

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

There was a meeting of Lapford Parish Council on Tuesday 17th October 2023 at 7.30pm held in the Orchard Centre, Lapford

Members Present: Cllrs Julie Down (Chairman); Sue Briant-Evans; Ian Wilkie; John Burrows; Roy Andrews; Stacey Lumsdon; Bill Graham.

Also Present: District Cllr. Steve Keable (From 8.00pm); Michelle Maidment (Openreach)

In attendance: Rob Martin (Clerk)

Others: 7 members of the public.

MINUTES

2324-132 APOLOGIES

County Councillor Squires had apologised for family related reasons.

2324-133 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)

There were no declarations of interest made.

The Chairman to adjourn the meeting to allow public participation

2324-134 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION & UPDATES FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

A resident requested that the signed versions of the minutes on the parish council website should be updated more frequently. The clerk undertook to bring the current position up to date.

Concern was expressed about trees overhanging the road in the bottom section of Eastington Lane, between Moorland View and Hill Lane, which the clerk would report to Devon County Highways. The property owner had already been contacted twice with no response to date.

Parish councillors were thanked for organising the village clear-up on 14th October 2023 which had made a big improvement in how the village looks. The chairman wanted to thank all those that took part.

The clerk was reminded that the payment for the remembrance wreath which was handed to the chairman, still had to be made.

2324-135 OPENREACH CAMPAIGN

Michelle Maidment representing Openreach was given the opportunity to outline the Openreach campaign she was undertaken to improve broadband connections in the area covered by the Lapford exchange.

She explained that Openreach were looking to upgrade the broadband connection for up to 800 properties in Lapford and surrounding parishes by installing fibre connections from



Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

where they finish now, mostly the nearest junction box, to each home. Most homes in Lapford still had copper wire connections from the junction box that did not allow the best broadband services to be delivered. There was government grant of £4,500 per household available by means of a voucher code to enable this work to be undertaken and Openreach was looking to obtain access to as many of these vouchers as possible to enable a block job to be undertaken. She was looking for a minimum total of 240 of which 81 had already signed up and was looking to get to the target by Christmas 2023.

Copper wire connections suffer from a number of potential problems giving a lack of security to broadband connections which do not occur with fibre connections. There are certain situations where upgrading is not advised and individuals with alarm system connections, for instance, should check with their service provider before signing up.

The aim is to get as many as possible with access to 'Ultrafast' broadband which is up to 10 times as fast as the average connection. Users who upgrade will need to change their broadband package to benefit from the fibre connection which will be notified to users as complete by a government email.

There were a number of questions from those present and Michelle was thanked for her presentation. The clerk would feature this on the website. To pledge a voucher people should access www.openreach.co.uk/connectmycommunity

Michelle was invited to attend the Lapford Village Markets, the next one of which would be held on 28th October 2023, or the following one on 25th November 2023.

2324-136 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

To receive a verbal report for information.

- a) Devon County Council – there was no report available from Cllr. Squires.
- b) Mid Devon District Council – Steve Keable's had circulated a report a copy of which can be seen [here](#)

The Chairman to reconvene the meeting in line with Standing Orders

2324-137 CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk had circulated the following report to councillors:

1. Meeting With Chair and Vice-Chair

I met with Julie and Sue in the Orchard Centre on 3rd October from 7.30pm onwards. The meeting helped to continue to keep us up to date and to refine the way we progress the parish council business. There will be continuous changes to make parish business more efficient and effective.

2. Lloyds Bank Account

The necessary forms have been signed by signatories and have been submitted. A response is awaited from the bank.

This has still 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

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

not be shown as part of the parish account, which it is currently.

A list of Church Green Trustees is required to be able to set the account up.

At the meeting the clerk indicated that the only thing left to do was for Cllr. Briant-Evans to provide the bank with identification, as they could not identify her online.

3. Parish Clerk's Time

At the meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman the clerk presented information on the work carried out over the last 6 months, with the conclusion that he was consistently doing more hours than he was paid for. At the next meeting, he would produce a report that would look at this in more detail with suggestions about what he could cut back on, what others could do for him and what the acceptable number of hours would be going forward. This was especially important given the uncertain effects on his workload would be once the Neighbourhood Plan work was underway.

As an indication of the scale of the matter, his records indicated that the clerk was working an average of 54 hours per month for Lapford, compared to the 35 hours in his contract.

4. Action List

The completed matters have been removed from the Action List and new ones have been added. There are matters on the list that need to be updated. These include:

- Follow-ups on the overgrown hedge at Yeo Vale Cottage, Section 106 for the Playing Field and Football Club, Youth Council.
- Setting up a public meeting for the Neighbourhood Plan
- Cleaning the signs, possibly using a contractor for the work
- Update on the progress of the telephone box work

In addition, he had just received responses by telephone and email to the letter sent to Meg Booth and others on the **Lapford Bridge Repairs**.

He explained the financial background to the Highways position which by all accounts was dire. It was appreciated however that the condition of the highway on both sides of the bridge was structurally compromised and dangerous. The conclusion was that a fairly costly (£60,000 to £100,000) structural job was being worked up which would be put on the future programme of work, the earliest date for which would be sometime in 2025/26 and possibly later. In the meantime, the highways department would send the 'Dragon Patcher' team to carry out repair works to the road surface which would make the highway safe for the time being. This work would be carried out before the end of December 2023, probably earlier but that was dependent on weather and availability. The cost of the 'Dragon Patcher' would be £3,000 and the work would take two days to complete, but the parish council would not be charged with this sum despite having offered to pay for it.

This was generally believed to be a very positive result and the parish council looked forward to seeing it come to fruition. Cllr. Graham was concerned about the potential road closure for two days questioning whether it would still be open to pedestrians, whose only alternative route would involve walking along the A377, and the clerk would ask highways about this. The clerk had already requested early notification of the likely start date and would communicate that as soon as it was received.

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

2324-138 MINUTES

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Burrows, it was **Resolved** that the circulated draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th September 2023 were a correct record of the meeting and were then signed as such.

2324-139 ACTION LIST

The clerk indicated that he had sent follow-up emails on the overgrown hedge at Yeo Vale Cottage, Section 106 for the Playing Field and Football Club, Youth Council.

The neighbourhood plan was on the agenda later in this meeting.

The Chairman confirmed that she had tried to contact the volunteer on the sign-cleaning to no avail and wished to thank those who had already cleaned some signs of their own volition.

The telephone box disconnection was also on the agenda for this meeting.

2324-140 LAPFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- a) The **Lapford Neighbourhood Area** designation has been agreed.
- b) A response had been received from the Neighbourhood Plan Support team at EDDC in which the request to provide someone to come to a public meeting to outline what a Neighbourhood Plan entailed had been refused on the basis of a lack of resources. District Cllr. Keable would discuss the matter with the officers involved to see if something could be done.
- c) The public meeting would be organised once the presentation had been organised.

2324-141 LAPFORD EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN COMMITTEE (LEAP)

On a proposal by Cllr. Briant-Evans, seconded by Cllr. Down it was **Resolved** to adopt the minutes from the LEAP meeting held on 5th October 2023.

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Lumsdon, it was **Resolved** that the circulated Terms of Reference for the committee were ratified.

The clerk would contact highways and request county to provide advance warning of works such as drainage to attempt to ensure that cars are moved before the work is to be done.

The clerk to thank highways for clearing the obscured sign and request the fencing at that site to be replaced, or for a specification so that the parish councils can investigate doing the work.

The parish council to install further grit bins (See agenda item).

The parish council replace the Orchard Centre WiFi router and perhaps reduce the charge. The clerk had just received an email from BT asking whether their contract should be reviewed and renewed. He would investigate options going forward.

~~W. Evans~~
Cllr. ~~Briant-Evans~~ had been contacted by the owner of The Mill which had suffered flooding due to blocked highway drains and the parish council had been asked whether sand-bags

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

could be provided to help with this. The clerk would investigate whether the District/County Councils had empty bags available as the ones in stock had been filled and provided for this purpose with the 13 bags in hand had been filled with half a bin of sand. The locks on the bins had corroded and had to be cut off, and these had required replacements to be bought. It was agreed that Cllr. Wilkie would be reimbursed £45.98 for the cost of the locks.

Cllr. Briant-Evans also stated that she believed there should be a reserve balance of £2,166 for the committee's activities, which the clerk confirmed was the case.

The next LEAP meeting would be on Wednesday 1st November 2023 at 7.30pm in the Orchard Centre.

2324-142 **FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

Cllr. Burrows reported from a HOLD meeting held on 23rd September 2023. There was a bank balance of £8,333, the new Governance document had got to the point of needing legal advice, the Gardening Group would take part in the tidy-up day (which it did), the Youth Club was in need of more adult help, amongst others. A working Group would be set up to look at the assets stored in the containers and the date of the next meeting would be 17th November 2023. The HOLD AGM would take place on Saturday 21st October 2023 at 2pm.

Cllr. Burrows had also attended the DALC AGM and Conference, which he reported as providing a good lunch.

2324-143 **CHURCH GREEN TRUST REPORT**

Cllr. Briant-Evans reported that the trust's insurance premium had been paid for the coming year and that the dead Chesnut Tree would need to be sorted in an appropriate way.

The Annual Meeting would be on Tuesday 7th November 2023 in the Orchard Centre at 7.30pm

2324-144 **TRAINING IN THE ARK**

The chairman believed that the session was very successful, and all attendees learned something new. On a proposed from the chairman, seconded by Cllr. Andrews it was **Resolved** that a donation of £50 be made to **The Ark** for allowing the use of the building.

2324-145 **DESIGN A PARISH LOGO COMPETITION**

It was agreed to the setting up of a competition to design a parish council logo.

Cllr. Briant-Evans suggested that putting a notice in the Lookout for December could be followed by displaying entries in The Ark once the art exhibition is removed at the end of January 2024. This would enable people using The Ark to vote on which one they believed should be adopted as a new logo. It would also be an opportunity to put up display boards advertising the work of the parish council and explaining who does what in the wider local government arena. This approach was agreed as a good idea.

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

It is anticipated that this will be available to all in the parish, young and old, with the chosen logo being used on all correspondence, the website and official paperwork and notices.

2324-146 D-DAY COMMEMORATION

It was **agreed** that Lapford should do something for the D-Day commemoration, and this would be discussed at an Events Committee meeting before Christmas to work up some ideas for this event. The clerk advised that there was a total of £794 reserved for future events.

2324-147 ORCHARD CENTRE CCTV

After much discussion, it was concluded that the risk of the camera being vandalised and the limited benefit of such cameras to put the idea on hold for the time being.

2324-148 TELEPHONE BOX ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

On a proposal by Cllr. Down, seconded by Cllr. Fletcher, the quotation from National Grid to cut off the power supply to the telephone box, in the sum of £456.44, excluding VAT, would be accepted. The clerk would arrange for the order to be sent.

2324-149 ROAD SIGN REPLACEMENT

The chairman reported that she had returned the COLEFORD sign to its rightful place, but the missing LAPFORD sign had not yet reappeared. It was decided to leave getting a replacement until more time had passed as there was still the possibility it could be recovered from a hedge somewhere.

On a proposal by Cllr. Andrews, seconded by Cllr. Burrows, it was **Resolved** to accept the quotation from Road Signs Direct for the provision of 5 new finger signs in the sum of £399, plus VAT. The clerk would arrange for the order to be sent.

2324-150 MDDC AUTUMN NEIGHBOURHOOD WALKABOUTS

The District Council is conducting the Lapford Neighbourhood Walkabout is to take place on Thursday 2nd November 2023. It was **agreed** that Cllr. Wilkie would accompany the MDDC staff on this, but he needed to know what time this would happen.

2324-151 PENSIONERS' LUNCHESES

On a proposal by Cllr. Andrews, seconded by Cllr. Wilkie, it was **Resolved** to pay a grant of £300 to the Victory Hall to support the provision of Christmas Lunches for over 65's in Lapford.

2324-152 CITIZENS ADVICE

The parish council can support Citizens Advice using Section 142 of the Local government Act 1972 and a letter was received requesting such support stating that 78 Lapford residents had been helped in the 2022/23 year.

On a proposal by Cllr. Wilkie, seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was **Resolved** that Citizens Advice would be invited to a future meeting to put the case for support, provided they submit a completed grant application form.

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

2324-153 GRIT BINS

On a proposal from Cllr. Lumsdon, seconded by Cllr. Briant-Evans, it was **Resolved** to purchase three grit bins from Amazon, at the price of £135 including VAT, resulting in an overall cost to the parish council of £337.50.

2324-154 PLANNING MATTERS

a) APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED

To consider the following Planning Applications and to agree comments:

Reference	Location	Proposal
23/01581/FULL	Victory Hall Lapford Crediton	Alterations to existing porch to provide disabled access. Decision: Support

b) APPLICATIONS AFTER THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

Responses to applications notified after the agenda had been set:

23/01463/FULL	Land at NGR 272610 106518 Kelland Barton Lapford Devon	Erection of a farm shop and cafe with associated parking Decision: Site Visit to be requested
23/01597/HOUSE	Stonegate Cottage Popes Lane Lapford	Erection of a two-storey extension Decision: Site Visit to be requested
23/01584/	Stonegate Cottage Popes Lane Lapford	Erection of a dwelling Decision: Site Visit to be requested

c) MDDC DECISIONS

Reference	Location	Proposal	MDDC Decision
23/00628/HOUSE	10 Park Meadow Close Lapford Crediton Devon	Erection of first floor gable extensions	Full Permission Granted

2324-155 HMRC PAYMENT SEPTEMBER 2023

The clerk has inadvertently paid HMRC too much for tax deduction for September 2023, paying £505.50 instead of £140.60. His intention is to cease further payments for the months of October and November with a part-payment in December 2023 to catch up.

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

Following that, the payments for January, February and March will revert back to the sum that is due monthly.

This was **noted**.

2324-156 BANK RECONCILIATION & BUDGET MONITOR STATEMENT

To receive and note the attached Bank Reconciliation and Receipts and Payments statement, as at 30th September 2023.

These were **noted**.

2324-157 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

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

2324-158 PAYMENTS

Payment to	Services	Amount £	Payment No.
2023/2024			
S Hemsworth	Salary October 2023	57.37	SO
RJ Martin	Salary October 2023	505.50	2324-24
EDF Energy	Orchard Centre Electricity	30.35	DD
Everflow	Orchard Centre Sewage & Water	21.10	DD
BT Group Ltd	Orchard Centre Broadband	45.12	DD
IONOS	Village Website Hosting	16.84	DD
Mid Devon District Council	Parish Council Election May 2023	1,736.46	2324-23
DALC	AGM & Conference attendance	54.00	2324-25
The Ark	Donation for Training Use	50.00	2324-26
Ian Wilkie	Locks for Bins	45.98	2324-26
Sue Briant-Evans	Clean-up day Provisions	13.80	2324-26
Victory Hall	Pensioners' meals Grant	300.00	2324-26
National Rocksalt Ltd	Salt Bins	405.00	2324-26
National Grid	Telephone Box Disconnection	547.73	2324-27

RECEIPTS

Receipt from	Services	Amount £	Method
2023/2024			
Mid Devon District Council	Precept	12,500.00	BGC

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

2324-159 2024/2025 BUDGET AND RESERVES

In order to prepare for the decisions needed on the parish council budget and precept for the 2024/25 year, the clerk had focussed on the matters marked as Earmarked Reserves. In particular, the item denoted as being PWLB was only there originally to cover the timing of the repayments in the first year, long since passed. For this reason, the clerk suggested that this balance should be added to the General Reserve Balance. Conversely, the balance of Emergency Funds available of £2,166 had been swallowed up into the General Fund and this should now be shown separately. The car park reserve of £200 was also pointless considering the cost of carrying out its refurbishment, so would be reduced to zero for the time being.

The revised analysis of the current Earmarked Reserves should therefore be:

Calor Gas Rural Communications	£1,305
Public Rights of Way Grant	£755
Village Event Reserve	£794
Emergency Grant Reserve	£2,166
TOTAL EARMARKED FUNDS	£5,020

The General Reserve will of course change as the financial year progresses, but is likely to remain above £20,000, dependent on what is committed before the year-end.

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, it was **Resolved** that this be accepted and would inform the basis of the budget for next year.

2324-160 MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

The issue of dog and refuse bins should be placed on the next agenda. The chairman would send pictures of the current bins and he would contact MDDC to request new bins. Cllr. Wilkie asked whether dog refuse bags could be provided at points around the village.

2324-161 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Cllr. Briant-Evans suggested that the agendas and minutes should be posted in the Orchard Centre as well as on noticeboards and The Ark. She was concerned that the Archive Cupboard door was found open. She wanted a rota for people attending the village market, the next one of which would be 28th October 2023.

- Cllr. Graham warned that the work on the church would start in February 2024 and last until July, which would see a lot of activity.
- Cllr. Wilkie requested that the telephone box future be on the next agenda.
- Cllr. Wilkie agreed that he would attend as the parish councillor representative at the next Village Market on 28th October 2023.
- Cllr. Fletcher outlined the upcoming work to be done on the Orchard Centre which he and others would try to get on with.

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 17th October 2023

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

- Cllr. Andrews had produced a LYPFT report on the needs for the play area and playing field that would be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. He also made a request for the LYPFT insurance to be subsidised by the parish council. This would require a grant claim for the next meeting.

2324-162 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 14th November 2023 at 7.30pm in the Orchard Centre.

2324-163 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 10.00pm