



BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Angela Balcombe

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Minutes of a meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on
Tuesday 7 February 2023, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.

Present: Cllrs: *Bowtle, Champion, Cottrell, Harris, Ninnim & Windsor.*
In the Chair: Cllr *Bowtle.*
Clerk: Angela *Balcombe.*
Also present: Cllr *Maclean and 2 members of the public.*

23/52. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.

Cllr Bowtle welcomed those present to the meeting.

23/53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllr Boyce.

23/54. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 3 January 2023 were approved as a correct record of events.

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

23/55. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary, Other Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests on any matters covered by this agenda. Cllr Cottrell declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda items 23/59 Application No: 222151 as she is the landowner and 23/60 as it is related.

23/56. REPORTS.

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

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

Cllr Maclean gave a brief report on City Council matters.

23/57. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

A member of the public asked if the Council knew when a new Headmistress would be appointed at the local school. It was not known if one had been appointed yet.

23/58. PROGRESS CHECK.

Erection of Double Garage, Brambles - still awaiting a reply about the removal of the container.

23/59. PLANNING.

Application No: 222186. Proposed single storey side and rear extensions.

Location: 38 Birch Street CO2 0NB. **Approved.**

Application No: 222199/222200. To undertake modest alterations and repairs to the existing building.

Location: Brakes Farmhouse, Maldon Road CO2 0NU. **Approved.**

Application No: 222664. Renovation and refurbishment of the listed building, including demolition of modern additions, all as described on the attached drawings, together with the erection of new overnight accommodation for tourists and associated works. ** Revised ownership.

Location: Angel Inn, Maldon Road CO3 0SP.

Application No: 222151. Construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm and associated infrastructure, including batteries, inverters, security cameras, fencing, access tracks and landscaping and cable run. (Amended Environmental Statement and plans received).

Location: Land to the north west of Hardys Green, Birch.

The amended plans show a significant reduction in size which Councillors agreed was a vast improvement on the original application, however their original concerns remain, especially around access.

A representative from CARE Campaign Group informed the Council that residents still have the same objections. She also mentioned that CARE are involved with the National Campaign Group who are opposing use of agricultural land for solar farms.

23/60. CARE CAMPAIGN GROUP.

Care Campaign Group are asking for a contribution towards their adviser's fee which is in excess of £7,500.00, towards the objection against the proposed Birch Solar Farm. This was raised at the last meeting but no decision made. The Parish Council does have the legal power to contribute using the Local Government Act 1972 (s.137). **It was unanimously agreed not to contribute.**

23/61. FINANCE.

Payments made / money received:

101840 £59.93 C Ninnim (new pads for defibrillator)

101841 £45.00 Clacton Business Services Ltd. (Payroll)

101842 £424.10 A Balcombe (Salary/Office Expenses)

101843 £30,000.00 Playquip Leisure (Play Area Renovation)

Income £1,500.00 Colchester City Council (Play Area Grant)

£6,745.18 Birch Estate (Solar Farm)

23/62. HEDGEHOGS R US HIGHWAYS PROJECT.

Request for the Parish Council to invest in Hedgehog conservation products and raise awareness of the severe decline in hedgehog numbers.

<https://hedgehogsrus.co.uk/hedgehog-highway-project>

It was agreed that the project was aimed at less rural environments. The Council will raise awareness of the project in its report for the local newsletter.

23/63. CORRESPONDENCE.

Birch Church - email correspondence regarding the demolition of the Church.

The process for demolition is going ahead but is likely to be slow.

Elections (CCC) - information regarding Voter ID; electors will be required to bring photographic ID when voting at their polling station for the elections on 4th May 2023.

23/64. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.

- Cllr Ninnim - 20 bags of rubbish collected for January, also nine road signs belonging to Highways and Broadband.
- 20s Plenty Campaign - agreed that the 20mph limit should be put in place in certain areas throughout Birch. Cllr Harris to look into it.
- One of the gates as you come into Hardys Green has been knocked down, the other one has been badly repaired. To be reported to Highways.
- The broken streetlight in Birch Street to be chased up.

23/65. MEETING DATES 2023.

7 March, 4 April, 2 May (Annual Meetings), 6 June, 4 July, 5 September,
3 October, 7 November (Budget Meeting), 5 December.

The meeting closed at 20.08 pm.

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):

DATE: