



## **BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL**

*Clerk – Angela Balcombe*

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### **Minutes of a meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on Tuesday 7 April 2026, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.**

**Present:** *Cllrs: Bowtle, Boyce, Cottrell, Harris, Ninnim & Westby.*  
**In the Chair:** *Cllr Bowtle.*  
**Clerk:** *Angela Balcombe.*  
**Also present:** *1 member of the public and County/City Cllr Bentley.*

#### **26/43. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

#### **26/44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Cllr Monks.

#### **26/45. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.**

The minutes of 3 March 2026 were approved as a correct record of events.

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

#### **26/46. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests on any matters covered by this agenda.

*Cllr Cottrell declared an interest in agenda item 26/52 as Byway 42 passes right in front of her house.*

#### **26/47. REPORTS.**

**Essex County Council (ECC).**

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

Cllr Bentley continues to report and chase up potholes that are in need of repair.

Due to the May elections, there wasn't much else to report. The Locality budgets are available from April onwards.

#### **26/48. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

- Lower Road – tyres dumped.
- Gate broken at the electric sub-station.

#### **26/49. PROGRESS CHECK.**

No matters were raised.

#### **26/50. FINANCE.**

Payments made / money received:

102022 £556.97 A Balcombe (Salary/PAYE/Expenses)

102023 £125.00 Birch & Layer Breton PCC (Parish Newsletter)

102024 £294.00 Playquip Leisure Ltd (Safety Inspection)

102025 £75.00 Birch Memorial Hall (Hire)

**Income** £13,066.00 Colchester City Council (Precept)

#### **26/51. REFURBISHMENT OF BUS SHELTERS AND SEATS.**

Three bus shelters owned by the Parish Council are in need of refurbishment. One of the shelters is facing the wrong way providing no shelter for people waiting, details to be given to Cllr Bentley, who will ask the advice of officers. Benches and tables also need doing, a quote to be obtained. Possible funding to be investigated.

#### **26/52. DIVERSION OF RESTRICTED BYWAY 42.**

Informal consultation to divert a section of restricted byway 42 for reasons of privacy and security. Comments required by 20 April 2026. No action needed.

#### **26/53. PLAY AREA.**

To consider the latest safety inspection and any actions needed. It was agreed to get the equipment steam cleaned and replace rusting shackles at a total approx. cost of £400.00.

#### **26/54. PLANNING.**

**Application No: 260346.** Removing of the existing rear single-storey and the creation of a single storey front lobby extension and a rear two storey extension to increase living space.

**Location:** Green Gables, Mill Lane, Birch CO2 0NH. No objections.

#### **26/55. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.**

- Email asking the Parish Council to verify local connection to support a housing application.
- Emails regarding the relocation of the peacocks.
- Birch Parish Council Elections.
- Birch InSpire – reply regarding the questions submitted by the Parish Council relating to their Business Plan. Thanks were noted to Cllr Harris for all his work on putting the questions together.
- Ditch clearance works behind the old police house. There are conflicting rules around bird nesting season, the rules are different for hedge cutting and coppicing. An area has been sown with wildflowers and is being used by dog walkers. It is up to the landowner/tenant to put up any signage to stop the walkers straying from the public footpath.

#### **26/56. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.**

- 39 bags rubbish were collected throughout March plus a pallet.
- Fire at aerodrome – needs clearing up.
- Birch InSpire response – to be circulated
- Signpost at the corner of Blind Lane/Maldon Road has rotted and needs replacing.

#### **26/57. MEETING DATES 2026.**

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

Due to Parish Elections on 7 May the date of the May meeting has been changed to 12 May.

**CLOSE OF MEETING:** *The meeting closed at 20:19*

**SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):**

**DATE:**