

LAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on **Thursday 2 November 2023** at 7.30pm in Launton Parish Hall

Councillors present: Mr Andrew Briant, Mrs Abigail Dowman, Mr Ed Sanders (Vice Chairman), Mrs Lesley Thompson, Mr Richard Walker, Mrs Jaqueline Webber

In attendance: The Clerk, Mrs Jane Olds; Cllr Gemma Coton (CDC) (until 9.00pm), 4 members of the public

Apologies: Mr Simon Turner (Chairman)

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence

The Council received Councillor Turner's apologies.

2. Requests for Dispensations, Declarations of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality

Nothing was declared.

3. To facilitate public participation with regard to items on the agenda

Four members of the public were in attendance. One member of the public voiced their concerns about the staff employment contract, retention and the cost of training, the new 20mph speed limit in the village and the possible location of the proposed Station Road Speed Indicator Device.

Another member raised concern about the national speed limits approaching the village.

4. East West Rail – to receive a progress report from the EWR Liaison Officer

Ms Sa'id was unable to attend. More road closures were scheduled around Stratton Audley and Godington which the Clerk had publicised on social media and the website.

It was reported that more HGV traffic was coming through the village – the Clerk would report it to EWR.

5. Reports from District and County Councillors

Cllr Coton (CDC) reported that the recruitment for the new Chief Executive was moving forward; the interviews would take place towards the end of the month. The proposals to move the District Council offices from Bodicote House to Castle Quay in Banbury were ongoing. The Oxford Christmas Lunch event would take place again this year.

No report had been received from Cllr Corkin (OCC).

6. Minutes – to confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October previously circulated

The Council **RESOLVED** that the Minutes from the meeting on 5 October be accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

7. Update on progress from the Minutes – the Clerk / Chairman to report on progress of outstanding items which do not require further decision

a. Policies

The Grants Policy had been updated and published.

b. Tree Survey

One Tree Survey quotation had been received – further quotations would be sought.

8. Governance and Consultations

a. Fixed Assets – to receive the inspection reports

- Councillor Briant reported that the only problem with the rubbish bins was the open one in Sycamore Road, a quotation for a new bin would be obtained in due course. The dog bin provision in the sports field nearest the Yew Tree needed to be reviewed.
- Councillor Dowman reported that bus shelters (including the associated litter bins and benches) were in reasonable condition; the defibrillator and accessories were checked weekly and the cabinet was satisfactory.
- Councillor Webber reported that the salt bins were all full, although one had been used as a dustbin for food, West End Footpath was in reasonable condition and the outside benches were acceptable apart from the middle slat of the one in Sycamore Road.

b. Policy Review – to review the policies

i. Debit Card Use Policy

The Council considered the policy and **RESOLVED** to agree to adopt it.

c. Oxfordshire County Council Grass Cutting Agreement – to consider the revised agreement and policy

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to the grass cutting agreement, but noted that it should be within the 20mph limit rather than the 30mph limit. Confirmation had been received that the funding would remain at £1,216.28.

9. Finance

a. To receive the Finance Report and quarterly Budget Monitoring Report

As at 16 October, the Accounts stood at:

Co-op Current Account	£48,269.39
Co-op Deposit Account	£22,539.71

Standing Orders		Date Cleared
Clerk's September salary (monthly)	£767.25	2/10/23
Launton Parish Hall storage (quarterly)	£90.00	2/10/23
Launton Lines (monthly)	£170.00	4/10/23

Direct Debits		Date Cleared
O2 Mobile	£6.99	21/9/23

Income

None

b. Bank Statement – to acknowledge scrutiny and acceptance of the previously circulated bank statement

The bank statement for the current account was reviewed and accepted.

c. Draft Budget – to consider holding an informal briefing session

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to hold an informal briefing session. A date would be agreed.

d. Invoices for payment – to consider and approve invoices for payment itemised on the Payment Schedule

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the following payments which Councillor Webber would authorise.

Payment Method	Payee and reason	Budget	Minute Ref	Net Payment	Payment inc VAT
Bank Transfer	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils for planning training for Cllr Turner (invoice no: W-2906)	Training	7/9/23 10. a.	£55.00	£66.00
Bank Transfer	David Moore for Grounds Maintenance in The Glades and Sherwood Close (invoice no: DM0096)	Village upkeep and weedspraying	2/11/23 15. b. i. and ii.	£120.00	£120.00
Bank Transfer	Royal British Legion for Poppy Wreath contribution	Grants	5/10/23 13. d.	£60.00	£60.00
Bank Transfer	HMRC NICS Employer Contribution October to November	HMRC / NIC	Statutory	£1.28	£1.28
Bank Transfer	J Olds for Admin expenses (Printing £23.05, General Expenses £8.00, Laminating £2.00)	Admin Costs	6/4/23 9. g. iii.	£33.05	£33.05
	Mileage expenses	Mileage Expenses	6/4/23 9. g. iii.	£36.14	£36.14
	Home Working Expenses (from 1 August – 30 November)	Home Working Expenses	6/4/23 9. g. iii.	£104.00	£104.00
	Total				£173.19

Debit Card transactions to note:

Date Cleared	Payee and reason	Budget	Minute Ref	Net Payment	Payment inc VAT
27/9/23	HMRC NIC Employer Contribution August to September	HMRC / NIC	Statutory	£1.28	£1.28
16/10/23	Screwfix for black cable ties (for securing Silent Soldiers)	Admin Costs		£6.66	£7.99

Date Cleared	Payee and reason	Budget	Minute Ref	Net Payment	Payment inc VAT
(paid 23/10/23)	HMRC NIC Employer Contribution September to October	HMRC / NIC	Statutory	£1.28	£1.28

10. Training

- a. **NALC, OALC and SLCC** – to consider any further training offered by OALC, NALC and SLCC
The Clerk provided a list of training from OALC, NALC and SLCC.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to book the SLCC Managing Village Halls Webinar on 15 November at £45 plus VAT for the Clerk and any Councillors who were able to attend.

The Clerk had booked the free Martyn’s Law Webinar on 16 November.

Councillor Sanders expressed an interest in the OALC session ‘Addressing the Biodiversity Crisis for Town and Parish Councils’ on 20 February at 10am. Booking would be made in due course.

11. Planning

- a. **Planning applications** – to consider all recent applications received from Cherwell District Council detailed below and any other planning applications submitted and published on the CDC planning portal between the circulation of this agenda and the meeting

No applications had been received.

b. To note notices of decision

i. Application Number: 23/02092/ADV

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE - 1 No luminated fascia sign to front elevation at first floor level
Location: Building 148 The Command Works, Bicester Heritage, Old Skimmingdish Lane, OX27 8FZ
Permission for development subject to conditions (2 October)

ii. Application Number: 23/02097/F

Proposal: Installation of solar panels, the replacement of a shutter door with a bi-fold window, roller shutter alterations, the installation of air vents, the installation of external storage enclosures, installation of flues, signage, and associated works (follow up to 23/00258/F)
Location: Building 148 The Command Works, Bicester Heritage, Old Skimmingdish Lane, OX27 8FZ
Permission for development subject to conditions (4 October)

iii. Application Number: 23/02158/F

Proposal: Proposed two storey & single storey rear extension and detached garage / workshop at the rear
Location: 4 Bicester Road, OX26 5DP
Permission for development subject to conditions (9 October)

iv. Application Number: 23/01941/F

Proposal: Variation of Condition 3 (plans) of 19/02708/OUT - To vary the approved parameter plans
Location: Bicester Heritage, Buckingham Road, Bicester
Permission for development subject to conditions (12 October)

c. Cherwell Local Plan – to consider the response to the consultation (closes 3 November)

The Council received the draft response which had been developed following an informal online discussion and **RESOLVED** to submit the document to Cherwell District Council.

Further discussion with the ten other 'larger villages' would take place in due course, particularly in relation to the housing locations and numbers defined in the draft.

12. Parish Hall Project

a. Progress report – to receive a report

The Clerk reported that the Council's solicitors had confirmed that the engrossed Lease would be sent to her for signature. It would need to be signed by the Parochial Church Council, the Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Limited and the Parish Council. Two Councillors would need to sign it with the Clerk as witness – as per the Standing Orders.

The PCC had agreed to transfer the Hall Management bank account to the Parish Council for the specific purpose of the running of the hall.

There was no requirement for the Parish Council to take out a Premises Licence for the Hall.

The application to the CDC Village and Rural Community Halls Rural England Prosperity Fund was ready to be sent. The Business Plan had been completed and circulated for comment.

b. Management Decisions – to consider

i. Energy and Water Supply

The energy figures had only been sent to the Clerk the day of the meeting. The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to delegate consideration of the information to the Working Group.

Attempting to obtain quotations for the water was likely to be more difficult as the water meter was still to be located.

ii. Insurance Quotation

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to accept the quotation of £343.68 from Zurich to be added to the general Parish Council policy to cover the Hall until the next regular renewal at the beginning of June 2024.

iii. Bank Account Management

Further consideration of the bank accounts would be needed.

c. Policy Development – to consider policies necessary for the running of the Hall

The Clerk updated the meeting on the policies and other documentation which was likely to be needed. This included:

- Hiring agreement
- Health and Safety Risk Assessment

- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Risk Assessment (sheet 15?)
- Vulnerable persons protection policy
- Environmental Policy
- Lone Working Policy

The Clerk had received model documents from the Halls Advisor from Community First Oxfordshire.

d. Broadband Connection – to receive a progress report

The Hall had been booked for 24 October. Unfortunately, the Clerk was informed late the previous day that the engineering team had not been able to complete the pre-checks required and the appointment needed to be rescheduled. This booking would be taken as one of the four bookings Gigaclear requested as part of their agreement.

The Clerk was awaiting a new date.

9.00pm: Cllr Coton left the meeting

13. Climate Emergency

a. Report – to receive a progress report

No additional progress had been made.

b. Biodiversity Policy – to consider the draft policy for implementation

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to adopt the draft Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan developed with the SLCC Environment Advisor.

14. Remembrance – to note the Remembrance Day commemoration

The Council noted the 11 November Remembrance Day commemoration. The Clerk would deliver the wreath to the Chairman.

15. Village Matters

a. Highway and Traffic Issues – to receive a general update

i. Speed Indicator Devices and Traffic management – to receive a general update

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the revised location of the Speed Indicator Device on Station Road near the Hummingbird Centre. The Clerk would clarify with the OCC Officer whether the devices would be able to record the number of vehicles and the actual speeds.

ii. Speedwatch – to receive a progress report

No report had been received.

9.25pm The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to extend the meeting until 9.45pm.

b. Village upkeep

i. Sherwood Close – to consider a quotation for the regular shrubbery maintenance work and for additional work on the area by the wall

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to accept Mr Moore's quotation of £40 per visit for the regular work, which would take place up to three times a year, and £160 for the work to

clear the 'back' border including removing the ivy from much of the border. Any gaps would be filled from shrubs currently in the main border.

ii. **The Glades** – to consider a quotation for the regular shrubbery maintenance work
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to accept Mr Moore's quotation of £60 per visit for the regular shrubbery maintenance work which would take place up to three times a year.

iii. **The Poplars** – to consider a quotation for the regular maintenance work
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to accept Mr Moore's quotation of £60 per visit for the regular shrubbery maintenance work which would take place up to twice a year.

c. **D-Day Commemoration** – to consider commemorating the 80th anniversary
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to consider the commemoration in more detail at a future meeting.

16. Correspondence – to note correspondence received not otherwise on the agenda where decisions are not required
The Council **RESOLVED** to note the correspondence.

17. Attendance at Meetings and Reports from meetings / courses

a. **SLCC National Conference** – 10, 11 and 12 October

The Clerk attended the National Conference, primarily as a member of the SLCC Staff. Figen Murray – the mother of Martyn who was killed in the Manchester Arena bombing – made the case very eloquently for needing Martyn's Law to secure halls and events.

Members of the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities gave a presentation and following this it was hoped that the Department would be able to visit small parishes in Oxfordshire. The Clerk to Taunton gave a presentation about the creation of Taunton Town Council - one of the new parished areas; Keith Stevens (NALC Chair), a retired Chief Constable and Tilly Lockey also presented.

b. **Bicester Rural Resilience Meeting** – 17 October 7pm – Chesterton Community Centre
Councillor Sanders was unable to attend.

c. **OCC Town and Parish Charter Conference** – 26 October (6.30pm – 8.30pm at County Hall and online)
The Clerk attended the Conference in person. A consultation had been produced which would be considered at the December meeting.

d. **Age UK AGM** – 3 November
No one was able to attend.

e. **CDC Parish Liaison Meeting** – 8 November (online)
Councillors Thompson and Turner would attend the online meeting.

f. **Oxfordshire draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy** – webinar 9 November 12.15 – 1.15
No one was able to attend the webinar.

- g. Healthy Bicester Stakeholder Event** – 6 March 2024 (10am – 1pm at John Paul II Centre)
Advance notice given.
- h. CDC Code of Conduct Training** – 14 November (4pm – 6pm)
For all Councillors. A request had been made for a recording due to the inconvenient time.

18. Reports

a. Chairman's Report

The Chairman had nothing further to report.

b. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that she had labelled the defibrillator with the name of the parish and the mobile number in case it was used and not returned.

The Clerk had written to MP Mrs Prentis about the Levelling-up Bill and the disappointment that the House of Commons had rejected the amendments including the adoption of hybrid meetings and the allowance for carers (both of which were permitted in Wales) and had invited her to a Parish Council meeting.

19. Items for information or next Agenda only – all items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk by Thursday 23 November

- a. Blackthorn Road Flooding** – the Clerk had been alerted by a villager about the properties on the southern side of Blackthorn Road which had flooded again due to 'hydraulic overload' caused when the sewage line was unable to cope with the amount of water going through it. This was the third time this year that Thames Water had been called out.

20. Date of next meeting – Thursday 7 December 2023 at 7.30pm in Launton Parish Hall

The meeting closed at 9.36pm.

Notes on declarations of interest

Any Member arriving after the start of the meeting is asked to declare pecuniary interests, as necessary, as soon as practicable after their arrival, even if the item in question has been considered.

National rules about pecuniary interests are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and in secondary legislation made under the Act, in particular The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Signed.....

Dated.....