

Launton Annual Parish Meeting 2018

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting
held on Thursday 19 April 2018
at 7.30pm in Launton Parish Hall

Chairman: Councillor Simon Turner (Chairman Launton PC)
Clerk: Jane Olds (Parish Clerk)
Launton Residents: 14 residents
District Councillors: Cllr David Hughes (CDC)
Other visitors: PC C Cook and PC Muhtarogw

1. To accept apologies for absence

Apologies were received from two villagers, Cllr Ian Corkin (OCC) and Mechelle Harris (Hummingbird Centre).

2. To confirm minutes of the previous meeting on 20 April 2017

All were in favour of the Minutes being confirmed as an accurate record and they were signed by the Chairman

3. Matters arising from these minutes

The benches had been installed and more dog bins had been installed.

4. Report from the Chairman of Launton Parish Council for the past year

The Parish Council usually meets on the first Thursday of the month in the Parish Hall, with a public participation session from 7:00 p.m. (at which councillors are available to talk to parishioners about any subject they wish, and any planning applications for the meeting may be viewed), prior to the council meeting starting at 7:30 p.m. Part of the meeting itself is set aside for members of the public to address the council about items on the agenda, subject to individual and overall time limits.

The agenda for the forthcoming meeting, and minutes of the previous meeting, are displayed on the two Parish Council notice boards outside the Parish Hall and near the War Memorial, and are also available from the council's web site at **www.launton-pc.gov.uk**.

The council has again met 13 times in the past year: our 12 regular monthly meetings, plus one extraordinary meeting to approve the annual return. We have commented on 38 planning applications, one of which was for Buckingham and should not have been sent to us, meaning that the real number was 37, the same as last year. 37-40 applications per year appears to be becoming the norm, as a significant increase on a few years ago. Fortunately, the number of consultation documents remains relatively small: notable consultations include the parliamentary boundary changes, proposed increases in the amount of controlled airspace, and the partial review of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1, to accommodate some of Oxford's unmet housing need, which has held up progress on the

long-awaited Local Plan Part 2, in which housing targets for the villages will be stated. As I have reported for the last two years, we still await the consultation on this vitally important plan.

In October, our Clerk, Caroline Dunn, stepped down due to family circumstances; I would like to thank her for all her support and hard work during her time in the post. Our new Clerk is Jane Olds, who is also the Clerk for Caversfield and Wendlebury Parish Councils, and whose considerable experience and deceptively easy-looking competence is proving a boon. She is calmly steering us through the ever-changing legislative waters, including the looming changes to data protection, and is updating and adding to the complement of governance documents (standing orders, formal policies and procedures etc) that underpin all that we do. Jane recently gained her Certificate in Local Council Administration, which enabled us to adopt the General Power of Competence in January: this odd-sounding power means that we are less bound by red tape in some of the things that we can do, and should simplify matters in the future.

We were greatly saddened by the death earlier this year of Stan Archer, who served as a Parish Councillor for many years, including being Chairman; I have fond memories of Stan's contributions during our years on the council together.

As I reported last year with my fingers hopefully crossed, the pedestrian footway in Station Road was finally completed after many years of hard work. Thanks for this are due in no small part to the persistence of our previous Oxfordshire County Councillor, Catherine Fulljames. Since last May, we have had a new Councillor, Ian Corkin, who has been very engaged and supportive of our efforts in numerous ways, including discussions with us and highways officers about things that could be done to help with the traffic problems in the village; regrettably there is insufficient funding for some of the ideas raised, but there are some that might be achievable. Ian has also recently become involved with the drainage issues in Blackthorn Road. We look forward to continuing to work with him in the years to come.

5. Financial Report of Launton Parish Council for the year ended 31st March 2015

The Clerk introduced herself and reported that the Parish Council accounts for the year had been closed and the internal audit arranged for the following week. She provided the meeting with the Statement of Accounts.

The increase in costs over the year was primarily due to the increase in the grass cutting, both in the village and the surrounding area, the purchase of new litter and dog bins and the new benches for the bus shelters and Island Pond Wood. All the other expenditure remained fairly static.

Looking forward, a full budget was agreed in January together with the Precept – which remained the same as last year at £20,250 and which will cover all the Parish Council's responsibilities including verge cutting in and out of the village, emptying the numerous dog bins (twice a week in summer and once a week in winter), and making sure that the Parish Council was compliant with all the legislation including GDPR and transparency. To

that end, the Parish Council will be looking to revamp the Council website to make it easier for everyone to find the documents they need.

The Parish Council had adopted a Reserves Policy in order to meet the various obligations which include: holding the recommended three months' running costs; the possibility of having to pay for an election (at about £1,600); and various contingencies, including the transfer of the Parish Hall Lease. Unfortunately, unless the Parish takes out a loan which is agreed by the *Public Works and Loans Board*, the Parish is unable to borrow money, so it is essential that funds are set aside in ear marked reserves to pay for things when needed.

The Clerk included on the Statement, the S137 expenditure allowance. This allowance is published by Government and gives Parish Councils the power to 'to incur expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised' such as the poppy wreath for Remembrance Day which wasn't otherwise possible. However, as the Council has recently fulfilled the criteria of at least five elected Members and a qualified Clerk, and adopted the General Power of Competence, there will now be more flexibility in the awarding of grants and to that end a Grants Policy has been developed and adopted.

6. Parish Hall Improvement Project – Report from Martin Evans

Once again we have had a successful year with more events raising money for the Parish Hall Improvement Project.

Fund raising has ranged from an Easter style Bake Off to the Launton Rock Chorus evening, from the Launton Lollop to the 50:50 draw, and of course another Tythe Barn quiz. We would like to say a huge thank you to all the people who worked to make all of our fundraising events happen and especially to the committee who turn up at each meeting and come up with ideas and make them a reality.

We have made progress with the lease of the Parish Hall. In February the Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Ltd agreed to the Heads of Terms which the Parochial Church Council has worked on with the Parish Council, and so we are now discussing the actual lease with the solicitor. Discussions have been held with Launton School about including a small piece of land that is part of the access road. This is owned by slightly different parts of the Church so we need the agreement of the Head teacher and Governing Body.

Ideas for funding are always welcome but priority is to move the lease along as we need this in place to apply for any grants. Along with that we need to keep our own fundraising activities going as this shows that we are committed to this project and will bring a higher chance of success when we do apply for funding.

7. Parish Path Warden update.

Mr Boulton who was the volunteer Parish Path Warden reported that his duties included walking the 20 paths and one bridleway and reporting any issues to the OCC Footpaths team. Three bridges had recently been replaced by OCC.

Mr Boulton asked that if any issues were found by villagers to report them to him and he could follow them up with OCC.

8. Reports from representatives of village organisations

The Clerk had contacted 46 people or organisations and 14 had submitted reports or presented them at the meeting. The following organisations responded:

The Hummingbird Centre
Friends of Island Pond Wood
Friends of Launton School (verbal report presented by Mark Williams)
Launton Community Christmas Tree (in aid of Cancer Research UK)
Launton Facebook Page
Launton Fete
Launton Lines
Launton Over 60s Club
Launton Parochial Church Council
Parish Transport Representative
Launton Village Players
Launton Village Rock Chorus
Launton Watercolour Art Group
Launton WI

The written reports would be available on the Parish Council website.

9. Report from the Cherwell District Councillor for Launton

Councillor Hughes was not able to make a full report as he was in Purdah at the time of the meeting due to the forthcoming elections.

10. Report from the Oxfordshire County Councillor for Launton

Councillor Ian Corkin sent a written report outlining the relevant issues for Launton.

He had arranged a walk of the village with the County Highways Safety Officers and Parish Councillors at the start of the year and discussed a number of issues, including the pinch points around the school, process for monitoring traffic speeds, traffic speed reduction options and possible flashing lights outside of the school. It is with the PC to decide which front they would like to progress.

The footpaths along the Bicester Road had been examined, but at the moment they fall below the threshold for remedial work. This is not a satisfactory position and he agreed to revisit this situation with OCC officers.

There were a number of highways and drainage issues currently in hand.

He was actively following up the recent road traffic collisions on the A41 and agreed to report progress soon.

East West Rail: This continued to impact various areas of his division, not least around Launton. There has been success in influencing transport routes and a liaison group will be

formed for the communities most affected. CDC are looking closely at the impact of the build on the surrounding road network as it will be of particular importance to Launton.

11. Report from Thames Valley Police

PC Cook, an officer on the Neighbourhood problem-solving team, reported to the meeting. The members of the team had changed in June the previous year with Sergeant Kerry O'Leary responsible for the team overall. A number of the Police Officers had changed, but the PCSOs remained.

A review of crimes in Launton did not show any significant incidents.

Two Community Resilience groups had been set up, one for the rural area around Bicester and one for the town itself. All villagers were welcome to attend these meetings which would be every three to four months. The meetings would look at the current issues concerning residents and would then highlight some priorities which the Police could use as a basis for their work. The main issues recently had focussed on speeding. The next meeting would be 13 June at Piddington Village Hall.

Concern was raised about the poor parking outside school and the way to reduce the number of HGVs coming through the village. The fatality at the A41 Blackthorn crossroad was also raised and Cllr Ian Corkin had already asked for an investigation.

12. Any other business

Following Cllr Corkin's visit to the village, the Parish Council wished to look into the possibility of a 20mph zone outside school.

13. Date and venue of next meeting

Launton Parish Hall at 7.30pm on Thursday 18 April 2019

The meeting closed at 9.09 pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....