

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 18th February 2025

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

There was a meeting of Lapford Parish Council on Tuesday 18th February 2025 at 7.30pm held in the Orchard Centre, Lapford

Members Present: Cllrs Sue Briant-Evans; Bill Graham; Steve Fletcher; Ian Wilkie; Roy Andrews; Peter Heal; Alex Shapland.

Also Present: No-one

In attendance: Rob Martin (Clerk).

Others: Eight members of the public.

MINUTES

2425-239 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from Cllr. Down had been received and were accepted. In the absence of the chairman, Cllr. Briant-Evans took the chair for this meeting.

Apologies had also been received from County Cllr. Squires and District Cllr. Keable.

2425-240 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)

Cllr. Heal declared a ~~personal~~ *pecuniary* interest in a planning application under minute 2425-257 below.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow public participation

2425-241 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION & UPDATES FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Sue Hemsworth, as the cleaner for the Orchard Centre toilets, said that there had been graffiti put all over the wall inside the toilet and other damage which she had left for councillors to inspect.

In answer to a query the clerk confirmed that the grant to Lapford Community Car Aid had not been paid, in accordance with minute number 2425-202.

Further MOP comments were noted regarding payments recorded in past minutes.

PLANNING APPEAL

A local resident agreed that the comments laid down in the district councillor's report on the appeal covered most of the points he wished to make but added that the applicant's agent (STAGS) has indicated that there is a dire need for self-build plots in the Mid Devon area, which is not the case with very recent permission granted for 7 plots in Chawleigh alongside 4 available in Chulmleigh. There is therefore no unsatisfied local identified need for further self-build plots in Lapford, with the very real concern that this lack of demand will result in the plots being developed out for market housing as has been experienced in Tiverton recently.

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The STAGS report was also highlighted where it compared successful appeals in Malmesbury based on the need to house employees, and Droitwich on land adjacent to the M5 neither of which were applicable to these plots in Lapford. Other comments highlighted the dangers of large vehicles exiting the proposed site via a very narrow turning circle resulting in damage to the opposite field bank possibly resulting in the collapse of the field above into the highway.

2425-242 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

a) Devon County Council

County Cllr. Squires was not present.

b) Mid Devon District Council

District Cllr. Keable had circulated a report as follows:

This meeting's agenda items precede my District Councillors' Report:

Given the change of date from 11th February I am unable to attend the 18th meeting due to a clash with a Mid Devon internal meeting prior to full Council on 19th and when the subject of Local Government Reorganisation (Devolution) is on the agenda. A synopsis of this is in my following report.

2425-243 Planning Appeal APP/Y1138/W/24/3356652 – Individuals are able to submit their own comments <https://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-inspectorate> This does require registration on the Planning Inspectorate website. I shall be submitting my own comment which will be supporting the Mid Devon Decision. In summary for your debate, my points will be:

- Policy DM6, was unsupported, as the applicant did not state that the proposed self-build plots would be affordable or low cost.
- No up-to-date evidence on housing need or a housing survey had been provided.
- On self-build no evidence had been provided on eligibility for shared ownership or equivalent 'help to buy'.
- Type & scale of housing is not appropriate to the proven need of Lapford.
- 4+ bedrooms in Lapford is not a priority.
- Impact upon the countryside would be detrimental and would change the character of the setting.
- Access roads, street lighting etc would have a detrimental impact.
- Development would result in further pressure for the development of the rural fringe of the village and into undeveloped countryside.
- The Local Plan does not earmark this site for development.
- The proposed development would be contrary to policies S9, S14 and DM1 of the Local Plan.
- The provision of self-building plots would not override the planning

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harm identified above.

- Access to the site from the A377 is through Lapford on 2km of single track road which is mostly without a pavement.

2425-220/3 Road Warden Equipment – Storage Missed from the minutes I was asked to enquire about MDH garages. Request submitted and for contact to be made with the Clerk. Current rental is circa £700p.a.

2425-252 North Devon Line Rail Promotion Group – formerly known as the Tarka Railway Association. This item follows my January report on the potential for rail investment in the North Devon Line. Minute 2425-228

As a Council you will be considering becoming a member of the Group, and that is your debate and decision. I have no comment.

However, I would draw to your attention a second group who in my view are more aligned with the rail industry. The Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance hold their AGM on Friday 7th March, in Barnstaple. Steve Munday and I shall be attending. NDRDA would like parish councils on the rail line to affiliate. There is no cost to this and there is no reason why the parish council should not join both organisations.

Attached to my District Councillors report is a relevant page from the NDRDA 2014 Annual Meeting. This is evidence of the support including North Devon Council, Torridge District Council and the Town Councils of Bideford and Barnstaple. Shortly I shall be taking a similar request to Mid Devon District Council. Investment in the North Devon Line is vital to our communities and to the economy and should be a major item of consideration for the Lapford Neighbourhood Plan.

I would hope the no-cost membership of NDRDA, could be considered under this item or at a future meeting, when I can explain in more detail.

2425-253 Community Risk Register – Given there was no response at the January meeting Councillors may wish to consider the merits of my submission as District Councillor.

	Name of Risk	Likelihood 1-5	Impact 1-5
Risk 1	Heavy rainfall housing flood risk, Lapford Mill, Lapford Malt Scoop Cottage, Chawleigh New Inn (opposite Butts Close) – affecting individual homes	4	4
Risk 2	Compact snow creating deep road ice	2	5

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	in prolonged freeze between Lapford, Orchard Way to upper Lapford.		
Risk 3	Flooding River Yeo at Lapford	5	2

2425-242 District Councillors Report

1. S106 Support for the Nursery Play Equipment at Church Close (2425-220/5)
I have provided in principle support for the S106 application made to MDDC. Before I can formally sign this off, I need clear identification of items and project cost. I believe there are now two costs: a) Nursery and b) Older Children. This was not clear to me at or since the January meeting. I do not see this as a listed agenda item for this meeting.
2. Eggesford Station Monitoring Group (2425-228)- started by Winkleigh PC to maintain a watchful eye on proposed car parking at the Station this group is becoming more involved in the potential developments and investment on the North Devon Line. Steve Munday and I attended a meeting, 3rd February, of the Group with Devon County Transport Team. Sadly, the DCC representative was not aware of the November consultation representations for the improvement and integration of public transport in our locality.
3. Aggressive Dogs & Owners, Eggesford Forest (2425-229) – My January report will appear in the March issue of the Lapford Lookout. Costs for the emptying of 'dog bins' is still to be clarified. Four parish councils in Mid Devon have agreed to consider a contribution to costs once these are known.

White Paper and Decentralisation – There has been considerable media coverage since the publication of the "Devolution" White Paper on 16th December. This impacts upon us all in three completely different ways.

- a. Combined County Authority, with a strategic overview of historic Devon was formed on 5th February and the inaugural meeting will be at Tavistock on the 19th March, with 3 representatives from Torbay Council, 3 representatives from Devon County Council, 2 representatives for the 8 District Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner.
<https://www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk/news/signed-legislation-brings-devon-and-torbay-combined-county-authority-into-being> . This body will have a small budget of devolved funding to perform strategic duties.
- b. Unitary Council(s) - The Secretary of State has announced that Devon will not be in the first round of Councils for the consideration and that the County Council Election on 1st May will not be cancelled. There is little doubt there will be local government reorganisation in Devon. We enter a period of uncertainty.

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The County Council is proposing a Unitary Devon, 7 of the 8 District Councils plus Torbay are likely to propose 2 Unitary Councils in Devon and supporting an expanded Plymouth into part of South Ham and part of West Devon.

- C. Mayoral Strategic Authorities. This is the most significant of the devolutionary Government initiatives and where established will have a considerable budget. These authorities refer to a local government body in the UK where a directly elected mayor has significant power to make decisions on strategic issues like transport, planning, and economic development within their region. Devon & Cornwall is the proposed region.

Unitary authorities will impact upon the tasks of parish councils. A Unitary Council area equivalent to a current County Council Division e.g. 1 County Councillor (Margaret Squires) with 22 active parish councils between Wembworthy & Silverton and 8 District Councillors will be reduced to 2 Unitary Councillors.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting

2425-243 PLANNING APPEAL

Proposal: Outline for the erection of 3 self-build dwellings with some matters reserved

Location: Land at NGR 273411 108426 (Sandhurst) Lapford Devon

Application No: 24/01074/OUT

Appeal Ref No. APP/Y1138/W/24/3356652

On a proposal by Cllr. Heal, seconded by Cllr. Braint-Evans, it was **Resolved** to confirm the parish council's **Objection** and to add the comments suggested by the district councillor alongside further points made by the public above.

2425-244 MINUTES

On a proposal by Cllr. Andrews, seconded by Cllr. Heal, it was **Resolved** to receive and adopt the attached draft minutes of the last Parish Council meeting held on 14th January 2025 and those of the follow-up meeting on 21st January 2025.

2425-245 ACTION LIST, CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk had circulated a report as follows:

1. Personal

I have been involved in a number of complicated family matters since the last meeting which, to some extent, have now reduced in intensity. I expect normal service to be restored shortly.

2. Bus shelter grant

Duplicate grant payment now refunded

3. Road Warden Equipment – Storage

Item on the agenda relating to permanent storage within a MDDC garage being

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used. Response awaited from MDDC.

4. Grass Cutting Contract

Date for receipt of bids for this set as 1st March 2025. One bid has been received at the time of this report

5. Section 106 Finance for Play Equipment

I was asked by the Section 106 officer to provide further information for the grant claim, which has been forwarded. Confirmation that this is all that is needed has been requested alongside an expected timescale for acceptance by MDDC. *The application had been agreed by the time of this meeting so the finance was expected in the bank as soon as the MDDC processes had been completed.*

6. Play Area Lease

The lease is progressing slowly but there is little difference between what has been proposed and what the parish council needs. Correspondence on the matter is being pursued.

The solicitor had acknowledged and incorporated the changes suggested and these had been sent to MDDC. Getting this concluded would be pursued as a matter of priority.

7. Action List

I have updated the Action List to present the current position as I know it. These include:

- **Neighbourhood Plan** – This is on the agenda.
- **BT Broadband for Orchard Centre** – The question of whether the Orchard Centre had been connected yet would be pursued.
- **Historic Records** – sorting these had been started and Cllr. Briant-Evans had retained some documents for further inspection.
- **Orchard Centre Work** – Cllr. Graham suggested that CCTV should be considered again. Cllr. Fletcher suggested that a wildlife remote camera could be used. Further consideration would be taken to the next meeting.
- **Footpaths** – the clerk and Cllr. Shapland need to liaise on the forms for next year and also to look at what the current year's balance could be used for. To be considered at the next meeting.
- **Lapford Toddler Play Facilities** – Once confirmation of the Section 106 grant is confirmed the order will be submitted.
- **Gift Aid for Church Green** – £496.05 has now been received and credited to the Trust account.
- **Select List of Contractors** – still not attempted yet.

2425-246 FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

No meetings of other organisations had been attended by councillors.

2425-247 COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Celebrations Committee

Cllr. Heal reported that a quiz had been held with around £430 being collected

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towards future events.

b) Lapford Emergency Action Plan (LEAP) Committee.

No committee meetings have occurred since the last Parish Council. Cllr. Wilkie was concerned that grit had been delivered to the Highfield grit bin but had not been informed of this, as promised. Cllr. Andrews had arranged for the grit bin to be filled and apologised for not informing other councillors.

2425-248 CHURCH GREEN TRUST FEEDBACK

The minutes of the Church Green Trustee meeting on 25th January 2025 with the main points of note being the tree felling was awaiting a bat survey to be done and the beacon lighting for the VE day celebrations would take place on the Green on 8th May 2025.

2425-249 GRANT APPLICATIONS

Following confirmation that Citizens Advice attend the Ark on the last Friday of each month from 10.00am to 2.00pm, on a proposal by Cllr. Heal, seconded by Cllr. Wilkie, it was **Resolved** to make a grant payment to them of £300, using the power given under Section 142 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2425-250 ORCHARD CENTRE – EXTERNAL POWER SOCKET

It had been suggested by a resident that the installation of an external power socket would enable visiting food wagons to operate without running their engines the whole time. It was **Agreed** that this would not be appropriate or practical for the parish council to provide.

2425-251 ROAD WARDENS – USE OF MDDC GARAGE

The equipment purchased for Road Wardens is currently in temporary storage so the proposal was to rent a garage from MDDC to use for this equipment, ensuring its security and accessibility.

There were potentially some garages available, and the annual rent would be around £700 but they were awaiting refurbishment by MDDC. It was **agreed** that the clerk positively pursue the idea and bring the matter back to council when the availability and rental figures were confirmed.

Cllr. Wilkie had inspected the equipment at its current location and believed this to be adequate and suggested a small payment to the owner to compensate for the use of the building. He had also discussed with Stacey Lumsdon problems she was having in arranging further Road Warden training with her contact at DCC not responding. Cllr. Wilkie would find out who she was talking to and inform the clerk so that he could formally write from the parish council to try to get the training in place.

2425-252 NORTH DEVON LINE RAIL PROMOTION GROUP (NDLRPG)

Correspondence had been received from the NDLRPG (formerly the Tarka Rail Association) asking whether the parish council wished to become a member of the group, with an annual contribution of £15. In addition, there was a further group the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance (NDRDA) as outlined in the District Councillors report above.

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Steve Munday had been an 'unofficial' parish council representative on the NDRDA reporting back through councillors as and when there was anything significant afoot, the main aim of this being to try to increase the number of stopping trains at Lapford station. Steve was thanked for the work he had done on behalf of the community. He had expressed an interest in becoming a formal representative of the parish council so that he would have more clout when making his points. His belief was that in order to have any influence you have to be involved and the potential changes being put forward would have an effect on services through Lapford and the task was to make those effects positive. He felt that being the formal LPC representative would mean that his voice would possibly be heard more than just attending as a member of the public.

The clerk pointed out that the matter of transport would be important within the Neighbourhood Plan and it would be important to have up to date information to be able to put the pieces together.

On a proposal by Cllr. Briant-Evans, seconded by Cllr. Heal, it was **Resolved** that:

- Steve Munday would act as the parish council representative on all railway matters.
- The parish council would formally join the NDRDA, with Steve Munday, alongside councillors entitled to attend its meetings and receive its reports.
- The parish council would formally join the NDLRPG, with Steve Munday, alongside councillors entitled to attend its meetings and receive its reports.
- Payment of the NDLRPG subscription of £15 be made.

2425-253 COMMUNITY RISK REGISTER

The district councillor had added three Lapford-based additions to the Risk Register and it was **agreed** that the parish council would support those changes. The gritting item should be extended to include the Eastington Lane to the other side of the school. The response should therefore be as follows:

	Name of Risk	Likelihood 1-5	Impact 1-5
Risk 1	Heavy rainfall housing flood risk, Lapford Mill, Lapford Malt Scoop Cottage, Chawleigh New Inn (opposite Butts Close) – affecting individual homes	4	4
Risk 2	Compact snow creating deep road ice in prolonged freeze between Lapford, Orchard Way to upper Lapford and along Eastington Lane past the school	2	5
Risk 3	Flooding River Yeo at Lapford	5	2

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2425-254 CONVERSION OF LAPFORD SCHOOL TO CHURCH SCHOOL

A report from the school had been circulated. Cllr. Graham stated that the consultation had included all of the identified stakeholders and that the matter was now concluded. The chairman had represented Lapford Parish Council with Cllr. Graham present representing the Parish Church. Cllr. Andrews was also present.

The clerk would write to the school to congratulate it on successfully making the change and to ask that the parish council be kept in touch on further developments.

2425-255 VILLAGE MAINTENANCE & WEED CLEARANCE

This matter had been put forward by the absent chairman. To be considered at a future meeting. Cllr. Graham requested that consideration be given to replace the plastic/glass sheets on the bus shelter at the bottom of the village. This matter to be considered at the next meeting.

2425-256 LAPFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- a) The NP Steering Group Minutes of its meeting on 1st February 2025 were adopted. The survey forms had gone to press in time to be circulated next month.
- b) Whilst the majority of expenditure for the LNPSG is covered by grant funding, there are incidental costs involved that have to be covered by the parish council. On a proposal by Cllr. Fletcher, seconded by Cllr. Heal it was **Resolved** with one abstention to allocate a budget line for LNP work of a maximum of £2,000 per annum with access delegated to the clerk, in conjunction with the parish council chairman. An example is to purchase some plastic poster holders put forward by Cllr. Graham.
- c) The adjusted Steering Group Terms of Reference were adopted, following the advice to do so in the minutes adopted above.
- d) On a proposal by Cllr. Fletcher, seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was **Resolved** to provide website for the LNPSG, either on the page set up on the parish council site or setting up a separate site for the Plan, to be decided by the Steering Group. The Parish Council was of the opinion that a separate website would be best, but the Steering Group would need to be considered.

2425-257 PLANNING MATTERS

a) APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED

To consider the following Planning Applications and to agree comments:

Reference	Location	Proposal
25/00038/FULL	Land at NGR 273025 108665 & Cleveland Rensley Lane Lapford	Erection of animal shelter and feed store to include installation of solar panels for domestic use Decision: Support
25/00144/FULL	Yeo Vale Cottage Lapford Crediton	Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 22/02342/FULL (Erection of

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		replacement dwelling) to allow substitute plans relating to the change of materials for the windows and doors from timber framed to uPVC Decision: Support
25/00226/FULL	Land and Buildings at NGR 272970 108850 Rafters Rensey Lane Site Vicinity Grid Ref: 272988 / 108845	Erection of cover over existing feed yard Decision: Support

b) APPLICATIONS AFTER THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

No applications were notified after the agenda had been set.

c) MDDC DECISIONS

Reference	Location	Proposal	MDDC Decision
None			

2425-258 BANK RECONCILIATION & BUDGET MONITOR STATEMENT

The Bank Reconciliation and Receipts and Payments statement, as at 31st January 2025 was adopted.

2425-259 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

On a proposal by Cllr. Wilkie, seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was **Resolved** to make the following payments.

PAYMENTS

Payment to	Services	Month/Ref	Amount £	Payment No.
2024/2025				
S Hemsworth	Salary	Feb 2025	65.82	2425-32
RJ Martin	Salary	Feb 2025	550.50	2425-32
HMRC	Tax Deductions	Feb 2025	154.00	2425-32
Everflow	Orchard Centre Sewage & Water	Feb 2025	59.20	DD
BT Group Ltd	Orchard Centre Broadband	Feb 2025	55.70	DD
IONOS	Village Website Hosting	Feb 2025	21.88	DD
Adobe	Acrobat Professional	Feb 2025	19.99	DD
Victory Hall	Room Hire – Quiz Evening	670	35.55	2425-31
RJ Martin	Dropbox Reimbursement	Dec 24	95.88	2425-33

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Citizens Advice	Grant – Section 142, LGA 1972		300.00	2425-34
NDLRPG	Subscription		15.00	2425-34

RECEIPTS

Receipt from	Services	Amount £	Method
2024/2025			
None			

2425-260 MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

The acting chairman had nothing to raise.

2425-261 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Cllr. Andrews questioned why there were streetlights that were not on. He was referred to the DCC website reporting system in order to report that matter.

Cllr. Heal was looking to replace the lock on the public toilet and he was awaiting notification from Screwfix of when a suitable one would be available.

Cllr. Graham would notify people of a Zoom meeting to discuss the installation of an electric charge point for EV vehicles with one parish councillor being invited per parish. Cllr. Graham would be Lapford PC's council's representative at that meeting.

Cllr. Fletcher suggested that the second laptop could be used for the Lookout and Leap and this was agreed as sensible option.

2425-262 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 7.30pm in the Orchard Centre.

2425-263 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 9.30pm


J Down
CHAIR

11/3/25



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Action List 18th February 2025 Meeting

Latest Minute ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
2324 235	Ownership of the adjacent land to be determined.	Clerk	LEASE TO BE DRAWN UP
2324 069	Ash Dieback. Ownership of affected trees to be researched and addresses passed to the Clerk.		ON LIST FOR MS/ST
2324 235 2425 043	Cleaning of signs to be arranged.	Cllrs Heal & Down	Deferred until Spring
2324 242	Neighbourhood Plan.	Parish Council	Finalisation of survey contents to be conducted it in March 25 Setting up of Steering Group
2324 235 6 2425 046	Telephone Box – Make safe for use as book swap area.	Cllrs. Wilkie, Heal	PROGRESS NOT KNOWN
2324 117	Community Broadband	Clerk	PENDING
2324 137 3	Clerk's Hours Worked – to solve the disparity between the hours paid for, 35 hours per month, and the hours worked.	Clerk	With the chairman.
2324 231 2425 047	Openreach Fibre Connection	Clerk	With Openreach
2324 235 3	PC Historic Records	Clerk Cllrs Briant-Evans and Down	Action under way. Some documents retained for further examination.
2425 005	Co-option of new councillors	Council	Cllrs. Down and Briant-Evans to work up advertisement
2324 250 2425 053	Lapford Play Facilities - To put together a plan of what is to be done with both the Playing Field, liaising on this with LYPFT, and play equipment	Clerk, District Chairman, Cllr. Keable, Cllr. Andrews and others	Toddler equipment agreed. Order to be sent once Section 106 received Youth equipment, liaise with LYPFT
2324 309	Orchard Centre work to be done <u>Painting of toilet door</u>		

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Latest Minute ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	<u>Toilet handrail to be refurbished</u> <u>Cleanup of the outside of the Orchard centre and complete the exterior painting</u> <u>Entrance into the Orchard Centre by the door can be slippery.</u> <u>Hole in archive cupboard as a result of the fuse board being moved</u> <u>Repainting of interior and fitting of new notice boards</u>		<i>All tasks are pending for the time being</i>
2425 037	Highways – Road Wardens	Clerk & Cllr. Heal	<i>Equipment delivered & in storage Further Training to organise</i>
2425 039	Footpaths	Chair & Clerk Cllr. Shapland	<i>Cllr. Shapland to be liaised with</i>
2425 040	Highways Additional outstanding jobs requiring completion	DCC	<i>Additional list sent to Margaret Squires, awaiting response.</i>
2425 175	Select List of Contractors – to draw up a list of people that can be contacted first when work needs to be done.	Clerk	<i>List to be drawn up from the Lookout and other local sources with request for hourly rates being made.</i>
2425 177	Projector Equipment for Village Hall	Cllr. Graham	<i>Donation of £2,000 agreed. Equipment installed and available for public use.</i>