

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 15th August 2023

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There was a meeting of Lapford Parish Council on Tuesday 15th August 2023 at 7.30pm held in the Orchard Centre, Lapford

Members Present: Cllrs Julie Down (Chairman); Sue Briant-Evans; Ian Wilkie; Alex Shapland; John Burrows; Roy Andrews.

Also Present: District Cllr. Steve Keable.

In attendance: Rob Martin (Clerk)

Others: 3 members of the public.

MINUTES

2324-082 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Bill Graham, Steven Fletcher, Stacey Lumsdon and Abigail Whittaker.

County Cllr. Squires also expressed her apologies.

2324-083 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)

No declarations were made.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow public participation.

2324-084 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION & UPDATES FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Someone had tried once more to light a fire public toilet. The door was always unlocked and maybe it was time to refit a timed lock to the door so that it was unavailable overnight. This matter would be investigated and it was agreed that such a lock be fitted, provided the door does not also need to be replaced. The clerk would pull this together with councillors.

2324-085 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

- a) **Devon County Council** – Cllr. Squires did not attend and there was no report.
- b) **Mid Devon District Council** – Cllr. Keable reported that the new MDDC administration was looking to sort out some of the urgent financial problems, particularly in relation to the 'arms-length' 3 Rivers Company'. It was likely that there would need to be a 'soft closure' of the company to limit the eventual pressure on the precept.

The financial outlook for the next few years was going to mean a reduction in services as government grants were predicted to fall significantly.

There would also be a motion in front of the District Council to encourage the County Council to do something about the appalling state of the roads.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting in line with Standing Orders

2324-086 CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had circulated a report, as follows:

1. Meeting With Chair and Vice-Chair

I met with Julie and Sue in the Orchard Centre on 2nd August from 7pm onwards. The meeting helped us look at continuing the improvement in PC operations and focussed on the tasks identified at the last council meeting and the work necessary to complete them. The revised action list is the result – see below.

2. Defibrillator Pads

The acquisition of new pads became more urgent when the existing one had to be used for real. I contacted ZOLL, the original suppliers of the defibrillator who had supplied subsequent parts orders only to find that they no longer supply parts. They did however put me in touch with their parts 'partners', trading as the **defibshop**, part of the Imperative Training Ltd group who were very good at supplying the required pads within two days, even though the price had doubled since the defibrillator was acquired in 2018.

3. Signposts

I researched the companies supplying signposts only to find that they were numerous, and all provided different styles and sizes, so it will be down to defining exactly what style of sign is required in each case. The materials supplied vary from wood to plastic to metal. Once we have decided what style is required, the right companies can be identified and replacements bought.

4. Land Next to Orchard Centre

I was required to ascertain whether any of the land around the Orchard Centre 'belonged' to the parish council, either as part of the owned building site or the leased car park. Having looked at both the sale documents (land registry) and the signed lease, the conclusion is that these parcels of land are not the parish council's.

5. Lloyds Bank Account

A Lloyds Online Account has been applied for and the confirmatory documents are awaited from the bank. Once these documents are received, I will be requiring the signatories to sign the paperwork and then we can transfer the money in the NatWest account across. The possibility of doing an account automatic transfer between the banks was discussed, but this requires both accounts to have the same signatories which they will not.

This has been done for the Parish Council Account only thus far, as it is sensible to keep the **Church Green Trust** account separate from the parish council one. That is not to say that this account cannot be transferred to Lloyds as well, but it should not be shown as part of the parish account, which it is currently. A charity account can be set up through the bank website whereas a parish council has to be done by phone and the trustees should look to have their own minute defining who the signatories are and not rely on the decision taken by the parish council. The Trustees have to do something as their current signatories are out of date as well and setting up a new separate account might be beneficial.

6. Action List

The Action List sent out with this agenda is based on that produced by Cllr. Briant-Evans for our meeting earlier in August. It is still in its infancy and is still all shown as one set finished or not. The intention is, as time goes by, to separate the completed

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tasks into various sets dependent on whether they are completed, pending or still to be finished.

It is necessary for the description of each task to be complete and detailed, so that there is no confusion about what has been authorized by the council.

2324-087 MINUTES

It was **Resolved** that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18th July 2023 were a correct record and were signed as such.

2324-088 ACTION LIST

The action list was discussed, and the updated version is at Appendix A below.

2324-089 ORCHARD CENTRE WORK

The clerk outlined the need to prioritise the various tasks identified for the Orchard Centre against the other work that is being pursued to ensure that the parish council worked within the funds available. The health and safety matters identified within the building had now been addressed and further work was a matter of choice going forward.

Following the potential for fire damage, as discussed in the public session, there was a need to ensure that the public toilet was locked overnight, so it was agreed that this be put in hand as soon as possible. This led to the question of whether it would be necessary to replace the door which was reportedly rotten at the bottom. It was agreed for the time being to replace the lock with one that could be timed to close the facility overnight.

2324-090 TELEPHONE BOX

It was **Resolved** that the telephone box would remain where it was, still owned by the parish council. There were a number of uses made of these boxes around the country, the most likely possibility for Lapford would be to use it as a book exchange point/swap shop working possibly in conjunction with the Ark. The parish council would refurbish the box, replacing broken glass with plastic and repainting the metalwork. A quotation would be obtained by Cllr. Andrews from Paul Essen for stripping the surface and repainting the outside, as this would take a long time for him to do.

The actions would be for Cllr. Andrews to ensure the electricity supply was appropriately made safe, with an electrician's certificate obtained, and the supply point boxed in.

Cllr. Andrews undertook to install some shelves and arrange for necessary electrical work to be done as well as arranging the painting.

2324-091 HIGHWAYS

Cllr. Briant-Evans had circulated a report of the meeting held with Steve Tucker (DCC Highways) and Councillor Margaret Squires on the many highways issues in Lapford which resulted in the following recommendations for the Parish Council:

- Write directly to Meg Booth, Director of Climate Change, Environment & Transport DCC, regarding any unresolved local roads issues. Also, to request costings for the repair of the road over the bridges as discussed above; the possibility of the DCC contractor carrying out work paid for from Parish Council funds; or the possibility of using a private contractor for the work.

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 15th August 2023

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- That the Parish Council considers using £3k of reserve funds to pay for the work mentioned in the bullet point above.
*It was **Resolved** that a letter be sent to Meg Booth to outline that the Parish Council might be prepared to assist with this work.*
- That the Parish Council resolves to join the Road Warden scheme.
*It was **Resolved** that the parish council nominate someone like Cllr. Wilkie as a Road Warden and that he undertakes training.*

In addition, Cllr. Andrews had written through the website to ask about Snow Warden training but had heard nothing yet. Steve Tucker had asked that anyone willing to do this should contact him directly and he would arrange the training. Cllr. Andrews would write directly to Steve Tucker to request this.

2324-092 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP)

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Area was under its consultation period with representations being made until 18th September 2023. The clerk had put a notification of this on the front page of the website.

The clerk explained that the parish council would need to draw up an initial pool of volunteers to form a **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**, and needed to ensure that representation was as wide as possible. He explained that the first thing to do would be to invite the previous people who had been active with considering the future of the parish to try to draw them into the group and then to invite members of the whole community to come on board on a volunteer basis. The aim is that no-one should be excluded from the invitation to take an active part. The clerk would draw up a list of the initial invitees on the basis of his previous experience both in the Lower Town Place report and in starting a NP process elsewhere.

2324-093 LAPFORD VOLUNTEERING DAY

District Cllr. Keable explained that the weed-spraying activity was no longer conducted by Mid Devon DC so it would be down to individual communities to undertake this type of work for the future.

Cllrs. Briant-Evans & Down proposed that a further 'tidy-up' day in the autumn to do things like clearing weeds from the roadside. The precise activities still had to be determined, but it was necessary to put a date in the diary now. The agreed date was Saturday 14th October 2023, from 10am to 1pm, which would give enough time to advertise it in the Lookout. Cllr. Burrows would provide Bacon Sandwiches which he would cook in the Victory Hall kitchen.

2324-094 FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Parish Council representatives on other bodies to feedback important information from the meetings held since the last council meeting.

(LEAP) Lapford Emergency Action Plan 'Committee'

The LEAP group met on 31st July 2023, and the minutes of this meeting were circulated with the agenda. These minutes were received and **adopted**.

The clerk had been requested to look over the draft LEAP Terms of Reference and to attempt to locate the old LEAP files. He had found no such files.

A **HOLD** directors meeting had been held on the previous Saturday and some notes had been circulated to councillors on their discussions. One of the conclusions was that *'The Youth Club's request for a graffiti board on the inside face of one of the containers was under consideration.'*, which was a surprise to Cllr. Wilkie who was under the impression that this had all been agreed and had arranged for the boards to be purchased already. The delay in making the decision had been caused by concerns about how the boards were going to be attached to the containers without compromising their integrity.

The **Victory Hall** minutes had not been forwarded to the clerk, but Cllr. Andrews summarised the latest meeting. He stated that there was a window looking out over Lower Town Place that was to be changed to a doorway for which planning permission had been applied.

2324-095 CHURCH GREEN TRUST REPORT

To consider the conclusions of the latest meeting of the trust and parish council matters arising therefrom. The clerk had attempted to set up the method for claiming tax rebate but had not yet had a response from HMRC to his application.

2324-096 PLANNING MATTERS

a) APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED

Reference	Location	Proposal
23/01144/CAT	Lapford Church Green & War Memorial Lapford Devon	Notification of intention to remove 1 Chestnut tree and lift the crowns of 3 Chestnut trees to 7.5m above ground level within the Conservation Area. This application had been withdrawn, see below.

b) APPLICATIONS AFTER THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

There were no applications notified after the agenda had been set.

c) MDDC DECISIONS

The following MDDC decisions were **noted**.

Reference	Location	Proposal	MDDC Decision
23/01144/CAT	Lapford Church Green & War Memorial Lapford Devon	Notification of intention to remove 1 Chestnut tree and lift the crowns of 3 Chestnut trees to 7.5m above ground level within the Conservation Area	Withdrawn

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 15th August 2023

Email: clerk@lapfordparishcouncil.org.uk Phone: 07768 829511 Website: www.lapfordparishcouncil.org.uk

23/00859/FULL	Land at NGR 272906 108696 West Lane Lapford Devon	Erection of an agricultural storage building	Permission Granted
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2324-097 BANK RECONCILIATION & BUDGET MONITOR STATEMENT

The Bank Reconciliation and Receipts and Payments statement, as at 31st July 2023 were received and **noted**.

2324-098 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

On a proposal by Cllr. Burrows, seconded by Cllr. Briant-Evans it was **Resolved** to approve the following payments.

PAYMENTS

Payment to	Services	Amount £	Payment No.
2023/2024			
S Hemsworth	Salary August 2023	57.37	SO
RJ Martin	Salary August 2023	505.50	2324-17
HMRC	Tax Deducted August 2023	140.60	2324-17
EDF Energy	Orchard Centre Electricity	56.57	DD
Everflow	Orchard Centre Sewage & Water	3.01	DD
BT Group Ltd	Orchard Centre Broadband	45.12	DD
IONOS	Village Website Hosting	16.84	DD
Steve Munday	Orchard Centre Electrical Inspection	175.00	2324-18
PKF Littlejohn	External Audit	252.00	2324-18
Imperative Training	Defibrillator Pads	412.80	2324-19
Microsoft	Office 365	79.99	2324-20
McAfee	Computer Security	59.99	2324-20
A&S Paving & Supplies	Ply Board	39.31	Card

RECEIPTS

Receipt from	Services	Amount £	Method
2023/2024			
None			

In addition, payments will be made for invoices received since the agenda was set.

2324-099 SCRIBE ACCOUNTS

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 15th August 2023

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The clerk had attended a Zoom meeting with a representative from Scribe, a company that provides accounting facilities solely for parish councils. He had been concerned that the current method of keeping and providing financial information was very much personal to him and would be difficult to maintain for someone less versed in financial matters than he was. The system is very easy to manage and has the features that allow each transaction's details to be recorded at the point of entry, including the order, the Council minute number and the Legal Power used to make the payment.

It was agreed that this would be a good further step in improving the parish council's governance and financial probity in the future and allow a less experienced clerk a better financial tool than the current spreadsheet.

The cost of using this system would be an annual fee of £408 with an additional £249 'onboarding fee' for the initial set-up. The clerk was tasked with finding someone relatively local to show how it works in practice to ensure it was as good as it was portrayed in the webinar and then report back at a future meeting.

2324-100 MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

The Chairman referred to the DALC website and the services they offer. She advised that councillors should log on to the site and consider whether there were matters of training they would want to attend. The clerk had received a response from the Training Officer and was looking to organise a local event for all councillors. Other training on Neighbourhood Plan processes were all available for example.

2324-101 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Cllr. Briant-Evans asked about the email received that day on a Broadband initiative which should perhaps find its way onto the Lookout for general consumption.

William
Cllr. ~~Mackie~~ asked about the diseased trees and whether owners had been notified. The clerk would ensure this was done. He had done a risk assessment on the fence on the bridge where there was an 18-foot drop, which should be sent to highways and Steve Tucker in particular.

2324-102 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Parish Council meeting would be Tuesday 12th September 2023 at 7.30pm in the Orchard Centre.

2324-103 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed:  Chairman Date: 12/9/23

2324	062	Hedge by the burnt down Yeo Vale Cottage very overgrown, impacting on the highway. Owner to be contacted re trimming it back	Clerk	A letter has been sent to the owner requesting hedge reduction. <i>No response had yet been received.</i>
2324	062	Park Meadow Close – footpath. Further work required to stop debris falling onto MOP's drive.	Clerk & Cllr Shapland	Cllr. Shapland has installed boards on either side of the path to stop the detritus washing straight onto the drive. <i>He was thanked for doing this and would keep a watching brief on whether it was working.</i>
2324	062	106 funding for the Playing Field. Cllr Andrews to be contacted.	Clerk	Cllr. Andrews contacted but no response yet. <i>Cllr. Andrews and the clerk would get together an action plan.</i>
2324	064	106 funding for the Football Club	Clerk	Awaiting a response from Nick Tucker who has been sent a follow-up email. <i>A response had been received explaining that a FC committee had looked at what was required and had put forward answers to the questions which still had to be finalised.</i>
2324	064	Youth Council. Reply awaited from Cat Seymour. She is to be contacted about it. Response to be sent to Austin's letter.	Clerk	Response awaited.
2324	064 & 078	Neighbourhood Plan. Contact to be made with MDDC.	Cllr B-E Clerk	<i>This still had to be sent.</i> Contact made, the Development Plan Area designation applied for and subject to public consultation with end-date 18 th September 2023. <i>The clerk had advertised the consultation on the parish council</i>

2324					website. The aim now was to gather a team to form a Steering Group, starting with those known to be active in the past, but also putting feelers out to the whole community for volunteers.
2324	064	MDDC Housing Needs supplementary document. Issues to be summarised.	Clerk		Still to be undertaken.
2324	064	MDDC Walking Festival. Positive response to be sent.	Cllr Burrows		Interest in the project had been notified.
2324	067	Orchard Centre issues. £100 granted for a replacement board for the external notice board.	Cllr Wilkie		Item purchased and awaiting fitting.
		Costs for an OC sign to be investigated.	Cllr Graham		Cllr. Wilkie had arranged for the sign to be produced and it had been fitted.
		Ownership of the adjacent land to be determined.	Clerk		The clerk had researched using the transfer documents for both the car park lease and the Orchard Centre purchase and confirmed that neither included the land in question.
2324	069	Ash Dieback. Ownership of affected trees to be researched and addresses passed to the Clerk.	Cllr Burrows		Cllr. Burrows had confirmed the details of two trees affected. The clerk to notify both.
2324	069	Signposts, prices to be obtained for replacement arms. Request that the Playing Field be added to the central village one.	Clerk		The clerk had researched this online and had identified a number of companies able to do the work. He believed, however, that he needed more specific information sign-by-sign to complete the task. Cllrs. Burrows and Briant-Evans would attempt to get pictures of each sign in order to enable these to be ordered.
		Cleaning of signs to be arranged.	Cllr Lumsdon		This had been arranged for the following Thursday, but now had to be

		Highways to be notified of defective signs which they hold responsibility for.	Cllr B-E	<i>changed due to availability.</i>
2324	073	Councillor profiles. Proforma to be filled in for inclusion in the Lookout and sent to Cllr Lumsden.	All Councillors	<i>This had been done, See report of meeting with Steve Tucker.</i>
2324	074	Planning – Eastmere farm. Additional comments to be sent in to MDDC.	Clerk	<i>Cllr. Lumsdon had produced a set of profiles and pictures which would be used but presented without being stylised both on the website and for the Lookout. There were a few matters of fact to be sorted.</i>
2324	077	To arrange Councillor training, possibly in conjunction with Chawleigh PC	Clerk	<i>This was done promptly.</i>
2324	078	Neighbourhood Plan. When appropriate a public meeting to be called re progressing this.	Parish Council	<i>Dates are still awaited.</i>
				<i>Discussed as part of the main meeting. The clerk would draw up a list of those to be invited initially and a general advertisement for the community at large.</i>