

Letcombe Regis Parish Council

Parish Clerk Mrs Elizabeth Jenkins
Tel: 01235 765530
Email: letregispc@gmail.com

4 The Old Stables
Warborough Road
Letcombe Regis
OX12 9LD

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 26th September 2022
at 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

Four Residents also attended the meeting.

Item		Action
1.	Apologies for absence: All Councillors were present	
2.	Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest	
3.	Approval of the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th July, 2022: Councillors approved the minutes.	
	Actions Arising: Footpaths The Chairman had asked the Clerk to arrange a meeting to finalise improvements to the pavement between Blandys Cottage and the entrance to the Nature Walk. the Clerk had emailed Arthur James-McKewan (AJW) twice for his availability. The Chairman confirmed that she had also emailed him. Cllr Hitchcock was also waiting for a reply to her email re the footpath between Letcombe Regis and Letcombe Bassett. Cllr Constance would contact AJW for details.	YC
4.	County Council Matters: Cllr Constance reported that Oxford County Council (OCC) had made statements on improvements to roads, footpaths and cycle paths but had given no indications of funding. It has been suggested that libraries could be used as “warm places” during this winter, and indication that OCC are also prepared to fund some heating of village halls as well but no news on how much funding or how to apply. Kingston Lisle have considered using their village hall for Coffee mornings on one or more mornings a week.	
	Cllr Constance is contributing £1500.00 of her Priority fund towards the Thames Valley Police (TVP) initiative to provide Primary schools with information to help them keep safe on social media. Cllr Lapsley asked if special schools had	

been included and Cllr Constance confirmed that she would confirm with TVP. Cllr Constance had planned to allocate £1k to support each of her villages to implement the 20mph scheme. Unfortunately implementation of the scheme is not progressing quickly enough for the funds to be allocated in time and Cllr Constance is now asking villages to select a scheme she can fund instead. The schemes would have to be fully funded and implemented by February/March next year. Cllr Lapsley had applied for this for the playground. Cllr Lapsley said that it could be fully funded in time and she would keep Cllr Constance informed. Application to the fund holders would have to be made in the next 4 to 6 weeks.

JL

Update on grant funding from OCC Green Homes Grant (LAD3) and (HUG1).

Cllr Constance would make further enquiries and report back to Councillors. Cllr Lapsley confirmed that this was concerned with the Governments warm homes scheme and had been sent from OCC by Gayle Pilkington.

YC

The Oxfordshire 2050 plan was originally set up to get agreement between the District Councils and Oxfordshire County Council from 2031 onwards. However disagreement has arisen due to expectation that District Councils would pick up the unmet housing requirements for Oxford City Councils. Originally 12,500 were accepted in the 2031 plan with the Vale committed to build 2,250. Oxfordshire has already generated 50 thousand new jobs and the housing numbers need to keep pace with these requirements. OCC area also waiting for the Government to agree on the housing numbers.

Cllr Lapsley asked whether the number of houses expected to be built exceeds actual needs. Cllr Constance replied that there is a commitment to build one hundred thousand houses in Oxfordshire by 2031. Cllr Barrow would know the total number of houses expected to be built by the Vale, as these numbers are with District Councils not OCC.

5. District Council Matters:

Cost of living increase update from P Barrow Cllr Lapsley asked if there was any more information. Cllr Barrow said not currently but confirmed he would send more information through when received.

D Cllr
PB

Cllr Barrow said that he had sent round the note on planning as he thought it would be useful to know the limitations.

On the Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). They were particularly hoping to stop children use e-cigarettes which apparently are pleasant tasting and although not as dangerous as cigarettes are more dangerous than not smoking at all. They are basically intended to help adult smokers to quit. HOSC is interested in inequalities particularly in relation to health access as current housing provision structure does not go hand in hand with health infrastructures. This was the provision of the Oxford Clinical Commissioning Group in the past but has now been taken over by BOB ICS and that is a concern. They are also concerned about elderly residents particularly those living in retirement bungalows, many are elderly widows or people who are infirm, they may not have access to the internet and have problems with accessing their GP by phone and they do not necessarily have transport, and no community buses so this is of great concern. The Healthwatch Foundation have produced an excellent report

on rural inequalities which will be discussed at HOSC in more detail in November.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have reviewed the South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) which was rated as inadequate, there is an improvement plan in place. There is also a national Covid enquiry and HOSC will report into this. The musculoskeletal physio service has changed hands from Healthshare to Connect Health and it is hoped that this will offer a slightly better service.

Cllr Lapsley thanked Cllr Barrow and asked if Cllr Light had anything to report. Cllr Light said that the CQC report on SCAS was very disappointing and felt that if one looked at other trusts during Covid they would find similar problems. All attention was directed to services for Covid and all managers were called in to clinical services. There is a very comprehensive clear improvement plan, which will cover every detail in place and the whole Trust is hoping to go back to a decent level and hopefully be outstanding within a few years. Cllr Light asked Cllr Barrow that the HOSC paperwork reported that the Community Services Strategy (CSS) which included what was going to happen to Wantage Hospital had been paused, and was asking if he could explain, and comment please.

Cllr Barrow explained that the CSS had been absorbed into the Integrated Improvement Plan (IIP) with the idea of combining acute health services with community health services, the aim being to reduce pressure on ambulance services so that patients can be discharged from hospital more frequently. There is still concern that the hospital is being dealt with at county level and that the Wantage hospital could be forgotten about. The Maternity unit has been closed for over a year now and the staff moved to Wallingford which is in fact a smaller area than Wantage and Grove and he felt that the staff should be coming back in this direction. He had also asked if this would happen but has not had an answer to the question. The Community Health service is still being looked at in detail. There is concern that there are only two members of staff doing the whole review and was originally to be completed by last December which was far too ambitious. HOSC are keeping a watching brief at the moment.

Cllr Light said she had read the details of the IIP plan. In theory it is fine but is not convinced that it will alter the problems of getting people into hospital in the first place. She understood the hospital bed block problems but it does not say whether there should be a hospital in Wantage. Cllr Barrow agreed and said that they need to know how many community hospital beds are needed and these details are not being addressed.

Cllr Lapsley asked about reports that Covid in Oxfordshire is creeping up Cllr Barrow said yes but in a very minor way.

6. Parish Council Matters:

i) Burial ground update

Waste bins Cllr Lapsley reported that they were emptied during the summer and the waste taken to the local tip. The Trustees do not own the ground just inside the Bassett Road and to the left of the original car park and the PC would look to make use of the area. Cllr Lapsley thanked Cllr Barber for watering the hedge during the extreme weather to help keeping the hedge going.

The area between the new car park and the public footpath is being used as a cut through to the public footpath raising concerns about damage to the new hedge. The Chairman had asked the Clerk to look at ways to reinstate the fencing and she had distributed details of temporary fencing however after a full discussion Councillors voted to allow a formal pathway.

Cllr Frewer asked about the entry to the Burial Ground via the Lych gate the area was uneven. He had to use a walker which was a problem when using the Bassett Road entrance. Cllr Lapsley assured Cllr Frewer that it had not been forgotten. It had been agreed that the whole of the new area would be levelled and reseeded in the spring.

Cllr Light reported that the RG&VHC had agreed that the PC could put non combustible waste in the bin outside the sports Pavilion, which is emptied fortnightly by Grundon, at no cost to the PC.

ii) Village Maintenance Contract
 Cllr Lapsley confirmed that a specification had been pulled together for the PC and also for the Trust and had approached three contractors had been approached for quotes. The Clerk reported that the three had declined to quote and Cllr Lapsley asked Councillors to let the Clerk have names of anyone who might be interested and she would contact them. The Clerk would also make enquiries.

**Cllrs.
EJ**

iii) Village Roads
 a) White Line markings. Cllr Lapsley asked if Cllr Constance could help with getting the white lines urgently repainted in the village. In particular those at junctions. Andy Marczak reported that his daughter who had recently passed her test was nearly hit by a car coming down Windmill Hill. Cllr Constance agreed to follow up.

YC

b) Slump in Airband trench on Court Hill Road. Cllr Light reported that the Contractors for Airband had dug a trench across the road just before the junction at the bottom of Courthill Road. This has sunk badly and needs to be refilled. Airband have been informed but have not replied. Cllr Constance said she would chase this up.

YC

c) Grips update - Cllr Barrow had walked Warborough Road in Letcombe Regis and Gramps Hill and Holbourn Hill in Letcombe Bassett during recent rain and the grips were non functional. Cllr Light pointed out that it was not just the water but also the grit and soil which entered the brook causing build up of silt in the rare chalk stream.

Cllr Lapsley asked who is legally responsible for safety on the roads and funding, Cllr Constance agreed that it is OCC. She pointed out that some years ago villages were invited by OCC to take over some aspects of the work and received an allowance. OCC insurance had been extended to Parish Councils who carried out the work. She will check if the scheme is still running and report back.

YC

7.	<p>Cllr Batchelor suggested using parabolic mirrors in blind areas and if these could be funded by Cllr Constance. She believes that they are not acceptable now as they are often damaged and mist up in winter. However she would check and report back to the PC</p> <p>Councillor Updates: Cllr Batchelor Fete update Cllr Batchelor confirmed that Letcombe Bassett had not decided on the date for their next Open Gardens in 2024. However confirmed any date after June 2024 would be suitable. Plans for a Village Fete could therefore commence.</p> <p>Vodafone equipment for Church Tower Cllr Batchelor does not know who in the Church to approach to see if the Parish Council (PC) and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) can come to an agreement to get a small mast placed in the village so at least mobile signals can be carried throughout the village. The Church had previously turned down Vodafone’s offer to improve the signal by placing a small mast in the church tower. Andy Marczak who works for Vodafone volunteered to help out if he can. Cllr Light confirmed that in the first instance Debbie Webb, the Churchwarden, should be contacted.</p> <p>Village website questionnaire Cllr Batchelor would put together a brief questionnaire for the Register and would circulate it before the November meeting.</p> <p>Airband Cllr Batchelor has spoken with the technical team at SSEN who confirmed they are willing to share their poles to carry the fibre optic cable if necessary. Companies would need to contact Scottish and Southern Electricity Board (SSEN) to let them know which poles they needed to use. He had also been in touch again with Mark Watts (MW) of Airband in April who said that Airband were going to hold a board meeting in July to discuss how to proceed after completing cabling in Warborough Road. However MW had not had the results of that meeting. BT are going ahead with mapping exactly where the telephone lines and cabling are and that work including the re-installation of fibre to premises for all housing is due to be completed by the end of next year. BT’s cabling will carry all the signals.</p> <p>Gordon Lundie(GL) reported that over the summer he had been trained as a Pothole Champion and he can go into Fixmystreet and raise work orders provided the pothole reaches certain dimensions in size, he also got the Highways officer to come out to look at the bottom of South Street to see if he is prepared to do proper engineering work to try and deal with the fact that it keeps flooding and he has completed some of the processes decided on. GL will continue to chase over the winter.</p> <p>Cllr Light Oxfordshire Conversation This was delayed due to the period of mourning for the late Queen. As neither Councillors Light or Lapsley were able to join the meeting. Cllr Lapsley asked Cllr Light to email the date to Councillors after the meeting so that one of them could attend.</p>	<p>YC</p> <p>Cllrs.</p> <p>PB</p> <p>PB</p> <p>GL</p> <p>LL</p>
----	--	---

Airband

Cllr Light had written to Airband to say that not only had the traffic lights installed between Mill Paddock and the bottom of Windmill Hill stuck on Red but a residents driveway had been blocked by contractors equipment. Three Councillors and one of the Recreation Ground Trustees had directed traffic for over 6 hours in extremely high temperature. They had also been unable to contact Airband. Cllr Light had received a letter to say that the contact number for the firm supplying the traffic lights was displayed on the lights themselves. Cllr Light wrote back to say that was not the case, the sign had since been found face down on a nearby bank. She suggested that Airband might like to contribute towards the Childrens playground and is waiting for their reply.

Cllr Hitchcock

Bio Diversity and Nature Conservancy Forum

Cllr Hitchcock said that this was an amazing meeting with so many attendees and great ideas. The idea of the forum was to find ways to protect the environment, create a nature positive economy and to protect habitats. Some Councils had already made progress with recovery. She felt that the main point of the meeting was that we should start thinking about nature recovery from the bottom up. Rather than starting on several areas to get individuals in the community informed and involved. Items explored were pollution reduction, national canvassing, governments are looking at protecting hedgerows. The main idea was to look at the landscape surrounding us and what we can do with it. Cllr Hitchcock said that we are well provided for at Letcombe Regis, she would like to see more bird and bat boxes in the Nature Reserve. The PC needs to establish a local diversity plan by using local expertise who could help to form an active group to start the ball rolling.

Action at individual level, firstly planting perennials for pollinators putting up bird, bat and bee houses, create hedgehog highways, leave an area in the garden to go wild. Providing fresh water during hot spells. Not to use pesticides, contact farmers for their cooperation. Have more informative presentations. Include children in the schemes. There are several organisations with a wealth of information, the Wild Life Trust, RSPB, Wild Oxfordshire, Freshwater Habitat, Nature Recovery Network, Involving the public on what is available, get schools involved, notify local paper of achievements. Cllr Barrow is going to arrange another online meeting Cllr Hitchcock said she had found it very stimulating and had learnt a lot.

Cllr Lapsley thanked Cllr Hitchcock and agreed that there are a lot of organisations in the village asking if she had communicated this to them. Cllr Hitchcock replied that she wanted to initially communicate with the PC to see where they wanted to go and who wanted to get involved. They could join the next Zoom Forum. Cllr Lapsley suggested holding a meeting to coordinate everything. Cllr Barrow agreed that Letcombe Regis is very lucky. They are trying to get hedges planted in the Challows and Childrey. Cllr Hitchcock asked if we could get Blandys to plant a hedge round their car storage area. Cllr Lapsley suggested starting with a piece in the Register and if villagers are interested arranging a meeting to agree what can be done. Cllr Hitchcock suggested contacting experts first. Cllr Barrow mentioned that Dominic Lambe is the Senior Environmental Officer at the Vale and would give good advice. Cllr

KH

	<p>Light confirmed that Mark Bradfield does visit schools to publicise the Letcombe Brook Project.</p> <p>Cllr Hitchcock to follow up.</p> <p>Cllr Frewer Cllr Frewer asked about making the Millennium Green more accessible for disabled villagers. Cllr Lapsley said that this was in the pipeline but the PC had been concentrating on getting the Burial Ground completed but would be considering this, as it's next project, and it would be financed from the remaining S106 grant.</p> <p>8. Financial Matters:</p> <p>i) The Clerk reported that the original intention to broaden the use of internet banking to include the following items had originally been approved just as the Covid pandemic struck and as this would mean the Clerk and Councillors having to attend the bank it was delayed. However the bank require a current copy of the minutes confirming approval by Councillors. So this has been brought to Councillors again for approval, with the intention of getting everything in place by November.</p> <p>a) Appointment of two new signatories - Cllrs Barber and Batchelor confirmed their agreement.</p> <p>b) Internet payments</p> <p>c) Use of a bank card by the Clerk.</p> <p>Councillors unanimously approved the changes to the banking system.</p> <p>ii) Ratification of invoices Green & Stripey BG Grass £140.00, R Raines pruning MG fruit trees £276.00, A Gallagher PC Insurance £375.06, Clerk July salary and backpay £438.22, PAYE July £188.00, JR Tomkins Wasps on MG £65.00, Garry Cook Garden Services BG tidying £320.00, Letcombe Brook Project £700.00, A Lax June, July & August timesheets £840.00</p> <p>Councillors endorsed the above payments</p> <p>iii) Summary of payments and receipts to date against budget - Councillors had no queries. Cllr Lapsley pointed out that we were half way through the financial year and the budget showed similar spend so she didn't believe there were any issues.</p> <p>iv) Grant requests Mike Light on behalf of the Trustees had applied for a grant towards the fireworks. Councillors discussed and awarded £300 grant. The Clerk would let the Trustees know.</p> <p>v) Annual Review of Council Policies and Procedures Document Retention Policy. Councillors would review and let the Clerk know if they had any suggestions or comments. To be returned at the next PC Meeting in November.</p>	<p>KH</p> <p>EJ</p> <p>Cllrs.</p>
--	---	--

vi) Accounting package – Councillors had been sent the quotes for Scribe and Rialtus Alpha before the PC’s July meeting. The Clerk had read the information provided by both quotes and also contacting other Clerks for information on their accounting procedures. Of these one replied to say she used Rialtus Alpha, the others who used Scribe recommended using them. They had found the online training useful and their interactions with staff had been extremely helpful. The website also has useful tips and financial changes are updated in a timely manner.

Another benefit with Scribe would be that she could use the same cost codes as those in DO\$H the previous package which would make the end of year finances much simpler. Based on the replies from other Clerks and her own enquiries she recommended going for the Scribe package. The Clerk would resend the quotes from both packages again. Councillors agreed that the PC should go for Scribe and the Clerk would contact Scribe to confirm.

EJ

9. 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. **ONGOING**

Cllr Lapsley said that the PC had put in a Freedom of Interest request to the District Council and had received a response but had since put in a further follow up request. Martin Samuels had also asked if he and his Agent could attend this evenings meeting to answer any questions. However the request was received after the Agenda had been issued and Cllr Lapsley suggested having a meeting in the Village hall specifically for the two applications* as there is a level of interest in the village. The Clerk was asked to organise a meeting. **ONGOING**

EJ

P22/V0812/FUL, 15 Kings Close Letcombe Regis, OX12 9JF

Proposed new dwelling. (Amended plan and additional information received 13th June 2022 (Amended plan received 22 August Minor amendment to internal fencing. Start Consultation Period, 6th April 2022, End Consultation Period 1st July 2022, Target Decision Date 25th August 2022. Letcombe Regis Parish Council object to this planning application as overdevelopment of the site and its negative impact on local amenities. **GRANTED** despite PC’S comments

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. Registration date 16th June 2022, Target Decision date 11th August 2022. PC comment attached. Following the PC’s comments, the VOWH has asked for further reports to be provided concerning the perceived non-viability as an equestrian business. **ONGOING**

P22/V1247/FUL, Antwick Stud Letcombe Regis Wantage OX12 9JD

Conversion and extension of stable buildings to form three family homes with amenity space, parking, and associated works. Start Consultation Period 30th May 2022. End Cosultation Period 29th June 2022, Target Decision Date 22nd July 2022. PC comment attached. (see above*) **ONGOING**

10. Parish Council meetings:

Dates approved by the PC but subject to change,

2022 - 21st November

2023 – 16th January, 20th March,

For Approval

– in 2023

15th May APM & APCM, 17th July, 18th September, 20th November,

- in 2024

22nd January and 18th March

The dates were approved by Councillors but as above are subject to change.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

Elizabeth Jenkins
Parish Clerk
3rd October 2022

APPROVED