

Letcombe Regis Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 18th January 2021 at 7.55pm
Due to the Government Covid-19 Regulations the meeting was held as a virtual meeting 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), Kristine Hitchcock (KH). Elizabeth Jenkins (EJ) Parish Clerk,
Elaine de Ridder Locum Clerk

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

One member of the public was in attendance.

Item		Actions
1.	<p>Update from Phil Hodgson on the Burial Ground Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr Hodgson updated the Parish Council on the latest amendments, including those to the car park. As agreed, the entrance was moved to the middle of the car park with a disabled space adjacent to it. The columns supporting the pitch roof will be outside the “no dig” zone. As no further issues were raised, Mr Hodgson will finalise the revised plans and submit them.The deadline to submit amendments to the plans to the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) is mid-February. The other deadline to keep in mind is that of the S106 spending deadline, which is December 2021.Mr Hodgson will draw up plans and costings lists to go to tender. It is hoped that the tenders will be sent out by the next Parish Council meeting on Monday 15th March. <p>Henry Hallward attended the meeting to update Councillors on plans for Bowers Farm. (Brought forward from item 15)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr Hallward reminded councillors that in 2017 he applied for planning consent to convert barns into houses (P17/V3395/FUL). Due to Brexit there has been delays but they are now ready to proceed. Mr Hallward is seeking clarification from his MP if the 6 month extension which was announced last year will apply. He will also write to the VWHDC to ask for an extension as the consent will expire in April 2021. It was confirmed that part of the original plan will remain as it is. The alterations to the scheme include the demolition of the existing barns and the addition of one more house. The houses will be in a “barn” style. It was confirmed that a new application for the new scheme will be needed. This was noted by Parish Councillors.	PH/EJ

2. **Apologies for Absence: None**

3. **Declarations of Interest: No declarations were made**

4. **Approval of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 16th November 2020 and actions arising:**
The minutes were approved and duly signed.

5. **Actions Arising:**

Letter to the Secretary of State (re Wantage Hospital Closure)

The Parish Council had not received a reply from the Secretary of State. Cllr Lapsley confirmed that she has written a second letter requesting feedback. **Completed**

Village Warden - See Item 11

Forwarded from the previous meeting for discussion.

Item 6 iii) Lighting for the football pitch See item 8ii)

Forwarded from the previous meeting.

Report from Cllr's Lapsley & Batchelor re the meeting with the Roger Goodchild President of the football Club

Cllr Batchelor would contact the VOWH for guidance on the consultation to enable Cllrs to agree the wording of the public engagement.

iv) Community Emergency Plan

The GDPR version has now been added to the Parish Council Website – **Completed**

Item 8

ii) Letter to Dr J Birch.

Approved at the previous meeting and has been forwarded to Dr Birch - **Completed**

6. **County Council matters:**

Cllr Constance informed the Parish Council that the (Civil Parking Enforcement) CPE was approved by the VWHDC. This would be very helpful for towns with railway stations as they have problems with parking in residential areas. It is not as yet clear who will receive the fines but the parking charges will be going to the County Council who is funding this scheme. It will be possible to have parking wardens in villages where needed.

Cllr Constance reported on the Councillor's Priority Fund (CPF) in relation to a footpath between Letcombe and Wantage. She cannot help through the CPF but will make further enquiries.

Cllr Constance also reported on "Oxford 2050" and CPRE's response. It is a very long-term vision statement and they are moving towards a consultation. Part of that is the local Transport and Connectivity Plan which updates the current transport plan, which brings the issue of digital connectivity instead of roads into focus. This will mean improvements in broadband connections and encouraging the use of public transport instead of private vehicles.

All County Councillors are supportive of a 20mph speed limit in built up areas, where

YC

needed.

Re the planning white paper consultation, it was reported that everybody, including the Local Government association complained that it was over-centralised.

The unitary proposal is still ongoing and is still with the Secretary of State.

The previous minutes mentioned the BOAT (Green Lane). Cllr Constance pointed out it was a County matter and that she paid for the concrete blocks to be replaced through her CPF. These blocks are now in place. It is hoped that a permanent order against 4x4 vehicles will be made in future.

A COVID-19 report was circulated prior to the meeting. It was confirmed that OCC is providing free school meals and that the fire service are now acting as first responders and ambulance drivers.

Cllr Lapsley commented that there was a very short response time on some consultations and asked that the matter be passed on. Cllr Light remarked that due to COVID-19, people will be reluctant to use public transport and wondered if that would impact the OCC's transport plans. Cllr Constance replied that public transport use is currently at 30% but as vaccinations are proceeding it should not impact the plans for the future.

7. District Council Matters:

Cllr Barrow reported on recent flooding, especially on the A417, Bablakes Farmhouse and in West Challow. He also identified various other places where there are minor flooding. The clearing drainage grips is an issue in some of these areas. As this is a OCC matter, County Cllr Constance added that there is a 1 in 4 year routine to clear drainage grips but OCC does not have the budget to do it more frequently. Cllr Lapsley asked Cllr Constance to urge OCC to look at the cost effectiveness of the 1 in 4 year maintenance, as the knock on effect results in more potholes, which are more expensive to repair. Cllr Benton requested that the Parish Council be notified when the routine maintenance would be done.

YC

Both Cllr Barrow and Cllr Constance were asked about the Bablakes Farmhouse planning application as concerns were raised about flooding in the area of the proposed building. Highways have not commented on the application. Cllr Barrow reported that the planning officer was satisfied with the drainage engineer's assessment and report. No further conditions can be imposed after an application has been determined. Cllr Light pointed out that the Environment Agency's flood risk assessments are often relied upon in these instances, and they are not up to date. Cllr Benton reported that the owners of Bablakes Farmhouse assured her that work would not commence before the drainage problems were sorted out. Highways will put a 6 weekly maintenance schedule in place until the drainage work is done.

Cllr Barrow reported that it will be possible to distribute CIL money more widely if it isn't used within the locality from which it was received.

Cllr Barrow was thanked for his work regarding flooding and Green Lane. He was asked to investigate how much it would cost for villages to take over the responsibility of maintaining drainage grips.

PB-DC

8. Parish Council Matters:

- i) Community Emergency Plan (CEP) Purchase of walkie talkies and emergency mobile **completed** - Cllr Benton. Cllr Lapsley asked that councillors should start thinking about where they will be kept. The Clerk confirmed that the emergency mobile and sim were purchased. **Completed.**
- ii) Lighting request for football pitch – carried forward from last meeting. Cllr Batchelor reported on the meeting with Des Williams and Roger Goodchild, President of the Letcombe football club. Detailed diagrams of the floodlights plans have been produced. The Parish Council was advised to use “public engagement” when asking residents for their views. Cllr Batchelor to produce a detailed plan for the public engagement and will consult with VWHDC in time for the next PC meeting.
- iii) CPRE re 2050 Plan for Oxfordshire for discussion – Carried forward from last meeting. Cllr Lapsley suggested that as this is a long way off, a watching brief be kept.

PB

9. Councillors updates (if anything to report)

Cllr Barber – nothing to report

Cllr Batchelor reported that Airband has not been responding to requests for updates. Part of the problem seems to be limited uptake for the Airband service and that no material has been distributed by them. There would be an opportunity to work with other villages in a similar position. Mr Hayward said he would pass on the contact details of those he has been dealing with at Airband. Cllr Lapsley asked that the County Council be contacted in this regard as OCC has better connectivity as a target in its Transport and Connectivity Plan.

PB/HH

Cllr Benton reported that Highways carried out some dragon patching on potholes before Christmas. She is also speaking to a resident about flooding into a property. She also spoke to Lewknor PC about flooding and clearing of gullies. Inconsiderate parking in the village continues to be a problem, as well as residents taking matters into their own hands to discourage off road bikes.

Cllr Hitchcock – nothing to report

Cllr Frewer thanks the Parish Council on behalf of Richmond residents who received Hyacinths for Christmas. It was very well received.

Cllr Lapsley reported later about COVID-19

Cllr Light reported that she had the annual report about the Letcombe Brook Project which is now available on their website.

10. Village Items:

- i) Update re road signs and markings - These were installed during the last week in November and the first week in December. The Clerk has written to thank Mark Francis. They do seem to have an effect. District Cllr Barrow mentioned that Speed Indicator Devices (SID) might like to be considered in the future as the cost is minimal.
- ii) Super-user. Cllr Benton contacted a resident about this but has not had a reply. There has been a delay in the training, probably due to COVID-19.

11. Village Warden work Schedule – carried forward from last meeting. Suggestions from a resident has been circulated prior to the meeting. An annual maintenance schedule for the village warden has now been drafted and these suggestions will be incorporated where appropriate. The Clerk suggested that the drainage grips e.g. on Warborough Road might be added to the schedule too. **EJ/JL**

12. Covid-19 Update

- i) Meeting Minutes. Cllr Lapsley reported that the Pandemic Group had investigated other voluntary groups in Wantage. The Safeguarding Policy has been updated and circulated. The Village Hall has been identified as a possible vaccination site and a meeting will be held in this regard. Volunteer vests have been ordered for PC volunteers which can be used now and in future.
- ii) Bulletins. The village has been kept informed via regular Bulletins.
Bulletin-15 Move into Tier 2 issued on the 15 December 2020
Bulletin-16 Information re Scammers target residents with promise of coronavirus vaccine
Bulletin-17 Move into Tier 5
- iii) Thank you letters for the Hyacinths. Prior to Christmas individuals who were identified as being on their own, were given a pot with Hyacinths. Cllrs Light, Benton and Lapsley distributed them and they were very well received. The cost of this was about £500. Cllr Lapsley thanked Cllr Light and Cllr Benton for their hard work behind the scenes.

13. Financial Matters:

i) **Clerk's report**

Clerk's report for Letcombe Regis Parish Council Meeting 18th January 2021

Budget and Precept for April 1st 2021 to 31st March 2022

Details of the provisional tax base for 2021/22 were received on the 27th November last year. They were subject to approval by the District Council at their meeting on Wednesday 9th December 2020 and I have since received written confirmation that they were approved at that meeting.

The proposed budget for the next financial year 2020 to 2021 has now been calculated on these figures and subject to Councillors approval at next Mondays Parish Council Meeting I will be writing to the Vale of White Horse with our Precept request of £21,178 the following day.

You have also received the summary of Costs against Budget giving the spend between 1st April 2020 and 12th January 2021.

Grant Requests.

Since publication of the Agenda I have received a request from the Wantage Independent Advice Centre (WIAC) for a grant towards their work and this has been sent round for discussion at the meeting together with the Request from Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice (OSVCA).

Quotations for tree work on the Millennium Green

I have received quotes from RGR Tree Surgery and Jenks of Oxford. Oakleaf

Tree Services have promised to send theirs in time for Mondays meeting. RGR Tree Services was recommended by Mark Bradfield who has worked with him previously.

Mark Bradfield completed this years work on the MG in less time than quoted for so next years quote he expects it to be will be in the region of £900 assuming similar amount of weed control and no requirement for re-seeding. He and his team of volunteers Covid-19 permitting look after the area between the stream and the fence bordering the stream.

Planning Applications

Antwicks Stud. The Clerk heard from Martin Deans of planning that the December Report was the last one received from the Agents.

Account Balances as of the end of December 2020 (to the nearest £)

Current Account - £10,774

Deposit Account - £78,322 (NB this includes the £9k index linked for the Children's Playground and the S106 finance for the Burial Ground Improvements)

Village Hall Project Account - £1,357

BIG Lottery Account - £12,472

The last two accounts are held by the Parish Council to cover future purchases for the Village Hall

ii) **Ratification of invoices**

Mark Bradfield final invoice for 2020 - £370.00, Clerk salary for October - £253.49, PAYE October - £9.80, Clerk for purchase of shredder - £299.21, Cllr Benton purchase of cartridge (Covid-19) - £32.00, Village Warden time sheets for July, August, September & October - £1380.00, Cllr Lapsley purchase of village Christmas tree- £89.99, Grant to Childrens Air Ambulance - £150.00, Clerk salary for November £419.62, PAYE for November - £51.20, Moore 2019-2020 Audit - £240.00, Clerk purchase of Walkie Talkies - £54.98, Cllr Light purchase of Hyacinths and cards for lone residents - £544.88, Cllr Lapsley purchase of extra Hyacinths for lone residents - £30.00, Clerk salary for December - £167.27.

All payments were ratified.

iii) **Summary of costs to date against budget (circulated)**

iv) **To discuss and approve the budget for 2021/2022 subject to amendments necessitated by the Draft Local Government Financial Report to be issued in December 2020 and the tax base for 2021-22 which will determine the precept and set the amount of the RG&VH grant to the Trustees.**

It was agreed that at the next budget meeting in November, consideration would be given to flood prevention work and the budget needed for that. Other issues might also be identified during the year.

Cllr Lapsley proposed to accept the budget and precept. Agreed unanimously. Precept to be submitted to VWHDC.

EJ

- v) Grant requests
Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice
Wantage Independent Advice Centre

Both grant requests were considered and it was noted that residents benefit from both, but especially from WIAC. **It was agreed to give a grant of £250 to WIAC and £100 to OSVCA.**

EJ

14. Millennium Green:

Quotations for the trees – (Copy of comparison of fees appended).

Currently received from

RGR Tree Surgery

Elm (£450 ex VAT)

Sycamore (£940 ex VAT)

Willow (Might be included with Sycamore) Clerk to confirm

EJ

Jenks of Oxford

Elm (£525 ex VAT)

Sycamore (£875 ex VAT)

Willow (£1150 ex VAT)

Oakleaf Tree Services.

Elm (£660 ex VAT)

Sycamore (£850 ex VAT)

Willow (£1700 ex VAT)

It was agreed to accept RGR's quote provided that they have adequate insurance to carry out the work. There have to be an application to the VWHDC before the tree work can be done. It was suggested that logs might be left for the benefit of the villagers. RGR was also asked to quote for additional tidying up to be done at the intended compost heap site.

EJ

15. Planning Applications:

LRE/4783/6-X, Antwicks Stud, Main Street, Letcombe Regis.

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 meeting between VOWH and the Applicant Martin Deans (MD) of VOWH is contacting them monthly and reporting back to the PC. MD 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. I see this as clear evidence of progress on their behalf in terms of moving things forward. I will update you again in a month's time. September 2020, Martin Deans reported that the applicants have appointed agents to assist them with looking at options and the agents are due to contact Martin Deans in the next few weeks. He will update the Clerk for the next meeting. Report received from Martin Deans in December to say he has heard from the applicant's agent and they will make further contact to update him. (Martin confirmed that he has heard nothing since the December update)

Cllr Benton reported that the application seems to have been removed from the VWHDC's website. District Cllr Barrow will follow up on this.

PB-DC

P20/V1808/FUL, Mill Cottage Letcombe Regis Wantage OX12 9JD. Demolish Dwelling. Erect New Dwelling. 25th August 2020, End Consultation Period, 16th September 2020, Target Decision Date 11th November 2020. Parish Councillors comments *While Letcombe Regis Parish Council have no objections to the planning application. The Preliminary Roost Assessment needs to be taken into account along with the planning application. Councillors also wish to point out that the plan currently outlines a parcel of land which belongs to a neighbouring property whose owner wishes to retain the ownership of the said land. He has also pointed out that the replacement substantially increases the size of the replacement building.* It was noted that work has commenced but planning permission has not yet been granted. The VWHDC planning department were notified that the house has already been demolished. It is unclear if a demolition order was in place. Cllr Barrow to follow up.

PB-DC

P20/V2560/HH, Bablake Farmhouse, Letcombe Regis, OX12 9JD. Detached Oak Framed Ancillary Outbuilding. Start Consultation Period 15th October, End Consultation Period 11th November, Target Decision Date 30th November 2020. **GRANTED 30th November 2020 – Cllr Barrow has been asked to follow this up in view of the possibility of flooding during construction.**

PB-DC

P20/V3168/FUL, Letcombe Sports and Social Club OX12 9LJ Proposed container for additional storage for grounds equipment, extend the existing patio at the front of the clubhouse from 1.8m at its widest to 4.8m at its widest and replace 2 windows facing the patio with bifold patio doors. Cllr Light contacted the Planning Officer to say that this should have been sent by the PC and the Case officer has agreed that the application can be changed to come from the Parish Council and is arranging for half of the fee to be returned.

P20/V3187/FUL, Courtyard Stables, Court Hill Road, Letcombe Regis OX12 9QJ Proposed Demolition of existing stables; new single dwelling with garaging. Consultation Period 17th December 2020, End Consultation period 24th January. Councillors have met with the applicant. The Clerk will send Councillors the email received from neighbours.

EJ

16. **Parish Council meetings: Dates approved by the PC but subject to change, 2021** 15th March
17. **Dates to be approved in 2021** 17th May, 19th July, 20th September, and the 15th November,
Dates in 2022 17th January, and 21st March.
18. **Confidential item – Clerk to pass hosting to the Chairman and leave the meeting.**
Parish Clerk Performance Review
The Chairman advised the PC that the Parish Clerk's Performance Appraisal had been successfully completed and recommended that a further SCP should be awarded. This was approved.

The Chairman confirmed that temporary support arrangements had been put in place to reduce the pressure on the Parish Clerk who was receiving treatment for eye issues. These were approved by the Parish Council.

Elaine de Ridder
 Locum Clerk
 27 January 2021

Addendum

Comparison between the three quotations received for the trees on the Millennium Green

	Oak Leaf	Jenks of Oxford	RJR Tree Surgery
Chinese Elm cut back to original pruning points	£660 excl VAT of £132	£525 excl VAT of £107	£450.00 excl VAT £50 all arisings removed
Costs to remove Sycamore	£850 excl VAT of £170 Remove to ground level arisings left on site timber cut into manageable size lengths	£875 excl VAT of £175 Assumes woodchip can be broadcast round base of tree and wood left in sections	£940 excl of VAT £188 I am checking with RJR to see if this covers both the Sycamore and the Willow (see below)
Costs to remove Willow	£1700 excl VAT of £340 Remove to ground level Arisings as above	£1150 excl VAT of £230	