



BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Angela Balcombe

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Minutes of a meeting of Birch Parish Council, held on
Tuesday 5 April 2022, 7.30pm at Birch Memorial Hall.

Present: Cllrs: Bowtle, Boyce, Campion, Ninnim & Walsh.
In the Chair: Cllr Bowtle.
Clerk: Angela Balcombe.
Also present: County/Borough Cllr Bentley, Borough Cllr Maclean, two representatives from Low Carbon and 18 members of the public.

Proposed new Solar Farm

A presentation was given about the proposed new Solar Farm, the project, which is in the early stages, will consist of solar PV along with battery storage. The proposed area is approximately 80 hectares of land immediately to the north of Hardy's Green and will generate up to 49.9MW (same size as Layer Solar Farm). The proposed solar farm will be linked to the grid at Abberton. Low Carbon will be holding a public consultation event in Birch to introduce the project to the community and answer any questions they might have. An application to the Borough Council will be submitted in late May/early June.

Members of the public present, were unanimous in their objection to the siting of the proposed solar farm in a rural area surrounded by housing, including listed properties, ancient woodland, bridleways and wildlife. Members present made it clear that they were not against green energy but that it was about balance, using the right land in the right place for the right use.

It was explained that any objections to the application must be material planning considerations such as location, highways issues (access/traffic), effects on buildings and amenity (visual intrusion, noise and disturbance etc). Other things to take into consideration are Government policy, local authority plans and policies, effect on a specially designated area, e.g. conservation area.

22/31. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

22/32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllr Cottrell and Cllr Windsor.

22/33. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

The minutes of 4 January 2022 were approved as a correct record of events.

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

22/34. 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.

22/35. REPORTS.

County Council

Borough Council – Cllr Maclean gave a brief report; the Borough Council is catching up with planning applications and dealing with various issues such as flooding and fly-tipping.

22/36. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Birch Airfield – there is still a problem with cars racing. It was explained that the police are responsible for enforcing speeding issues.

22/37. PROGRESS CHECK.

Play Area – work has been completed including surfacing and maintenance.

22/38. COMMUNITY BENEFIT FOR LAYER SOLAR FARM.

To confirm if the Parish Council would prefer a lump sum payment or annual payment. It was agreed that a lump sum would be preferred.

22/39. THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY PLAQUE.

It was agreed to have a slate plaque costing £154.99.

22/40. PLANNING.

Results.

Application No: 202011 & 202012. Replacement of modern windows.
Retention and repair of Victorian windows.

Location: Birch Primary School, School Hill, Birch. **Approved.**

Application No: 220168. Re-roof using existing tiles, timber repairs, new conservation rooflight; cast iron rainwater fittings; Repair, replace & fit new timber external windows & doors; Remove single storey modern extension; install new foul drainage system & treatment plan.

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

Application No: 220385. Notification for prior approval for a proposed single storey rear extension extending 6.00 metres beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, with a maximum height of 3.65 metres, and eaves height of 2.80 metres.

Location: Die Puppenstube, Birch Street, Birch CO2 0NN. **Prior approval not required.**

22/41. FINANCE.

Payments made / money received:

101798 £383.90 C Cottrell (Trees)

101799 £396.32 A Balcombe (Salary/PAYE)

101800 £75.00 Birch Memorial Hall (Hire)

101801 £125.00 Birch & Layer Breton PCC (Newsletter)

101802 £396.00 Hill Farm Landscapes Ltd. (Grass Cutting)

101803 £251.92 EALC (Annual Subs.)

101804 £3,047.40 Playquip Leisure (Play Equipment Maintenance)

101805 £154.99 The Royal British Legion (Jubilee Plaque)

101806 £48.00 Clacton Business Services (Payroll)

Income

£8,066.00 CBC (Precept first installment)

22/42. CORRESPONDENCE.

CBC – Great British Spring Clean 2022.

CALC – presentation of S.106 monies.

Residents email – regarding the fencing at Birch Church Yard.

A letter to be sent to the Diocese saying that this matter must be dealt with sooner rather than later and that it is disrespectful to those that have family members buried here. The new fencing seems to have taken away the right of access.

The Conservation Volunteers – email explaining the work they do (circulated)

22/43. PARISH COUNCILLOR REPORTS / NEXT AGENDA ITEMS ONLY.

22/44. MEETING DATES 2022.

10 May (Annual Parish Meeting/Annual Council Meeting), 7 June, 5 July, 6 September, 4 October, 1 November (Budget Meeting), 6 December.

The meeting closed at 21.24 pm.

SIGNED (CHAIRMAN):

DATE: