

## Letcombe Regis Parish Council

Parish Clerk Mrs Elizabeth Jenkins  
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OX12 9LD

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7.55pm**  
**Due to Covid-19 PC meetings are currently being held as virtual meetings using the Zoom Platform.**  
**The first 5 minutes were for meeting preparation**

**Present:** Jeanne Lapsley (JL) Chairman. Loretta Light (LL) Vice Chair,  
Councillors David Barber (DB), Paul Batchelor (PB), Michelle Benton (MB)  
Doug Frewer (DF), Elizabeth Jenkins (EJ) Parish Clerk

County Councillor Yvonne Constance (YC)  
District Councillor Paul Barrow (DC-PB)

Item		Action
1.	<b>Apologies</b> Apology received from Cllr Hitchcock due to illness.	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest:</b> There were no declarations.	
	The Chairman, Cllr Lapsley, was not originally available to attend this meeting and as Cllr Light the Vice-Chair had prepared for the meeting, it was decided she would act as Chair this evening although Cllr Lapsley would now in fact be present.	
3.	<b>Approval of the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting and Actions Arising from this and earlier meetings:</b> Councillors approved the minutes as a true record of the meeting.	
	<b>From earlier meetings;</b> <b>Item 5 ii) Request for a meeting with Adrian Duffield in connection with Antwick Stud application and the disparity in planning applications</b> Cllr Light reported that Adrian Duffields current commitments on strategic work for the Council meant that he was unable to attend a meeting. This would now take place with Emily Hamerton the Development Manager to be held on Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> January at 3pm. <b>Completed</b>	
	<b>Item 4i) Options for powering the Village Hall in an Emergency.</b> Cllr Light with Mike Light as a Village Hall Trustee had met with Mr Thomasz Komorowski (TK) at the Village Hall, Richard Taylor had also been present for part of the meeting. TK explained that adding a generator and batteries to the current village hall system could lower the overall cost of powering the hall. Batteries would be fed by the solar system in the summer and a cheap night	

	<p>time tariff which would save money in the long term. In a power cut and a 25% drop in power by the batteries the generator would kick in and power the batteries. KT needs information on current electric usage to calculate the approximate costing. <b>Ongoing</b></p> <p>Cllr Lapsley said that this would be raised at the Trustees meeting the following evening.</p> <p>Due to Covid-19 calculating the average electricity consumption is tricky however 9 months worth of figures have been sent to him. Cllr Lapsley asked if there were any grant funding streams available and Cllr Light confirmed it was likely however the advantage to the village Hall using this system would, in the long run, be cheaper than the current system. However we do need to see how much it would cost. Cllr Barber asked if the original idea was to use it not for general running of the Village Hall but for use in an emergency. Cllr Light agreed but the advice was using batteries could work out cheaper in the long run. Cllr Batchelor asked what the battery life expectancy was. Cllr Light reported that it was at least 15 years. TK's company as part of their contract would make two company visits twice a year to maintain the system. There are additional costs eg the generator, fuel tank etc. which would need to be buried below the generator in the wire cage for the Air Source Heat Pump.</p> <p><b>Item 14i)–Meeting to discuss the Maintenance Contract.</b> Cllrs Light and Lapsley put together a completely new monthly job checklist for the maintenance contract and this would be checked with Richard Taylor, the Chairman of the Recreation Ground and Village Hall Trust to see if there were any extra items they would like included. Cllr Lapsley had been given names of two contractors from Lambourn Parish Council and the PC will write inviting them to visit the village and submit quotes. Cllr Batchelor said that it should include Warborough Road once OCC had sorted out who was responsible for what concerning the drainage issues and this could be added in if necessary depending on the timing. Cllr Lapsley agreed that we should keep this in mind. <b>Ongoing</b></p> <p><b>From the PC meeting held 15 November 2021</b> Item 1 Burial Ground Improvements. The Clerk confirmed she had written to the contractors to thank them. Other items will be covered later in the Agenda. <b>Completed</b></p> <p>Item 7ii) <b>Broadband Rollout - Cllr Batchelor to write a report for the Register</b> Cllr Light reported that Airband had pre-empted the issue by posting adverts and calling on villagers in Warborough Road, where they have already installed a fibre cable. They were asking for residents to register an interest, which would not be a commitment. They were also interested in the PC arranging for a village meeting with Airband. Cllr Light said that the conduit at the bottom of Warborough Road is blocked which is stopping the fibre to be installed any further which may take some months to solve. Cllr Batchelor reported that trying to find a solution is not easy. Currently work is being</p>	<p><b>JL</b></p> <p><b>PC</b></p>
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	<p>carried out by a number of companies who are looking at what is required to put the infrastructure in for the rest of the village which will enable Airband to bid for the contract and meet the deadline for completion of the work. Airband were jumping the gun, they were not offering a complete package by not carrying all services and he would write a report for the Register to ensure residents were aware. He and District Cllr Paul Barrow have been working with West Challow and the Broadband officer Craig Bower from OCC to understand what services are included in the contract. Cllr Batchelor would write a piece for the Register in conjunction with Cllr Barrow, West Challow and Craig Bower. Cllr Light asked if this could go into the February Register if possible. Cllrs Barrow and Batchelor had requested a meeting with Ian Richardson of Richmond to discuss the issue and Cllr Frewer confirmed that he would remind him.</p> <p>Cllr Light reported that the Letcombe Brook Project had sent their annual report which would be put on the Register.</p> <p><b>Item 10 Chalk Streams</b> Cllr Batchelor had drafted a letter which had been sent to Cllr Lapsley and the Clerk asking why the MP had taken his particular stance on a Government issue. Councillors would be sent the draft and asked to let the Clerk have any comments. It would then be sent to David Johnston MP. Attached as Appendix A). Cllr Batchelor asked if Cllrs had seen the information that the proposal for building a reservoir had been sent for consultation and Cllr Constance said she would cover this in her report.</p> <p><b>Item 11 Clean Slate</b> The Clerk confirmed that Clean Slate provide long term emotional support for survivors of abuse in Oxfordshire. The Clerk would ask them to submit a brief resume of their work.</p> <p><b>4. County Council Matters:</b> Cllr Light thanked Cllr Constance for forwarding the Chief Executives report and her earlier advice .</p> <p><b>i) Advice on costs for the 20mph.</b> Cllr Constance had sent the advice on costs which had been circulated to Councillors. The estimates seemed rather high and she questioned the quoted amount of £8 million as all her parishes had agreed on the idea. She is trying to get County to understand that once approved each parish could apply under the scheme and would only need to pay for signage changes rather than wait 3 years for approval. The individual costs were also out of proportion, eg £5k for a village which may only have a couple of signs could not be substantiated. YC is trying to find out the way that this has been calculated and request that individual villages should be able to apply.</p> <p><b>ii) Broadband.</b> Cllr Constance thanked Cllr Batchelor for his report on Broadband. Airband are promoting themselves everywhere which is keeping BT and others active.</p>	<p><b>PB</b></p> <p><b>DF</b></p> <p><b>EJ</b></p> <p><b>EJ</b></p>
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The fact that Airband is not offering a full service package is worth noting.

**iii) Speed Camera Update.**

The Speed Indicator Device (SID) installed in Uffington cost between £7 and £10k however cost is dependent on the type of reports received. YC pointed out that they have proved useful in reducing speeding.

**iv) Boundary consultation.**

The boundary commission has proposed that all constituencies should have between 70 and 75 thousand electors and due to the growth in our area it is now around 130 thousand so boundaries need to be amended. The current proposal is that the Wantage boundary will stop at Kingston Lisle and the villages from Uffington through to Shrivenham, Fenham, Longcote, Woolstone and Baulking will transfer to Witney. This is unlikely to change as the numbers are right however, timing is the issue. The next general election must be held by December 2024. We do not know what is going to happen in Government at the moment, whether Boris Johnson survives or not and when an election will be called.

**Reservoir:**

Thames Water (TW) have revisited their original plan, The reservoir would be surrounded by a bund between 15m and 25m high (90 feet) rather than dug down into the earth. Water would be pumped from the Thames to the reservoir to be held in reserve for when supplies are lower further to the east and in London. TW would be able to sell to Affinity, one of the water companies serving East Anglia. This plan has been circulating for some years and was originally subject to a significant public enquiry which found that TW had not made the need for a reservoir clear. There are still significant leakages and experts have shown that, even with the growth in population if TW fixed them there would be no shortage of water.

Thames have come up with a new regionally based scheme for the whole of the south eastern region. Cllr Constance believed that consultation details were available. It would be a vast build on land which would not relieve flooding as it is not permeable, the build is expected to take ten years. New railway sidings would be required to transport the soil. It would displace and cause disruption around Steventon and Abingdon for ten years and there are alternatives to this scheme. There is a possibility of a transfer from the Severn. The Environment Agency had previously been against this solution as they thought mixing the water from the two rivers would cause a problem. It is also believed that there is some old transfer infrastructure available which could be used which could be a simpler solution.

At a previous meeting TW claimed there would be more evaporation from this than from the open reservoir. They have also been committed by the regulator to reduce their leakages by at least 50%. The other alternative is that Affinity could also be supplied by water brought from Birmingham by canal. Oxford County Council (OCC) have a new councillor, an engineer who has questioned TW. Cllr Light asked if they could not dig down but Cllr Constance thought it

	<p>may be because it would cause more problems with flooding.</p> <p>Cllr Constance also reported that she had sent the County Council report on the County Councils next Transport Strategy. There will be a separate chapter on Freight management. OCC had a unanimous vote on a Freight subsidy. This would be a long way in the future as funding will be a problem. Cllr Light said that there are two webinars on planning which anyone can attend on the 24<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm and another on the 1<sup>st</sup> February at 7pm. The link is in the notification however it needs to be accessed via either the original notification of the consultation, or by the link which can be accessed from the notice.  <a href="https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltcp/survey_tools/ltcp-booking-form">https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltcp/survey_tools/ltcp-booking-form</a></p> <p>Cllr Light pointed out that consultation on the budget only came out on the 17<sup>th</sup> December requiring replies to be in by the 5<sup>th</sup> January. It was felt that the timing was unfortunate. Cllr Constance said that in defence of council officers the Government does not release the contribution to Councils until just before Christmas meaning that councils were unable to release the figures any earlier.</p> <p><b>5. District Council Matters:</b></p> <p><b>i) Update on the meeting with Lee Travers</b></p> <p>Cllr Paul Barrow had written to Lee Travers and Gordon Kelman of CC requesting a meeting on Warborough Road in order to develop a strategy to solve the grips and drainage problems. Cllr Constance said that should not be a problem the difficulty would be finding the funding. Gramps Hill is also a problem but Warborough Road is more complicated.</p> <p>It was reported that this had started when a villager had been asked to clear the ditches that were not his responsibility, small clearances would not solve the problem which needed looking at along the whole of the road. Cllr Batchelor clarified the situation by saying that this goes back to the change in legislation in the early nineties and the lack of understanding on what was actually meant. Cllr Barrow said it has also been exacerbated by BT putting telegraph poles in some of the ditches. Cllr Constance would try and get residents informed officially of their responsibilities.</p> <p>The PC would await the outcome of the meeting with the Officers. Cllr Barber confirmed that the ditch along the allotments was the farm's responsibility. Cllr Lapsley pointed out that there had been instances of vans and workmen arriving and just sitting not doing anything, she confirmed that in future photos would be taken of the vehicles number plates and reported.</p> <p><b>ii) Update on Wantage Hospital</b></p> <p>Cllr Light asked Cllr Barrow to report on any progress with the Wantage Hospital and HOSC. He confirmed that there had not been any progress to date.</p> <p>There is a county wide review of Health Services including Wantage Hospital. The rationale was that people discharged from hospital should go home as they recover better at home than in a community hospital however to date no comparison has been made between the two. There is a community wide bed optimisation programme. There will be a public consultation if it is decided to close the beds at Wantage Hospital. The next meeting is likely to</p>	<p><b>Cllrs</b></p>
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take place in March. Cllr Light confirmed that the South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) were being helped by Military and Fire Service co-responders driving Ambulances thereby freeing up clinical staff during the current problem due to staff being off sick or isolating. Cllr Batchelor asked how many ambulance staff are unvaccinated and Cllr Light said that SCAS were not currently publishing this information. The NHS were looking into how to encourage unvaccinated staff to be vaccinated and were looking at moving them to other posts where it was not obligatory, it is a very long process and is being kept confidential at the moment.

Cllr Barrow confirmed that Healthwatch Oxfordshire are currently looking into rural isolation a report will be published in March and he will feed information back.

Cllr Lapsley reported South and Vale District Councils are looking at the concept of district pilot schemes going for Rapid Neighbourhood Access Neighbourhood Plans to be ready in March, suggesting that we should currently keep a watching brief.

Cllr Lapsley confirmed that Letcombe Regis had gone for a Community Led Plan rather than a Neighbourhood Plan as the process seemed to take forever to achieve. We are also in an AONB and Conservation area which gives a level of protection and the PC felt this was the best way forward at the time. The PC may revisit this alternative in the future. Cllr Barrow is leading the Neighbourhood plan for his village which has taken an inordinate amount of time and work, they have just had their public consultation. Cllr Light attended planning training Witney for the whole county, organised by the OALC. The impression they were told very clearly was that Neighbourhood Planning helped Parish Councils to decide where houses that were going to be built would be built but not if.

**6. Parish Council Matters:**

**i) Register Cllr Light to update:**

Cllr Lapsley introduced Cllr Benton who was obtaining the views of Residents as to whether the Register should continue electronically or return to a hard copy or both. Cllr Benton reported that she had contacted the volunteers and had received nine responses, of those, three want to keep electronic, some did do a poll in their areas but a lot of them had their own personal view. Four wanted to return to hard copy, and two wanted both, suggesting placing hard copies in the Church and in the shop. She had also checked the Residents Association area in Richmond and there are never any copies there. Cllr Lapsley said that in the midst of Covid Richmond had agreed they would print off electronic copies to be circulated which did not last. Cllr Frewer confirmed that they did not consider it practical to restart it. Cllr Lapsley felt this was discriminatory as half of the village population lived in Richmond. Cllr Frewer said that half of the Richmond village residents did not want an internal Richmond email (nb some of them are on the PC village email list). Cllr Benton said that some of the volunteers had said they would be happy to deliver if there was a return to hard copies. Cllr Light mentioned the expense



	<p><b>vii) OALC Model letter discussion.</b> Cllr Light reported that Cllr Frewer had done an excellent job on reducing the size of the Model Letters. She suggested that the Clerk should send them to our local MP and to the Minister for levelling up Opportunities. It was decided not to include any local examples. (Attached as Appendix B)</p> <p><b>7. Councillor updates:</b> There were no updates</p> <p><b>8. Financial Matters:</b></p> <p><b>i) Clerks report.</b> The Clerk had forwarded the report before the meeting and Councillors had no questions.</p> <p><b>ii) Ratification of invoices (see last page of Agenda).</b> PAYE for October £69.80, MPW Construction &amp; Groundwork Ltd £19,139.88, MG maintenance £504.00, MPW Construction &amp; Groundwork Ltd £12,992.76, November PAYE £17.20, Clerk November salary £252.14, Arran Lax – November Timesheet £165.00, OALC – Training £60.00, Christmas Tree £89.99, Register Toner £118.28, Mobile phone contract Direct Debit to November 2021 £10.00, to December 2021 £10.00, to January 2022 £10.00.</p> <p>Councillors ratified the payment of the invoices.</p> <p><b>iii) Summary of Costs to date against budget.</b> The paperwork had been sent round with the Agenda and there were no questions</p> <p><b>iv) Grant requests</b> <b>South and Vale Citizens Advice Oxfordshire -</b> They were asking for a grant of £100. They advised They had supported ten residents from Letcombe Regis during the current year. Councillors agreed to give a grant of £100 as requested.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that South and Vale Citizens Advice are a separate advisory company from Vale Community Impact (VCI) formerly known as Wantage Independent Advice Centre (WIAC).</p> <p><b>v) Updated Review of Internal Controls and Risk Assessment - 9<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</b> Cllr Light commented that item 7 on Safeguarding needs updating and she would send the Clerk relevant text. This means on receipt of grant requests the PC must check that they have a safeguarding policy in place. We do not need to see it just record that they have one. The policy is reviewed annually.</p> <p><b>9. Budget:</b> To approve the budget for 2022/2023 and set the amount of th RG &amp; VH grant to the Trustees. There will be no increase in the Precept. Cllr Lapsley explained the process and asked if Councillors had any questions. There were</p>	<p>EJ</p> <p>EJ</p> <p>EJ</p>
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	<p>none and Councillors approved the budget unanimously. Cllr Light thanked the Clerk for preparing the budget. The Clerk would send the Precept request to the Vale.</p> <p><b>10. Village Items:</b></p> <p>i) Discuss hedging for the Burial Ground and replacement of the metal fencing between the Burial Ground and the original car park. Cllrs Light and Lapsley had walked round the Burial Ground. The beech hedging alongside the footpath needed filling in and the hedging itself should be continued round the extension to the new car park and along the third side. It would also be an idea to plant the sides of the Lych gate with climbing plants such as roses, honeysuckle etc. The Clerk reminded Councillors the PC had been left a sum of £200 from a resident at Richmond to go towards plants in the village.</p> <p>Councillors discussed and decided to continue with the Beech hedging round the Burial Ground rather than a mixed hedging as it is more formal and suited to a Burial Ground. The Clerk had contacted Julie Arthur, who had confirmed she was interested in doing the work.</p> <p><b>ii) Update on Platinum Jubilee celebrations.</b> Cllr Lapsley said that the Recreation Ground and Village Hall trustees are keen to be involved and she will set up a meeting. Details still to be confirmed. The WI are involved with cakes, teas etc. The village hall is booked on the Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June between 12 and 5pm. The suggestion was for a tea or picnic to enable a gathering of people. DC Cllr Barrow had sent through the notice about a beacon and Cllr Lapsley wondered if there could be a village bonfire and fireworks. Cllr Barber said that for the last Jubilee there was an impromptu beacon on the top of the hill. He has spoken to Sallie and Tessa Good and they are happy to have one again. Richmond were also keen to sign up. Some of the Richmond residents had said they would make cakes. Cllr Light would enquire whether the church had a flagpole on the church tower to display a union jack. And Cllr Lapsley suggested a local blacksmith could make some Commemorative tokens for villagers. Cllr Lapsley would also check if the Ukelele Group would be available. The church could also have a recital. Cllr Frewer asked about the church bells. Cllr Light would check.</p> <p><b>iii) Update on the Millennium Green.</b> Kristine had asked about cutting back the Fruit trees and moving the waste heaps. The Clerk was continuing to push for both to be done asap. We have since heard that the waste would be moved the weekend of the 29-30<sup>th</sup> January.</p> <p><b>11. Planning Applications:</b> <b>LRE/4783/6-X, Antwicks Stud, Main Street, Letcombe Regis.</b> Outline application for the erection of an additional thirty stables with associated store and tack room. New indoor riding school and manège. Conversion of the existing bungalow on the site into two residential units. Since the initial meeting between VOWH and the Applicant Martin Deans (MD) of VOWH is contacting them monthly and reporting back to the</p>	<p><b>LL</b> <b>JL</b> <b>JL</b> <b>LL</b>  <b>EJ</b></p>
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PC. MD reported that he had a conversation with the Applicant at the end of February and clear progress has been made over the last month. He is confident that the Applicant is keen to move things forward with some speed. While MD appreciates that more detail would be helpful he points out that the content of the conversations has to remain confidential at this stage. Martin Deans has since had another meeting with the Samuels' agents and has reported that there is clear progress being made on reviewing the options for the site. The Agents apologised for the delay in progress caused by a high workload and constraints imposed by the pandemic, but they are clearly engaged in the work. **Ongoing**

**P21/V1998/FUL, Richmond Letcombe Regis OX12 9RG**

Replace the wooden walkway with a crushed limestone path similar to that on either end of the walkway on the clients land and the public footpath to the south. End Consultation Period 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021, Target Decision Date 20th September. 2021 Cllr Hitchcock had mentioned this to Ian Robertson Cllr Lapsley said that there had been concerns about the proposed route for the pathway and IR asked if it would be possible meet on site so he could understand the problems that village residents were concerned about. Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> October. Cllr Frewer reported that he had been in contact with the Land Agent but the Contractor was not able to start the work until the middle of March

**Application Granted 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**P21/V2403/FUL, Letcombe Bowers Farm, Letcombe Regis, OX12 9NG**

Variation of condition 2 (Approved plans) in application P19/V1917/FUL. To incorporate design features Alterations to the existing farmhouse and replacement of the self contained east wing. Start Consultation date 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021, End consultation Period 29th September 2021, Target Decision Date 13th October 2021.

**Application Granted 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021**

**P21/V2583/HH, Mill Fleurs, Main Street, Letcombe Regis OX12 9JP**

Demolish existing porth and garden room, Convert existing garage to bedroom, erect single store extension and new entrance porch. Erect new single storey kitchen studio and utility/WC/Amend 1st floor window above main garage, Insert french doors and glass balustrade Amend timber windows on main street to white UPVC. Start Consultation Period 14th September 2021 End Consultation Period 15th October 2021 Target Decision Date 2nd November 2021.

**Application Granted 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

**P21/2783/HH, 5 Court Road, Letcombe Regis OX12 9JH**

Render front of house, the right hand side of the garage and the retaining wall enclosing the driveway to match the existing render. Start Consultation period 26 October. Close Consultation period 24 November. Target Decision Date 15 December. **Application Granted 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021**

**P21/V2826/HH, Cresscombe House, Letcombe Regis OX12 9JD** (replaced Mill Cottage),  
Demolish existing concrete garage and erect oak framed garage. Start Consultation Period 11<sup>th</sup> October, End Consultation Period 10<sup>th</sup> November, Target Decision Date 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021.  
**Application Granted 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021**

**P21/2848/HH, Manor Farm, Warborough Road, Letcombe Regis OX12 9LD**

**P21/2849/LB, Manor Farm, Warborough Road, Letcombe Regis OX12 9LD**

Erect solid timber gates at the top of drive. Replace the existing side gate in the same style as the existing and the proposed new gates on the adjacent drive to the same basic design. Gates to be electronically operated with motors set in the ground. Start Consultation period 28<sup>th</sup> October, Close Consultation period 24<sup>th</sup> November Target Decision date 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

**Application Granted 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

There were no further planning applications.

**12. Parish Council meetings:**

Councillors to discuss whether to return to Face-to-face or stay with Zoom meetings. It was decided to continue with Zoom and revisit at the next PC meeting.

**Dates already approved:**

**2022** 17<sup>th</sup> January, 21<sup>st</sup> March.

**Dates to be approved :**

**2022** 16<sup>th</sup> May, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> November,

**2023** 16<sup>th</sup> January, 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Councillors approved the above dates subject to any amendments which may arise.

Elizabeth Jenkins  
Parish Clerk  
28<sup>th</sup> January 2022