

LAPFORD PARISH COUNCIL

There was a meeting of Lapford Parish Council on Tuesday 10th February 2026 at 7.30pm held in the Orchard Centre, Lapford

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

Also Present: No other councillors

In attendance: Rob Martin (Clerk).

Others: One member of the public.

MINUTES

2526-248 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Cllr. Down who was absent for personal reasons. This was accepted by the parish council.

In the absence of Cllr. Down, the Vice-Chairman Cllr. Briant-Evans chaired this meeting.

County/District Cllr. Keable also apologised as he had to attend Thorverton Parish Council's meeting instead.

2526-249 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY)

No declarations of interest were made.

2526-250 COUNCILLOR COOPTION

Cllrs. Briant-Evans and Graham had put together an article for the Lapford Lookout which councillors **agreed** should be forwarded unchanged.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow public participation

2526-251 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION & UPDATES FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

A question was raised about who on the council would supply the notes of the current meeting for the Lookout. Cllr. Briant-Evans undertook to do this.

2526-252 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 joint report to councillors before the meeting. One matter to be decided was who was going to represent the parish council at the NDRDA convention on Friday 6 March 2026 at 11.00am in the Fox and Hounds at Eggesford. Cllr. Graham agreed to attend on behalf of the council.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting

2526-253 MINUTES

Cllr. Briant-Evans proposed to adjust minute 2526-240 to add 'The council voted to allow District Councillor Steve Keable to share the Neighbourhood Plan statistical information with Mid Devon District Council'.

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Andrews, it was **Resolved** to adopt

JD
10/3/26.

the adjusted minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13th January 2026.

2526-254 ACTION LIST, CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

To consider any outstanding matters on the attached Action List and decide how these are to be taken further. To receive the circulated report from the Clerk on action taken and correspondence received since the last meeting.

Action List updates on matters not on this agenda:

- Highways meeting between Steve Keable and Steve Tucker – no report had been received but Cllr. Briant Evans was aware that the drains at the bottom of Mill Hill and Edgerley would be jetted at some point.
- Orchard Centre Land – the clerk had contacted Steve Densham outlining the area that the parish council wished to have added and was awaiting a response.
- Toddler Play Area lease – had been signed by both sides and completion was imminent.
- Planning Enforcement Matters – there was no further update.
- Telephone Box – when the weather improved the painting would be done.
- Additional Youth Play Equipment – the clerk would draw up a list of the requested items and liaise with LYPFT.
- Road Wardens – Stacey Lumsdon had been advised to contact Steve Tucker to arrange some practical training and Cllr. Briant-Evans had asked her to include Steve Keable, herself and the clerk in correspondence on this matter.
- Footpaths – a further £160 P3 grant had been received from DCC which would be ring-fenced for PROW work.
- Select List of Contractors – to be taken off the Action List.
- Concrete Bin Disposal – the weather has stopped this from happening.
- Village Maintenance – Cllr. Graham stated that this was about potentially employment someone on a piecemeal basis to undertake maintenance activities around the village. A name was mentioned by Cllr. Andrews would contact him to see whether he would be interested.
- Orchard Centre Telephone Connection – this was outstanding.
- Play Area Inspection Regime – this would arranged between the parish council and LYPFT not involving MDDC. The ROSPA inspection for the coming March had been ordered.
- Dangerous Tree – this was to be done by MDDC but to date nothing further had been heard.
- Assertion 10 Compliance – this has been ordered.
- Planning Training – Angharad had been contacted for a price which was awaited (post-meeting note: £250). The clerk would clarify whether a Saturday morning would be available to enable Neighbourhood Plan attendees.
- Bus Diversions – a response had been received and circulated regarding the lack of service for Lapford when roadworks diversions were in place caused by the inability to safely turn buses in the village. It was agreed however that in future a taxi replacement service will be provided for Lapford when this occurs.
- Temporary Fencing – Cllr. Graham had circulated plans which appeared to show that the land in question was owned by Cloverdown, the landlord for the industrial site just across the road. The clerk would approach Cloverdown.
- Local Government Reorganisation Consultation – this was now open. It was

agreed that a response should come from the parish council. The date for a special meeting would be set as 15th April 2025 to discuss this at 7.30pm.

- Defibrillator – the Circuit had questioned whether the garage defibrillator had been inspected, indicating that a report should be made at least once every 90 days. The view was that either Piers Fletcher or Sean Cocker would be the ones to contact to verify an inspection.
- Fire Brigade Community Conversation – will take place online on 6 March 2026 at 12.00 noon.
- Devon Community Resilience Forum – DCRF emails had indicated that there would be grant available for flood damage and prevention and that there was an invitation to complete a survey of recent damage.
- May Fisher – an email on community-led and self-build housing for ‘lived-in’ which had been sent to the Neighbourhood Plan team and Peter Totterdill had suggested inviting them to a future meeting.

2526-255 FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES

Cllr. Briant-Evans reported from the last meeting of HOLD. The legal and charitable position of the Village Hall land owning situation is now settled. The village hall bookings are well down. There are some tidying up jobs to be done on Lower Town Place which could be tackled on the village tidy-up day. The Youth Club Friday group is attracting about 20 young people currently, which is encouraging.

There were some concerns about community groups having to call out a Community Church representative before being able to use the audio-visual equipment in the hall. This would be discussed at the next village hall committee.

The fact that the village hall is struggling to wipe its face financially should be broadcast more widely

2526-256 COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Celebrations Committee

No committee meetings have occurred since the last Parish Council.

b) Lapford Emergency Action Plan (LEAP) Committee.

There had been due to be a LEAP meeting the previous evening but too few turned up for it, so it did not take place. The Emergency Planning Officer had indicated that he would come to the village on a Friday morning to give advice, so another LEAP meeting needed to be set up to consider what was necessary. The meeting date was set as 7.30pm on 18 February 2026 in the Orchard Centre.

2526-257 CHURCH GREEN TRUST FEEDBACK

The minutes of some Trust meetings have been publicised on the parish council website. As the meetings were not public this should now be changed and the clerk undertook to take them off. Summaries would be reported through the Parish Council minutes.

2526-258 SOUTH WEST WATER (SWW) RESPONSE

The response from SWW was much as expected with the organisation taking little or no responsibility for the sewage problems experienced with a toothless Environment Agency being stated as the ‘watchdog’. The clerk had copied both Alex Gater and the Neighbourhood Plan team into the response for their information.

2526-259 ANTENNA ON ORCHARD CENTRE

The contract correspondence with Netmore had not been completed and bank payment

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information had not been passed over to enable rent payments to be made. Contact had been made with the company confirming that the start date of the contract was July 2024 so rental of £350 per year for two years had now been made with the next payment of £350 would be made in July 2026.

2526-260 GRASS CUTTING 2026

On a proposal by Cllr. Graham, seconded by Cllr. Fletcher, it was **Resolved** to extend the contracts for grass cutting with T&G Garden Maintenance for a further year with the toddler play area unchanged at £810 and the village, including the Church Green, rising from £770 to £788 (+2.3%).

A full quotation process was due to be carried out for the 2027/2028 year.

2526-261 CHAIRMAN'S ALLOWANCE

Section 15 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides for town and Parish Councils to pay the chairman 'for the purposes of enabling them to meet the expenses of the office such allowance as the Council think reasonable'.

On a proposal by Cllr. Andrews, seconded by Cllr. Heal it was **Resolved** to pay the chairman an allowance of £200 to cover the additional costs of the role.

2526-262 VILLAGE TIDY-UP DAY

A notification had been placed in the Lookout for this to take place from 9.30am on 28th March 2026.

The parish council would pay for free refreshments for people taking part in this activity including tea coffee cake and bacon rolls being which were being made available from the village hall on this date. The parish council had a budget of £60 for this which, on a proposal by Cllr. Briant-Evans, seconded by Cllr. Graham it was **Resolved** it would pay to subsidise the food for the workers.

2526-263 LAPFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllrs Briant-Evans and Graham had attended the Steering Group meeting on Saturday 7th February 2026. The main points of that meeting were: -

- Government housing targets would mean that Lapford would need to take around 150 dwellings over the next 20 years, whether or not allocated within the Neighbourhood Plan.
- There would be information sessions on planning and community land trusts over the next few weeks.
- There was work being done on the style of potential development and how it could be fitted into the current infrastructure. Having an 'A' road and a railway line it was considered a prime area for development.
- The next meeting would be on Saturday 14 March 2026.

2526-264 PLANNING MATTERS

a) APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED

Reference	Location	Proposal
None		

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b) APPLICATIONS AFTER THE AGENDA WAS ISSUED

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

c) MDDC DECISIONS

The following was noted.

Reference	Location	Proposal	MDDC Decision
25/01705/CLP	43 Prospect Way Lapford Crediton	Certificate of lawfulness for the proposed erection of single storey rear extension and installation of a dormer window to facilitate loft conversion	Certificate Issued

2526-265 BANK RECONCILIATION AND RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS COMPARED WITH BUDGET

The bank reconciliation and budget comparison document for the period ended 31st January 2026 was noted.

2526-266 RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

On a proposal by Cllr. Heal, 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.
2025/2026				
S Hemsworth	Salary	Feb 26	65.82	2526-32
RJ Martin	Salary	Feb 26	550.50	2526-32
HMRC	Tax Deductions	Feb 26	154.00	2526-32
HMRC	National Insurance	Feb 26	40.66	2526-32
Everflow	OC Sewage & Water	Oct/Nov 2025	0.00	DD
BT Group Ltd	OC Broadband	Jan 26	55.63	DD
IONOS	Village Website Hosting	Jan 26	32.59	DD
Adobe	Acrobat Professional	Jan 26	19.97	DD
Lloyds Bank	Service Charge	Dec 25	4.25	DD
Valda Energy	Orchard Centre Electricity	Dec 2025	89.44	DD
Royal Mail	Postage – Signed Lease	Online	5.50	Card
Victory Hall	PC Meeting	13 January 26	12.00	2526-33

RECEIPTS

Receipt from	Services	Amount £	Method
2025/2026			
Netmore	Antenna Rent	700.00	BGC

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2526-267 MATTERS RAISED BY THE CHAIR

Cllr. Briant-Evans highlighted the need to look at the MDDC 'Register of Assets' and to correct any errors and report back to the District Council.
She would look at getting the Orchard Centre chairs recovered.

2526-268 COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Cllr. Andrews brought up the state of the throughway at the top of Park Road which had been dug up by a Utility (BT?) but was just compacted earth and, because of all of the recent rain, had become a quagmire. He requested that the parish council contribute to the work he was going to carry out of compacting chippings to make it usable. This would be placed on the next agenda.

Cllr. Heal said that the broken telegraph/power pole on the A377 had been replaced. He also expressed concern about youngsters riding electric scooters dangerously around the village. The clerk would notify this concern to the Neighbourhood Police team and try to get some action taken. The incidences were in several places, mainly between 6 and 8pm most days of the week. An article to be written for the Lapford Lookout.

Cllr. Fletcher reported a streetlight being out.

The clerk would investigate the potential for a Neighbourhood Watch team to be set up.

2526-269 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 10th March 2026 at 7.30pm in the Orchard Centre.

2526-270 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

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Action List 13th January 2025 Meeting

Ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	Orchard Centre Adjacent Land	Clerk/MDDC	MDDC <i>Parish Council response sent on land to be included, awaiting response.</i>
	Toddlers Play Area Lease	Clerk/MDDC	<i>Lease signed and sent back, now awaiting completion.</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, which none of those in Lapford were.	Clerk/MDDC	MDDC have conducted site visits and conclusions are awaited.
	Ash Dieback To encourage DCC to consider notifying residents of the danger to the highway	Clerk/DCC	DCC Highways List with SK
	Highways	Clerk/DCC	DCC Highways List with SK
	Neighbourhood Plan	Parish Council	Steering Group presentation had taken place.
	Telephone Box Make safe for use as book swap area.	Cllrs. Heal, Andrews	This had been washed clean and repaired ready to be rubbed down before being painted
	Co-option of new councillors	Council	There are still three vacancies Sue B-E to write an article for the Lookout
	Youth Play Equipment Additional requests	Clerk	Liaise with LYPFT on whether and how the request could be fulfilled.
	Orchard Centre a) Painting of toilet door 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.	Councillors	All tasks are pending for the time being

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Action List 13th January 2025 Meeting

Ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	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 to be arranged</i>
	Footpaths Overgrown Footpaths	Chair & Clerk Cllr. Shapland	<i>Some work done & 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>
	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	Clerk	<i>Response from SWW received and circulated. Item on this agenda.</i>
	Orchard Centre Telephone	Clerk	<i>The telephone had been purchased and was installed but was still not working. The clerk would contact BT once again to sort this out</i>
	Tarka Line To confirm that Steve Munday continues to be the parish council representative on the two organisations	Clerk	<i>Clerk has written, no response to date</i>
	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 MDCC	Clerk	<i>To be actioned</i>

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Ref	Issue/Action	Responsibility	Update
	Play Area Inspections To sort out what regime of inspections is necessary both for the annual ROSPA Risk Assessment and week to week visual checks.	Clerk/LYPFT	MDDC informed that PC & LYPFT will arrange all inspections.
	Dangerous Tree The tree identified is considered to be a danger to motorists as it is hanging over the highway and only secured by webbing.	Clerk	DCC Highways SK informed PC that this would be done by MDDC
	South West Water Antenna The antenna has been installed on the Orchard Centre since May 2024 but no income has been received for it	Clerk	Netmore contacted and payments for July 2024 and July 2025 made. July 2026 will be made on time.
	Assertion 10 Compliance To ensure the necessary adjustments are made to comply with the security and accessibility requirements.		Order placed for this to be completed
	Planning Training Training offered at Lapford for latest planning legislation and proposals		Request for dates made to Angharad
	Bus Diversions Recent diversions have resulted in buses not coming through the village but staying on A377, causing problems for local residents.		Email sent to Devon Transport team
	Temporary Fencing at Village Entrance The temporary barriers next to the bridge need to be replaced by a permanent fence. The landowners need to be identified and a request made for this to happen.		Bill Graham located a map that shows the land is not network Rail's. Further investigation to reveal landowner necessary.