clerk: *Angela Balcombe.*

Also present: *2 members of the public, County/City Cllr Bentley & City Cllr Ellis.*

26/02. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

26/03. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllr Westby.

26/04. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 2 December 2025 were approved as a correct record of events.

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

26/05. 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.

26/06. REPORTS.

- **Essex County Council (ECC).** Funding towards the refurbishment of the War Memorial has been received. Cllr Bentley gave a brief report on the budget for 2026/27, there shouldn't be too much of an increase on residents Council Tax. An update on Local Council Reform was also given. Cllr Bentley to look into the White Gates that were requested through the Local Highways Panel.
- **Colchester City Council (CCC).** Cllr Ellis mentioned the Local Plan consultation which closes on 14 January, there are 15 homes proposed for Birch. The Parish Council was encouraged to think of any projects that would meet the criteria for s.106 funding (the Warren Lane junction near Colchester Zoo was mentioned).

26/07. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

A large hole/drain was reported at the junction of Lower Road/School Hill, to be reported to Highways. Peacocks were reported for making a mess, around ten of them, it's not known where they came from.

26/08. PROGRESS CHECK.

No matters were raised.

26/09. IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SCHOOL PLAY AREA.

To consider a request received from Birch Parents and Friends Association for a donation towards fencing around the play area, needed for safety reasons. It was unanimously agreed to donate £1,000.00 towards the fencing from the Community Benefit Fund.

26/10. MEMORIAL HALL REDECORATION.

To consider paying for the redecoration of the Memorial Hall, cost £7,870.00 net of vat. This was unanimously agreed and will come from the Community Benefit Fund.

26/11. FINANCE.

Payments made / money received:

102014 £546.89 A Balcombe (Salary/PAYE/Expenses)

102015 £1,474.80 Playquip Leisure Ltd. (Play Equipment Repairs)

102016 £1,000.00 Birch Primary School (Donation Fencing – C/Benefit)

102017 £9,444.00 South East Painting Ltd (Refurbishment Memorial Hall – C/Benefit)

26/12. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.

Stanway Parish Council – burning of illegal waste.

26/13. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.

- 20 bags rubbish collected throughout December, annual total 237 bags.
- Trail cameras – next agenda to agree the purchase of one more camera.
- The Christmas Tree looked great, thanks to Cllr Harris.
- 'Unsuitable for HGV' sign missing at Layer de la Haye end of Pudding Lane.
- Cllr Boyce gave her apologies for the February meeting.

26/14. MEETING DATES 2026.

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

CLOSE OF MEETING: *The meeting closed at 20:23*

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):

DATE: