

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 11th November 2025

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

There was a meeting of Lapford Parish Council on Tuesday 11th November 2025 at 7.30pm held in the Orchard Centre, Lapford

Members Present: Cllrs Julie Down (Chairman); Sue Briant-Evans; Bill Graham; Peter Heal; Roy Andrews.

Also Present: District & County Cllr. Steve Keable

In attendance: Rob Martin (Clerk).

Others: Four members of the public.

MINUTES

2526-176 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence had been received from Cllr. Fletcher which was accepted by the parish council. Cllr. Shapland was not present but no apologies had been received for this absence.

2526-177 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)

Cllr. Down declared a pecuniary interest in planning application 25/01493/FULL below and would take no part in the discussion on this.

2526-178 COUNCILLOR COOPTION

No new applications for the role of Councillor had been received.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow public participation

2526-179 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION & UPDATES FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

There were a number of overgrown hedges encroaching onto the highway. The resident was advised to report these on the County Highways website as she knew the locations of the offending hedges.

The enforcement matter at Eastmere Farm had been designated by MDDC as not at the top of its list as it was not dangerous, however the parish council should push for it to rise to the top as soon as possible.

It was believed that the War Memorial could do with a clean, but that would be a matter for the Church Green Committee.

The parish council had in the past annually bought a cut Christmas Tree and the question of installing a growing one was raised, but this had been considered before and rejected partly because the Church Green did not have good enough growing conditions for one.

The owner of Lapford Mill briefed the council on the state of play with South West Water and the Environment Agency regarding the escape of sewage from the system onto his

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 11th November 2025

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land. He had taken advice from the Consumer Council for Water which amounted to getting formal legal advice because the SWW & EA responses had not been good enough.

2526-180 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

To receive a verbal report for information.

a) Devon County Council

b) Mid Devon District Council

Cllr. Keable had circulated his monthly report before the meeting. He highlighted that the on-street parking charge increase, the first for four years, which will go into a fund to finance more than parking facilities such as highway maintenance & rural bus services. On-street parking is charged in the larger towns and tourist areas and not in rural areas. He highlighted the residents' survey which allows people to express their ideas on what is wanted for the future of local government in the area.

In addition, he pointed out that the Devon local authorities had until 28th November 2025 to submit their proposals for the future structure of Local Government in Devon. The chairman questioned Cllr. Keable on the Eastmere Farm enforcement case and when this might become top priority for the team. His response was that although he agreed that it was an eyesore the scale of problems in other cases meant it was somewhere in the middle of the priority list, not at the top.

Cllr. Keable encouraged the council to ensure that the work on the Neighbourhood Plan does not stall because MDDC was being asked to find 6,000 more homes within its new Local Plan period, of which 3,000 would be attached to the towns, leaving 3,000 to be found within its 22 rural villages. It would be better for the community to be planning where these might go rather than having them imposed on sites chosen by developers. The changes required to accommodate the new government guidance is meaning that the MDDC Local Plan delivery would be slipping at least a year in order to conduct an additional 'call for sites', carry out additional consultations and await the production of a new Local Plan rule book.

The chairman proposed that the chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be invited to the January 2026 meeting of the parish council to provide an update on progress to date.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting

2526-181 MINUTES

On a proposal by Cllr. Briant Evans, seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was **Resolved** to adopt the attached draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th October 2025.

2526-182 ACTION LIST, CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The clerk outlined the work he had undertaken since the last meeting.

- The draft lease, including a 50 year break clause rather than one for 25, had been received and circulated to councillors. On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Briant-Evans it was **Resolved** to proceed with getting the lease in place without further delay.

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 11th November 2025

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- MDDC had sent an email explaining that the dangerous Willow Trees would be pollarded by Devon County Highways.
- A member of the public had previously questioned whether the parish council had seen the available grants from the DCC Community Enhancement Fund. The clerk explained that this was the fund being used to pay for the Road Warden Training and equipment to date. It would be accessed again once the Road Wardens needed materials and further equipment.
- Crediton Association of Local Councils – the clerk had been asked whether Lapford PC had been invited to any meetings of the group, which it had not.
- Grit Bins for the area around the route to school – Cllr. Graham had asked whether two bins could be purchased and placed where they would be accessible to the part of the highway not covered by the DCC gritting route.
- The letter sent to a resident regarding the parking of a horse-box camper vehicle had been answered to the effect that the police had been contacted when it was vandalized in the village car park and they had informed the resident that it was parked in a safe place.
- Update on Section 106 application – the clerk had applied to Land Registry for the documents relating to the land in question and would be forwarding those to MDDC together with other things being requested to support the application. This application had cost £60 to make.
- Phone Box Refurbishment – Cllr. Andrews had spent some time working on the paintwork but would need to spend a lot more time to really make progress. The current weather was working against this to some extent.
- Tourism Signs – Cllr. Graham was still researching this.
- Concrete Bin Disposal – Cllr. Heal believed that this would be done the coming weekend, weather permitting.
- Weed Clearance – the solution to this continued to be a problem. This might be something that has to be pursued as a community action project following the response to the tidy-up days.
- SWW and sewage issues – dealt with as part of the public session above.
- Land adjacent to the Orchard Centre – the clerk would pursue this with the MDDC legal now that the playing field lease was sorted.
- Orchard Centre Telephone – the clerk still had to pursue BT on getting the installed phone to work.

2526-183 FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

There was no feedback available.

2526-184 COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Celebrations Committee

No committee meetings have occurred since the last Parish Council.

b) Lapford Emergency Action Plan (LEAP) Committee.

Cllr. Briant-Evans had circulated the latest minutes of LEAP, highlighting the Road Warden training and the new grit bins both of which had already been discussed.

County Cllr. Keable asked that he be informed of the location of the grit bins as

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 11th November 2025

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he thought that the gritters would be able to fill the bins with salt.

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Andrew it was **Resolved** to purchase two further grit bins at a total cost to the parish council of around £400, which would be arranged by the clerk.

2526-185 CHURCH GREEN TRUST FEEDBACK

Cllr. Briant-Evans had circulated the minutes of the last Church Green Trust meeting with no matters for the parish council to consider.

2526-186 FOOTPATH REPAIRS

No update had been received from Cllr. Shapland.

2526-187 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT

This matter had been questioned by a member of the public asking for 20mph signs to be installed within the village. There was some doubt about the scale of speeding in the village and a feeling that there were already more road signs than were needed. Past evidence had indicated that the speeds were not as high as perceived by pedestrians. The matter was considered but there was little the parish council could effectively do.

2526-188 ORCHARD CENTRE MATTERS

The chairman brought up the issue of vandalism in the toilet and inappropriate matter being put in the bin. This is a facility that is used by many people, and it was a shame that it was being treated in this way.

2526-189 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Cllr. Keable had visited with Steve Tucker the Community Highways Officer to look at the cause of flooding at the bottom of Orchard Way. The immediate action to be taken would be to clear the hedging and clean back the detritus at the site, in order to attempt a video inspection of the drains, with the expectation that they are compromised by ingrowing tree roots etc. There was likely to be drainage work to be done here, but this will be dependent on the status of the road in relation to other safety matters. DCC will not be cutting the grass next to the footpath down by the Willow trees and the parish council might have to consider whether it is willing to add this to its annual schedule of cutting.

2526-190 CHRISTMAS LUNCH SUPPORT

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Briant-Evans, it was **Resolved** to provide a grant of £400 to support the Pensioners' Christmas Lunch which would be paid to the Jubilee Hall account.

2526-191 REMEMBRANCE DAY WREATH

On a proposal by Cllr. Andrew, seconded by Cllr. Heal, it was **Resolved** to pay £60 including VAT to the RBL Poppy Appeal.

2526-192 BUDGET & PRECEPT 2026/2027

A budget analysis had been circulated by the clerk. In addition, he had circulated a

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 11th November 2025

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table which showed various levels of Precept finance together with the %age change and the yearly financial effect on each Council Tax band.

He focused on the projected effects of the projects already undertaken in the current year (eg installing the Toddler play equipment) and the project already authorized for the coming year (installation of the youth equipment). The effect of these would see a reduction in the General Reserve to around £14,000 at March 2026 and £10,000 at March 2027 assuming no increase in the level of precept. This table is shown below:-

Number of Band D equivalents has increased from 402.33 in 2025/26 to 410.91 for 2026/27

This means that the Parish Council precept request could increase by £618 to £29,618 with no increase in charge per household.

Council Tax Band		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
Fraction		3/9	5/9	7/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	
LPC Precept		Household Precepts								
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
2025-26										
£29,000		24.03	40.04	56.06	72.08	88.10	104.12	120.13	144.16	
2026-27										
£29,000		23.53	39.21	54.90	70.58	86.26	101.95	117.63	141.16	-2.08%
Decrease		-0.50	-0.83	-1.17	-1.50	-1.83	-2.17	-2.50	-3.00	
£29,618		24.03	40.04	56.06	72.08	88.10	104.12	120.13	144.16	0.00%
No change		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
£30,000		24.34	40.56	56.79	73.01	89.23	105.46	121.68	146.02	1.29%
Annual Inc.		0.31	0.52	0.72	0.93	1.24	1.34	1.55	1.86	
£31,000		25.15	41.91	58.68	75.44	92.20	108.97	125.73	150.88	4.66%
Annual Inc.		1.12	1.87	2.61	3.36	4.11	4.85	5.60	6.72	
£32,000		25.96	43.27	60.57	77.88	95.19	112.49	129.80	155.76	8.05%
Annual Inc.		1.93	3.22	4.51	5.80	7.09	8.38	9.67	11.60	
£33,000		26.77	44.62	62.46	80.31	98.16	116.00	133.85	160.62	11.42%
Annual Inc.		2.74	4.57	6.40	8.23	10.06	11.89	13.72	16.46	
£34,000		27.58	45.97	64.35	82.74	101.13	119.51	137.90	165.48	14.79%
Annual Inc.		3.55	5.92	8.29	10.66	13.03	15.40	17.77	21.32	

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 11th November 2025

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The timescale for deciding on the budget and precept was to have notified MDDC by mid-January 2026, but it would probably be best to decide at the December 2025 meeting. The matter was deferred to the next meeting.

2526-193 LAPFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Discussed above.

2526-194 PLANNING MATTERS

a) APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED

To consider the following Planning Applications and to agree comments:

Reference	Location	Proposal
25/01509/PNAG	Lower Eastington Farm Lapford	Prior Approval for the construction of a slurry tank Decision: Approval
25/01493/FULL	Rafters Rensley Lane Lapford	Construction of roof over existing concrete yard Decision: Approval

b) APPLICATIONS AFTER THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

No applications had been notified after the agenda had been set.

c) MDDC DECISIONS

Reference	Location	Proposal	MDDC Decision
25/01018/FULL	Great Hole Farm Lapford Devon	Erection of an agricultural storage building	Full Permission Granted

2526-195 BANK RECONCILIATION AND RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS COMPARED WITH BUDGET

On a proposal by Cllr. Heal, seconded by Cllr. Graham, it was **Resolved** to adopt the bank reconciliation and budget comparison document for the period ended 31st October 2025.

2526-196 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

On a proposal by Cllr. Heal, seconded by Cllr. Graham, 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.
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Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 11th November 2025

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2025/2026				
Lapford Church Green	Grant	2025/26	2,000.00	2526-21
S Hemsworth	Salary	Nov 25	67.83	2526-22
RJ Martin	Salary	Nov 25	568.15	2526-22
HMRC	Tax Deductions	Nov 25	159.00	2526-22
HMRC	National Insurance	Nov 25	43.97	2526-22
Balsam Gharib	NP Data Analysis	Nov 25 – 40%	488.40	2526-23
T & G Garden Maint	Play Area Grass Cutting	May – Oct 25	315.00	2526-24
T & G Garden Maint	Village Grass Cutting	Final 2025	223.00	2526-24
Everflow	OC Sewage & Water	July/Aug/Sept 25	0.00	DD
BT Group Ltd	OC Broadband	Nov 2025	55.63	DD
IONOS	Village Website Hosting	Nov 2025	32.59	DD
Adobe	Acrobat Professional	Nov 2025	19.97	DD
Lloyds Bank	Service Charge	Nov 2025	4.25	DD
Valda Energy	Orchard Centre Electricity	Oct 2025	30.18	DD
Royal British Legion	Remembrance Wreath	11/11/25	60.00	2526-24
WEF Fire Protection	OC Equipment Testing	1514	52.80	2526-25
Peter Heal	Toilet Roll Holder & Tissue	Nisbets	84.93	2526-25
Peter Heal	Primer	Toolstation	23.98	2526-25
Roy Andrews	Play Area Keys	Crediton Cobblers	31.47	2526-25
Andrew Hicks Engineering	Xmas Tree Stand	Roy	288.00	2526-26
Lapford Village Hall	Pensioners Lunch Grant		400.00	2526-26
Land Registry	Playing Field Documents	S106 Claim	60.00	Card
Amazon	Grit Bins	Cocus Products	371.98	Card

Lapford Parish Council

Lapford Parish Council Meeting 11th November 2025

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RECEIPTS

Receipt from	Services	Amount £	Method
2025/2026			
MDDC	Precept	14,500.00	BC
HMRC	VAT Refund	6,219.39	BC
BT	Broadband Refund	36.58	BC

2526-197 MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

The chairman had received an email on a meeting to discuss Lapford being used as a film location. She had passed this on to Alex Gator who would attend.

2526-198 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Cllr. Graham questioned whether a motion activated light would be possible outside of the toilet area alongside an emergency light fitting. He would ask the electrician to see how feasible it was.

It was believed that a non-public meeting take place to consider the detail of the budget in time for the next parish council meeting.

Cllr. Heal was concerned about the lack of activity with the new houses at the bottom of the village. The chairman would make a phone call to the agents to ask about the current status.

2526-199 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 9th December 2025 at 7.30pm in the Orchard Centre.

2526-200 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

JD

LAPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Action List 11th November 2025 Meeting

Ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	Orchard Centre Adjacent Land	Clerk/MDDC	MDDC <i>Lease to be drawn up</i>
	Toddlers Play Area Lease Still with MDDC legal team to get sorted out.	Clerk/MDDC	MDDC <i>Still to sort out with solicitors</i>
	Planning Enforcement Issues MDDC was currently overwhelmed by enforcement cases with just one officer to do them. The concentration was on those matters that were dangerous, however the Eastmere Farm issue would be looked at.	Clerk/MDDC	MDDC <i>Still to respond</i>
	Ash Dieback To encourage DCC to consider notifying residents of the danger to the highway	Clerk/DCC	DCC <i>Highways List</i>
	Highways	Clerk/DCC	DCC <i>Highways List</i>
	Neighbourhood Plan	Parish Council	<i>Survey produced and distributed & advertised. Background survey work under way.</i>
	Telephone Box Make safe for use as book swap area.	Cllrs. Wilkie, Heal	<i>This had been washed clean and repaired ready to be rubbed down before being painted</i>
	Co-option of new councillors	Council	<i>There are still three vacancies</i>
	Youth Play Equipment Section 106 application The clerk had applied for the Section 106 funding available for the Youth Equipment and had received a response requesting more information. He would undertake to get what he could returned to MDDC as quickly as possible.	Clerk, District Chairman, Cllr. Keable, Cllr. Andrews and others	<i>Once application for Section 106 is actioned, order play equipment.</i>
	Youth Play Equipment Additional requests	Clerk	<i>Liaise with LYPFT on whether and how the request could be fulfilled.</i>
	Orchard Centre a) Painting of toilet door	Councillors	<i>All tasks are pending for the time being</i>

LAPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Action List 11th November 2025 Meeting

Ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	b) Toilet handrail to be refurbished c) Cleanup of the outside of the Orchard centre and complete the exterior painting d) Entrance into the Orchard Centre by the door can be slippery. e) Hole in archive cupboard as a result of the fuse board being moved f) Repainting of interior and fitting of new notice boards		
	Road Wardens	Clerk & Cllr. Heal	<i>Further Training be arranged</i>
	Footpaths Overgrown Footpaths	Chair & Clerk Cllr. Shapland	<i>Cllr. Shapland to be liaised with</i>
	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>
	Tourism Signs To consider the possibility and cost of providing such signs for local businesses	Cllr. Graham	<i>Cllr. Graham would look at these as soon as he could.</i>
	Concrete Bin Disposal To remove the unsightly concrete bin next to the A377	Cllr. Heal	<i>Cllr. Heal would be looking at this.</i>
	Village Maintenance Cleaning of signs To be arranged.	Cllrs Heal & Down	<i>Deferred until Spring</i>
	Village Maintenance Weed Clearance	Cllr. Graham	<i>Cllr. Graham undertook to look at potential contractors to use acceptable sprays</i>
	SWW and sewage issues Cllr. Graham reported that ???	Clerk	<i>A response was still awaited from SWW relating to the plans that had been received which were unclear as to the direction of flow in the pipes and additionally indicated that at least one was discharging straight into the river</i>

LAPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Action List 11th November 2025 Meeting

Ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	Yellow Post Box	Completed	The new owners of Lowerfield House were quite happy for the box to stay where it was
	Orchard Centre Telephone	Clerk	The telephone had been purchased and was installed but was still not working. The clerk would contact BT once again to sort this out
	Horse Box To make a request that this be parked in a less obtrusive place	Clerk	Clerk to write
	Defibrillator Pads & Registration To order replacement pads and register the Spar defibrillator urgently	Clerk	Clerk to make arrangements
	Church Green Grant To pay the agreed grant of £2,000 for 2025/2026	Clerk	Clerk to make payment
	20 mph Speed Limit To investigate the potential and resultant cost of providing 20mph signs in the village	Cllr. Down	Cllr. Down to outline her thoughts on this
	Tarka Line To confirm that Steve Munday continues to be the parish council representative on the two organisations	Clerk	Clerk to write
	Local Government Reorganisation To consider the potential effect on the parish of the implementation of the proposals to introduce a Unitary Authority to replace DCC and MDDC	Clerk	Clerk to circulate his thoughts on the analysis sent by MDDC following the State of the District event
	Christmas Tree To arrange a tree for placement on the Village Green	Cllr. Andrew	Contact John Cockram Christmas Trees and arrange tree(s) for festive period
	Budget & Precept 2026/2027 To consider what might be necessary for the period ending 31 st March 2027 and setting a budget and precept appropriately, whilst ensuring that there are sufficient reserves to cover unexpected eventualities.	Clerk	Analysis to be produced for each meeting for final decisions to be made by the 10 December 2025 meeting