BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present:	*Cllrs: Cottrell, Monks, Ninnim & Westby.*
In the Chair:	*Cllr Ninnim.*
Clerk:	*Angela Balcombe.*
Also present:	*City Cllr Ellis and 3 members of the public*

Due to the absence of the Chairman Cllr Bowtle and Vice-Chairman Cllr Boyce, Cllr Ninnim was elected as Chairman for this meeting.
Proposed: Cllr Westby. Seconded: Cllr Monks. All agreed.

26/12. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.
The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

26/13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.
Apologies were received from Cllrs Bowtle and Boyce.

26/14. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.
The minutes of 1 September 2026 were approved as a correct record of events.
Proposed: Cllr Westby. Seconded: Cllr Ninnim. All agreed.

26/15. 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.

26/16. REPORTS.
Essex County Council. Apologies were received from Cllr Harding.
Colchester City Council. Cllr Ellis apologised for not attending meetings lately due to the additional workload since becoming Mayor of the City Council. Cllr Ellis gave a brief update on City Council matters.

26/17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.
Birch Primary School – the school has begun the process of joining the Canonium Learning Trust, a Multi-Academy Trust. An academy is a school, which draws its funding from, and is regulated by, the Department for Education directly, rather than via the local authority. They are operated by not-for-profit Academy Trusts.

26/18. PROGRESS CHECK.
- Salt for winter service has been delivered.

26/19. COMMUNITY LED ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION.
The RCCE has received funding to provide support to Parish Councils for Community Led Environmental Action, some of it from ECC specifically to support

parish level Local Nature Recovery Plans. By registering an interest, the Parish Council would have to devote some time resource to this work. Agreed to keep an eye on this to see what benefit it could be for the Parish Council.

26/20. THE 92 BUS SERVICE – BIRCH TO COLCHESTER.

Complaints received about the unreliability of this bus service. It was agreed to write to ECC Passenger Transport about the service.

26/21. BUS TRAVEL IN COLCHESTER – SURVEY.

Help shape the future of Bus Travel in Colchester – online Community Survey closes at the end of October.

26/22. FINANCE.

Payments made / money received:
102049 £547.84 A Balcombe (Salary/PAYE/Expenses)
102050 £2,640.00 The Turf Guy (Grass Cutting May – August)
102051 £78.00 Playquip Leisure (Repairs)

26/23. PLANNING.

CCC Planning Policy Team - Colchester Submission Draft Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Consultation runs from 28 August – 13 October 2026. It was agreed to respond.

Application No: 261452. Removal of existing porch. New porch and cladding to the main house.
Location: Heckford Bridge Cottage, Maldon Road, Birch CO3 0SP. **Refused.**

26/24. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.

Birch Primary School – copy of a letter sent to parents regarding proposed changes to the school (circulated).

26/25. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.

- Play Area – a family combined facility was suggested such as outdoor table tennis, Pétanque or Boules. Would need a budget of approx. £3K. Next agenda.
- Village Gateways – to be considered when setting the budget for 2027/28, along with Speed Indicator Devices which cost around £2,500 per sign.

26/26. MEETING DATES 2026.

3 November (Budget Meeting), 1 December.

CLOSE OF MEETING: *The meeting closed at 20:21*

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN): **DATE:**