

LAPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

There was the Annual General Meeting of Lapford Parish Council on Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 7.30pm held in the Orchard Centre, Lapford

Members Present: Cllrs. Julie Down; Sue Briant-Evans; Bill Graham; Peter Heal; Steve Fletcher.

Also Present: District/County Councillor Steve Keable

In attendance: Rob Martin (Clerk).

Others: Five members of the public.

MINUTES

2627-001 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

On a proposal by Cllr. Heal, seconded by Cllr. Fletcher, it was **Resolved** that Cllr. Down be re-elected as chairman for the coming year.

2627-002 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

On a proposal by Cllr. Heal, seconded by Cllr. Fletcher, it was **Resolved** that Cllr. Briant-Evans be re-elected as vice-chairman for the coming year.

2627-003 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Andrews.

2627-004 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)

Cllr. Heal declared a personal interest in item 2627-005 below as the applicant for Councillor co-option was his son.

2627-005 COOPTION OF COUNCILLOR

Graham Heal had completed an application form and presented himself as a potential councillor answering questions put to him by current councillors.

On a proposal by Cllr. Briant-Evans, seconded by Cllr. Graham, it was **Resolved** that Graham Heal be co-opted as a parish councillor and he completed his declaration of acceptance of office and took part in the remainder of the meeting.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow public participation

2627-006 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

It was confirmed that the parish council would be discussing outstanding Highways jobs, Road Wardens and Planning Enforcement matters.

Cllr. Keable said that there was a new Senior Enforcement Officer with whom he would meet to find out where the matters were going.

The Lapford Youth and Playing Field Trust asked whether there was a timeline for the acquisition of the Section 106 finances for the new play equipment. The problem was one of MDDC questioning the ownership of the land rather than accepting this to be the community. The clerk would contact the MDDC officers involved to resolve this and would look to secure legal advice to settle the matter as soon as possible. The effect of

further delay would be have to cut back on the available equipment because prices have risen beyond the scope of the parish council and LYPFT.

2627-007 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

To receive a verbal report for information.

- a) Devon County Council
- b) Mid Devon District Council

Cllr. Keable circulated his monthly report to those present and highlighted the potential for grants for bus shelters being available from DCC. The clerk would investigate this and find out whether it is only for new shelters or for the refurbishment of existing ones.

He also said that Joseph Locke Way in Crediton, between the Tesco roundabout and the railway station was to be brought up to adoptable standards from 29 June 2026 for 4 months including rebuilding the roundabout. This would involve traffic signals and diversions over this time so residents should avoid wherever possible.

The MDDC Local Plan housing numbers were to be increased to 6,000, half of which would be in rural areas, one reason why the Lapford Neighbourhood Plan was important. The Local Plan had to be completed within 30 months, so there would be less consultation, which meant that parish council awareness was important. The target date for this would be April 2028, coinciding with the expected start date for the new Unitary Authority organisation.

Mid Devon was now within the top 10 performing councils nationwide for recycling.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting in line with Standing Orders

2627-008 CLERK'S REPORT & ACTION LIST

The clerk reported on:

The Annual Parish Meeting took place on Saturday 9th May 2026 and this was well attended with a total of 19 reports from Lapford organisations. The whole meeting was positive and one of the best he had attended in his 29 years as a parish clerk.

The temporary fencing near the entrance of the village had been removed. Correspondence with Cloverdown indicated that they were going to install new fencing along that stretch, for the full length, not just the 8 metres covered by the temporary arrangement.

The clerk had spent some time attempting to get the emergency phone in the Orchard Centre working. It had now picked up the Wifi signal but there was still no phone contact. He would contact BT directly to get this sorted out.

2627-009 MINUTES

On a proposal by Cllr. Down, seconded by Cllr. Briant-Evans, it was **Resolved** to approve, as a correct record, the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th April 2026.

2627-010 SIGNATORIES

It was **Agreed** that the bank signatories would remain as Cllrs. Briant-Evans; Julie Down and Bill Graham and the Clerk.

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2627-011 STANDING ORDERS

On a proposal by Cllr. Peter Heal, seconded by Cllr. Graham it was **Resolved** to adopt the Revised Standing Orders.

2627-012 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

On a proposal by Cllr. Peter Heal, seconded by Cllr. Graham it was **Resolved** to adopt the Revised Financial Regulations.

2627-013 RECEIPT OF AGENDAS AND MINUTES ONLINE

On a proposal by Cllr. Peter Heal, seconded by Cllr. Graham it was **Resolved** to accept the receipt of agendas and minutes online.

2627-014 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

On a proposal by Cllr. Peter Heal, seconded by Cllr. Graham it was **Resolved** to continue the current councillors representing the parish council on the outside bodies.

2627-015 BUSINESS RISK ASSESSMENT

On a proposal by Cllr. Peter Heal, seconded by Cllr. Graham it was **Resolved** to adopt the Business Risk assessment for the coming year.

2627-016 INSURANCE POLICY

The Renewal Notice for insurance was awaited, the renewal date being 6 June 2026. The parish council is under contract with Community First Insurance with this being the last year of a 3-year Long Term Agreement (LTA) so the basis of the premium would be the same as last year. On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Peter Heal it was **Resolved** that, subject to the details being circulated to councillors, the clerk would make payment of the premium accordingly.

2627-017 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Internal Auditor's report had been circulated and was very comprehensive in its coverage. The conclusions of the report and potential parish council comments are shown below: -

Audit Point	Internal Audit Findings	Council comments
B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	I recommend the Acceptance of Office form is amended to include formal acceptance to receive information by electronic means in the form " <i>As per Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, I consent to the receipt of all council meeting papers by electronic methods. I understand I may withdraw this consent at any</i>	This has been amended with Graham Heal being the first with the declaration contained (see Minute 2627-005 above)

	time.”	
J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS	The External Auditors report was not presented to council to note in the minutes due to the Clerk being on long term sick leave at the time. It is the recommendation that the clerk present the report at the next available meeting.	Presented at this meeting (see Minute 2627-018 below)
O. DIGITAL AND DATA COMPLIANCE	The council doesn’t have an IT Policy in place and has therefore not met the requirements of Governance Assertion 10. The council must adopt and publish an IT Policy.	Information Technology Policy for adoption (see 2627-019 below)

The comments were **Agreed** by the council.

2627-018 EXTERNAL AUDITOR’S REPORT 2024/2025

The 2024-25 PKF Littlejohn report for the year ended 31st March 2025 was considered in accordance with the requirement of the Internal Auditor. The following matter was brought to attention in the report: -

‘The date for Section 1 has been incorrectly recorded on the AGAR. The minutes of the meeting at which the AGAR was approved have been reviewed and demonstrate that Sections 1 and 2 have been approved in the correct order. The smaller authority should ensure that the correct dates are recorded on the AGAR in future’

This came about because the meeting date on the accounts form had been for 13 May 2024 and not 13 May 2025, just an administrative error. This had not been repeated for 2025-26.

2627-019 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

On a proposal by Cllr. Briant-Evans, seconded by Cllr. Heal, it was **Resolved** to adopt the presented IT Policy.

2627-020 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

On a proposal by Cllr. Peter Heal, seconded by Cllr. Graham, the Statement of Internal Control for the 2025/2026 Financial Year was adopted.

2627-021 2024/2025 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)

- a) On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Briant-Evans, it was **Resolved** to approve The Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026, Section 1 of the AGAR.
- b) On a proposal by Cllr. Heal, seconded by Cllr. Graham, it was **Resolved** to approve The Accounting Statements 2025/2026, Section 2 Of the AGAR.
- c) On a proposal by Cllr. Fletcher, seconded by Cllr. Graham, it was **Resolved** to

publish the 'Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return' with the period for the exercise of public rights running from 3rd June 2026 to 14th July 2026.

2627-022 MEETINGS DATES 2026/2027

Keeping to holding meetings on the first Tuesday of each month would result in the following dates for the coming year.

- 9th June 2026
- 14th July 2026
- 11th August 2026
- 8th September 2026
- 13th October 2026
- 10th November 2026
- 8th December 2026
- 12th January 2027
- 9th February 2027
- 9th March 2027
- 6th April 2027
- 11th May 2027 (AGM)

The District Councillor observed that the first Tuesday of each month clashed with a number of other parish councils in his ward which he had to attend occasionally and Cllr. Fletcher also had difficulty making Tuesdays.

It was concluded that the next meeting would remain as 9th June 2026 and the clerk would look at the possibility of (say) the third Thursday of each month and report back.

2627-023 FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

No feedback was available for village organisations.

2627-024 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) **Celebrations Committee** – there had been no meeting.
- b) **Lapford Emergency Action Plan (LEAP) Committee** – Cllr. Briant-Evans had circulated the minutes of the last meeting with the main matter being the Devon Community Resilience Forum initiative regarding Community Emergency Hubs. Notification had been passed to DCT that Lapford would take part, and a kit had been applied for with an online training session set for 3rd June 2026.

2627-025 CHURCH GREEN TRUST FEEDBACK

There were no Trust meetings this month.

2627-026 LAPFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The update on this had been outlined in the Annual Parish Meeting on the previous Saturday and the minutes of the latest Steering Group meeting were on the website.

2627-027 CREDITON CLUSTER GROUP

It was **Agreed** that the clerk would contact Crediton Town Council and express an interest in taking part and ask for a list of meetings dates and venues.

2627-028 AFFORDABLE COMMUNITY HOUSING

Mandy Goddard from Devon Communities Together had talked to Neighbourhood Plan people on this subject. DCT offers free support from Mandy on delivering affordable housing across Devon tailored to the types of housing required in each parish. This was important for the Neighbourhood Plan and could be delivered by setting up of a Community Land Trust to determine what was to be built, where and who from the parish would be eligible for access to it.

Access to the service would need to come from the parish council rather than the Steering Group. It was **Agreed** that the clerk would contact Mandy Goddard and see what could be done for Lapford.

2627-029 PARISH ASSETS INSPECTION

The inspection carried out by Cllrs. Briant-Evans and Andrews had identified a number of matters requiring some attention. In particular, taken alongside the ROSPA report there were two matters relating to the Toddler playground area – the wooden bench was in need of some attention and the fence surrounding the area had become unravelled to some extent at the bottom. Cllr. Peter Heal undertook to look at these matters and take some action to rectify the problems.

2627-030 SPORT ENGLAND MOVEMENT FUND

Cllr. Graham had chanced upon this fund and asked whether it was appropriate for access by the parish council for its projects. It was **Agreed** that the clerk would investigate whether this fund be pursued for Lapford projects and report back.

2627-031 PLANNING MATTERS

a) APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED

Reference	Location	Proposal
None		

b) APPLICATIONS AFTER THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

No applications had been notified after the agenda had been set.

c) MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL DECISIONS

Reference	Location	Proposal	MDDC Decision
None			

2627-032 RECURRING PAYMENTS

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Graham Heal, it was **Resolved** to approve the following recurring payments for 2026/2027

Payment to	Services	Amount £	Frequency
2025/2026			
Information Commissioners Office	Annual Fee	47.00	Annually
1&1 IONOS	Village Website	35.78	Monthly

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BT Group	Orchard Centre Broadband	60.43	Monthly
Valda Energy	Electricity	Variable	Monthly
Everflow	Water/Sewage	Variable	Monthly
Public Works Loan Board (PWLb)	Loan Repayment	2,249.63	Twice-Yearly
Lloyds Bank	Service Charge	4.25	Monthly

2627-033 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Fletcher, it was **Resolved** to approve the payment of the invoices on the schedule below for the period since the last meeting:

PAYMENTS

Payment to	Services	Month/Ref	Amount £	Payment No.
2026/2027				
S Hemsworth	Salary	May 2026	67.83	2627-03
RJ Martin	Salary	May 2026	568.15	2627-03
HMRC	Tax Deductions	May 2026	158.80	2627-03
HMRC	National Insurance	May 2026	43.97	2627-03
Everflow	Orchard Centre Sewage & Water	May 2026	40.66	DD
BT Group Ltd	Orchard Centre Broadband	May 2026	60.43	DD
IONOS	Village Website Hosting	May 2026	35.78	DD
Adobe	Acrobat Professional	May 2026	19.99	DD
Valda	Orchard Centre Electricity	May 2026	38.00	DD
Lloyds Bank	Service Charge	May 2025	4.25	DD
Playsafety t/a ROSPA	Toddler Play Area Annual Inspection	96289	99.60	2627-04
Playsafety t/a ROSPA	LYPFT Play Equipment Annual Inspection	96490	136.80	2627-04
Mulberry Local Authority Services	Internal Audit	2025-2026	214.50	2627-04

RECEIPTS

Receipt from	Services	Amount £	Method
2026/2027			
HMRC	VAT Refund	784.72	BC

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2627-034 2026/2027 BANK RECONCILIATION AND BUDGET MONITOR

The bank reconciliation and statement of expenditure to date for the month compared to budget ended 30th April 2026 was **noted**.

2627-035 MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

The chairman highlighted *The Devon Local Council Weed Management Survey 2026* by Green Futures and asked whether the council should take part. It was **Agreed** that the clerk would look at the survey and complete what he could for Lapford.

She also mentioned the need for some plants to fill the boxes around the village and Cllr. Peter Heal offered to sort out the supply of these.

2627-036 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr. Briant-Evans pointed out that MDDC had a 'Visit Mid-Devon' section of its website with a Lapford page which seemed to contain out-of-date information.

She also mentioned the MDDC Transfer of Assets process which had been circulated and questioned whether Lapford would be interested in any MDDC assets in the village. The clerk would investigate further and report back on the whys and wherefores.

2627-037 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Lapford Parish Council is Tuesday 9th June 2026.

2627-038 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.



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Action List 12th May 2026 Meeting

Ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	Orchard Centre Adjacent Land	Clerk/MDDC	<i>Awaiting update from MDDC</i>
	Planning Enforcement Issues MDDC was currently overwhelmed by enforcement cases with just one officer to do them. The concentration was on those matters that were dangerous, which none of those in Lapford were.	Clerk/MDDC	<i>MDDC have conducted site visits and conclusions are awaited.</i>
	Ash Dieback To encourage DCC to consider notifying residents of the danger to the highway	Clerk/DCC	<i>DCC Highways List with SK</i>
	Highways	Clerk/DCC	<i>DCC Highways List with SK</i>
	Neighbourhood Plan	Parish Council	<i>Financial position of NP grants outlined for Steering Group. Workplan and timescales to be supplied</i>
	Telephone Box Make safe for use as book swap area.	Cllrs. Heal, Andrews	<i>To be done in May 2026</i>
	Co-option of new councillors	Council	<i>There are still three vacancies Lookout article published, response awaited</i>
	Youth Play Equipment Additional requests	Clerk	<i>Liaise with LYPFT on whether and how the request could be fulfilled.</i>
	Orchard Centre a) <u>Painting of toilet door</u> b) <u>Toilet handrail to be refurbished</u> c) <u>Cleanup of the outside of the Orchard centre and complete the exterior painting</u> d) <u>Entrance into the Orchard Centre by the door can be slippery.</u> e) <u>Hole in archive cupboard as a result of the fuse board being moved</u> f) <u>Repainting of interior and fitting of new notice boards</u>	Councillors	<i>All tasks are pending for the time being</i>

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Action List 12th May 2026 Meeting

Ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	Road Wardens	Clerk & Cllr. Heal	<i>Method statements circulated to councillors</i>
	Footpaths Overgrown Footpaths	Chair & Clerk Cllr. Shapland	<i>Some work done & Cllr. Shapland to be liaised with</i>
	Concrete Bin Disposal To remove the unsightly concrete bin next to the A377	Cllr. Heal	<i>Awaiting dry weather</i>
	Village Maintenance Cleaning of signs To be arranged.	Cllrs Heal & Down	<i>Possibly done by maintenance person</i>
	Village Maintenance Weed Clearance	Cllr. Graham	<i>Possibly done by maintenance person</i>
	SWW and sewage issues	Clerk	<i>MP contacted by Alex</i>
	Orchard Centre Telephone	Clerk	<i>The telephone had been purchased and was installed but was still not working. The clerk would contact BT once again to sort this out</i>
	Local Government Reorganisation To consider the potential effect on the parish of the implementation of the proposals to introduce a Unitary Authority to replace DCC and MDDC	Clerk	<i>The answer will come in July 2026</i>
	Dangerous Tree The tree identified is considered to be a danger to motorists as it is hanging over the highway and only secured by webbing.	Clerk	<i>MDDC to rectify this</i>
	Planning Training Training offered at Lapford for latest planning legislation and proposals		<i>To be on Saturday 23rd May 2026</i>
	Temporary Fencing at Village Entrance The temporary barriers next to the bridge need to be replaced by a permanent fence. The landowners need to be identified and a request made for this to happen.		<i>Cloverdown have responded positively. Questions to be asked about where the temporary barriers have gone.</i>

Action List
12th May 2026 Meeting

Ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	Village Maintenance To appoint someone to undertake general maintenance tasks around the parish either as a contractor or an employee	Cllr. Andrew/Clerk	<i>Awaiting final decision by individual</i>

