

DRAFT

**LITTLE BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL -ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON
Wednesday 13th May 2015 at 7.00pm - At Little Birch Village Hall**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Morley; Elaine Godding; Annette Wissler; Steve Naylor; Ben Roberts

ALSO: Sophie Glover (Parish Clerk), 3 Parishoners.

Meeting Opened: 7.18pm

1. **Election of Officers**
Chairman: Mike Morley Proposed: Steve Naylor, Seconded: Ben Roberts
Vice Chair: Elaine Godding Proposed: Ben Roberts, Seconded: Steve Naylor
All forms signed, clerk to submit to electoral services
2. **Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting** held on 19.05.14
These were signed on 9.07.14
3. **Chairman's Annual Report – at end of the minutes**
Clerk's Annual Financial Report/ adoption of accounts for audit
The Parish Council's books were available for inspection and the Clerk issued details of the 2014/2015 accounts. £3747.43 is to be carried forward to the 2015/16 financial year which is split with £3996.95 deposited in the current account and £50.48 in the savings account.
Clerk to submit accounts to Grant Thornton.
4. The Parish Council have spent nearly the full Budget for the Lengthsman this financial year, and will reapply for Lengthsman budget for 2015/16.

John Penrice, the internal auditor, audited the books in May 2015, and declared himself happy with their contents, and the Parish Council agreed the 2015/16 accounts unanimously.
5. **Conscription of new councillors:**
All vacancies with in the PC have been filled.
6. **Appointment of members to Committees and working groups**
Village Hall committee: Ben Roberts to join as the PC rep. Proposed by; Mike Morley Seconded: Elaine Godding.
7. **Review of other appointments ie Footpath Officer, Internal Auditor**
Sandra Cameron was re appointed Footpath Officer Proposed by: EG seconded: SN.
Thanks were given to John Penrice who is stepping back from being the PC's internal auditor, and an advertisement will go out in the next newsletter.
*Clerk to inform SC that she is re-elected.
MM to put in newsletter.*
8. **Review of Insurance Policies**
Aon to be paid after this meeting..
9. **Review Subscriptions**
All agreed to renew subs for HALC
Clerk to pay.
9. **To remind Councillors to update their Notice of Registrable Interests**
Done.
Clerk to submit the forms.

Signed:

Date:

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LITTLE BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON
Monday 13th May 2015 at 7.30pm
AT LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL
MINUTES

- Present** Councillors Mike Morley; Elaine Godding; Annette Wissler; Steve Naylor;
Ben Roberts
- Also** Sophie Glover (Parish Clerk), 3 Parishoners.
1. **Apologies**
Ward Cllr David Harlow
 2. **Declaration of interest**
None
 3. **Open Discussion, public forum**
 - 3.1 **Police Update –**
Sent Electronically
 - 3.2 **Ward Councillors Report**
He was not present and no report had been given
 - 3.3 **Public comments**
A parishioner commented on the problem of cars speeding down The Thorne. *Clerk to inform MBPC.*
The chair pointed out that this was Much Birch and asked the Clerk to forward the PC's desire to get a SID put on that stretch.
 4. **Acceptance of minutes of the last meeting**
These were adopted.
 5. **Action points from last meeting**
Chair is looking for a new clerk, further details will follow.
 6. **Neighbourhood Plan.**
The Chair outlined to the new Cllrs where the PC was with the NP and why Little Birch is not currently inclined to start doing one. *Clerk to look at funding for NP's in 2015*
 7. **Parish Field**
This has been reseeded, and a tree surgeon will do some work to overhanging branches in the autumn.
 8. **The Castle**
The clerk was asked to chase up the inspection report. *Clerk to action this*
 9. **Dobbin Cottage**
EG told the meeting that a surveyor from Herefordshire Council was going to make an assessment. *Clerk to put on the agenda.*
 10. **The Lengthsman**
The new lengthsman is coming to do a tour of the Parish with the Chair. *Chair to do the walk with him.*
Following this there will be a final decision to appoint him and get the work started.
 11. **To note the contents of the information sheet.**
No comments noted

DRAFT

Finance: including financial report and payments to be made

Bank Totals: Barclays Community Account As at 24.04.15 £5,346.95
Business Premium Account As at 28.01.15 £ 50.48

12.i

Approved; Mike Morley

Payments to be made: All agreed unanimously.

Clerk to make payments.

ii

Clerks Salary	£	152.82
Clerks expenses	£	16.00
Lengthsman management fee	£	69.00
AON insurance	£	247.31
Lengthsman	£	194.50
Halc Subs	£	261.60
Halc Training	£	30.00

iii

Payments Received:

Precept £1350.00

Clerk to arrange the necessary paperwork.

iv

Requests for financial aid:

None

Both EG and SN are to become signatories on the Parish Accounts

Planning application

13.

There are none at present for the parish, however EG is concerned about the building works happening at Withycombe, and she was wondering if they had planning consent for what they were doing.

14

To receive agenda items for next meeting

Dobbin Cottage, Neighbourhood Plans

Clerk to add them to the agenda.

15.

Next meeting Wednesday 6th July 2015 at 7.30pm

Meeting closed at 8.59pm

SIGNED:..... CHAIRMAN

Dated:.....

Future Meetings

	Monday July 6th	7.45
	Wednesday Sept 9th	7.30
	Wednesday Nov 4 th	7.30

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Chairmans Annual Report 2015:

Meetings and Attendance

The Council had its full complement of five members for the year, Alison Clark, Elaine Godding, Annette Wissler, Tony Rees and Mike Morley

Six meetings were held throughout including the annual meeting in May. Attendance was a creditable 87%. Jon Norris the Ward Councillor was present at two meetings and David Atkinson the Balfour Beatty Localities Officer attended once.

As usual very few parishioners attended.

The Clerk, Sophie Glover, administered our Council well and kept us informed of National and Herefordshire Council information that could affect LBPC and the parish. Unfortunately at the end of year she indicated her intention to resign and this will probably be her last meeting. Sophie will be missed and we wish her well for the future. We think she has enjoyed her time with us and we are glad that her family has attended local events including the pantomime and gardening club.

Two Councillors decided not to seek re-election at the end of their terms. Tony Rees was co-opted after the departure of a previous John Dillon, a previous chairman. He was a valuable member characterised by attention to detail and logical thinking. Alison Clark was a Councillor for more than 20 years including several as chairman. She was recognised as a calm peacemaker, always seeking compromises. Her participation in parish affairs have been considerable. She says that she will continue with other village activities including the History Group, Hall Committee, Book Exchange etc.

Neighbourhood Plan

Proposals for a Little Birch Neighbourhood plan were made at most meetings for the past two years but not supported by the majority. It is difficult to imagine how a plan could be formulated until the Herefordshire Council Core Strategy and particularly the categorisation of Little Birch are resolved. Protests to Herefordshire Council about proposed Little Birch category have gone unanswered. This will have to be kept under review because the development of the village for the next twenty years is at stake.

Village Hall

The Village hall is a registered charity. LBPC is the Custodian Trustee and therefore has a representative on the Village Hall Management Committee. During the year all members of the Management Committee were registered with the Charity Commission as Managing Trustees. This did not include the LBPC representative.

Councillor Roberts has agreed to become administrator with the Charity Commissioner.

Audited accounts for 2013/14 were circulated during the year showing financial soundness. Accounts for 2014/15 will be available in July.

The hall continues to be well used including for Brownies, Whist, Gardening Club, History Group, parties etc. The New Years Eve celebration was completely sold out and the Annual Pantomime was again very successful.

Castle Inn

Unfortunately the Castle Inn remained closed and for sale during the year. It is the subject of a registration as a community asset that the Herefordshire Council suggested should be removed to assist it's sale. This is difficult to understand and CAMRA advice has been sought.

Newsletter and Website

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The monthly King's Thorn, the Birches and Aconbury circulated continuously since 1977 continues to be published. It is recognised as a valuable source of information on people and events. It produced by volunteers and paid for by the three parish councils and advertising and breaks even. Each month 500 copies are printed at the Much Birch Resource Centre at a cost of more than £100 depending on the number of pages. It is also included on the village Website and the Much Birch parish Council Website. Younger volunteers to carry on this work and improve quality and advertising revenue would be welcomed.

The Village Website started by Jon Norris has not been well used. New rules for parish councils requires that information including agendas and meeting minutes must be published on a Website. Jon Norris is no longer a Ward Councillor or a member of Much Birch Parish Council so it is unclear whether or not he will continue to maintain this site. This needs to be checked and possibly alternative arrangements made.

Methodist Chapel

The Methodist Chapel closed and sold by auction. The buyer approached individuals and this Council and offered it for public use for the next few years. A parishioner obtained planning consent for it to be used as a village shop but his plan is in abeyance pending the outcome of the plan to open a new shop in Wormelow. LBPC should again seek ideas for the chapel to be used and avoid it's inevitable deterioration.

Parish Field

The Parish Field was registered as a common by this Council some years ago but has no responsibility for maintaining it. It was left derelict and a dumping ground for many years. It is pleasing to be able to report that it has now been cleaned up and planted as an amenity area for the benefit of parishioners and others. The project was completed by volunteers organised by Alison Clark and paid for by profits from the Diamond Jubilee event and donations. LBPC should consider providing small amounts of funding for future maintenance.

Winter Gritting

The joint scheme with Much Birch parish Council and operated voluntarily by Bob Mason continued. The grit stock held at Merrivale farm was supplemented by Balfour Beatty. Fortunately the winter was relatively mild and gritting was only necessary on one occasion.

One complaint was received so it will be necessary to remind residents before next winter about the objectives of the scheme.

HALC

The Council continued it's membership of the Hereford Associations of Local Councils (HALC). Councillor Godding is a member of the Executive Council. The Clerk and Mike Morley have attended other meetings. HALC provides excellent training courses for Councillors and Clerks as well valuable administrative and legal advice not available from the Herefordshire Council. LBPC should continue to monitor the need for HALC membership but it would be potentially dangerous to leave now.