

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 15th April 2025

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

There was a meeting of Lapford Parish Council on Tuesday 15th April 2025 at 7.30pm held in the Orchard Centre, Lapford

Members Present: Cllrs Julie Down; Sue Briant-Evans; Bill Graham; Steve Fletcher; Roy Andrews; Peter Heal, Alec Shapland.

Also Present: District Cllr. Steve Keable.

In attendance: Rob Martin (Clerk).

Others: Four members of the public.

MINUTES

A minute's silence was observed before the meeting in memory of Cllr. Frank Letch who had died recently for his work at many levels for the community.

2425-286 APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence

2425-287 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)

No declarations of absence had been received from parish councillors.

County Cllr. Squires had apologised for not attending this meeting.

2425-288 COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION AND COOPTION

Ian Wilkie had tendered his resignation as a councillor for personal reasons. The clerk had notified the Electoral Services team at MDDC of the casual vacancy and was awaiting the advertisement for election document prepared by them.

This meant that there were now three councillor vacancies to be filled and Cllrs. Down and Briant-Evans had drawn up and sent an advertisement for the next Lookout.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow public participation

2425-289 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION & UPDATES FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Sue Hemsworth was concerned about a saw in cleaning cupboard, but no-one knew who had put it there.

T&G Garden Maintenance wanted confirmation that the Church Green Trust part of Their quotation had been accepted. This would be an item for the next meeting of the trust.

2425-290 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

a) Devon County Council

The county councillor was not present so there was no report.

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b) Mid Devon District Council

District Cllr. Keable reported as follows:

1. **Mid Devon's' Recycling** - Our District is now in the top 5% of performing Councils in the country with £1m income that off-set the cost of waste to Council Tax Payers to equivalent of £1 per collection. Everyone – 'thank you' as this is a collective effort by all residents.
2. **Feedback from Residents Survey** - The resident and budget survey ran from 30 October to 11 December 2024, with 433 residents completing the questionnaire. Key findings from this latest survey include:
 - Percentage of residents that are very or fairly satisfied with the way the Council runs things increased from 41.1% to 51.8%.
 - Percentage of residents that are very or fairly satisfied with the Council's customer service towards residents and/or businesses increased from 33.7% to 42.3%. For details: <https://democracy.middevon.gov.uk/documents/s32921/RS24%20Report.pdf>
3. **Active Mid Devon Re-branding of Mid Devon Leisure** – with a new vision to inspire people to be happier and healthier. <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/mid-devon-is-now-active/> Mid Devon leisure customers can now benefit from a new Mid Devon Active app for • Booking and managing classes • View real time schedules • Join waiting lists • Set reminders. <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/dive-in-to-active-mid-devon-s-new-app/>
4. **Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation** – 28th November is the deadline for submissions to Government. The District Council are pooling resources to work through joint consultants on 1:4:5. DCC has put forward 5 options: these will be considered by the new Council after 1st May.
5. **State of the District Debate** – this annual event has been deferred due to the County Council Elections and is being scheduled for 25th June – where Local Government Reorganisation in Devon will be theme.
6. **Tribute to Cllr Frank Letch MBE** – Sadly on Tuesday 8 April 2025, the Council's current Chairman, and a very well-known figure in the Crediton community and beyond, Councillor Frank Letch MBE, died following an illness. Frank had Chaired several community meetings in Lapford. <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/a-tribute-to-councillor-frank-leitch-mbe/>

The Chairman reconvened the meeting

2425-291 MINUTES

On a proposal by Cllr. Fletcher, seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was **Resolved** to adopt the presented minutes of the last Parish Council meeting held on 11th March 2025.

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2425-292 ACTION LIST, CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk reported as follows:

1. Orchard Centre Broadband

The BT engineer will attend the Orchard Centre from 1pm on Friday 11th April to fit the new broadband kit, following which the wifi is expected to be much stronger. *Cllr. Briant-Evans pointed out that a digital telephone needed to be purchased to connect to the system, as the old one would no longer work.*

2. Internal Audit

The clerk has been contacted by Louise from Mulberry & Co and now has the necessary information to be able to submit the necessary paperwork. The audit report is expected to be received before the Parish Council Annual Meeting on 13th May 2025.

3. Payroll Close Down

The parish council payroll information has already been passed to HMRC via the Real-Time Information system and both the clerk and the cleaner have received P60 documents for 2024/25.

4. Railway

The latest round of emails between Steve Munday and Matt Cambourne of GWR have been circulated so the current issues are apparent within those.

5. Pensions Regulator

Once every three years employers have to re-enrol with the Pensions Regulator which will have been undertaken by the time of this meeting. The main idea is to remain on the system, even though no pension is paid by LPC.

6. Orchard Centre Electricity

It is clear from the accounts that edf have for some reason stopped invoicing the parish council and taking the Direct Debit. They will be contacted to inform them of the error and the unspent portion of the budget for 2024/2025 (£824) is moved into a reserve to be paid during the current financial year.

Cllr. Graham said that edf were still trying to charge for electricity on the Lower Town Place site and had been told to stop. This might have resulted in the current position for the Orchard Centre.

7. Section 106 Finance for Play Equipment

Agreement to pay LPC the finance for the Toddlers Equipment has been made, but not yet paid. Apparently, because the amount is over £10,000, the parish council has to enter into a grant agreement first. MDDC Section 106 team have been asked for this agreement, but it is with the solicitors. The urgency to get it sorted is being conveyed regularly.

8. Play Area Refurbishment

The contract has been officially ordered. Further information is still awaited regarding the target date for installation.

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Cllr. Andrews suggested that there should be a formal opening event for the new toddlers' area and that he would look to organise it. A local 'celebrity' would be sought to preside at the official opening.

9. Play Area Lease

This will be pursued further.

10. Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

An email from MDDC has been circulated trying to explain what the current position is. My suggestion is to read it and be aware of the potential implications of its content as we might have a greater role to play once the whole thing is completed.

11. Groundwork Grant Report

The end of grant report was submitted well before 31st March 2025 and has been acknowledged (three times!)

Most of the outstanding matters on the Action List were dealt with under items on this meeting's agenda.

The only item of outstanding correspondence was from the owner of the property adjacent to the bus shelter who had complained about children playing football against it and standing on the bench. It was difficult to know what could be done about this as its placement had been based on advice from Devon County Highways.

The clerk pointed out that the police service had just announced more boots on the ground to deal with anti-social behaviour, so if this occurs again it might be possible to contact them to encourage officers to attend the village. The chairman would look to see whether there was a need to take appropriate action if further incidences occur.

2425-293 FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

There were no matters to be reported back.

2425-294 COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Celebrations Committee

Cllr. Braint-Evans had circulated the minutes of the last meeting on 18th March 2025 including the proposed timing of events on the VE Day commemoration on 8th May 2025.

b) Lapford Emergency Action Plan (LEAP) Committee.

No LEAP meetings had been held since the last parish council.

2425-295 CHURCH GREEN TRUST FEEDBACK

There had been no meeting since the last parish council, the next one would be in May 2025.

2425-296 FRENCH POST-BOX

The post box had been donated to the Lapford Twinning Committee, but there were concerns that it could be swept away by new owners of the property to which it was attached. It had been suggested that a better position would be to locate it adjacent or attached to the Orchard Centre building, but it was not really a parish council decision to make.

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Cllr. Graham was a member of the Twinning Committee, and he would encourage it to consider moving the box to the Orchard Centre in order to secure it for the community on the basis that this was the preference of the parish council.

2425-297 ORCHARD CENTRE WATER & ELECTRICITY

The contracts for the supply of electricity and water/sewage for the Orchard Centre were about to cease, with consequent substantial increases in prices resulting by continuing on the standard rates.

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was **Resolved** to accept the new contracts for the supply of water/sewage and electricity services for the Orchard Centre as negotiated by Clear Utility Solutions.

2425-298 YOUTH PLAY FACILITIES

The clerk had circulated a report on a proposal by Lapford Youth and Playing Field Trust (LYPFT) to install further Youth Fitness Equipment on the playing field. The main features of the report were:

On the basis of considering three quotations, the Trust had already chosen Sovereign as its preferred supplier/installer and the company was informed of a new reduced level of play/fitness equipment (6 items) and a possible additional see-saw as an addition if this could be afforded.

Sovereign have produced new quotations for the two requirements which amounted to:

Target Muscle Group - £8,505.94

Timber See-Saw - £4,074.49

The Target Muscle Group equipment was the first priority for the LYPFT.

Available within the MDDC Section 106 funds there is £7,147 specifically for the provision of Youth Equipment in Lapford. The proposal is to use that money for this project. In addition, the LYPFT is able to enhance this amount by around £1,500 making a total of £8,647 which would pay for the Target Muscle Group with a little left over. This is a firm proposal by the LYPFT.

As far as the seesaw is concerned, the proposal is to use the remaining sum alongside fund-raising for the remaining £3,400 starting with the County Council Community Funds of (say) £1,000 (this will only become clear when the election is over) alongside grant claims and possibly some from Lapford Parish Council.

The Parish Council was asked to consider this and decide whether it would:

- Apply for the remaining Section 106 funds on LYPFTs behalf
- If successful with the Section 106, organise and pay for the equipment (for VAT reasons)
- Consider what funding, if any, it could make available towards the youth equipment project.

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Down, it was **Resolved** that:

- a) The parish council work with LYPFT to apply for the Section 106 funds available.

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- b) To organise and pay for the equipment and take initial ownership to reclaim VAT, eventually gifting it to LYPFT.
- c) To fully fund the cost of the seesaw from the General Reserve in order to avoid further delays in the project.

2425-299 ASSET REGISTER

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Fletcher, it was **Resolved** that:

- a) The method of valuation for the preparation of the Asset Register for the AGAR 2025 and beyond would be on a consistent basis of acquisition costs rather than replacement costs.
- b) The presented Asset Register at 31 March 2025 excluded the cost of Road Warden equipment which the clerk undertook to update and that this updated Asset Register would be the basis for both the AGAR 2025 and as a guide for insurance cover.

2429-300 COUNCILLOR TRAINING

An email from David Parker at MDDC had been circulated asking whether councillors wished to attend a presentation on the new Local Plan and how it and the new legislation will affect the planning landscape. The NP Steering Group has been included in the circulation list.

It was **Agreed** that the whole council should attend a Teams meeting on the subject and the clerk would respond as the parish council preference.

2425-301 FOOTPATHS (PROW)

Cllr. Shapland reported on PROWs, starting by confirming he had submitted P3 forms for work identified as necessary for the year on broken posts and missing signs.

2425-302 LAPFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The clerk summarised the public response to the survey conducted by Devon Communities Together which had resulted in a parish response of 11%. The Annual Parish Meeting would include a presentation of the full results which would be published in a formal report.

Whilst the results would give direction to the Steering Group there were other matters that needed to be on its radar with further consultations with local employers and businesses, for example.

2425-303 PLANNING MATTERS

a) APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED

The following applications were considered:

Reference	Location	Proposal
25/00440/FULL	Two Hoots Lapford Crediton	Variation of conditon 4 of planning approval 22/01775/FULL to reduce the number of velux windows to 2, change size of the solar tube panels and change size of window in south elevation

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		Decision: Support
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b) APPLICATIONS AFTER THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

Reference	Location	Proposal
25/00203/HOUSE	Court Barton, Lapford	Installation of 12 Solar Panels on south facing roof of barn for domestic use. Decision: Support
25/00204/LBC	Court Barton, Lapford	Listed Building Consent for Installation of 12 Solar Panels on south facing roof of barn for domestic use. Decision: Support

c) MDDC DECISIONS

Reference	Location	Proposal	MDDC Decision
25/00219/PNAG	Land at NGR 272851 109291 Rensley Farm Rensley Lane Lapford	Prior Notification for proposed excavation works to form a dirty water lagoon	Prior Approval Not Required
25/00038/FULL	Land at NGR 273025 108665 & Cleveland Rensley Lane Lapford Devon	Erection of animal shelter and feed store to include installation of solar panels for domestic use	Full Permission Granted
25/00144/FULL	Yeo Vale Cottage Lapford Crediton Devon	Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 22/02342/FULL (Erection of replacement dwelling) to allow substitute plans relating to the change of materials for the windows and doors from timber framed to uPVC	Full Permission Granted

2425-304 31st MARCH BANK RECONCILIATION

The Bank Reconciliation statement, as at 31st March 2025 was **Adopted**.

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2425-305 2024/2025 BUDGET MONITOR STATEMENT

The statement comparing the outturn receipts and payments compared with the budget as revised when setting the 2025/2026 precept was **Adopted**.

2425-306 2024/2025 FINAL ACCOUNTS

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Briant-Evans, it was **Resolved to Adopt** and sign the attached Receipts and Payments Statement for 2024/2025.

2425-307 2024/2025 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Briant-Evans, it was **Resolved to Adopt** the AGAR for onward transmission to the Internal Auditor. The final version will be presented at the Annual Parish Council meeting in May 2025, complete with the Internal Auditor's Report.

2425-308 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

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

PAYMENTS

Payment to	Services	Month/Ref	Amount £	Payment No.
2024/2025				
Lapford Project 2000	Third Share of Noticeboard Repairs	18/03/2025	74.00	2425-40
Lloyds Bank	Service Charge	March 25	4.25	DD
2025/2026				
S Hemsworth	Salary	Apr 2025	65.82	2526-01
RJ Martin	Salary	Apr 2025	550.50	2526-01
HMRC	Tax Deductions	Apr 2025	154.00	2526-01
HMRC	National Insurance	Apr 2025	40.66	2526-01
Everflow	Orchard Centre Sewage & Water	Apr 2025	78.82	DD
BT Group Ltd	Orchard Centre Broadband	Apr 2025	55.70	DD
IONOS	Village Website Hosting	Apr 2025	21.88	DD
Adobe	Acrobat Professional	Apr 2025	19.99	DD
Lloyds Bank	Service Charge	New	4.25	DD
Devon Association of Local Councils	Subscription	6519	440.44	2526-02

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Julie Down	Toilet Consumables	Lidl	6.49	2526-02
Clyst Honiton PC	SLCC Subscription Share	252601	81.00	2526-02

RECEIPTS

Receipt from	Services	Amount £	Method
2024/2025			
None			
2025/2026			
MDDC	Precept	14,500.00	BC

2425-309 MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

The chairman reported on the litter pick-up day on the preceding Saturday at which 10 bags of waste were filled, and a really good job was done. It was reported that MDDC staff had scraped some weeds from the car park surface and swept it into the road where the road sweeper came along and cleared it.

The chairman and Cllr. Briant-Evans had driven around the village looking at the extent of the weeds for potential clearance. A list of the worst affected areas had been produced and the potential for employing a contractor to clear these areas should be investigated.

2425-310 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Cllr. Briant-Evans had done some posters for the Annual Parish Meeting which needed to be displayed.

Cllr. Andrews pointed out that the Toddlers' play area needed a sign to clearly show that the parish council owned it and not the LYPFT. The clerk would ensure this was done.

2425-311 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the **Annual Parish Council meeting** is scheduled for Tuesday 13th May 2025 at 7.30pm in the Orchard Centre.

The **Annual Parish Electors' meeting** will take place on Saturday 10th May 2025 starting at 10.00am

2425-312 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 9.15pm



LAPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Action List 15th April 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.		Highways List
2324	235 Cleaning of signs to be arranged.	Cllrs Heal & Down	Deferred until Spring
2425	043		
2324	242 Neighbourhood Plan.	Parish Council	Survey produced and distributed & advertised.
2324	235 6 Telephone Box – Make safe for use as book swap area.	Cllrs. Wilkie, Heal	Pending
2425	046		
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 Openreach Fibre Connection	Clerk	Some installation taken place but work on hold currently.
2425	047		BT full fibre order for OC placed.
2324	235 3 PC Historic Records	Clerk	Work been done, report back when complete.
2425	005 Co-option of new councillors	Cllrs Briant-Evans and Down Council	Cllrs. Down and Briant-Evans to work up advertisement
2324	250 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	Order is sent & grant agreed, awaiting grant agreement from MDDC
2425	053		Youth equipment, liaise with LYPFT
2324	309 Orchard Centre work to be done a) Painting of toilet door b) Toilet handrail to be refurbished c) Cleanup of the outside of the Orchard centre and complete the		All tasks are pending for the time being

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Latest Minute ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	<u>exterior painting</u> d) <u>Entrance into the Orchard Centre by the door can be slippery.</u> e) <u>Hole in archive cupboard as a result of the fuse board being moved</u> f) <u>Repainting of interior and fitting of new notice boards</u>		
2425 037	Highways – Road Wardens	Clerk & Cllr. Heal	<i>Equipment delivered & in storage Further Training be arranged with reference to Margaret Squires and DCT.</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>

