



BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Angela Balcombe

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Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on Tuesday 6 May 2025, 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: *2 members of the public & City Cllr Maclean.*

25/07. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.

To elect a Chairman for the Civic Year 2025/26. Cllr Boyce proposed Cllr Bowtle as Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr Cottrell and unanimously agreed.

- Cllr Bowtle signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman.

25/08. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN.

To elect a Vice-Chairman for the Civic Year 2025/26. Cllr Bowtle proposed Cllr Boyce as Vice-Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr Cottrell and unanimously agreed.

25/09. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

25/10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

There were no apologies.

25/11. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 1 April 2025 were approved as a correct record of events.

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

25/12. 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.

25/13. REPORTS.

Essex County Council (ECC). Apologies were received from Cllr Bentley.

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

25/14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

- Closure of school gates all day - this was causing traffic chaos with cars parking on the hill again. Cllr Bowtle will speak to the Headteacher.
- War Memorial Cross - residents were impressed with how the Cross had been decorated and thanked those responsible.
- Birch InSpire - a resident has transcribed the presentation given to Councillors at the last meeting to make it clearer to read, and is happy to email it to Councillors. The resident has written to the Bishop of Barking.

25/15. PROGRESS CHECK.

No matters were raised.

25/16. FINANCE.

Payments made / money received:

101972 £444.00 BAA Groundcare (Birch Churchyard)
101973 £880.00 M J Ince The Turf Guy (Grass Cutting)
101974 £880.00 M J Ince The Turf Guy (Grass Cutting)
101975 £549.80 A Balcombe (Salary/Expenses)
101976 £57.00 Clacton Business Services (Payroll)
101977 £281.98 EALC (Affiliation Fees)
101978 £831.16 Clear Insurance Management (Insurance)
101979 £141.00 VCS Websites (6 Months Hosting)
101980 £2,828.40 Playquip Leisure Ltd (Play Area Maintenance)

25/17. ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 2023/24.

As the gross income/expenditure for 2024/25 is above £25,000, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3 has been completed which must be externally audited. Birch have been selected for an Intermediate Audit.

The year-end accounts for 2024/25 were approved.

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

The Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer signed:

- (i) Annual Governance Statement.
- (ii) Accounting Statements.

25/18. PLAY AREA.

To consider any actions following the recent safety inspection. Further repair is needed on a couple of pieces of equipment, quotes are on the way. New equipment was discussed; however, it was agreed to put this on hold for the moment.

25/19. PLANNING.

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. **Approved.**

25/20. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.

Highways - temporary closure of Roundbush Road, Birch commencing on 20 May 2025 for 3 days. Anglian Water to undertake fire hydrant repairs.

Residents email - refuse collection and parking in Mill Lane. Some vehicles have received a notice threatening a £50 fine if drivers park there again.

25/21. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.

- 21 bags of rubbish were collected during April, this might slow down for a while due to the verges growing. Dumped asbestos has been marked, some has been collected.
- Agreed to invite the new Zone Warden to the next meeting and update the details on the website.
- Community Speed Watch (CSW) has started up sessions again.

- Large lorries are still using Pudding Lane, although there was no weight restriction, the lane did have a sign saying unsuitable for large vehicles.
- Mill Lane - a 'No Through Lane' sign was suggested.
- The Memorial Cross needs some repair work doing - Cllr Ninnim will look into finding a specialist to do the work.
- Hare & Hounds - a complaint was received regarding extra loud noise from a live band and a large marquee erected up against a neighbour's garden fence with no notice given. The resident concerned has submitted a complaint to the City Council. Cllr Ninnim will speak to the landlord.
- Cllr Boyce gave her apologies for the next meeting.

25/22. MEETING DATES 2025.

3 June, 1 July, 2 September, 7 October, 4 November (Budget Meeting),
2 December.

CLOSE OF MEETING: *The meeting closed at 19:58 pm.*

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):

DATE: