

LAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on **Thursday 7 December 2023** at 7.30pm in Launton Parish Hall

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

In attendance: The Clerk, Mrs Jane Olds; 4 members of the public, 2 representatives from East West Rail (left 8.22pm)

Apologies: Mrs Abigail Dowman, Mr Simon Turner (Chairman), Mr Richard Walker

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence

The Council received Councillors Dowman, Turner and Walker'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 raised traffic issues and the revised position of the suggested Speed Indicator Device on Station Road. One member raised concerns about the planning application reference 23/03036/F. A further member was dissatisfied with the display of documentation at the meeting.

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

Ms Sa'id reported that the project was on schedule. The majority of the track work had been completed and the signalling works were under way. The infrastructure was scheduled to be completed by 2024 and then Network Rail would undertake the testing. Winslow Station was nearing completion and much of the work further up the line, including where the line crosses HS2, was under way.

8.22pm the two representatives from EWR left the meeting.

5. Reports from District and County Councillors

No report had been received from Cllr Coton (CDC).

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

6. Minutes – to confirm the Minutes of the Council meeting and the Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 2 November previously circulated

The Council **RESOLVED** that the Minutes from both meetings on 2 November 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 Debit Card Use Policy and the Biodiversity Policy had been updated and published.

b. OCC Grass Cutting Agreement

The Clerk had completed the agreement and returned it.

c. CDC Local Plan

The response had been submitted.

8. Governance and Consultations

a. Policy Review – to review the policies

i. Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

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

ii. Staffing Committee Terms of Reference

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

iii. Website Policy

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

iv. Data Protection Policy and GDPR Awareness Checklist

The Council considered the documents and **RESOLVED** to agree to adopt the data protection policy and the GDPR Awareness Checklist.

b. Website Review – to appoint two Councillors to review the content of the website (as per the Website Policy)

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree defer the appointment until more Councillors were present.

c. OCC / OALC Councils' Charter – to consider a response to the survey

The Council particularly considered the question "What does stronger partnership working between the Oxfordshire Councils look like?" The Council **RESOLVED** to respond that the primary objectives were for strategic focus and operational compliance with the requirements of a working charter, that the Charter must be written in clear, plain English endorsed with the Plain English Campaign Crystal Mark, there should not be any platitudes, it must be brief and non-political and there must be a way of judging and reviewing its effectiveness.

Communication between all levels of Councils must be key.

9. Finance

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

As at 16 November, the Accounts stood at:

Co-op Current Account	£46,769.00
Co-op Deposit Account	£22,700.15

Standing Orders		Date Cleared
Clerk's October salary (monthly)	£767.25	1/11/23
Launton Lines (monthly)	£170.00	6/11/23

Direct Debits

O2 Mobile

£6.99

Date Cleared

23/10/23

Income

Deposit account interest (6 months)

£160.44

Date Cleared

5/10/23

- b. Bank Statements** – to acknowledge scrutiny and acceptance of the previously circulated bank statements

The bank statement for the current account and the transaction list for the deposit account were reviewed and accepted.

- c. Staff Salary** – to note the NALC revised cost of living salary scale for the Clerk for 2023/24 together with the amount backdated to April

The Council noted the NALC revised salary scales and the “cost of living” increase of £1 per hour to £14.95 on Scale Point 17 (agreed at the 25 May Staffing Committee). This would make the total gross monthly expense £822.25.

The standing order would be updated ready for the December payment scheduled for 1 January.

The Council also noted the total backdated pay calculated for the year from April to November was £440.00 which would be paid separately (minus any tax and National Insurance due).

- d. Grant Request** – to consider a grant application for the churchyard mowing for 2024/25

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to the request for support with the churchyard grass cutting of £1,500 using the Local Government Act 1972 s214(6) Power.

- e. 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 Thompson checked at the meeting and Councillor Dowman would authorise.

Payment Method	Payee and reason	Budget	Minute Ref	Net Payment	Payment inc VAT
Bank Transfer	SLCC – Managing Village Halls webinar (invoice number: BK213377-1)	Training	2/11/23 10. a.	£45.00	£54.00
Bank Transfer	Robert C Yates & Partners (t/a RGS Arboricultural Consultants) (invoice number: 17318)	Parish Hall Project	2/2/23 14. a.	£97.50	£117.00
Bank Transfer	HMRC Contributions (NICS Employer Contribution November to December £62.00 plus Employee Tax and NI Contribution £30.71)	Clerk’s Salary	Statutory	£92.71	£92.71
Bank Transfer	J Olds Back Pay (April to November)	Clerk’s Salary	7/12/23 9. c.	£409.29	£409.29

Debit Card transactions to note:

Date Cleared	Payee and reason	Budget	Minute Ref	Net Payment	Payment inc VAT
7/11/23	Defib Store for 2 sets defibrillator pads	Defibrillator	Health and Safety	£112.00	£134.40

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.

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

i. **Application Number: 23/03036/F**

Proposal: Redevelopment to form three detached dwellings with garages, parking and altered vehicular access
Location: Salamanca, Bicester Road, OX26 5DQ

The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** to respond that many of the concerns raised in the application reference 21/02097/F remained. It was still an over development of the site, the loss of natural habitat and green space was contrary to the Council's climate emergency declaration and the limited parking would not accommodate the number of cars likely to be generated by three, large houses. There was further concern about the overshadowing of the neighbouring properties.

ii. **Application Number: 23/03120/LB**

Proposal: Re-roof of main house and dairy to include insulation and bat mitigation measures, replace existing rooflights with new conservation style rooflights and install new clay chimney pots on existing chimneys
Location: West End Farm House, 56 West End, OX26 5DG
The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** to respond that there were no comments or objections to the proposal.

iii. **Application Numbers: 23/03153/F and 23/03154/LB**

Proposal: Alterations at ground floor and first floor levels of the main house to create a master bedroom with dressing room, and re-purposing of the kitchen space to create a cloakroom, WC and new utility room. Replacement of uPVC windows in the main house with new timber framed windows. Conversion of the former workshop building to become a new open-plan kitchen, living and dining space. Conversion and extension of the existing utility room to create a feature lobby space linking the new primary living spaces contained within the former workshop, with the main dwellinghouse. This will also include the addition of a wine store in this space. Demolition of the large storage barn and replacement of this with an oak framed and glazed pool house. Conversion of the existing double garage to create a guest annexe and garden store. Conversion of the stables to create a home

office and home gym space. Demolition of the timber garden store and replacement with a garden kitchen and mower and garden tool store. Comprehensive re-planning of the external spaces including replacement of tarmac/concrete hardstanding with domestic surface finishes, planting beds and lawn

Location: Laurels Farm, Station Road, OX26 5DX

The Council considered the applications and **RESOLVED** to respond that there were no comments or objections to the proposal.

b. To note notices of decision

i. Application Number: 23/02046/F

Proposal: Single storey and two storey rear extension

Location: 33 West End, OX26 5DF

Permission for development subject to conditions (1 November)

ii. Application Number: 23/02583/F

Proposal: Single storey rear extension

Location: 1 Wetland Drive, OX26 5AN

Permission for development subject to conditions (14 November)

12. Parish Hall Project

a. Progress report – to receive a report

The Clerk reported that the Lease had been returned to the Council's solicitor with a request for a mutually convenient date for it to come into force in order that the insurance and utilities could be managed.

The application to the CDC Village and Rural Community Halls Rural England Prosperity Fund had been received and a grant of £25,000 had been approved; the grant was to be match funded and would include a portion of S106 funding allocated to the Hall. The Parish Council considered the terms and conditions and **RESOLVED** to agree them. In order for the Council to be able to take advantage of the funding, the Council **RESOLVED** to agree to apply to the Friends of Launton Parish Hall for the remainder of the funds. The Clerk would send the authorisation.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to ask the grass cutters – Calber – to add the Parish Hall grass cutting to the contract.

b. Management Decisions

i. Energy and Water Supply – to consider quotations

The Clerk had asked the broker Cardinal Energy for assistance with finding a supplier for the electricity for the Hall. The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to a contract with BG Lite for the day rate supply (standing charge 42.000 per day, estimated annual cost £724) and Opus Energy for the restricted hours off peak supply (standing charge 41.000 per day, estimated annual cost £2,580) on a rate fixed for 24 months. The estimated rates were based on the previous year's usage.

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

- c. Policy Development** – to consider policies necessary for the running of the Hall
The Clerk had developed a User Guide and Terms and Conditions of Hire together with a Key Holder Policy. The Council considered the policies and **RESOLVED** to agree to the Hiring Agreement (which included a user guide) and a Key Holder Policy.

Further policies required would include:

- Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment
- Fire Safety Risk Assessment
- Vulnerable persons protection policy
- Environmental Policy
- Lone Working Policy.

- d. Broadband Connection** – to receive a progress report
The Clerk had chased a new installation date with Gigaclear but was yet to receive a response.

13. Climate Emergency

- a. Report** – to receive a progress report
No additional progress had been made. The Chair of the Launton Environmental Society had asked for two items to be considered by the Council at a future meeting.

14. Village Matters

- a. Highway and Traffic Issues** – to receive a general update
- i. Speed Indicator Devices and Traffic management** – to receive a general update
Further to the agreement at the November meeting, concerns about the location of the SID had been raised. Councillors Thompson and Sanders had looked into the location in more detail and had suggested an alternative location which the Clerk had passed on to the County Highways Officer. The Clerk was awaiting a response.
- ii. Speedwatch** – to receive a progress report
No report had been received.
- b. Public Transport** – to receive an update
The Clerk had received reports of the number 17 Red Rose bus being unreliable and not coming through the village and had contacted the OCC Officer responsible for the bus routes. The Officer confirmed that if the bus did not appear, it should be reported to Red Rose with the date, time and direction of travel together with the location of the bus stop. An article had been published in *Launton Lines* and on social media.
- c. Defibrillator**
- i. Use** – to note that the defibrillator had been used and the pads had been replaced
The Council noted that the defibrillator had been used and that both sets of pads had been needed. New pads had been ordered and received. The defibrillator was taken out of commission while delivery of the pads was awaited, but was back in service within four days.
- ii. Additional Defibrillator** – to receive an update on the application
The application to the Department for Health and Social Care for the full funding of a new defibrillator had not been successful. However, London Hearts (the DHSC's partner organisation) had informed the Clerk that the matched funding of £750 had been successful.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to apply to London Hearts for the matched funding of £750 and to pay the Council's contribution.

The new defibrillator would be sited on the Parish Hall (position to be agreed). The agreement with London Hearts includes the requirement that the installation of the equipment should take place within four weeks of receipt and a photograph of the installed cabinet should be provided.

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

- iii. **Training** – to apply to the SCAS for Defibrillator Awareness training for the village and agree to pay a donation

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to the date of 27 January and to make a donation of £200 from the grants budget to the Community First Responder.

The WI were prepared to provide refreshments.

d. Village Upkeep

- i. **Weed Spraying** – to consider a quotation for the village weed control for 2024/25

The current contractor had been contacted about alternatives to the standard weed killer in order to consider the Parish Council's biodiversity impact.

The contractor had responded that the alternatives would be either burning the weeds or using a weed suppressant which would not be practical.

The Council therefore requested that the contractor provide a quotation for the current regime.

- 15. Correspondence** – to note correspondence received not otherwise on the agenda where decisions are not required

The Council **RESOLVED** to note the correspondence.

16. Attendance at Meetings and Reports from meetings / courses

- a. **CDC Parish Liaison Meeting** – 8 November (online)

Councillors Thompson and Turner and the Clerk attended the online meeting.

Councillor Barry Wood gave his usual overview of the District's work. CDC was currently preparing the balanced budget for 24/25. The proposals to move the offices from Bodicote House to Castle Quay in Banbury were under way and the current phase of the Local Plan consultation had been completed.

A presentation about the Village Hall Grant Scheme and the Rural England Prosperity Fund was given which was followed by a briefing by Emily Schofield (OCC) and Lucy Dalby (OALC) about the Oxfordshire Charter. Finally, Christina Cherry and Paul Seckington from Planning gave an update about the current status of the planning department and the Local Plan.

- b. **OALC Planning Training** – 13 November

Councillor Turner attended the training.

c. CDC Code of Conduct Training – 14 November

Councillors Sanders, Thompson and Turner, together with the Clerk, attended the training.

d. SLCC Managing Village Halls Webinar – 15 November

The Clerk attended the training which was very useful. It had helped to clarify a number of things of concern, but also made her realise that there was a great deal to do.

e. NALC / SLCC Martyn's Law Webinar – 16 November

Councillor Sanders and the Clerk attended the webinar about the draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill. The presentations by both NALC and SLCC were useful, but the Home Office was unable to include many of the things they would have said because it was on Zoom.

It was hoped that a General Election would not delay the Bill.

f. OALC / NALC Legal Briefing – 27 November

The Clerk attended the briefing which covered topics including funding to churches, the Building Safety Act, Subsidy Control Act, issues surrounding biodiversity and guidance on complying with the duty, the recording of council meetings and Martyn's Law.

g. Healthy Bicester Stakeholder Event – 6 March 2024 (10am – 1pm at John Paul II Centre)

The Council noted the event.

17. Reports

a. Chairman's Report

The Chairman had nothing further to report.

b. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that she would be attending the SLCC Staff Conference on 11/12 December.

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

a. Refuse collections over Christmas

Due to Boxing Day being on a Tuesday, the refuse collection for the village would be moved back to the Wednesday. A notice had been published on social media (with follow up reminders set), put on the Parish Council website and would be going out to the email list shortly.

19. Date of next meeting – Thursday 4 January 2024 at 7.30pm in Launton Parish Hall

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

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.....