

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 15^h March 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)
PC Darrent James (DJ) and PCSO Tom Wallcott-Smith (TW-S)
Mr P Hodgson attended for part of the meeting

| Item | | Actions |
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| | <p>The meeting started with County Council Matters as Cllr Constance had another meeting to attend. See Item 6.</p> <p>This was followed by an update from PC Darren James and PCSO Tom Walcott-Smith. See Item 10.</p> <p>1. Apologies for Absence: None</p> <p>2. Declarations of Interest: No declarations were made</p> <p>3. Burial Ground - Update from Phil Hodgson on the Burial Ground Improvements Mr Hodgson (PH) confirmed that the planning application was submitted. Sally Appleyard is the officer dealing with the application and she is awaiting the response from Highways and the Forestry Officer. The target decision date remains 24/3/2021 but there might be small over run. The next step would be to contact potential contractors in order to prepare a tender list. The detailed design and schedule will be drawn up ready to go to tender. It was hoped that this will be done in April Cllr Lapsley thanked Mr Hodgson for the work done so far.</p> <p>4. Bowers Farm Development – Update from Henry Hallward Mr Hallward experienced internet problems and could not connect to the meeting.</p> <p>5. Approval of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 18th January 2021 and actions arising: The minutes were approved.</p> <p>Actions Arising: Item 6 County Council Matters 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.</p> | <p>PH</p> |

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| <p>6.</p> | <p>Drainage Cllr Constance to urge OCC to look at the cost effectiveness of the 1 in 4 year maintenance. Both questions were answered, see item 6.</p> <p>Item 7 District Council Matters 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. Cllr Barrow reported that he has investigated this matter and after considerable effort found someone who does the work for both Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire County Council. A verbal quote of about £1000 for the wider area was given but despite reminders, no follow up has been received. One of the issues identified was having the appropriate insurance to carry out the work on/next to the roads. Cllr Benton to follow up with the contractor.</p> <p>Cllr Barrow was also asked to investigate the possibility of flooding outside Bablakes in relation to their proposed planning application. Cllr Barrow reported back that as this application has already been decided, the planning officer said that no further information could be asked for nor could further conditions be imposed.</p> <p>Item 8 ii) Lighting for the Football pitch Cllr Batchelor to produce a detailed plan for the public engagement and will consult with VWHDC in time for the next PC meeting.</p> <p>Village Warden Cllrs Lapsley, Cllr Light and the Clerk updating monthly tasks for the Village Warden COMPLETED</p> <p>Precept The Clerk has informed the VOWH of the required precept. COMPLETED</p> <p>Grants It was agreed to give a grant of £250 to WIAC and £100 to OSVCA. - COMPLETED</p> <p>Millennium Green It was agreed to accept RGR's quote provided that they have adequate insurance to carry out the work. Confirmed by RGR. COMPLETED</p> <p>County Council Matters: Cllr Constance circulated the weekly reports from the CEO stating that over almost 230,000 people were vaccinated in a week in Oxfordshire. She also reported that low traffic neighbourhoods started and are going well in Cowley and that "Active Travel" schemes have started in Bicester and Witney. The pilot scheme for a zero emission zone in Oxford will be considered. It will be the first in the UK.</p> <p>Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) This gives power to smaller towns the ability to have a local presence to do parking enforcement.</p> <p>i) Who receives the civil parking fines. As the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is paying for the scheme, the fines will go to OCC to repay the £500,000 cost in starting this scheme. Any additional funds raised this way can only be spent on improving highways and transport schemes. OCC entered into a contract with a parking enforcement provider and will be responsible for contracting the enforcement employment.</p> <p>ii) Guidance document The local District Council will be responsible for the guidance document. Parking wardens will be used in market towns.</p> | <p>MB</p> <p>PB</p> |
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| <p>7.</p> | <p>iii) Method of employment. OCC. See (i) above.</p> <p>Consultation Local Transport and Connectivity Plan – Consultation closes 29th March Cllr Constance reported that this “vision document” emphasizes a future where they do not rely on the increase of roads to accommodate cars. OCC will be working towards reducing the dependency on cars. The emphasis is on digital connectivity instead. It was reported that OCC Highways will be attending to the Bablakes Farm drainage on 19th April. Cllr Constance was asked if she could provide details of the 4 year cycle of clearing the drainage grips etc. Although she could not find the details of the cycle, she noted that additional funding has been made available for high risk areas and she flagged the A417 and Courthill in Letcombe Regis. It was mentioned that only 2 drains in Letcombe Regis drain freely. Cllr Constance has not secured any funding source for the path from Letcombe Regis to Wantage and is investigating why the project is so expensive. It was pointed out that ditches and culverts and the cutting back of vegetation should be addressed and that waiting 4 years is a very long time. Cllr Constance clarified that the CPE will be for market towns in the first instance and not for villages. The offer of 20mph zones and Speedwatch packages for villages will be looked at by the next administration. Cllr Constance reminded the Parish Council that this was her last meeting before the elections. The Chairman expressed sincere thanks from the PC for the assistance provided by CC Constance during the past years</p> <p>District Council Matters:</p> <p><i>Cllr Barrow report (emailed 12th February)</i> <i>Email re Biodiversity and Nature Recovery (emailed 4th March).</i> There will be a forum about Nature Recover and Climate Change later in the year. Details will be passed on once received. <i>Compiled report (emailed 5th March)</i> <i>New Licensing policy for Taxi’s & Minicabs – closes 24th March 2021 (emailed 10th February)</i> <i>Request that we have better leading times for grants</i></p> <p>Cllr Barrow reported on the presentation on better broadband. Cllr Batchelor suggested that a cross county approach would be much better than individual villages trying to negotiate a deal. Grant funding is available again from the Government. More information on what can be offered to the village will be needed before the village can be consulted. Cllr Barrow will continue to investigate possible solutions and feed back.</p> <p>Cllr Barrow also took up the matter of speeding pointing the advantages of Speed Indicating Devices (SIDs) as well as Speedwatch.</p> <p>Cllr Barrow reported that the sports club has been in touch to ask for information about grant funding following on from the pavilion planning application. They have been put in touch with the community funding officer.</p> <p>The future of Wantage hospital was discussed. The future of in-patients beds is not yet decided. It is not yet clear which services will be available at the hospital. Cllr Barrow said that a very critical response to the consultation process was sent in but is not yet in the public domain.</p> | <p>YC</p> <p>PB-DC</p> |
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| <p>8.</p> | <p>Parish Councillors Updates:</p> <p>Cllr Barber <i>Suggestion for maintenance for ongoing path between Letcombe Regis and Wantage.</i> An email was sent out prior to the meeting. Mr Rob Andrews spent considerable amount of time clearing the path to Wantage and he was thanked at the time. Cllr Barber also spoke to Mr Andrews who suggested that an annual upkeep schedule in the autumn using a hired mechanical brush should be considered and would not be expensive to do. The mechanical brush could also be used elsewhere and it might be worth investigating buying one. Clerk to ask village warden if he would be able to do the work, how long it would take, if he had the appropriate insurance and if he might be able to use the equipment elsewhere. Clerk to follow up on the cost of hiring the equipment.</p> <p>Cllr Batchelor <i>IT grant – email from Catriona.</i> Cllr Batchelor and the District Councillor will see if this is still available as the lead time for the application was only 48 hours. <i>Airband.</i> No response has been received from Airband despite following up on a new contact. <i>Football Lighting</i> A proposed timetable and the proposed public engagement were discussed. Practical considerations are being considered, e.g. how and where would residents submit responses. An online survey was considered but it would be difficult to monitor who responds and where the respondents are from. The additional problem is that the internet is not reliable in the village and not everyone will be able to access an online consultation. Having a paper based response form with a post code seemed to be the solution. Cllr Lapsley also suggested that response forms should be numbered so that they could not be duplicated. It was agreed that the Parish Council should proceed with this. Cllr Frewer will check that Richmond will be happy to have a response box in the shop. A working group consisting of Cllr Lapsley, Cllr Batchelor, Cllr Frewer, Cllr Light and Cllr Hitchcock will discuss possible responses and how to move this forward.</p> <p>Cllr Benton <i>Roads and Bablakes Farmhouse drainage improvements</i> Cllr Benton reported that road drainage issues at Bablakes Farm were due to be addressed on 19th April. A blocked drain and standing water at the bottom of Windmill Hill were also reported. Potholes at the bottom of South Street and on the road from Wantage were mentioned, as was one on the Letcombe Bassett road. There are several on the Warborough Road and Chapel Lane. Cllr Benton will be logging drainage and pothole problems on www.fixmystreet.com. Cllr Benton to put an entry in the Register.</p> <p>Cllr Frewer <i>Update on Richmond</i> Cllr Frewer reported that there are about 85 independent units in Richmond, of which only about 60 are occupied. Richmond does offer support in terms of transport and meals where needed. The entire centre building is regarded as a care home under COVID regulations, so there is no access to the centre for other Richmond residents. The actual care home only consists of 2 units on the first floor but as they are in the same building as the +/- 65 assisted living apartments (40 of which are occupied), all fall under the same restrictions. These residents do see each other in the restaurant so they are not entirely isolated. So far no COVID infections have been reported.</p> <p>Cllr Hitchcock <i>Confirmation of the date for the Fete</i> The date has been set as 3rd July 2022 but there are dates available in June too. Cllr</p> | <p>EJ</p> <p>DF</p> <p>JL, PB, DE, LL, KH</p> <p>MB</p> |
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| | <p>Hitchcock checked with Open Gardens in Letcombe Bassett to ensure there will not be a clash but they were not confident that events like theirs will be going ahead.</p> <p>Cllr Lapsley <i>Covid-19.</i> A Bulletin was issued but as the Government has issued a “roadmap” out of lockdown, they did not want to overload people with too much information. OCC sent out more information recently which will be circulated in a Bulletin due course. <i>Code of Conduct.</i> Due to events in other parish councils which made headlines in the news recently, councillors were reminded that they have signed a code of conduct. Should any councillors have any concerns, they should speak to the chair in the first instance.</p> <p>Cllr Light <i>Emergency Plan Update</i> Cllr Light reported that a phone, walkie talkies and wind-up torches were purchased and would be passed between the clerk, Cllr Lapsley, Cllr Batchelor, Cllr Benton and Cllr Light, each keeping them for 2 months. They should be kept together and always be kept fully charged. Cllr Benton to pass on torches and the receipt to the clerk. Cllr Light to pass on a set of walkie talkies to the clerk. The final contents of the emergency box will include high viz jackets, aluminium blankets, tea, coffee, sugar, dried milk, water, several laminated copies of the plan, a spade, a bucket, a first aid kit, candles & matches etc. Once finalised the village will be informed and the plan will be lodged with the OCC emergency team. A storage container is to be investigated by the Clerk, with a view to this being placed in the Village Hall.</p> <p>9. Financial Matters: <i>i) Clerks report.</i> The clerk wrote to SSE to enquire what size generator will be needed for the village hall but no response was received. Cllr Frewer will make enquiries about Richmond’s generator. The internal auditor quoted £100 to perform the internal audit. Two sections need to be identified to be audited. It was suggested the cost of the village warden and subscriptions should be looked at in depth. Since the publication of the agenda the “Communities First Oxfordshire” subscription renewal was received. RGR was appointed to carry out work to trees on the Millennium Green at the previous meeting. Residents were informed of the date for the work RGR which has been started and should be completed within a day of the meeting. A VAT refund of £1656.77 has been received.</p> <p><i>ii) Ratification of invoices.</i> The clerk thanked the Parish Council for the additional salary increment. The following payments were approved: BBOWT - £46.00. Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice Grant - £100.00. Wantage Independent Advice Centre - £250.00. Clerks purchases for Parish Council £827.84. PAYE for January - £206.00. Clerk salary for January (including backpay & holiday Pay £1038.43. E de Ridder (locum Clerk) - £128.25 PAYE for February £39.60. Salary for February - £372.52. Clerk purchases for Community Emergency Pack - £71.51. OALC subscription - £148.89. Mobile phone direct debits 7 January 2021 - £22.98. 7 February 2021 (new contract) - £10.00</p> <p><i>iii) Summary of costs to date against budget.</i> The summary has been brought up to date. Elaine de Ridder offered to look at the document as it would not print properly.</p> <p><i>iv) Grant requests</i> The Parish Council has received letters from the WIAC and South and Vale Citizens Advice Centre expressing thanks for the grants. No new requests were received.</p> | <p>ALL</p> <p>MB LL</p> <p>EJ</p> <p>DF</p> |
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| <p>10.</p> <p>11.</p> | <p>Village Items: <i>Parking in the village (I have emailed the PCSO for an update).</i> PCSO Tom Walcott-Smith and PC Darren James gave a report on crime over the last 6 months in Letcombe Regis. There has been a few domestic incidents that wouldn't affect the wider community. No reports of burglaries were made. There were reports of youths congregating with cars in the sports club car park and the area was patrolled. Details were taken and if they were seen in the area again they would be issued with COVID fines. Parking, especially where building work was being done, was an issue but seemed to have been resolved. Cllr Hitchcock mentioned that it was a problem again recently. Speedwatch was discussed and the Blewbury Community Speedwatch was mentioned as they were ready to launch but it was stopped due to COVID. It was recommended that the Parish Council gets in touch with the Blewbury Speedwatch group. Good results were achieved as regards to hare coursing. Arrests were made and dogs and vehicles were seized. There is an ongoing investigation about the damage caused by 4x4 vehicle. Councillors mentioned that 4x4 vehicles and off road bikes continue to cause problems locally. Members of the public were encouraged to ring 999 if they witnessed vehicles doing damage to crops. Cllr Lapsley asked that patrols be stepped up on Sunday afternoons. Cllr Light reported litter (and possible drink driving) as empty cans and wine are left on a daily basis on Court Hill, where there isn't space for parking. Cllr Batchelor asked that a note about not parking on pavement should be included in the next Register.</p> <p><i>Self-employed Contractors (see OALC update for February Page 29. (emailed 28th February)</i> This has been taken note of and the village warden's hours will be monitored accordingly.</p> <p>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 between VOWH and the Applicant Martin Deans (MD) of VOWH is contacting them monthly and reporting back to the 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. 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 applicants agent and they will make further contact to update him. Unfortunately no update was received in time of the meeting.</p> <p>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 <i>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.</i></p> | <p>JL</p> <p>JL</p> |
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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. **6th January 2021 Emailed Josh Sharp the Planning Officer to see what is happening with this application.**
Application GRANTED

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**

Have requested that Cllr Barrow follows this in view of the possibility of flooding during construction. The Parish Council is disappointed that their views about flooding were not taken into consideration and now it is too late to impose further conditions.

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 Lapsley contacted the Planning Officer. 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.

Planning Application GRANTED
5th February 2021

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. Arrangements have been made to visit the site. Parish Councillors comments *Councillors are questioning whether the height of the garage, in relation to its distance from the western boundary wall of 0.7m is within permitted planning regulations. They have no other objections to the application. Councillors have also been made aware of neighbours objections to the application.*

Planning application GRANTED 4th February 2021.

P21/V0256/FUL, Letcombe Regis Parish Council Burial Ground Bassett Road Letcombe Regis OX12

Car park extension and new entrance to existing burial ground. Start Consultation Period 11th February 2021, End Consultation Period 10th March 2021, Target Decision Date 24th March 2021.

P21/V0314/LB, Blandys Cottage Bassett Road Letcombe Regis OX12 9LJ

Installation of an electric car charging point, to be located in the front garden, adjacent to the garden wall. Cable to be run from the fuse board above the front door, clipped to the outside of the front wall of the house at low level. EV Charging point to be mounted on a small oak post next to the wall so as not to be visible from the highway. Start Consultation Period 18th February 2021, End Consultation Period 17th March 2021, Target Decision Date 29th March 2021.

The clerk to submit a "no objection" response.

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| | <p>P17/V0163/FUL Blandys Farm Bassett Road Letcombe Regis Wantage OX12 9LJ</p> <p>Demolition of all existing buildings (including car showrooms, sales reception and car preparation barn). Erection of single dwelling with ancillary accommodation and garaging. The application ran out on the 3rd December 2020. The Clerk has since written to VOWH asking if the six month extension, due to the Pandemic applies and will Planning inform the PC if the applicants wish to re-apply?</p> <p>The clerk is still awaiting a response.</p> <p>Concerns were expressed about the increased numbers of cars and containers and the lengthening of the driveway. District Councillor Burrow will look at the original application and advise the Parish Council accordingly.</p> <p>Any planning applications received since publication of the Agenda None.</p> <p>12. Parish Council meetings: Dates approved by the PC but subject to change, 2021 17th May (Annual Parish Meeting 7.30pm on Zoom followed at 8pm by the Annual Parish Council Meeting). Councillors are reminded to start drafting short reports for the meeting. 19th July, 20th September, 15th November,</p> <p>2022 17th January, 21st March.16th May</p> <p>The Parish Council unanimously decided to continue meetings on Zoom until such time as they feel safe to resume meetings in person.</p> <p>Meeting closed 22.05</p> <p>Elaine de Ridder Locum Clerk 22 April 2021</p> | <p>EJ</p> <p>PB-DC</p> |
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