

Lapford Parish Council Annual Meeting 16th May 2023

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Website: www.lapfordparishcouncil.org.uk

The Annual Meeting of Lapford Parish Council was held on Tuesday 16th May 2023 at 7.30pm in the Victory Hall, Lapford

Members Present: Cllrs Julie Down; Bill Graham; Steven Fletcher; Abigail Whittaker; Alex Shapland, Ian Wilkie; John Burrows; Stacey Lumsdon; Sue Briant-Evans.

Also Present: District Cllr. Steve Keable.

In attendance: Rob Martin (Clerk)

Others: 7 members of the public.

MINUTES

In the absence of the previous chairman, Cllr. Down as the previous council's vice chairman, took the chair for the election of the new council's chairman.

2324-001 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

On a proposal by Cllr. Fletcher, seconded by Cllr. Lumsdon it was unanimously **Resolved** that Cllr. Down be Chairman for the coming year.

2324-002 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Cllr. Andrews.

Apologies had also been received from County Cllr. Squires.

2324-003 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE FORMS

Each councillor then made a declaration of acceptance of office witnessed by the parish clerk.

2324-004 REGISTERS OF INTEREST

Councillors handed their completed Registers of Interests forms to the parish clerk, who would ensure the safe passage to the District Council Electoral Office.

Councillors were reminded that they have a responsibility to submit a signed Election Expenses Form to MDDC directly within 28 days of the election.

2324-005 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Fletcher it was unanimously **Resolved** that Cllr. Briant-Evans serve as Vice-Chairman for the coming year.

2324-006 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)

No declarations of interest were declared.

The Chairman to adjourn the meeting to allow public participation

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2324-007 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

A member of the public thanked the successful councillors for putting their names forward and forming a truly 'new' council and looked forward to a different approach from it where it would grasp the nettle of the matters the community were concerned about with honesty and integrity.

Concern was expressed about the apparent random striking of the newly refurbished village clock. Cllr. Graham explained that the apparently random strikes were due to the training of new bellringers and not the clock. Further bellringing volunteers would be welcomed.

A further person reiterated his thanks for forming the council which was much changed from the rather divisive situation over the last few years. It was now time to move on and look forward.

The parish council needed to be better at telling the public what it is doing.

2324-008 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

To receive a verbal report for information.

- a) Devon County Council – Cllr. Squires was not present and there was no County Council report.
- b) Mid Devon District Council – Cllr. Keable explained that whilst he was canvassing for the election, it was apparent that the public in the village were not aware of who the parish councillors were individually. He congratulated the councillors in being elected and pointed out that the turnout in Lapford was the highest in Mid-Devon at 48.6% which reinforced the wish to move on. He was convinced that people turned out to vote for change. He had witnessed a District Council wish to embrace change and to do things differently.

Cllr. Keable would be holding a village surgery at the village market on the fourth Saturday of the month between 10.00am and 11.00am, following which he would move on to Chawleigh and Wembworthy. In addition he would hold a surgery at the Crediton Farmers Market on the first Saturday of each month.

The Chairman to reconvene the meeting in line with Standing Orders

2324-009 CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk reported as follows:

1. General

A great deal of water has gone under the bridge since the last meeting on 11th April 2023. The agenda for this meeting is very long and includes a good deal of 'setting-up' processes for the new council.

2. Parish Council Elections

The Lapford Parish Council election took place on 4th May 2023 with twelve candidates for the ten councillor positions. The result was that both Peter Heal and Malcolm Hayes have to stand down and councillors Stacey Lumsdon and Sue Briant-Evans have returned, alongside new councillors John Burrows and Ian Wilkie. I am sure the

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parish council will thank Peter and Malcolm for their time and work on the council, particularly Peter who has been a councillor for many, many years. John Parsley and Ivan Hall decided not to apply this time and they are also thanked for their contributions. There is a complicated process for setting up the new council, which is one of the reasons this agenda is so lengthy.

3. Internal Audit

The process for the Internal Audit to take place was undergone from start to finish since the last meeting, with the resultant report indicating some minor process transgressions but a clear audit nonetheless. The parish council has clearly come a long way from the 2019/2020 audit which resulted in a Public Interest Report having failed to agree final accounts or complete an Annual Return.

4. Job Applications

Two applications for the job of parish clerk have been received and these are included in the confidential section at the end of this meeting. I have indicated that if this fails to produce a satisfactory outcome, I will be prepared to remain as parish clerk for the next year at least. It would be good to have something positive to remember Lapford by.

5. Action Lists

I am aware that the previous production of an action list has slipped by the board and am keen to start this up again. The problem with having the list on each agenda was that the first half an hour of every meeting was taken up with discussing each line on the list, with just a series of vague promises resulting from the discussion. If this list is to be started again, I believe it needs to be more dynamic with councillors and clerk working together between meetings to move things on. This will need to be developed further, but I will bring something to the next meeting in June as a possible way forward.

6. Annual Parish Meeting

Having discussed this with some councillors it was believed that in order to undertake this meeting properly, having the Annual Parish Meeting on the same night was impractical. For this reason and, in an attempt to engage with other members of the community on the future direction of the parish council, an alternative date is needed to hold the APM before the end of May, the deadline set in legislation.

2324-010

MINUTES

On a proposal by the chairman, it was **Resolved** that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th April 2023 were a correct record and were signed as such.

2324-011

SIGNATORIES

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Whittaker it was **Resolved** that the bank signatories would be Rob Martin (Parish Clerk for access to the online system); Cllrs Down, Briant-Evans & Lumsdon.

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The parish clerk had made a number of previous failed attempts to change the account details online and would need to take a different route to achieving the required changes. He would attempt to make the changes by contacting NatWest by telephone. If that meant that it was too difficult to achieve, he would look to change the bank to Lloyds in order to effectively start again.

2324-012 BANK DEBIT CARD

At the same time as looking to solve the banking issues with NatWest the clerk would obtain the paperwork to set up a bank debit card, with the conditions for its use to be determined at a future meeting.

2324-013 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

On a proposal by the chairman, seconded by Cllr. Graham it was **Resolved** that Lapford Parish Council adopt the **General Power of Competence** for the coming four years.

2324-014 PARISH COUNCIL LAPTOP

On a proposal by Cllr. Lumsdon, seconded by Cllr. Fletcher it was **Resolved** that the clerk arrange for the purchase of a Lenovo IdeaPad 3i Laptop, available from John Lewis at £399.99 (including VAT) which comes with a 2-Year John Lewis guarantee. This would replace the current laptop, which was coming to the end of its practical life.

2324-015 RECEIPTS OF AGENDAS AND MINUTES ONLINE

On a proposal by Cllr. Whittaker, seconded by Cllr. Graham it was **Resolved** that agendas and minutes would be sent to councillors by email rather than by posting, for all councillors.

2324-016 COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION

There were a number of committees and groups for which councillors were to be nominated but this would require the parish council to determine what groups were going to be in operation going forward. It was believed that some allocations of councillors needed to be made straight away. These were:

Trustee for **Heart of Lapford Development Company (HOLD)**

- On a proposal Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Lumsdon it was **Resolved** that **Cllr. Burrows** be nominated to represent the parish council. Cllr. Graham said that the next meeting would be on 19th May 2023 and Cllr. Burrows would be welcome to attend that meeting.

Lapford Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC)

- In his absence, it was agreed that **Cllr. Andrews** continue to represent the parish council on VHMC.

Lapford Youth and Playing Field Trust (LYPFT)

- In his absence, it was agreed that **Cllr. Andrews** continue to represent the parish council on LYPFT.

Lapford Emergency Action Plan Committee (LEAP)

- The re-emergence of this committee was believed to be urgent partly to consider the parlous state of the highways with **Cllrs. Briant-Evans, Wilkie, Graham, Fletcher and Lumsdon**, alongside **Steve Keable** allocated as its membership. The first meeting of this committee would be 23th May at 7.30 in the Orchard Centre.

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- The committee would need to consider the setting up of a Road Warden and a Snow Warden.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- Cllr. Shapland would continue to coordinate the PROW work.

Highways

- Cllr. Graham would retain the lead role in pursuing highways matters.

The remainder of the representations would need to be dealt with at a future meeting.

2324-017

MEETINGS DATES 2023/2024

On a proposal by the chairman, it was **Resolved** that:

- a) The current accepted principle that meetings will generally be held on the third Tuesday of every month (2nd Tuesday if clerk not available) including August was agreed, and
- b) The meetings dates for the coming year would be:
 - 20th June 2023
 - 18th July 2023
 - 15th August 2023
 - 12th September 2023 (2nd Tuesday)
 - 17th October 2023
 - 14th November 2023 (2nd Tuesday)
 - 19th December 2023
 - 16th January 2024
 - 20th February 2024
 - 19th March 2024
 - 14th May 2024 (AGM & APM) (2nd Tuesday)

2324-018

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AGENDA

The **Lapford Annual Parish Meeting** will take place on Tuesday 30th May 2023 at 7.30 in the Village Hall. The normal business of such a meeting would be included, such as reports of the local organisations over the last year, but the focus would be on encouraging residents to engage with the future of the village and to help determine the direction of travel for the parish council and other village groups.

2324-019

PLANNING MATTERS

a) APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED

To consider the following Planning Applications and to agree comments:

Reference	Location	Proposal
23/00628/HOUSE	10 Park Meadow Close Lapford Crediton	Erection of two storey rear extension Decision: Support
23/00277/FULL	Land and Building at NGR 273983 110608 (Tall Trees) Lapford Devon	Conversion of agricultural building to holiday let

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		Decision: Objection on basis that this was an inappropriate development for the site
23/00610/FULL	Eastmere Farm Lapford Crediton	Erection of an agricultural utility building Decision: Possible Objection after obtaining further information from the planners first

b) APPLICATIONS AFTER THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

None

c) MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL DECISIONS

The following planning decisions were **Noted**

Reference	Location	Proposal	MDDC Decision
22/02113/HOUSE	Lapford Mill House, Lapford Mill and Millstream Cottage Lapford Crediton Devon	Retention of a log store with platform and external staircase to Mill	Full Permission Granted
22/02110/LBC	Lapford Mill House, Lapford Mill and Millstream Cottage Lapford Crediton Devon	Listed Building Consent for the erection of a log store with platform and external staircase to Mill	LBC Granted
23/00229/FULL	Land at NGR 272651 108072 (North Of Lapford Bridge) Lapford Devon	Relocation and widening of vehicular access	Full Permission Granted

2324-020

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

A Freedom of Information request has been made requesting historic information on the past FOI requests for Lower Town Place and the cost of producing the report. The clerk will write a response to this request, and clear a draft with councillors before sending a response.

2324-021

ORCHARD CENTRE

The fixed wire inspection report had identified a number of matters that needed to be rectified in the medium term, including the need to move the electricity consumer unit from the archive cupboard. It also mentioned the socket within the toilet section of the building as being unsatisfactory. It was clear that, alongside the Fire Risk Assessment

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matters, some work was necessary on the Orchard Centre to comply with legal requirements.

The clerk also stated that it would be necessary to work with the Village Archive LP2K group to ensure that any changes did not compromise the Orchard Centres suitability for storage of the paperwork. A meeting with the people responsible for the Archive would be arranged involving the clerk and Cllr. Fletcher.

2324-022

RECURRING PAYMENTS

The following recurring payments for 2023/2024 were **Approved**

Payment to	Services	Amount £	Frequency
2023/2024			
Information Commissioners Office	Fee	35.00	Annually
1&1 IONOS	Village Website	14.44	Monthly
BT Group	Orchard Centre Broadband	45.12	Monthly
EON	Electricity	Variable	Monthly
Everflow	Water/Sewage	Variable	Monthly
Public Works Loan Board (PWLb)	Loan Repayment	2,249.63	Twice-Yearly

2324-023

ASSET REGISTER & INSURANCE POLICY

The insurance premium for the coming year is due on 5th June 2023. The current insurance is with Zurich, through the Community Insurance agency for parish councils and charities. The premium being requested is for £544.99 and the parish council is in a Long-Term Agreement (LTA) which lasts until 4 June 2024, so subject to adjustments believed necessary as per the attached Asset Register.

The attached Asset Register shows in the last column what the Clerk is suggesting the cover should be for the next twelve months based on this detailed version. Increasing the overall cover will increase the premium, on the basis of the rates contained within the LTA.

The Internal Auditor also required the parish council to look at the level of Fidelity Guarantee cover to ensure it was sufficient. The basic principle is to cover the maximum amount expected to be in the bank account during the year, valued at the overall reserves (£30,205 at 1st April 2023) plus half of the precept (£12,500) which is lower than the cover in the policy of £50,000.

On a proposal by Cllr. Lumsdon, seconded by Cllr. Braint-Evans it was **Resolved** to

- Increase the All Risks cover to that shown in the Asset Register, and
- Leave the Fidelity Guarantee cover from its current £50,000.
- Delegate the power to make payment of the resultant premium to the clerk

2324-024

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Whittaker, it was **Resolved** to approve the payment of the invoices on the schedule below.

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PAYMENTS

Payment to	Services	Amount £	Payment Type/No.
2023/2024			
RJ Martin	Clerk's Salary (April 2022)	505.70	222304
HMRC	Tax Deduction (April 2022)	126.20	222304
Sue Hemsworth	Public Toilet Cleaning	57.30	SO
1&1 Ionos	Village Website	16.84	DD
BT Group	Orchard Centre Broadband	51.62	DD
Everflow	Water/Sewage	27.07	DD
Public Works Loan Board (PWLb)	Loan Repayment	2,249.63	DD
Devon Association of LC	Annual Subscription	294.78	2324-02
Clyst Honiton PC	SLCC Subscription Share	67.00	2324-02
Julie Down – Makro	Toilet Consumables	18.59	2324-03
RJ Martin	Stationery	109.91	2324-04
Victory Hall	Room Hire	12.00	2324-05
Emazdad the Magician	Coronation Party Magician	375.00	2324-05
Goodwin Electrical	PAT Testing	56.00	2324-05
Information Commissioner	Annual Fee	35.00	DD
RJ Martin	Clerk's Salary (May 2022)	505.50	2324-06
HMRC	Tax Deduction (May 2022)	155.00	2324-06
S Hemsworth	Public Toilet Cleaning	57.17	SO
EDF Energy	Orchard Centre Electricity	9.48	DD
Mulberry & Co.	Internal Audit	270.00	2324-07
Community First	Insurance Premium	544.99	2324-07

RECEIPTS

Receipt from	Services	Amount £	Method
2023/2024			
Mid Devon District Council	Precept	12,500.00	BGC
HMRC	VAT Refund to 31 st March 2023	1,728.61	BGC

2324-025

2022/2023 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

On a proposal by Cllr. Lumsdon, seconded by Cllr. Burrows it was **Resolved** that the attached report from the Internal Auditor be adopted.

The AGAR return had been adjusted to take on board the Internal Auditors observations.

2324-026

FINAL ACCOUNTS 2022/2023

On a proposal by Cllr. Briant-Evans, seconded by Cllr. Graham, it was **Resolved**

- To approve and adopt the final accounts for 2022/2023, including the Receipts and Payments Account, Bank Reconciliation and Statement of Reserves

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- b) To note the Receipts and Payments compared with budgets statement.

2324-027 **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2022/23**

On a proposal by Cllr. Lumsdon, seconded by Cllr. Graham, it was **Resolved** to approve

- a) AGAR Section 1 –The Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023, and
- b) AGAR Section 2 –The Accounting Statements 2022/2023.
- c) The posting of the Provision of Public Rights of Inspection notice on the noticeboard and website.

2324-028 **MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR**

The chair had nothing further to add.

2324-029 **COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Cllr. Briant-Evans highlighted damage to the bridge at the entrance to the village which had already been reported, apparently. It would be necessary to keep an eye on this. She also said that various footpaths needed to be trimmed.

Cllr. Whittaker reminded councillors that there would be a Church Green Trustee meeting on 8th June 2023 at the Orchard Centre.

Cllr. Shapland asked about whether there was any progress on the Section 106 finance available for the football team project. The clerk indicated that this was in danger of being forgotten about and undertook to raise the matter with district officers urgently.

Cllr. Graham questioned the decision made in October 2022 to divide the Calor Gas grant equally between the four venues, on the basis that the Village Hall had now arranged for Airband broadband to be installed, he believed free of charge. There was apparently no information on what the ongoing costs of the provision were however. The clerk undertook to request information on what the village hall's contract with Airband contained and would report back.

2324-030 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting of Lapford Parish Council is Tuesday 20th June 2023.

2324-031 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

On a proposal by the chairman, it was **Resolved** 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.

2324-032 **APPOINTMENT OF PARISH CLERK (CONFIDENTIAL)**

It was **Resolved** to offer an interview to one candidate for the position of Parish Clerk.

2324-033 **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 10.25pm

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Signed:  Chairman Date: 20/6/23