



## **BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL**

*Clerk – Angela Balcombe*

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### **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on Tuesday 7 May 2024, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.**

**Present:** *Cllrs: Bowtle, Boyce, Campion, Harris & Ninnim.*

**In the Chair:** *Cllr Bowtle.*

**Clerk:** *Angela Balcombe.*

**Also present:** *2 members of the public.*

#### **24/54. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.**

Cllr Boyce proposed Cllr Bowtle as Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr Campion and unanimously agreed, therefore Cllr Bowtle was elected Chairman for 2024/25.

- The Chairman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Chairman.

#### **24/55. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN.**

Cllr Bowtle proposed Cllr Boyce as Vice-Chairman, this was seconded by Cllr Ninnim and unanimously agreed, therefore Cllr Boyce was elected Vice-Chairman for 2024/25.

#### **24/56. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

#### **24/57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Cottrell and Windsor.

#### **24/58. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.**

The minutes of 2 April 2024 were approved as a correct record of events.

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

#### **24/59. 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.

#### **24/60. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

War Memorial - it was suggested that it would be better to cut around the edges rather than the whole area.

#### **24/61. PROGRESS CHECK.**

A brief update on any actions from the last meeting.

- **Village Gateways** - a Highways Officer has confirmed that applications to the Local Highways Panel (LHP) must come directly from the County Councillor on behalf of the Parish Council, this has now been submitted to the LHP.

#### **24/62. FINANCE.**

Payments made / money received:

101903 £423.10 A Balcombe (Clerks Salary/Expenses).

101904 £665.12 Clear Insurance Management (Annual Insurance Premium).

101905 £100.00 VCS Websites Ltd (6 months hosting).

101906 £444.00 BAA Groundcare (Grass Cutting at Birch Churchyard).

**Income** £9,566.00 Precept - First Instalment.

#### **24/63. ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDING 2023/24.**

As the gross income/expenditure for 2023/24 is above £25,000, the Council completed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3 which must now be externally audited.

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

The Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer signed:

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

- **Risk Management & Risk Assessment Review** - the Clerk explained the Council's risk management and assessment process, including financial and other risks. This was agreed by the Council and will be reviewed in May 2025.

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

#### **24/64. PLAY AREA.**

It was agreed to accept the quote from Playquip Leisure for a new Climbing Wall with bonded mulch safety surfacing.

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

#### **24/65. PLANNING.**

**Application No: 240541.** Demolish an existing detached dwelling and garage outbuilding, and build a new replacement house together with 3 no. new houses (4no. detached houses in total).

**Site Address:** Stable Field Cottage, Hardys Green, Birch CO2 0PA. **Refused.**

It was agreed to find out why this application was refused and to contact planning enforcement about the new entrance.

#### **24/66. CORRESPONDENCE TO NOTE.**

**Birch Church** - copy of an email sent to the CEO, Diocese of Chelmsford, they have replied to say the points raised have been heard and will be raised at meeting in June.

The Parish Council to write to the Diocese voicing concerns regarding any further delays in the demolition of the Church, as until this is resolved the safety fencing must remain in place making it impossible for families to visit and maintain their loved ones graves.

#### **24/67. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.**

- Thanks are recorded to the residents that have cleaned the play equipment free of charge.
- Litter picking - volunteers now need to carry out a risk assessment and must report to the City Council where and how many bags of rubbish have been collected.
- One test camera to be purchased.
- Summer Fete - the Crazy Alien Competition is still going ahead.

- Pudding Lane - lorries are causing damage, an 'unsuitable for heavy vehicles' sign to be requested.
- Change of collection times - contact the Post Office to find out why no-one was notified of the change.
- Pothole on the corner on the way to Copford still not repaired.

**24/68. MEETING DATES 2024.**

4 June, 2 July, 3 September, 1 October, 5 November (Budget Meeting),  
3 December.

*Apologies were received from Cllr Boyce for the next meeting.*

***The meeting closed at 21.02 pm.***

**SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):**

**DATE:**