

**Letcombe Regis Parish Council**

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4 The Old Stables  
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Letcombe Regis  
OX12 9LD

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July  
at pm 7.55pm on Zoom**

**Present:** J Lapsley (JL) Parish Council (PC) Chairman, L 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 and District Councillor Paul Barrow  
  
Joyce Ward and Tom Griffin were also present

Item		Action
1.	<b>Apologies for absence:</b> Cllr Hitchcock due to Covid	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest:</b> Cllrs Light and Barber in relation to Planning Application no P22/V1506/DPO	
3.	<b>Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th May 2022:</b> Councillors approved the minutes. The Minutes from the Extraordinary meeting were being held over until the PC meeting in September:  <b>Actions Arising:</b> Item 4i) Options for powering the Village Hall in an Emergency – Cllr Lapsley updated Councillors alternative options are being considered as they arise. <b>Completed</b>  Item 4ii) Distict Council Matters – 20mph costs Councillors are waiting for the final costing. The Clerk received an email on the 1 st July from Geoff Barrell OCC Scheme Manager confirming that there is no charge to Parish Councils implementing the 20mph limit. <b>Completed</b>  Item 6 ii) Parish Council Matters NALC/SLCC Civility and Respect Project. The new Code of Conduct was discussed and adopted by the Parish Council at the Extraordinary meeting on the 14th June 14th 2022. <b>Completed</b>	

<p>4.</p>	<p><b>County Council Matters:</b> Cllr Constance will forward the County Councillor Chief Executives report as soon as it comes through.</p> <p><b>20mph Speed limit</b> OCC believe they will get phase one implemented by the end of this year. Letcombe Regis should be in phase two which will be next year. Normally a buffer zone is required when going from a 60 mph road to 20 mph. Application has been made for a speed limit of 40mph between Letcombe Bassett and Letcombe Regis at Letcombe Bassett's Request.</p> <p><b>Grips Update</b> Cllr Lapsley mentioned the grips up Warborough Road. There is potential for them to be 'regripped' Cllr Constance will get Gordon Kelman to mark them up. Cllr Batchelor asked if there is any design on the grips pointing out that when they are angled across the road all four tyres go over one after another causing a greater impact on speed. Cllr Constance will enquire. It was confirmed that there are mapping exercises in progress plotting where the brook goes underground.</p> <p><b>Footpaths</b> Arthur James McKewan (AJM) of OCC together with Cllr Hitchcock, District Cllr Barrow and Cllr Barber had walked along the footpath between the Nature Reserve and Letcombe Bassett to inspect the damaged area. In Cllr Hitchcock's absence Cllr Barrow reported that Arthur had agreed that areas could be repaired where it was most uneven, but could not repair it all as there was no funding at the moment. See also Cllr Hitchcock's report attached as Appendix 1 Cllr Constance suggested that she could put £1k of her fund towards the repair of this footpath which would be of some help and she would contact Arthur James-McKewan.</p> <p>The owner of Blandy's Cottage Tom Griffin (TG) had written to the PC asking if Councillors would be willing to help with the cost of repairs to the footpath between Bassett Road and the Bridge over the stream leading to the Nature Reserve. The Clerk had arranged to meet AJM prior to his inspecting the Letcombe Regis to Letcombe Bassett footpath, Cllr Hitchcock and DC-PB were also present. They discussed the footpath which gets very muddy in the winter. AJM reported that according to the OCC records the footpath covered the whole width of the entrance. He felt that the damage to the upper area between the road and the entrance to Blandy's Farm property was caused by the cars from both properties and that the owners should be responsible for repairing that area. AJM said that the remaining area needed to be done to a good standard which would be in the thousands rather than hundreds as quoted by Tom Griffin.</p> <p>TG agreed that the damage to the upper part of the footpath was caused by their cars. According to paperwork received when purchasing Blandy's Cottage he is the owner of the area in question. His neighbour at Blandy's Farm has permission to use the area in order to access his own property. Cllr Lapsley said that the PC would need to see proof of ownership. The PC would ask for this Cllr Constance said she would include this path in her discussions with AJM. Cllr Barber pointed out that using gravel grids would stop the gravel sinking into the mud. Cllr Lapsley suggested that similar construction using concrete</p>	<p>Cllr YC</p> <p>Cllr YC</p> <p>EJ Cllr YC</p>
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grids to that used by the owners of Brook Cottage and Footpath 8, where the owners of Brook Cottage parked their own cars, might be a solution. It was agreed to establish ownership in the first instance, and then seek a resolution that was affordable and suitable for the area. Cllr Lapsley thanked TG for attending the meeting.

5. **District Council Matters:**

- i) Grips update discussed under County Council Matters
- ii) Antwicks Update – Will be covered under planning.

**Broadband Rollout:** Report from Cllr Barrow.

Cllr Barrow reported that together with Cllr Batchelor and Ian Skern of West Challow he had another catch up with Craig Bower from OCC.

The UK has decided to facilitate competition between companies which will in theory keep costs down. Openreach are converting all our copper wire phone connections to fibre and companies such as Airband are also competing in this area. Airband are not only laying out fibre but will be offering connections to individual houses.

Cllr Barrow reported that roll out of Ultra-fast Fibre Broadband has been and remains confusing. Openreach are different in that they are not Internet providers which is done through Sky, TalkTalk etc. In some places we may find that Openreach and Airband are laying cable in the same place.

Cllr Constance explained the background to the reason why both Airband and Open Reach were doing the rollout. The Government funding will go to an open market contender for the work to be done so it is competitive. With Airband and Open Reach working in this area. They work on the basis that they need at least 30 customers before they will commit to putting in the infrastructure. This leads to confusion as neither Airband or Openreach made clear that they are not the only contractors available.

Once the fibre has been rolled-out in our area, which OCC say will be completed by end of the second quarter of 2023 (connection from the street to distribution points such as telegraph poles), residents should be contacted by their internet supplier who will then organise the final connection from the street to the house including provision of a new router and suggesting the need for a new phone. In some cases Airband has already contacted many individual residents but there is no obligation to take up this offer which may be more limited than other providers.

Most but not all residents have internet. The phone connection provider will be required to ensure that during the change from copper to fibre residents who do not want internet access will continue to have a phone line. How this will be done is not yet clear.

Cllr Batchelor said that there was a slight cross purpose here. The initial scheme was the funding for the Rural Fibre Broadband for Business and Openreach were currently underway with the mapping they are doing in Letcombe Regis over three pools there was a slightly different arrangement which was to replace the copper wire systems or at least to have them running alongside the copper wire to the housing. So at the moment what is happening is that Openreach are

planning to replace all copper wire based telephone lines with fibre optic which will allow the same highspeed connection that Airband are currently offering, and will be done irrespective of what Airband decide to do. Airband were having a board meeting last week when they intended to decide exactly what offer they will make to Letcombe Regis. The local Airband Manager would let Cllr Batchelor know but hasn't done so as yet. Cllr Constance said it appears that the Openreach development to replace copper cable with fibre is a later development and is not part of the Rural Business Funding provided by the Government. Airband controls this in the Letcombe Regis area , Cllr Batchelor confirmed it only covers the Warborough Road run. Cllr Lapsley commented that we are in the hands of the contractors when they come to dig our roads up and there is nothing we can do. She thanked everyone for their updates.

Cllr Light reported that in addition to Airband digging a conduit up Warborough Road, there is an existing conduit on the other side. Cllr Constance said this might be the telephone line, either BT would not share it or it was in bad repair which was the most likely.

Cllr Batchelor agreed he believed that it was the latter as Airband are currently mapping out the infrastructure in Letcombe Regis and is more likely to be in bad repair. The other thing to note and he was not sure where we should pick this up is that 5G will give as fast a speed as fibre optics, so in many areas companies will be in trouble especially in cities. Where they can use 5G masts quite easily one thing we will need to make a decision is that parts of the village do not have a mobile signal or cannot get a reliable signal. There was some discussion some time ago where Vodafone were looking to place some sort of connection on top of the church tower which would provide a reliable signal however the church took the decision not to go ahead with it. PB thought that it is worth exploring why that decision was taken and if the PC has a position we wish to take on that. Cllr Lapsley asked the Clerk to make a note and the PC would approach the church to for a joint meeting to discuss the possibility.

**6. Parish Council Matters:**

**i) OALC – Fraud awareness (OALC- email sent 13 May)**

Cllr Lapsley said that everyone had seen the email confirming the Clerk of Towersley Parish Council had been prosecuted for fraud. Cllr Lapsley believed the PC had the correct systems in place but we do need to get our schedule of Parish Councillors working with the Clerk particularly in respect of financial procedures and asked the Clerk to send out an email asking Councillors to sign up to the schedule. She asked all councillors to respond to the email.

**EJ  
ALL**

**ii) North Hinksey Parish Council banning peat sales. (email of 9<sup>th</sup> June).**

North Hinksey proposed that all Councils and councillors in line with the BBOWT initiative should support the call for an immediate ban on peat sales. Councillors discussed and agreed that while it was not something we could enforce we should promote it.

**ALL**

**iii) Footpaths**

Discussed earlier under County Council Matters

<p>iv) <b>Fete Update</b>  Cllr Batchelor confirmed that the next Gardens Open in Letcombe Regis would be held in 2023. It was agreed that we should aim for 2024 and Cllr Batchelor would check the date Letcombe Bassett were proposing. Cllr Benton confirmed she had the paperwork which she and Cllr Hitchcock had prepared before the pandemic which could be used as the basis for planning the event.</p> <p>v) <b>Website Update</b>  Cllr Batchelor suggested that we needed a greater steer on what residents required from the website. He also confirmed that it is compliant with the current regulations.</p> <p>Cllr Lapsley suggested that we should have a short survey in the Register to ask those using it if it was satisfying their needs. It was agreed that this would be take place in the Autumn.</p> <p>vi) <b>Burial Ground Update</b>  Due to the weather the Burial Ground had become overgrown. Julie Arthur has weeded along the hedge bordering the new area and spread the compost from the Millennium Green, however there is still considerable work to be done on the new area to get it level and the Clerk is looking for someone to complete this urgently. Cllr Barber has been watering the new hedging when he has had time. The Clerk will place a notice on the Lych gate asking people visiting the Burial Ground to use the Bassett Road Entrance until the area is finished and safe to use.</p> <p><b>Burial Ground Rules</b>  Cllr Light reported that the Clerk had highlighted the Burial Ground Rules which still needed amending and a meeting would be arranged between Cllrs Lapsley, Cllr Light, the Clerk and Jim Birch the Burial Ground Superintendent.</p>	<p>PB</p> <p>EJ</p> <p>EJ</p> <p>EJ</p>
<p>7. <b>Councillor Updates:</b>  Cllr Batchelor reported that SSE would be replacing 5 or 6 electricity poles in the lower end of the village. The problem is that SSE do not have a contract with suppliers to carry fibre optic cabling. He has written to SSE to ask what cable they will carry, pointing out that other companies do carry other cabling. If we can use the infrastructure available it will save the hassle we have experienced with new conduits being dug. Cllr Barber confirmed this had been a problem in the past. Cllr Batchelor would circulate the reply once received</p> <p>Cllr Hitchcock  Update on the footpath between Letcombe Regis and Letcombe Bassett. Due to her absence the footpath between Letcombe Regis and Letcombe Bassett had been reported on by District Cllr Barrow under the District Council report. Cllr Hitchcock had earlier forwarded the brief report from Arthur James-McEwan, and was emailed to Cllrs on the 16 th July. He confirmed that they would install ‘uneven footpath ahead’ notices at either end of the footpath and suggested they would try and carry out minor improvements ahead of this winter, in the form of levelling the very worst of the uneven areas. Longer term the footpath should be given a major package of improvements including vegetation clearance, revetment, levelling and perhaps a stone surface along its</p>	<p>PB</p>

length. However this would need capital funding from OCC's central reserves which is unlikely to happen for a couple of years.

Report on the Bio-Diversity and Nature Conservancy Forum – held over to the next Parish Council Meeting.

## 8. Financial Matters:

i) Report follows

The Audit paperwork was sent to the Auditors after the extraordinary meeting to approve sections 1 and 2. They have acknowledged receipt but there has been no further contact.

The Clerk had sent an email to 19 other parish clerks selected randomly, from the OCC list, to ask what accounts program their PC used, and, from those who replied, five used Rialto, one used Scribe with the remainder using specially developed excel sheets from former RFO's I have written to both Rialto and Scribe requesting the costs. Both have extra facilities which we don't need such as allotments but have a cemeteries facility which could possibly be of use. Scribe have several help sheets which are free to non Scribe clerks. The quotes will be forwarded to Councillors for consideration at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Bank Balances as of today's statements

Current account to date: £12,113.10

Deposit account to date; £47,128.23

As reported for the Annual Parish Meeting it contains the following amounts

Earmarked reserves from the Big Lottery Fund of £12,448.84

and those from the Village Hall Project account of £1,341.93

\*Ring fenced finance towards the Childrens playground £7,000.00

Bequest towards plants £200.00

Grant received towards another seat £300.00

Reserves equal to the Precept £21,178.00

**Total £42,468.77**

Leaving a balance of £16,772.56 which is over and above the maximum amount we should be holding in reserve which we should be reducing as soon as possible.

\*£2000 has already been paid for the original playground design.

### Items still to pay for.

Seating,

Levelling the new area between the beech trees and the new car park and making a safe level footpath safe for all to use.

Planting around the entrance porch,

Disposing of the waste in the burial Ground bins.

The Beech trees need the lower branches cutting back as several are down to the gravestones

Unfortunately some people are using the new car park as a cut through to the pathway up to the deer farm, which may cause damage to the new hedge.

<p>Proposal for improving access to the Millennium Green via a viewing platform/entrance for residents from Richmond to get to the Millennium Green.</p>	
<p>ii) Ratification of invoices (see last page of agenda) Councillors ratified payment of the invoices. PAYE April £84.80, OALC Training £122.00, Bicester Wills &amp; Probate £90, Hendred Ukelele Group £100, Clerk May salary £542.82, PAYE May £93.20, Internal Audit £100, Green &amp; Stripey £140, Clerk June salary £420.71, PAYE June £62.80, Clerk for PC purchases £292.52, Julie Arthur BG July £340.00.</p>	
<p>iii) Summary of payments and receipts to date against budget There were no queries on the summary.</p>	
<p>iv) Grant requests – Reply from Home Start to confirm they had not helped anyone in Letcombe Regis in the past year. Councillors discussed and decided not to give a grant. The Clerk will write to Home Start</p>	EJ
<p>v) Annual Review of Council Policies and Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome Pack – Cllr Light had a few comments and would meet up with the Clerk to discuss.</li> <li>• Community Emergency Plan</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Lapsley asked Councillors to read through and let the Clerk have any comments.</p>	ALL
<p>vi) Financial Package Rialtus Alpha and Scribe had both sent quotes and are attached at the end of the minutes. The Clerk would compare and speak to the companies with any queries then come back to the PC with her recommendations.</p>	AJ
<p>vii) Fraud Awareness Dealt with under Parish Council Matters</p>	
<p>viii) Clerks Appraisal, The Chairman said this had been completed and they need to make adjustment for hours worked and the pay increase. This is allowed for in the budget.</p>	
<p>ix) BACs The Clerk would get the forms out for signature and would need a copy of the minutes where it was confirmed together with a letter for the bank signed by the signatories.</p>	EJ
<p>x) Renewal Questionnaire for Insurance. The Clerk’s only query was the cover for office equipment. The Clerk confirmed that we were in the second year of a three year agreement. It was subsequently confirmed by the insurers that office equipment is covered by the insurance. Clerk to complete and return to Gallaghers.</p>	EJ
<p>xi) Audit information This was covered in the Clerks report</p>	

- 9. Planning Applications:**
- P07/V1205/O, 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. The Parish Council understand that Mr & Mrs Samuels will be submitting a new application. (this has been received see later application)  
Cllr Lapsley reported that she and the Cllr Light had today submitted a freedom of information request. **Ongoing**
- P22/V0692/HH, Blandys Barn, Bassett Road, Letcombe Regis. OX12 9LJ**  
Proposed alterations provide two dormer windows. Consultation period 28<sup>th</sup> March to 29<sup>th</sup> April. Target Decision date 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022. PC Comments Letcombe Regis Parish Council have no problem with this planning application. **Approved**
- P22/V0786/HH, Little Croft, Main Street, Letcombe Regis.**  
Garage conversion & increasing of roof height over garage to increase size of en-suite. Consultation period 31<sup>st</sup> March to 29<sup>th</sup> April, Target Decision Date 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022. PC Comments Letcombe Regis Parish Council have no problem with this planning application. **Approved**
- P22/V0812/FUL, Proposed new dwelling at 15 Kings Close, Letcombe Regis.**  
Consultation period 6<sup>th</sup> April to 29<sup>th</sup> April. Target Decision date 25<sup>th</sup> May. PC Response Letcombe Regis Parish Council object to this planning application as overdevelopment of the site and its negative impact on local amenities. The Clerk confirmed that there had been no further information on this application **Ongoing**
- P22/V0977/HH, Erection of Greenhouse, Blandys Cottage, Bassett Road, Letcombe Regis.** Consultation period 26<sup>th</sup> April to 26<sup>th</sup> May. Target Decision Date 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022. PC Comments Letcombe Regis Parish Council have no problem with this planning application. **Approved**
- P22/V1030/LB, Blandy's Cottage, Bassett Road, Letcombe Regis OX12 9LJ:**  
Replace roof and doors on brick outbuilding. Start Consultation Period 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022, end Consultation Period 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Target Decision Date 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022  
PC Comment, Letcombe Regis Parish Council have no problem with this application. **Approved**
- 22/V1079HH: Lily Cottage , Bakery Lane, Letcombe Regis OX12 9JN.**  
Remove front kitchen window, open up wall and install stable door. Fix pitched parapet porch roof to from kitchen wall. Replacement front door. Start Consultation Period 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022, End Consultation Period 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Target Decision Date 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022. PC comment, Letcombe Regis Parish Council has no problem with this application. **Approved**
- P22/V1247/FUL: Antwick Stud, Letcombe Regis. 9JD:** Conversion and extension of stable buildings to form three family homes with amenity space, parking, and associated works. Start of Consultation 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022, End Consultation Period 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Target Decision Date 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2022. PC



Comments, Letcombe Regis Parish Council have a number of concerns in respect of this planning application and have called it in. The planners have agreed to extend the end consultation date to the 29<sup>th</sup> July. We have not heard as yet when it will go to committee. **Ongoing**

**P22/V1506/DPO: Upper Manor Farm, Warborough Road, Letcombe Regis OX12 9LD.** Discharge of legal obligations relating to P90/V0174/FUL dated 17th August 1990 and 5th July 2007. Date Received 16th June 2022, Registration Date 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022, Comments in by 18<sup>th</sup> July now Amended to the 4<sup>th</sup> August, Target Decision Date. 11<sup>th</sup> August 2022. For discussion Cllr Lapsley said this application was similar to the previous one for Courthill Stables.

Cllr Barrow reported that he had written to planning asking if the restrictions covered the Warborough Road entrance to Upper Manor Farm. The Officer will get back to him asap but is snowed under at the present time. Councillors have asked for a further extension to enable them to include the officers reply in their comments. **Ongoing**

Further to District Cllr's Report Cllr Lapsley asked him to report on the Health Development Cllr Barrow agreed that there is a lot of change going on at the moment as well as a current review Berkshire Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (BOB) are merging their health services at the moment. Additionally because of the problems with A & E and ambulances piling up they are merging the emergency health services with committee health services to try and discharge people in acute beds either to care homes or their own homes which is yet another level of re-organisation. Combined with the huge issue of staff shortage going round Wantage hospital a few weeks ago it emerged that the excellent maternity unit is unused. The nursing staff have been transferred to Wallingford. With all the changes taking place there is a huge area which has not been touched on. Cllr Light agreed and said that it is well known and incredibly worrying that no ambulance service is currently meeting targets. She had not heard of the integrated improvements program and asked if it is also known under a different name, she will make some enquiries and it will be included on the September Agenda.

Cllr Lapsley reported that Cllr Light had been to a briefing by Julie Maberley (JM) looking at planning and new plans for the future it was suggested that Julie Maberley and Jenny Hannaby should be invited to come to a meeting for the village to talk through the information raised at the Wantage and Grove Group (WAGG) meeting as confirmed by Cllr Light Julie is a very effective campaigner for people locally. Basically JM was talking about a new plan for 2040 and 2041 and she feels that we will end up with effectively a new town which includes East Challow, Crabhill, Wantage, Grove, West and East Hanney and would therefore need a new town centre and she would like to call for a development framework for the whole of OX12. The planned homes will be built anyway and we should take control and decide what we want at this point. Although there are no formal plans we know that developers are already looking at the land opposite Williams extending right the way round to Crabhill. Didcot has expanded greatly and Cllr Light believes that Julie is right in her belief despite believing that the number of houses required by the planners is completely wrong it looks very much as if we are facing a development looking like a new town. So we should get Councillors to listen to our opinions at this

point. It was discussed whether to hold it before the next PC meeting or separately Cllr Batchelor felt it would be a separate issue and would be a long meeting. Cllr Light felt that it should be an informative meeting for residents and it was suggested that it is opened to Letcombe Bassett and other villages as well. Councillors discussed and agreed it would be sensible to have a separate meeting possibly in October. The Clerk would check availability with the village hall.

Cllr Barber brought up the question of disposing of compost Cllr Lapsley said that we had recently been informed that the two large compost bins just to the left of the recreation ground car park were for our use as the Recreation ground did not use them.

Cllrs Lapsley and Light were going to clear and bag the the waste from the overflowing bins to the left of the Burial Ground and the Clerk would let Councillors know the date if they were able to help.

**10. Parish Council meetings:**

Dates approved by the PC but subject to change.  
2022, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 21<sup>st</sup> November,  
2023 16<sup>th</sup> January, 20<sup>th</sup> March.

The Meeting finished at 9.30

Elizabeth Jenkins  
Parish Clerk  
24<sup>th</sup> July 2022