

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 15th March 2022

There was a meeting of Lapford Parish Council on Tuesday 15th March 2022 at 7.30pm held in the Victory Hall, Lapford

Members Present: Cllrs Sue Briant-Evans; Roy Andrews; Pat Gowie; John Parsley; Alex Shapland; Abigail Whittaker; Julie Down.

Also Present: District Cllr. Clive Eginton.

In attendance: Rob Martin (Locum Clerk)

Others: 5 members of the public.

Before the meeting commenced the meeting stood in silence to support Ukraine

MINUTES

In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr. Briant-Evans as Vice Chairman took the chair.

2122-204 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Parish Councillors Peter Heal and Stacey Lumsdon. Apologies were also received from County Cllr. Margaret Squires.

2122-205 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)

There were no declarations of interest.

2122-206 LOCAL ORGANISATIONS' REPORTS

- a) Lapford Church Green Trustees - Cllr. Briant-Evans had circulated a report of the charity meeting held on 3rd March 2022, which included an update on the planning situation of the bank restoration project, the inspection needed for the Chestnut Tree and the outstanding Charity Commission submission.
- b) Heart for Lapford Strategy Group – no report.
- c) Heart of Lapford Development Board – no report
- d) Wallingbrook Patient Participation Group – there was nothing new to report.

Standing Orders were suspended and the Chairman declared the meeting closed

2122-207 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mr. Ivan Hall, a member of the public, read a statement regarding what he believed was the position in regard to the lack of youth facilities provided following the development of Lower Town Place and requested that this be investigated with vigour.

Bill Graham had noticed that there was £1,305 in reserve that was the balance of the Calor Gas Rural Fund which was originally obtained to fund the Broadband service for the Orchard Centre. He believed that this money could be used to fund to provide a broadband service to the Victory Hall and other local organisations, such as the congregational and parish churches.

2122-208 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

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County Cllr. Margaret Squires had circulated a report in which she had highlighted the work being done by DCC on expanding broadband connectivity in the rural community. She also outlined the effects in DCC of employing apprentices at all levels which were very positive.

District Cllr. Clive Eginton remarked that the MDDC precept for the next year was to increase by £5 per band D household which was roughly 2%. He also had two bits of planning enforcement information

- Firstly, at Eastmere Farm where the landowner had assured the enforcement officer that no-one would be living in the caravan that was on site.
- Secondly, the intermittent noise nuisance at Popes Wood would be reported to the Environmental Health department at MDDC, if the parish council wanted this to happen.

It was unanimously **Agreed** that Noise Nuisance should be reported to Environmental Health and this would be done by District Cllr. Eginton.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting in line with Standing Orders

2122-209 CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

- a) The Clerk apologised for cancelling the meeting on 2nd March 2022 at the last minute, which was only done because he believed that the parish council should conduct its business in a whiter than white way going forward. He had not published the agenda on the website at the statutory time, although copies had been posted on the noticeboards. There was need to raise the parish council's esteem amongst the community and anything that looked like it was not being completely open would be counter-productive.
- b) The order for the **Internal Auditor** had been placed with IAC, in accordance with the parish decision. The work was to be done online and the necessary records are being produced.
- c) Rob Martin will cease work as a Locum Clerk at the end of March 2022, and become the formal clerk for the foreseeable future. His Contract of Employment is on the Part 2 agenda. He will make a claim for the March work before the end of March to get the payment into the right financial year's accounts.
- d) After that he will run the HMRC Basic Payroll system monthly to determine payments to him and the HMRC.

2122-210 MINUTES

On a proposal by Cllr. Briant-Evans, seconded by Cllr. Down it was unanimously **Resolved** to adopt the minutes of the meeting on 2nd February 2022 as a true record. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman referred to the minutes currently on the website for the 18th January 2022 which she believed to still be an inaccurate version. The Clerk would investigate this and ensure that the posted minutes were the final version.

Each line of the Action List circulated by Cllr. Briant-Evans was then discussed, with the

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following situation report on each item:-

Highways, including Snow Warden & Road Warden – Dealt with as part of the highways meeting, see minute 2122-216 above.

Car Park Signage – The signs still had to be erected.

Tree Felling on playing field – This was now complete.

Varnishing of Benches – this had been put to one side because the Telephone Box repair was more urgent.

Village Clock – There had been an exhibition on the clock in The Ark and an article in the Lookout. A quiz is being held to try to raise money for the repair of the clock.

Grant-Giving Policy – is an item on the agenda, see minute 2122-218 below.

Autumn Briefing by Cllr. Hart – the video had not been circulated by the Chairman yet.

Footpath Issues – Cllr. Shapland reported that some repair work would be done directly by DCC.

Hedge Cutting – this was next to a footpath and it would be best done by the PROW team as it involved a large Oak tree as well as the hedge.

Parish Council Basic Training Session – The Locum Clerk should arrange this urgently now.

Popes Wood & Eastmere Farm – covered as part of the report from the District Councillor, see minute 2122-208 above.

HOLD/PC Grant Agreement – this would be dealt with under the auspices of the Clerk's presentation on the Lower Town Place report in Part 2 of this meeting.

Precept Explanation and Graph – This had been agreed by the Council and just needed to be forwarded to those preparing the Lapford Lookout for publication. The Clerk would also place it on the Parish Council website.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Group Terms of Reference – to be produced by the Locum Clerk with some urgency.

Lapford Voluntary Car Aid – The Locum Clerk needed to write to this organisation explaining that the parish council supports their work.

Section 106 Project List – On this agenda, minute 2122-213 below

Councillor Vacancy – no election had been requested to date and, once the Locum Clerk had heard back from MDDC Electoral Services, the co-option process could be started.

Telephone Box Repair work – Cllr. Andrews had carried out emergency remedial work and had chained the box shut in order to make it safe.

Link between PC website and Village website – the Locum Clerk reported that this had now been done.

Canterbury House Planning query – Cllr. Heal had not yet reported back on this.

2122-211 COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUPS

- a) Lapford Emergency Action Plan Committee – had not met
- b) Regeneration Working Group – had not met
- c) QE2 Jubilee Group – Cllr. Sue Briant-Evans had circulated a report of the group's meeting on 4th March 2022. An action list was now being worked through by the group. It was **Agreed** that the parish council should underwrite the celebrations up to a maximum of £500, but it was hoped that the project would be fully funded without the need for this. The Clerk would produce a set of Terms of Reference for the group before the next meeting.

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2122-212 ORCHARD CENTRE BUILDING AND CAR PARK

The Clerk had circulated a report on his understanding of the current position with the Orchard Centre, for discussion. Cllrs. Parsley and Andrews both expressed concerns about whether the building was secure enough and whether it was currently fit for purpose.

It was **Agreed** that a working party consisting of The Clerk, Cllr. Parsley and Cllr. Andrews would produce a plan for the use and maintenance of the building whilst ensuring its continued use.

2122-213 SECTION 106 FUNDING

The Clerk had circulated a report on the use of the outstanding balances available for Lapford. The Lapford Football Club had requested the use of the more general balance of £4,835.07 towards its capital project to improve facilities. The clerk had discussed this with MDDC and the conclusion was that only the changing room improvements would be eligible for the Section 106 funds and even then, they would have to be available for everyone to use. This would be investigated further, so that a case could be drawn up.

The other uses for the remaining £15,000 would be split between the provision of play equipment and teen facilities. The clerk was aware that the Lapford Youth and Playing Field Trust (LYPFT) were negotiating a new lease for the junior site, and had enquired about the use of this money. The clerk was concerned that this might cause confusion at MDDC and would talk to Brian Madge of LYPFT and discuss a sensible way forward.

2122-214 GRANT AGREEMENT – LAPFORD PARISH COUNCIL/HOLD

Cllr. Parsley had done some research on the status of the grant agreement on his own behalf and not as a councillor. It was explained that he could not be both councillor and member of the public at the same time and that this subject was therefore removed from the agenda.

2122-215 GRASS CUTTING 2022/2023

It was **Agreed** that the clerk would draw up a specification for the work to be done around the village, detailing both the areas of grass to be cut and the frequency of cuts. This would then be advertised in the Lapford Lookout and on the parish council website for quotations to be returned to the Clerk.

2122-216 HIGHWAYS MEETING

The meeting with Steve Tucker and Margaret Squires had taken place and the following notes resulted:

Lapford Roads/Highways Issues

Record of a meeting held in the Ark at 11-00 a.m. 1st March 2022

(Original list of issues considered at the meeting in black type, observations from the meeting in red)

Present Cllrs P Heal, R Andrews, Sue Briant-Evans & Pat Gowie; Margaret Squires County Councillor and Steve Tucker DCC Highways Officer

Potholes

- The road into Lapford from A377 where it crosses the river & railway bridges

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- Road from Blackaditch to Kelland Cottages. Many potholes becoming wider & deeper over the winter. Some were marked for repair several months ago but the situation has now changed for the worse.

Both these issues to be on the DCC Action list. Timing of work is unknown. Not recommended for local Road Warden action due to the nature of the issues.

Flooding

- Road above Kelland Cottages between allotment field and the Football Pitch. Regular deep flood, up to 12 inches, following rain due to uncleared drain. *Has been reported and acknowledged by the County. May be up to local action to locate and clear the drainage system there on a regular basis, and/or cut a drain through into the field.*

Grit Bins

Locations to be agreed so that funding can be applied for

- At the junction of Westgate & Park Road with the main village street.
- In Highfield, as central a location as possible.

New grit bins are only funded in exceptional circumstances. The system now is to look for grit bins in the area which are under used or in an inappropriate place. DCC will then relocate these to a new position identified as being more useful. Any bins identified for moving to be notified to Steve Tucker who will then decide on a suitable new location for them. Look at the DCC website for location of bins.

Road Safety Issues

- Lack of security fencing to protect the gap in the hedge against the precipitous drop to the river. No pedestrian safety barrier or room to step safely off the road to avoid traffic coming around the bend. *Funding was promised to address this at least two years' ago but has not materialised. The issue has been reported many times. Risk assessment needed!*

Steve T had this added to the County list two years' ago, and funding had been set aside for it. Advice now to write to Steve again, copied to Margaret S, restating the problem and its background, and requesting urgent action. It would help to get a backing statement for this from the school plus a copy of the school travel plan. Steve already has photographs to illustrate the problem. He will request that Nigel Flower, DCC Road Safety Officer, also visits the site.

- LHS on A 377 travelling towards Crediton a little before the turning to Morchard Bishop. Ash trees were felled along the road side in the Autumn leaving an exposed direct drop to the field & river below. No verge to act as a refuge and nothing to stop a skidding vehicle falling many feet onto the trees below. (A car skidded off the road just a few yards beyond this point recently due to icy conditions). Has the DCC Road Safety officer investigated? Risk assessment needed. *Steve T will ask Nigel Flower to look at this, however the most he will probably recommend will be reflective warning posts being placed along the roadside. Until there is evidence of danger e.g. loss of life due to an accident no other action is likely. This is due to the cost of preventative action and is a reflection of DCC's interpretation of national policy.*

Training for Volunteers

- Lack of Snow Warden Training. The trained warden has resigned for personal reasons and the replacement warden is finding suitable training hard to come by. *Cllr Andrews (Snow Warden Designate) will meet with Steve T in the village for a training session. Steve T will arrange this. The present Snow Plan may need revision.*

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- Difficulties with the on-line Road Warden Training process. Pat G to undertake the Chapter 8 section of the training in order that any signage used will be insured against accidents. A new system of ordering tools and supplies for pothole repair, delivered to parishes on a pallet, is to go via Steve T. He recommends that Road Wardens concentrate on keeping local water drainage systems clear in order to protect road surfaces. Drain clearing teams visit infrequently. They concentrate on major routes and use mechanical means to clear mud etc which is not always effective for minor roads & lanes.

Note – all these things have been reported many times with no result.

A written response required to back up any verbal promises/agreements.

Better communication would help a great deal.

Other Issues

Street Lights. These to be reported on the DCC website. Each problem light to be identified and reported on individually.

Pot Holes Repair gangs only repair the holes identified on a GPS tracking system. These will have been put into the system up to a month in advance so any unrepaired holes to be reported. The message is to keep re-reporting problems which have not been dealt with. Steve T cannot order repairs to be done, he can only report issues in the same way as a member of the public.

Planned road closures. These can be seen, anywhere in the country, up to two weeks in advance by looking on line at one.network

2122-217 ASSET REGISTER

The Locum Clerk had produced from records available to him, including the Asset Inspection report produced in June 2021, an Asset Register. He stated that this was not a complete document and still needed to populate the spreadsheet with data. What he wanted was a councillor(s) to look at the assets shown on the list to verify their existence and location and to correct any errors of omission or duplication before the final document was adopted. This work would need to be complete by the time of the next meeting in order to properly assess insurance needs for the coming year. **Cllr. Briant-Evans** offered to go through the Asset Register and liaise with the Locum Clerk on its contents.

2122-218 GRANT GIVING POLICY

Cllr. Gowie undertook to look at the application form that was part of the policy in order to make it less onerous to complete. This would be brought back to the next meeting in order to be adopted for the next year's applications for grant.

2122-219 PLANNING MATTERS

a) APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED

The following comment was **Agreed**

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Reference	Location	Proposal
22/00279/HOUSE	31 Highfield, Lapford, Crediton	Erection of single storey side extension Decision: No Objection
22/00026/LBC	Higher Eastington Farmhouse Lapford Crediton Devon EX17 6NE	Listed Building Consent for replacement of fibre cement roof tiles with natural slate; replacement fascia, soffit boards and rainwater goods; replacement of ridge tiles and re-pointing of chimney stacks. Decision: No Objection

b) APPLICATIONS AFTER THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

To consider responses to applications notified after the agenda had been set.

c) MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL DECISIONS

The following MDDC planning decision was **noted**.

Reference	Location	Proposal	Decision
None			

d) APPEAL DECISION

The following appeal decision has been issued since the last meeting.

Reference	Location	Proposal
None		

e) OTHER

There should have been two planning matters mentioned in minute number 2122-194 of the 2nd February 2022 meeting and they were:

- A letter had been received from Mr & Mrs Poole of Easton Barton requesting the Council's opinion of their plan to open a farm shop and cafe at Kelland. Subject to a satisfactory planning application being received, the Council supported the principle of such an idea.
- A member of the public had raised a query about the planning status of Canterbury House now that a business had been started there. As Chairman, Cllr. Heal would enquire of the Planning Officers whether this was an issue.

2122-220 BANK RECONCILIATION

The bank reconciliation for 1st March 2022 was **Adopted**.

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2122-221 RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS COMPARED TO BUDGET

The analysis of budgets compared with Receipts and Payments as at 1st March 2022 was **Adopted**.

2122-222 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

On a proposal by Cllr. Gowie, seconded by Cllr. Whittaker the invoices on the schedule below for the period since the last meeting, were unanimously **Approved**.

PAYMENTS

Payment to	Services	Amount £	Payment No.
2021/2022			
Southern Electric	Orchard Centre Electricity	79.29	DD
Pennon Water Services	Water Supply	85.79	DD
PKF Littlejohn	External Audit 2020/2021	576.00	212219
Victory Hall	Parish Council Meeting – 18 th January	12.00	212219
S. Hemsworth	Cleaning – March 2022	52.00	SO
1&1 Ionos	Village Website Hosting	14.44	DD
BT Group	Telephone & Broadband March 2022	41.28	DD
RJ Martin	Locum Clerk February 2022	768.40	212220
Victory Hall	Jubilee Meeting – 2 nd February	24.00	212220
RJ Martin	Locum Clerk March 2022	Tbc	212221

RECEIPTS

Receipt from	Services	Amount £	Method
2021/2022			
None			

2122-223 MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

Cllr. Briant-Evans brought up the possibility of doing a village litter-pick as part of the wider Keep Britain Tidy project, which was to run from 25th March to 10th April 2022. It was unanimously **Agreed** that the Lapford Litter Pick would be undertaken on 9th April 2022, starting in the Orchard Centre Car Park.

2122-224 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr. Parsley had been approached to ask the question as to what could be done by people vomiting in various parts of the village. There was a conclusion that there is not a lot that could be done.

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Cllr. Whittaker had presented an agreement for the movement of the Church Green noticeboard to outside of the village hall. The Locum clerk had questioned whether this was for the Church Green Committee or the Parish Council. The Chairman stated that this was a parish council responsibility for the future, so it should be considered appropriately.

Cllr. Gowie read an email she had received from the Lapford Voluntary Car Aid group because the Locum Clerk had not responded to their request for grant aid. The Locum Clerk acknowledged this was the case and would do so with urgency.

2122-225 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Lapford Parish Council is scheduled for Wednesday 6th April 2022 at 7.30pm, in the Victory Hall, Lapford. The deadline for agenda items is midday on the Friday two weeks preceding the meeting.

2122-226 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To resolve that under section 1(2) of The Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items of business if publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted as it involves the likely disclosure of personnel, commercially sensitive or legal matters.

On a proposal by the Chairman, it was **Resolved** to require the public to be excluded from the meeting.

PART 2 DECISIONS BASED ON CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The following decisions were made in the Confidential session of the Parish Council

2122-227 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

It was **Resolved** to adopt the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2022.

2122-228 APPOINTMENT OF THE PARISH CLERK

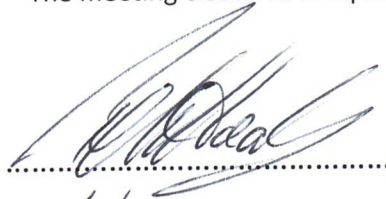
It was **Resolved** that the Clerk's contract should be signed for him to start formally in this role on 1st April 2022.

2122-229 LOWER TOWN PLACE REPORT

It was **Resolved** to allow the Locum Clerk to appoint Roger Taylor of Wellers Law Group to assist in finalising his report up to a maximum of £1,000 plus VAT.

2122-230 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed:  Chairman

Date: 