LAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on **Thursday 2 May 2024** at 7.30pm in Launton School Hall

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

In attendance: The Clerk, Mrs Jane Olds; 8 members of the public (3 left 8.05pm)

Apologies: Mr Richard Walker

1. **To elect the Chairman for the year 2024/25**
   Councillor Briant proposed, and Councillor Thompson seconded the proposal, that Councillor Simon Turner be elected as Chairman. The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to elect Councillor Turner as Chairman.

   Councillor Turner signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. **To receive apologies for absence**
   The Council received Councillor Walker's apologies.

3. **To elect the Vice Chairman for the year 2024/25**
   Councillor Turner proposed, and Councillor Briant seconded the proposal, that Councillor Ed Sanders be elected as Vice Chairman. The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to elect Councillor Sanders as Vice Chairman.

   Councillor Sanders signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4. **Requests for Dispensations, Declarations of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality**
   Nothing was declared.

5. **To facilitate public participation with regard to items on the agenda**
   8 members of the public were in attendance. A number wished to raise their concerns regarding the licensing application for the Blue Camel (formerly the Blue Texel). The Council heard the concerns.

6. **East West Rail** – to receive a progress report from the EWR Liaison Officer
   No report had been received.

7. **Reports from District and County Councillors**
   Cllr Coton (CDC) was unable to attend.

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

8. **Minutes** – to confirm the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 4 April previously circulated
   The Council **RESOLVED** that the Minutes from the meeting on 4 April be accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

The Council had been made aware that there was a typographical error in the debit card transaction record in the 1 February Minutes. The Council **RESOLVED** to note that the figure should have been £95.88 not £85.88.

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

a. Policy Review
The Internal Financial Control Policy, the Risk Assessment and Reserves Policy had all been updated and published on the website.

b. New Bins
The Clerk had not had the opportunity to arrange the order of the bins.

10. Governance and Consultations

a. Policy Review – to review the policies

i. Scheme of Delegation
The Council considered the Scheme of Delegation and **RESOLVED** to agree to adopt it.

b. Parish Council Appointments – to consider Councillor representation for the following organisations

i. Island Pond Wood – to consider and agree the appointment
The Council **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Dowman to represent the Parish Council.

ii. Village Fete Committee – to consider and agree the appointment
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to defer the appointment until the Fete organisation was recommenced for 2025.

iii. Launton Communications Group – to consider and agree the appointment
The Council noted that Councillor Thompson had recently been appointed and would continue the appointment until May 2025.

c. Councillor Responsible for Internal Financial Control – to consider the appointment of the Councillor for Internal Financial Control
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to appoint Councillor Briant as Councillor responsible for Internal Financial Control.

d. Website Review – to receive a report from the Councillors about the website
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to defer the consideration. However, it was suggested that the website be indexed using Wayback Machine.

11. Finance

a. To receive the Year End Finance Report and Budget Monitoring Report
As at 16 April, the Accounts stood at:

Co-op Current Account	£41,240.95
Co-op Deposit Account	£42,700.15

Standing Orders		**Date Cleared**
Clerk's March salary (monthly)	£822.25	2/4/24
Launton Lines (monthly)	£170.00	4/4/24

Direct Debits		**Date Cleared**
O2 Mobile March contract	£7.00	21/3/24

Outstanding Payments		
O2 Mobile April contract	£7.61	

Income		**Date Cleared**
Precept	£25,796.00	10/4/24

The VAT reclaim of £1,174.99 for the period 1 April 2023 to 29 February 2024 was made on 23 April.

b. Bank Statement – to acknowledge scrutiny and acceptance of the previously circulated bank statement
The regular bank statement was reviewed and accepted.

c. Transfer to Deposit Account – to consider a transfer of funds from the Current Account to the Deposit Account to take advantage of the interest rate
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to leave £15,000 in the current account and transfer the remainder to the deposit account.

d. Castle Water Bills – to consider the appropriate method of payment for the regular bills
The Clerk informed the meeting that Castle Water's payment terms were 14 days which did not fit in with the Parish Council payment run.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to pay the bills by Direct Debit. The Clerk would arrange the forms.

e. Internal Financial Control – to receive a report from the Councillor responsible for Internal Financial Control
Councillor Briant reported that he inspected the books on Tuesday 30 April. A couple of errors in the manual transfers on figures had occurred in the Minutes which needed to be rectified. The Clerk should ensure that all debit card payments were included in the minutes. Attention to detail by the Councillors to ensure that all was correct was to be encouraged.

f. Zoom – to consider the subscription renewal
The Council noted that the subscription was due to increase to £129.90 from £119.90 and **RESOLVED** to agree to the subscription.

g. Banking – to consider the bank mandate and confirm signatories
The Council considered the mandate and confirmed that the current signatories were adequate.

h. Statement of Accounts – to consider and approve the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2024
The Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the statement of Accounts.

i. Assets List – to confirm the assets list for the year 2023/24 and set an appropriate minimum value of assets for the asset register
The Council **RESOLVED** to confirm the assets list for the year 2023/24 with the inclusion of the defibrillator and cabinet at the Parish Hall and the Sumup device.

The Council further **RESOLVED** to agree that the appropriate minimum value of assets purchased by the Parish Council for the register would be £100 with the proviso that other items, which were of value, but which had not been purchased by the Council, generally be included at a value of £1.

j. Internal Audit

i. To receive and review the report from the Internal Auditor
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to accept and receive the report. The Council noted the advice of the internal auditor to consider the page numbering of the minutes but **RESOLVED** to maintain the current arrangement.

The Council noted the comments regarding the additional responsibility for taking on the running of the Parish Hall and the need for a business plan.

ii. To consider the appointment of the Internal Auditor for 24/25
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to ask for quotations from independent Internal Auditors using the current terms of reference and to consider the appointment further at a future meeting.

k. AGAR Signature Redaction – to consider redaction of the signatures on the web version of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return to protect the signatories from 'specific and identifiable threats' of identity theft and GDPR concerns
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to redact the signatures on the web version of the AGAR acknowledging that this was against the Accounts and Audit Regulations, but that it was to protect the signatories from the specific and identifiable threats of identity theft. There was no issue with the full documents being viewed in person.

l. External Audit – to consider the 2023/24 AGAR for submission to the External Auditor

i. Section 1: Annual Governance Statement - to consider the questions and respond accordingly
The Clerk had circulated the questions prior to the meeting and the Chairman read them out for consideration. The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to all the Governance questions. The Chairman signed the form.

ii. Section 2: Accounting Statements - to consider and agree the accounting statement figures
The Clerk had provided the meeting with the figures which included the Asset Register. The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the Accounting Statements. The Clerk had signed the form prior to the meeting; the Chairman signed the form.

iii. Electors' Rights – to note the dates for the Notice of Public Rights
The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the dates for the Electors' Rights as Monday 3 June to Friday 12 July. The notice would be posted in accordance with the Regulations.

iv. **Statement of Variance** – to consider the draft Statement of Variance
The Council **RESOLVED** to agree the Statement of Variance.

m. **Insurance Renewal** – to consider and agree the renewal for 2024/25
The Council considered the insurance renewal. A quotation from an additional provider had been sought, but they were unable to give a competitive quotation.

The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to accept the quotation from Zurich of £1,072.72 which included the cover for the Hall.

n. **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 would authorise.

Payment Method	Payee and reason	Budget	Minute Ref	Net Payment	Payment inc VAT
Bank Transfer	Bates Wells for Completion of Lease of Parish Hall including SDLT submission and registration with the Land Registry (invoice no: 2240588)	Parish Hall Project	4/10/18 10. a. i.	£895.00	£1,045.00
Bank Transfer	Launton Over 60s Group for grant	Grants	4/4/24 10. i. i.	£165.00	£165.00
Bank Transfer	St Mary's PCC for Parish Hall rent as per Agreement for Lease	Parish Hall Rent	Agreement for Lease	£300.00	£300.00
Bank Transfer	Castle Water – April (Invoice no: 10001994653) Part payment	Parish Hall Utilities		£23.02	£25.19
Bank Transfer	HMRC NICS Employer Contribution March to April	HMRC / NI	Statutory	£8.87	£8.87
Bank Transfer	Zurich Municipal for insurance renewal (Invoice no: 532364503)	Insurance	5/5/24 11. m.	£1,072.72	£1,072.72
Bank Transfer	Calber Facilities Management Ltd for April grass cutting (invoice number CL471409)	Urban grass cutting	6/10/22 14.	£237.00	£284.40

The Council noted the Debit Card transactions.

Date Cleared	Payee and reason	Budget	Minute Ref	Net Payment	Payment inc VAT
10/4/23	NALC for Emerging Trends in Local Government Finance Webinar	Training	4/4/24 11. a.	£32.69	£39.22

12. 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 one place on the OALC Cyber Security and Awareness for Parish Councils course on 5 August at a cost of £25 and one place for Councillor Sanders on the Appraisals for Parish and Town Council Staff on 16 September at a cost of £30.

13. 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

Planning applications reference 24/00912/F and the additional licencing application regarding the Blue Camel were considered at the beginning of the meeting.

i. **Application Number: 24/00852/F**
Proposal: Proposed conversion of existing double garage to home office and hobby room
Location: 4 Wetland Drive, OX26 5AN
The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** that there were no comments or objections to the proposal.

ii. **Application Number: 24/00912/F**
Proposal: Erection of a garden building in front of the dwelling with a sliding door and composite decking on the front and a high-level vent window on a right side elevation. The one-room insulated building will measure 3.8 width, 3 m depth, and 2.5 m at the highest point.
Location: 4 The Glades, OX26 5ED
The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** to comment that while there was no objection to the proposal, it was understood that there was a developers' restrictive covenant in place regarding buildings in the front gardens of The Glades development, however it was not known whether this would be a material planning consideration. There was further concern that, given that the building was in a public sphere (rather than in a private back garden) what it would be used for and whether there would be any restrictions on that use.

iii. **Application Number: 24/00949/F**
Proposal: Siting of battery storage facility; substation for the connection of the BESS to the grid; ancillary equipment; security fencing; landscaping and vehicular access alterations.
Location: Land West of Bicester Road, Launton
The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** that there were no comments or objections to the proposal.

iv. **Application Number: 24/01044/DISC**
Proposal: Discharge of Conditions 7 (internal joinery details) and 8 (external joinery details) of 23/03548/LB
Location: Box Tree Farm, Station Road, OX26 5DX

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

v. **Application Number: 24/00770/F**
Proposal: Proposed building to garage vintage/collectable cars. Building to provide protection and storage, not maintenance or restoration.
Location: Ash Grove House, West End, OX26 5DF
The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** that there were no comments or objections to the proposal.

Received 29 April. The Council **RESOLVED** to consider the following applications:

vi. **Application Number: 24/01098/F**
Proposal: Single storey rear extension
Location: 1 Lanes End, OX26 5DU
The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** that there were no comments or objections to the proposal.

vii. **Application Number: 24/01099/F**
Proposal: New rear facing former window to replace current roof light
Location: Blenheim Barn, Blenheim Drive, OX26 5EA
The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** that there were no comments or objections to the proposal.

Additional Licensing application:

viii. **Applicant: Balasubramaniam Balaruban**
Proposal: Premises Licence to sell alcohol in an 'off sales' capacity at
Location: The Blue 'Camel' Farm Shop, 1 Station Road, OX26 5DS
The Council considered the application and **RESOLVED** to object to the proposal on the grounds of safety. There was no parking available or provided by the premises (unlike the Costcutter shop on Bicester Road) and the Council believed it would encourage illegal and dangerous parking, especially due to the situation of the shop on the corner of Bicester Road and Station Road. It was considered a historically dangerous corner and anything which might 'encourage' parking close to the junction should be avoided.

The Council **RESOLVED** to extend the meeting until 9.50pm

b. To note notices of decision

i. **Application Number: 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

Permission for development subject to conditions (17 April)

ii. **Application Number: 24/00414/F**

Proposal: Change of use to community coffee shop

Location: The Old Poolhouse, 59 West End, OX26 5DG

Permission for development subject to conditions (24 April)

iii. **Application Number: 24/00523/F**

Proposal: First storey extension over existing dining area (no increase in building footprint)

Location: Apple Cottage, 37 West End, OX26 5DF

Permission for development subject to conditions (26 April)

14. Parish Hall Project

a. **Management Committee** – to consider the membership of the Committee and appoint two Councillors
The Council noted Mr Rob Cornford's willingness to join the Committee and thanked him. The Clerk had put adverts on social media and in *Launton Lines*.

b. **Community Ownership Fund application** – to receive the Round 3 notification and consider further action
The Council noted the disappointing news that the application had been rejected and that Mr Deegan's view was that the application in its current form was not viable. The Council **RESOLVED** to agree to apply for a lesser amount and to re-write the business plan.

c. **Further financial advice from Parkinson Partnership** – to consider a quotation for further advice regarding VAT implications for taking on responsibility for the Hall
There was nothing further to report.

d. **Progress report** – to receive a report
There was nothing further to report.

15. Climate Emergency

a. **Report** – to receive a progress report
No further progress had been made.

16. Village Matters

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

i. **Bicester Road Resurfacing** – to receive a progress report
There was no further update, but it was in the schedule for the current financial year.

ii. **Speed Indicator Devices and Traffic management** – to receive a general update
The Clerk had received the instructions for operating the SIDs and downloading the data, but had not had the opportunity to set it up.

iii. **Blackthorn Road 'Gates'** – to receive a progress report
Following the agreement in April to pay OCC for the installation work, the Highways team had managed to secure some S106 funding which otherwise would not have been able to be used. The installation was undertaken without the need for payment by the Parish Council.

iv. **Speedwatch** – to receive a progress report
There were only three Speedwatch sessions in April, partly due to a shortage of volunteers following events in March, but also due to the continuous wet weather systems passing throughout the month. This resulted in less visibility of the roadside teams.

Unfortunately, there had been a slight increase in the observed speeds of vehicles passing through the village and the Speedwatch Co-ordinator had been told by a number of people that vehicles had been overtaking at excessive speed where the front vehicle was keeping to the 20 limit. It had also been noted that a significant number of drivers pass the SIDs in excess of 30mph coming in from Bicester and this would be a priority for the forthcoming Speedwatch sessions.

b. **Rural Verge Cutting** – to consider a quotation
The Council considered the quotation of no more than £270 per cut for two cuts which was in line with the OCC Grass Cutting Agreement and **RESOLVED** to accept it.

The first cut would take place shortly.

c. **Flooding in Village** – to receive a report
The Clerk had contacted Thames Water and was awaiting a response.

It was noted that the gullies on Station Road outside Sharpes Cottages were getting blocked. The Clerk would ask the OCC drainage team to clear them.

d. **Bus Shelter by The Bull** – to consider a solution for the renovation of the shelter
The Clerk informed the meeting that it had not been possible to source additional S106 Highways funding and that it would be necessary to seek quotations for renovation.

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

18. **Attendance at Meetings and Reports from meetings / courses**

a. **SLCC Oxfordshire Branch Meeting** – 17 April Farmoor Village Hall
The Clerk chaired the meeting. Parish Online sponsored the event and gave a helpful presentation about their mapping software and their .gov.uk website provision.

b. **NALC Finance Webinar** – emerging trends in local government finance – 24 April
The Clerk attended the webinar which focused on the need for local councils to hold reserves. Nothing was forthcoming about the new Financial Regulations which could have been considered an emerging trend.

c. **OALC Councillor Forum** – 14 May at 9.30am and 4 June at 12noon
The Clerk had been invited to attend the April session to discuss internal audit and internal control procedures.

The Council noted the dates of the forum meetings.

d. **CDC Parish Liaison Meeting** – 12 June (in person)
The Council noted the date.

e. **OALC AGM** – 1 July 7pm – County Hall and hybrid
The Council noted the date and that it would be a hybrid meeting. The Clerk would attend.

19. Reports

a. **Chairman's Report**
The Chairman had nothing further to report.

b. **Clerk's Report**
The Annual Parish Meeting and the year end had made the month particularly busy.

20. Items for information or next Agenda only – all items for the next agenda to be submitted to the Clerk by Thursday 17 April

a. **Grass Cutting**
The Clerk reported that she had reminded Calber that the grass clippings needed to be removed as part of the contract.

b. **Crossroads Fingerpost**
The Clerk reported that the fingerpost had been fixed and the fingers were no longer pointing in the same direction.

21. Date of next meeting – Thursday 6 June 2024 at 7.30pm in Launton Parish Hall

The meeting closed at 9.49pm.

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**……………………………………………….**