

# LEAFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

16 May 2018

Held in the Village Hall, Leaffield.

**Present:** Cllr Wright, Cllr Hitchman, Cllr Woods, Cllr King, Cllr Pearce

County Cllr Walker

3 members of the Public

**This meeting was recorded**

Minute Taker: Andy Crick, Acting Clerk to Leaffield Parish Council

Item No.	Subject
1.	Welcome & Apologies for Absence 8:40pm - Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Cllr Caunt Cllr Woods has resigned from the Parish Council
<b>2. Approval of the minutes of the ordinary parish council meeting held on 25 April 2018</b>	
	Minutes read out and approved
<b>3. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous annual parish meeting</b>	
	Car park

#### 4. Annual report of Leaffield Parish Council

	Cllr King:
	It has been a difficult year for the council. Cllr King was on leave due to a bereavement. They PC has also been one councillor down and another councillor stepped down. Thanks to Cllr Caunt for taking on the Chairmanship during Cllr King's absence. Cllr Caunt resigned as vice chair at the end of the year although he remains as councillor.
	The parish council has worked closely with the village hall committee to support plans for an extension. Plans include better access, more space, and the kitchen and toilets reconfigured. The parish council has agreed to provide funding for new fire doors, to be replaced shortly.
	The parish council has been working for over a year with the church on the new burial ground as the existing burial ground is now full and is to be closed. A new field was acquired and technical inspections have been required for architectural interest and environmental issues. A firm has been appointed and once reports are received the work can commence. At the moment the parish council is considering whether to take control of the existing churchyard. The parish council could take control of the existing burial ground if it feels able to do so but concerns exist over the surrounding wall and the very large trees in the churchyard. If the parish council feels unable to take control of the churchyard it may decide to pass control to WODC which may itself pass control to the county council. The parish council will still need to fund the maintenance of the churchyard: currently the church is responsible.
	Car Park: plans are taking much longer than planned due to inspection work. The base is clay and rock which makes drainage difficult. An adequate drainage solution is needed and options have been considered for the dispersal of any water within the grounds of the playing field. The cost has been quoted at £130,000 which will be repaid over 30 years, so the solution needs to be sustainable.
	<b>Community safety:</b> the parish council continues to monitor conditions in the village and works with police on areas of concern, including the now derelict technical centre. The parish council continues to have concerns over parking around the school, both during the day and at start and finish times. The parish council has tried to work with the school to find some solutions but none has been found. Councillors have done several speed checks in the village.

The parish council coordinates with the district and county councils so that issues in the village which are their responsibility are discussed. The parish council has a good working relationship with all district and county councillors.

**Grass cutting.** The parish council maintains the village: it is responsible for cutting the grass which belongs to the village. Verges belong to the county council and they are not cut as frequently as they used to be. Unless there is a safety issue the verges are now only cut once a year at the end of the growing seasons.

The parish council looks after Greens and the playing field. The grass used to be cut on a weekly basis but it is now cut fortnightly. This has been done as the planned opening of the new burial ground requires significant funding. The first cut this year was very delayed due to very wet conditions; this meant that it was very untidy. The second cut and strim has remedied this and it looks very good.

**Dog mess.** the village is plagued by this. The parish council has stencilled warnings on busy areas and put out bags for owners to pick up dog mess. A new dog poo bin was bought and placed on the playing field. This had to be funded privately as it is private land.

The parish council carries out monthly inspections and annual RoSPA inspections on the play equipment and makes repairs as needed. A 'painting day' is planned for 9 June: volunteers welcome. The parish council plants bulbs around the perimeter to make the playing field look pretty.

**Gym and pavilion** are currently out of use due to a flood in the cold weather. They remain closed but work is underway to resolve the problems caused, including electric checks, new floor, new tiles and a new kitchen. The work should be completed by the end of next week.

The parish council tries to help the county council with their pothole filling by reporting problems. It has been a very bad year for potholes due to the weather. Also, the routine maintenance of roads by the county is no longer taking place so roads are in a very bad way.

The parish council tries to help with conflicts when they arise and works impartially with villagers.

The parish council supports village celebrations and events. The main focus this year is the centenary of the end of WW1. The parish council has invited tenders to re-gild the lychgate and plans to install a red garden next to the smallpox cross which is intended to be in bloom all year round. There is a plan to cover the lychgate with knitted or crocheted poppies. The parish council also plans to apply for funding for the various planned activities.

The parish council tries to manage the village's money as responsibly as possible, with a November meeting to decide how much to ask for from the parish precept. The parish council tries to keep the precept as low as possible but it has been increasing in recent years to cover major projects.

A new bus was launched this year by West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT). The parish council contributed to this and the village now has a five day service which operates from early in the morning until the early evening, enabling people to use it for work. The bus is not as well used as it could be by villagers. Its launch was beset by problems with weather but the parish council continues to promote it.

**5. Report from the Neighbourhood Policing Team**

None received.

The parish council is still looking for a neighbourhood watch volunteer: the neighbourhood watch page is currently being maintained by a volunteer in Chipping Norton

**6. Report from the County and District Councillors**

**Cllr Walker.**

Busy year.

Potholes - one of the worst years ever. The problem is less about maintenance, more about drainage as water damages roads, especially when it freezes.

Cllr Walker mentioned a leaking pipe on Witney Lane which remains a problem. The county council has been in touch with the farm responsible to require them to remedy it. If they fail to do so the county council will take further action.

Parking at the school. This is a common problem across his division. The county council is working on walking routes, white lines and other solutions.

Fairspear Road would benefit from a visit from the 'dragon patcher' repair vehicle. Cllr King noted that more is needed. Cllr Walker said around £20,000 has been put aside for drainage on Fairspear Road.

**Cllr Hill** sent the following report:

This past year has not been without its frustrations with the Local Plan still awaiting final acceptance. However there is light at the end of the tunnel with hopefully a conclusive result within the very near future. The Inspector has agreed to preserve the AONB in the Burford, Charlbury, Woodstock corridor from having developments of houses in the area. This will prevent property developers from obtaining endless permission to build on protected land.

All six Oxfordshire Councils have approved the £215m Housing and Growth Deal over a five year period. This funding will support the delivery of around 100,000 new homes across Oxfordshire between 2011 and 2031 and infrastructure developments as outlined in each Council's Local Plan. The Deal will also be

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seen as a down payment for the county with more funding to come.

As expected with the end of the five year freeze, Council Tax in West Oxfordshire has increased by three percent from April meaning the average Band D household will pay £94.38, just £2.75 higher than last year. That compares to a 5.1% increase nationally. WODC still has the second lowest Council Tax in the country.

The partnership of shared services with Cotswold and Forest of Dean District Councils is saving around £2m a year with a further £1.5m worth of efficiencies predicted following the establishment of the local authority owned company Publica in 2017 which now embraces Ubico and the 20/20 partnership. The Council's revenue has also been boosted by the new 10-year leisure contract with GLL Better.

When the Council's budget was set it was revealed its financial position had improved by £447,000. Rises in investment income, additional funding from Rural Services Delivery Grant and an increase in the Council's retained share of business rates had contributed to this despite the reductions in central Government funding.

Tourism is booming across the Cotswolds. In West Oxfordshire alone 553,000 people stayed in the area while almost 3.7 million visited for the day spending more than £252m. Across the Cotswolds there were 22.5 million visitors generating £745.7m for the area's economy. Figures for 2016 compiled by South West Research Company Ltd also showed tourism was responsible for eight per cent of employment across the wider area, rising to nine per cent in West Oxfordshire.

Free car parking continues to be available throughout West Oxfordshire.

#### **7. Reports from Leaffield Community Groups and local organisations**

Guides. Jane Digby.

The Guides meet on Tuesdays in term time from 7-8.30pm.

There are currently 9 girls aged 10-14 attending Leaffield Guides -7 from the village and 2 others from Milton. We also have a young leader and an occasional helper. We have to rely on a parent rota for the meetings to run as there must be a minimum of 2 adults.

We love meeting in the Hall and having the playing field for outdoor activities- we are so lucky to have this arrangement.

We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Gym committee which we used for an activity weekend in the Peak District that we all very much enjoyed in March this year. Without the financial support the activity weekend would not have been affordable for all of the girls.

We continue to have a varied programme of activities including craft, music, sports, home skills, camps, voluntary and community service. Some of these activities count towards badges and awards. Recent activities include- a stall at last November's Christmas Fayre, December making gingerbread sculptures and carol singing around the village. January and February working on World Issues badge, and Mothers day craft, March planting seeds, April working in the allotment and this month tidying up the School garden. Next month some of the girls will be off to camp.

In February 3 of our leavers were awarded their Baden Powell Trefoil – the highest award possible for Guide age girls; we are very proud of their hard work and achievement. Since the Leaffield Guide unit restarted on September 2000 only one other girls has achieved this award.

Numbers have dropped significantly over the past eighteen months since Finstock opened a Guide unit (they currently have 15 members- however there are currently no Leaffield girls attending Finstock Guides). Finstock Brownies used to move up to Leaffield Guides but they are now more likely to stay at Finstock.

It would be wonderful to be able to reopen the Rainbow unit (girls aged 5-7) and a new Brownie unit (girls aged 7-10) in the village – especially as we have such a great hall space and outdoors to accommodate them. The only thing preventing this from happening is adult volunteers to run the units. Full training and support is given locally and nationally. People can volunteer for as little as one hour per week. Anyone interested in either volunteering or registering an interest in their daughter joining a unit should speak to me.

Village hall. Jane Digby.

The Hall has experienced another good year for income, spot hires, big events and one off hires remains healthy.

Income has exceeded expenditure overall. The POP up PUB events that we have run whilst the Fox has been closed have been well attended on the whole and generated good extra income towards the extension project. We plan to continue with monthly hall events on the first Friday of each month starting in June, so continue to local fundraising momentum The annual accounts will be available to view at our AGM on June 7<sup>th</sup>.

A major expense imminently on the horizon is the replacement of the three emergency exits from the main hall to the patio area. The committee agreed which contractor to appoint at the last meeting and the work should be carried out very soon over two days. A couple of the regular hirers could potentially be affected by this work, but we won't know until we know the dates.

The committee remains too small for all that is required to run what is effectively a small business. Many hands make light work and so, as always, we are keen to welcome new people to the committee whether they use the Hall or not.

I will be stepping down as chair at our AGM; after 10 years not only is it time for someone else to take the reins but also time and effort is needed to complete the extension project so I shall channel my energies into helping Joe Coulson to achieve the funding needed to build the Hall extension.

As a committee we are keen to encourage the use of the Hall for more village events and regular hires – particularly during the day on weekdays. Anyone wanting to start a group or with an idea is welcome to contact us and we will give whatever help we can to make it happen.

Village Hall new Extension:- Where we are up to and what needs to happen next.

The extension working party continues but, as with the Hall, is too small and needs people with specific expertise or roles to join this group. i.e. grant writing expertise, fund raising skills. And time.....

The Village consultation last year was very positive, the ideas and suggestions generated have been taken note of and we shall endeavour to include as many as possible in the final plan. Consultation will continue as the project develops and we promise to consult the village at every stage.

The proposed steering group has not yet convened; this is an urgent next step in the process. People have been contacted and some have agreed, a wider group is needed to make the group truly representative of the village. The plan is to invite people with specific expertise and representatives of village groups to join a steering group for the development phase. This is an all inclusive village project that requires wide community involvement to stand any chance of gaining the grants needed to make the extension a reality.

Funding: the Grant application to WODC under their Facilities Grant programme was submitted this April (after logistical issues for the September 2017 round prevented a submission). The Big lottery Fund is no longer an option as they have changed their criterion. An application is in process to the Garfield Weston anniversary fund- deadline June 30<sup>th</sup> decision October 2018. TOE are to be approached for funding the energy saving aspects of the new heating system. Web searches are conducted regularly and the Hall is signed up to grant funding alerts. All leads are followed up as we are always on the lookout for other appropriate sources of funding for this project.

We have the promise of some funding from the Parish Council which is a prerequisite of receiving any grant from WODC.

We also have several thousand pounds in reserves set aside specifically for the extension (however the new emergency exits will put a large dent in that fund) by way of showing that we are 'in the black', therefore a viable business and can contribute to the works.

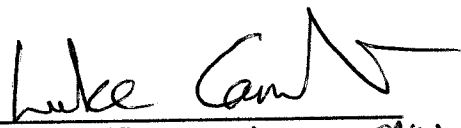
**We would encourage anyone interested to know more about the Hall affairs and extension plans to attend our AGM on Thursday June 7<sup>th</sup> at 8.15pm. Refreshments will be served in the lounge from 7.45.**

Plans for the new Extension will be on show, there will also be opportunity to discuss the plans and share ideas. EVERYONE is very welcome to attend.

We DO need more committee members; the roles that need filling are especially a Secretary, a PR person and someone to act as caretaker to manage the day to day running of the Hall affairs and a 'Handy person available to do the odd jobs as and when they arise. Currently the roles are all fulfilled by the chair, booking clerk and treasurer in addition to their substantive unpaid roles.

	The Village Fete is THIS SATURDAY MAY 12 <sup>th</sup> . And will be held at the hall and field in aid of the Church and Youth Club and will be accompanied by the Village Hall Beer Festival that will raise funds for the Hall extension project.
	Leafield What's On. Deborah Triff started a new, free monthly bulletin in April. The bulletin is intended to connect villagers to the 25 organisations in the village. It is published around the 15th of every month. Currently there are 189 subscribers: 174 receive it by e-mail and 15 get a hand-delivered paper copy. The first issue was sent out on 15 April 2018. In order to spread the word, every house was leafleted with information about how to subscribe. This included Fordwells, Langley, Fairspear and Field Assarts. Posters were also posted around the village and there are leaflets in the village hall and shop. The Forest Edge News has also advertised the bulletin along with the parish website and newsletter. Leafield What's On will continue to spread the word so that it reaches as many villagers as possible. Last month the Parish Council started their newsletter again so Gina Pearce, the editor of the newsletter, and Deborah Triff plan to meet monthly to coordinate their information and to share news. They plan to liaise and to coordinate information to encourage more people to get involved in village activities. Leafield What's On has received many thank you e-mails and positive comments from villagers, all of which have been gratefully received. Cllr King thanked DT for her work.
<b>8. Car park project update</b>	
	No update
9.	To invite the public to raise any matters of interest:  The Parish Meeting is an opportunity for parishioners on the Electoral Roll for Leafield to raise any matters of concern to them that relate to their local community. It would be helpful to have written notice of any matters to be raised but it is not essential.
	Cllr King reported that the youth club has reported a car coming into the car park on youth club nights. This has been raised with PCSOs.
	Cllr King mentioned that the PC is two councillors short. The PC should have 7 cllrs but currently only has 5. They are dealing with a lot of projects and they need support. People don't need to be full time: they could join sub-committees to deal with individual issues. New members would be welcome.
	A member of the public reported to the county councillor that most of the potholes are existing ones which were filled. Cllr Walker said they are being repaired based on priority.
	Cllr King was asked about the result of the speed camera tests in the village. The tests were done on the weekend and there was no one speeding. A test was done on Friday evening and everyone slowed down. Cllr Walker noted that the biggest problem tends to be local residents who know the roads. The the tests need at least three people to record all the information needed to report speeding to the police.
	Query over the parish website which doesn't include up to date information on the PC. The most recent minutes are from November. Cllr King will look into this.
	A resident mentioned the precept for Leafield as the village is the second highest behind Witney Town Council. Cllr King noted that the amount charged is to pay for significant expenditure such as the burial ground. One of the required reports for the burial ground cost the parish council £6,000. Cllr King noted that grass cutting costs £6,000 out of a total budget of c.£30,000.
	A resident mentioned the proposed cost of £130,000 for the car park and asked if that was everything. Cllr King confirmed that it was, including drainage, fencing, marking and decoration. So far the PC has had to pay more than £10,000 for the car park plans. The parish council is required to pay substantial annual emergency repairs for the car park given the condition it is in.
<b>10. Any Other Business</b>	
	Meeting closed at 22.01 hours

Signed (Chairman)

  
~~Julie King~~ LUKE CANT

Date

10/10/18