

**LITTLE BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL -ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON  
Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 7.30pm - At Little Birch Village Hall**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Councillors : Mike Davies; Kate Dillon; Janet Gwinnett; Peter Rees;  
Ward Cllr Toni Fagan

**ALSO:** Sophie Glover (Parish Clerk). Angela Middleton, Mike Morley, Ben Roberts and Ward Cllr Toni Fagan and  
1 other parishioner.

**Meeting Opened: 7.06pm With an open session for the public to address the PC.**

**1. Election of Officers**

**Chairman:** PR Proposed: JG Seconded: MD

*All forms signed.*

**Vice Chair:** JG Proposed: KD Seconded: PR

BR was thanked by PR for his years of service, and the other cllrs agreed.

**2. Co-option of Parish Councillors**

It was resolved to ask around the village and see if there was any interest before the next meeting. It was moved to bring them to the next PC meeting.

**3. Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting held on 03.05.18**

These were signed at the July meeting last year.

**4. Chairman's Annual Report – at end of the minutes**

**5. Clerk's Annual Financial Report/ acceptance of the Annual Governance Statement / adoption of accounts for audit**

Margaret Scrivens, the internal auditor, has passed the Parish Accounts to go on to the external auditor with the PC's agreement.

**6. Review of other appointments ie Footpath Officer, Internal Auditor**

Footpath Officer: Angela Middleton

Tree Warden: Janet Gwinnett

Margaret Scrivens will remain as the PC's internal auditor.

**7. Review of Insurance Policies**

In the second year of the 3 year tie in. Payment to be authorised at this meeting.

**Review Subscriptions**

**8.** All agreed to renew subs for HALC when they come round.

Tree Warden network

Resolved to continue with these groups.

**9. To remind Councillors to update their Notice of Registrable Interests**

Done.

**10.i Acceptance of the Annual Governance Statement**

Accepted by the LBPC.

**ii Adoption of Accounts for audit**

The accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting and they were duly adopted by the PC.

Meeting closed 7.46pm

**LITTLE BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MEETING HELD ON**  
**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 7.47pm**  
**AT LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL**  
**MINUTES**

**Councillors Mike Davies; Kate Dillon; Janet Gwinnett; Peter Rees;**

**Present Sophie Glover (Parish Clerk)**

**Also Also 3 Parishoners and the ward councillor Toni Fagan.**

A period of up to 10 minutes is available for the public.

The pot hole on Parish Lane was mentioned, and it was resolved that it was actually in Much Birch and on an unadopted lane, so there was little that this PC Could do.

**1. Apologies**

None.

**2. Declaration of interest**

None

**3.**

**3.1 Ward Councillors Report**

Toni introduced herself and outlined her early learnings in the role (lack of funds and the position will only get worse before it gets better).

**3.2 Police Update –**

Nothing from our PCSO but the Golden Valley newsletter was circulated.

**3.3 Balfour Beatty report**

Sent out weekly.

Cut through road by Castle Pool Cottage has large pothole.

*Clerk to report*

**4.**

**Acceptance of minutes of the last meeting**

these were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed: PR    Seconded: MD

**5. Action points from last meeting**

Are all addressed or on the agenda apart from listing The Castle as a property of community interest. The forms have been submitted, and the member of staff at HC responsible for them is back in work on the 14<sup>th</sup> May, so we will hear more upon her return.

*Clerk to put on Next agenda*

**Planning applications**

191290 – Land adjacent to Daneswood, Little Birch

Proposed response: to ‘support’ to the application. The feeling was that it was in keeping with the neighbouring properties.

**6.**

191442 – Land East of Castle Pool Cottage.

Proposed response: to have ‘no objection’ to this application, as it stands. But ask for conditions to enforce the ‘affordable’ house element. The PC acknowledges that this application is now more in accordance with the NDP, but does have concerns about the future maintenance of the orchard behind the houses.

191053 – Land west of Laburnum Cottage, Parish Ln.

Proposed response: Object to the application, it was felt that this is development in open countryside, and is served by very poor access. It also falls outside the Much Birch NDP settlement area, and could well lead to ribbon development along Parish Lane. LBPC supports MBPC in objecting to this application.

**7. Dobbin Cottage**

KD told the meeting that the problem was the joint chimney in the cottage. The owner is waiting for further quotes. The feeling is that the family is assisting her with her living there. It was also resolved that it was possibly no longer a PC issue.

*Clerk to take item off the agenda.*

8.

**Neighbourhood Plan – Referendum update**

Referendum is on the 30<sup>th</sup> May.

9.

**Lengthsman – update and identification of work**

There is a culvert below Castle Nibole that is clogged.

10.

**Discussion about the regularity of the PC meetings.**

To maintain monthly meetings.

11.

**To note the contents of the information sheet.**

Footpaths: Dawn chorus walk had 25 people, raising £130 for charity.

Bluebell walk last Sunday had 7 people.

June 9<sup>th</sup> will be a wild flower walk. 10am.

Get some waymarkers from the lengthsman.

12.i

**Finance: including financial report and payments to be made**

**Bank Totals:** HSBC account: £5,791.85

Clerks Salary	£	322.36
Clerks expenses	£	8.60
PAYE	£	61.00
Insurance	£	224.75

*Clerk to make payments*

ii **Payments to be made** proposed: KD Seconded: PR

iii **Payments Received:**  
Precept (1<sup>st</sup> half) £2750.00

iv **Requests for financial aid:**

v None

**Agreement sought to put all four cllrs onto the signatories list at HSBC.**

This was agreed, and the clerk will submit the relevant forms.

Proposed: PR                      Seconded: JG    Agreed by all present.

13. **To receive agenda items for next meeting**

Dobbin Cottage, Hedge opposite the village hall.

5

15. **Next meeting Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 8.40pm**

JG sends apologies

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

SIGNED:..... CHAIRMAN                      Dated:.....

**Future Meetings**

	Wednesday June 5 <sup>th</sup>	7.30
	Wednesday July 3 <sup>rd</sup>	7.30
	Wednesday Sept 4 <sup>th</sup>	7.30
	Wednesday Oct 2 <sup>nd</sup>	7.30
	Wednesday Nov 6 <sup>th</sup>	7.30

## **Little Birch Parish Council - Chairman's Annual Report May 2019**

### **Cllr Ben Roberts – LBPC Chairman**

#### **Meetings and Attendance**

Monthly meetings have continued over the last 12 months and have allowed us to stay current with planning, other local issues and the developing NDP.

10 routine parish council meetings were held during the year. Councillor attendance continued to be very good. The ward councillor David Harlow was present at 5 of the meetings, the Police at none and David Atkinson the localities steward at one this year. Regular reports were received from Balfour Beatty and the Ward Councillor

In September, Vice Chair Cllr Steve Naylor resigned from the council. Steve had been a Councillor since May 2015 and had been of great asset to the council and to the local community. After following the official process required to fill a casual vacancy, we welcomed our newest councillor Peter Rees in October. Peter has previous experience of serving as a parish councillor, is active in the community and on the village hall committee and has already proved to be an excellent addition to the parish council.

In April Cllr Annette Wissler resigned having been a parish councillor for many years. Annette's contribution to the parish council has been of great value and I extend my thanks to Annette.

Cllr Morley has decided not to stand for a new term after many many years as a parish councillor and chair of the parish council. I know that I speak for all of the current and past cllrs when I say how grateful I am to Mike for his help, support and advice and his work for the parish and its residents.

Angela Middleton has continued to be extremely proactive as our voluntary footpath officer, Angela has continued to organise and lead the parish walks which have become very popular. Cllr Gwinnett has now taken over as our tree warden.

#### **Parish Clerk**

Sophie has continued to do a fantastic job as our clerk, keeping us (and in particular me) informed, organised and up to date as well as liaising with our planning consultant David Nicholson to keep the NDP moving forward. Thank you Sophie.

#### **Planning**

10 planning applications of varying type scale have been submitted during the last 12 months. We have successfully had one application refused at committee and another has been approved at appeal. I feel that we have acted consistently and fairly in all planning matters and will be in an even stronger position if our NDP is ratified at referendum at the end of the month.

#### **Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The joint Neighbourhood Development Plan with Aconbury has made excellent progress over the last 12 months and has passed several large milestones. After the regulation 14 consultation stage in

early 2018 the plan then completed regulation 16 consultation in Autumn 2018 followed by the independent examination.

The plan will shortly be put to a referendum on 30<sup>th</sup> May which will mark the culmination of several years of hard work by the local community and the parish council. I would like to extend my thanks to everyone involved. I believe that we have done an excellent job and have a plan which will ensure that our views on local development will be taken into consideration for many years to come.

### **Website and Newsletter**

Traffic to the website continues to grow with 3200 visits over the last 12 months and a grand total of 12927 since the site was launched in August 2016. Parish council agendas, minutes and planning applications are routinely included as is local news and events and information about the NDP. The Little Birch parish Facebook group is proving popular with a mix of community events and information being posted by the local community. The group now has 240 members and continues to grow.

The King's Thorn, the Birches and Aconbury newsletter is still a fantastic source of information, adverts and news. It is financed by Little Birch and Much Birch parish councils, Aconbury parish meeting and advertising and is entirely produced and circulated by volunteers. The newsletter is edited by Liz Hall and Mike Leigh has now taken over responsibility for printing and distribution to the volunteers who then deliver it to local homes. The newsletter continues to be managed by the Little Birch village hall committee, however there are plans for the newsletter to become self-sufficient and run entirely by local volunteers.

### **Village Hall**

As custodian trustee LBPC has some responsibilities for the village hall. I am a member of the Little Birch Village Hall Committee and administrator to the Charity Commission. I make reports on activities at parish council meetings. The hall continues to be used regularly by local and outside groups and finances are in good order.

Plans to extend and modernise the hall are in the early stages, following consultation with the local community and the near neighbours. Further information will be provided as it becomes available. Local events including the panto, quiz night, and bingo remain popular and I would like to extend my thanks to the village hall committee.

The drama group continue to produce fantastic performances and are a real asset to the community.

The book exchange and coffee morning are still extremely popular monthly events.

### **Precept**

The precept was not increased so remains at £5,500.

### **Castle Inn**

The Castle Inn appears to be being well supported with excellent food, local beers and community events including quiz nights being available.

It was agreed the asset of community value should be renewed and this has now been submitted.

## **Winter gritting**

After a much milder winter the joint scheme with Much Birch and operated voluntarily by Merrivale Farm was not put to the test as it had been during the previous winter. However, I would like to extend my thanks to the Mason family for all of their hard work and for being ready to act to keep our roads clear when required.

## **HALC**

The Council continued its membership of the Hereford Association of Local Councils (HALC). The Clerk and Chairman attended the annual HALC meeting in the autumn. HALC provides excellent training courses for Councillors and clerks as well as valuable legal advice not available from the Herefordshire Council. LBPC should continue to monitor the need for membership of HALC in the future.

DRAFT