

LEAFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

held in The Pavilion at 8pm on Wednesday 20th May 2019

Those Present: Cllr Gina Pearce (Chaired the meeting), Cllr Juli King, Cllr Luke Caunt, Cllr Richard Hamilton

In attendance: Sharon Henley, Clerk/RFO, Kevin Ward, District Cllr Kieran Mullins (part of meeting)

Members of Public: 5

Annual Meeting Items

1. **Election of Chairman of the Council:** Councillor King initially chaired the meeting and announced her resignation from the Council with immediate effect after 16 years of service.
 - 1.1. **To elect the Chairman for the forthcoming year:** Cllr Pearce was nominated and elected.
 - 1.2. **Completion of Declaration of Acceptance of Office by Chairman:** Cllr Pearce completed the Declaration Form to be retained by the Clerk. She chaired the meeting from this point and thanked Councillor King for all her work for the Council over the years.
2. **Welcome & Apologies for Absence:** There were none.
3. **Completion of Declaration of Acceptance of Office by Elected Councillors:** Councillors Pearce, Caunt and Hamilton completed their forms to be retained by the Clerk.
4. **Co-Option of New Councillor Kevin Ward:** Councillors approved the co-option and Cllr Ward then completed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form.
5. **Election of Vice Chairman of the Council for the forthcoming year:** Councillor Caunt was elected to the post.
6. **Completion of Register of Members' Interests Forms by Councillors:** All councillors submitted their completed forms to the Clerk for onward transmission to the Returning Officer at WODC.
7. **Adoption of WODC Code of Conduct for Councillors:** The Code of Conduct was issued by the Returning Officer and was accepted by all members of the Council.

Ordinary Council Meeting Standing Items

8. **Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda:** Cllr Luke Caunt lives backing onto the Village Hall car park. Cllr Gina Pearce is Chairman of the Village Hall Committee.
9. **Approval of Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10th April 2019:** These had been re-circulated with an amendment to item 6 as requested by Deborah Triff. The amended version was approved.
10. **Matters Arising**
 - 10.1. The Annual Parish Meeting had been held on Wednesday 15th May with reports from several local community groups. Draft Minutes to be reviewed at the June meeting.
 - 10.2. The VAT Reclaim of £3,750.58 had been paid by the HMRC.
 - 10.3. Cllr Pearce had received confirmation from WODC that they currently maintained one closed churchyard within their area.
 - 10.4. The proposed public consultation about the burial ground on 3rd June had been postponed following a closed discussion meeting by Councillors and the Clerk.
 - 10.5. The draft Skip Policy was to be presented for approval at the June meeting.
11. **County & District Councillors' Reports:**
 - 11.1. Cllr Mullins arrived later in the meeting and reported after item 25. For the benefit of members of the public present who had not attended the previous week's Annual Parish Meeting he repeated his Annual Report.

11.2. Two members of the public were attending a meeting with Gigaclear to explore costs of the super-fast broadband deals. Cllr Pearce understood that, following installation of the new cabling and equipment it was expensive to get a connection from the road to individual's properties. Cllr Mullins offered to investigate that with Gigaclear.

11.3. Local election results had changed the make-up of the council. Cllr Mullins represents the Liberal Democrats and they now had 10 seats in the area.

11.4. Cllr Mullins had joined the sub-committee for lowlands planning.

11.5 A member of the public asked about village transport links. Cllr Mullins said that the Liberal Democrats were pushing for improvements but the County Council had other transport issues within their remit, particularly the proposed A40 eastbound bus lane and Park and Ride in Eynsham.

12. Opportunity for the Public to Speak:

The resident of Phillips Cottage, Chimney End, Alexa MacArthur, attended to discuss a letter sent to her from the Parish Council. The letter requested the removal of a flower bed, slabs and bins from outside her property.

The Chairman outlined the Council's concerns that this section of land formed part of the Village Green. In addition, the slabs made the area difficult to mow by the Council's contractor. Another member of the public maintained that a flower bed had been there for a long time and, according to other long-standing residents, this had been in place for around 60 years.

Councillors pointed out that the bins and sink in particular act to narrow the path outside the property. It was confirmed that it was registered Village Green land and the Parish Council hold the title deeds, so the resident did not own the land, which she was in agreement with.

After discussion it was agreed that the resident would remove the bins and sink. As a compromise the flower bed could remain in place and the slabs around the edge could remain as a temporary edging only. This was also agreed by the resident.

Caroline Bayliss attended to discuss land at Chimney End but it was agreed to confine discussion on this to item 26 on the agenda.

Policy & Finance

13. **Resolution to increase from Ten to Twelve Meetings per Year (to include August and December):** This was following a recommendation by the Clerk in order to better progress business throughout the year. Councillors approved this and the Clerk was to add two meeting dates and communicate them to councillors and on the website.

14. **Approval of Annual Memberships for Subscription Payments across the year as required:** The following membership subscriptions were approved and had already been included in this year's budget:

- 14.1. Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
- 14.2. Society of Local Council Clerks
- 14.3. Community First Oxfordshire
- 14.4. Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association

15. **Approval of Regular Standing Order & Direct Debit Payments:** This was to reduce financial administration at meetings. Amounts were variable and would be listed for approval each month:

15.1.	Clerk's Salary	Standing Order	Monthly	Existing Arrangement
15.2.	Nest Pension for the Clerk	Direct Debit	Monthly	Existing Arrangement
15.3.	Castle Water – Pavilion	Direct Debit	Monthly	New
15.4.	Clerk's Mobile Phone	Direct Debit	Monthly	New

16. **Removal of Jackie Hitchman (Retired Councillor) as Bank Signatory:** This was approved and the bank form completed.

17. Arrangements for Approval of Expenditure Items at Council meetings: Following the introduction of on-line banking the process was agreed: *'Two bank signatories to sign the schedule of payments agreed at each meeting with one of the two bank signatories who signed the schedule of payments approving the on-line BACs payment as set up by the Clerk/RFO'*.

18. S137 Expenditure (Section 137 Local Government Act): The Clerk reported on items of expenditure across the year which did not fall under any other Power to Spend but were permissible under S137.

18.1 Expenditure Limit for 2018-19: £7.86 per resident for 2018-19

18.2 Report on 2018-19 s137 Expenditure:

£150.00	St Michael & All Angels Church	Church Floodlights
£100.00	St Michael & All Angels Church	Church Clock
£100.00	Donation to local family	Travel expenses for hospital visits to family member
£350.00	Total	

The above were noted by councillors.

19. RFO's Report on End of Financial Year 2018-19 (to 31st March 2019):

Owing to a large number of projects there were several items of unplanned and unbudgeted expenditure during the year which necessitated funds being moved from General Reserves into the budget for the year. There were total receipts of £45,382.73 and total payments of £49,543.45 resulting in a net debit of £4,160.72.

The following unbudgeted amounts were noted:

- 1. Pension:** The new Clerk commenced a Pension in December in line with statutory employer's duties.
- 2. Village Hall Fire Doors:** The Council agreed to donate £6,676 towards the cost of upgrading the doors.
- 3. Play Area Repairs:** Several items of equipment required urgent repair resulting in a large expenditure totalling £4,332 following the annual risk assessment.
- 4. New Burial Ground:** The Council incurred very high costs by employing a contractor to survey and obtain planning permission for the new Burial Ground. The original budget for the year was £4,000 but actual spend was £11,581.

The Balance Brought Forward from 31st March 2018 was £60,549. The Balance Carried Forward at 31st March 2019 was £56,388. The Total Fixed Assets were valued at £322,256, a total increase of £486 for the addition and disposal of several small items.

The year's Precept was £41,706 meaning that the Council had approx. 135% of the annual precept amount in Reserves. This was discussed further at item 21. Councillors approved the RFO's report.

20. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)

20.1 Review and Approval of Annual Internal Audit Report 2018-19 signed by Phil Hood. This was approved.

20.2 Review and Completion of Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2018-19. The statements on the form were reviewed and responses were transcribed onto the form which was signed by the RFO and Chairman.

20.3 Approval of End of Year Bank Reconciliation. The RFO presented this document which was approved.

20.4 Review and Approval of Section 2 Accounting Statements 2018-19. The RFO presented the statements and these were approved. They were signed by the RFO and Chairman.

20.5 Review and Approval of Explanation of Significant Differences 2018-19 and 2017-18. The RFO presented this document which forms part of the AGAR return. The document was approved.

20.6 Confirmation of Dates for Period of the Exercise of Public Rights: The RFO confirmed that the signed AGAR and supporting documents would be submitted to the auditor Moore Stephens. The documents would be uploaded to the website following the meeting but the hard copy documents would be available 1st July-9th August 2019 owing to the RFO's availability. The RFO to display the statutory Notice of Conclusion of Annual Audit.

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21. **Review of Earmarked Reserves as per draft circulated**

21.1 Sufficiency of Funds Available: As reported by the RFO in item 19, there was approx. 135% of the annual precept available in Reserves. Councillors agreed that this was reasonable, although a high proportion was earmarked for various on-going projects.

21.2 Objectives of Earmarked Reserves: The RFO circulated a draft document in which a larger proportion of funds had been earmarked for the Burial Ground than previously and less for the Car Park. Grant money received from OALC was available for upgrading the website in line with new legal requirements. The RFO confirmed this was required by Sept 2020 and the money would be required for next year's budget. The RFO to source a quote for this work for consideration during the Budget round in November. The draft document was approved but the RFO to add the number of month's precept the General Reserves figure represents.

22. **Approval of Receipts and Payments for May**

Payee	Reason	Cheque No.	Payment inc VAT	Receipt	Power To Spend
Castle Water	Pavilion Water 1st - 30th April 19	BACs	£8.02		LGA 1972 s.133
McCracken & Son Ltd	Two cuts in April as per spec inv. 8953	BACs	£600.00		HA 1980 s.96, LG(MP)A 1976 s.19(3)
Reids Playground Maintenance Ltd	Fix skate ramp barrier with anti-tamper fixings and tap-weld following damage	BACs	£408.00		LG(MP)A 1976 s.19(3)
Gina Pearce	Reimbursement of first instalment of Emergency Payment to ERG Facilities for boarding up of Pavilion and Village Hall doors and windows following damage*	BACs	£340.00		LGA 1972 s.133
HMRC	PAYE Underpayment Mth 12	BACs	£343.26		LGA1972s.112(2)
O2	Mobile Phone Top-Up for Clerk	Debit Card	£20.00		LGA1972 s.111
The Train Line	Train Ticket Kingham-Reading for Clerk 23rd May	Debit Card	£22.10		LG(FP)A 1963s.5
Sharon Henley	Clerk's Salary 25th May	SO	Personal		LGA1972 s.112(2)
NEST Pension	Clerk's Pension May - contribution rate 3% employers and 5% employees	DD	Personal		LGA1972 s.112(2)
DL Hancock Ltd	Memorial Donations for Mr Peter Hitchman for bench to be placed in new burial ground.			£459.82	
HMRC	VAT Reclaim Oct 18 - Mar 19			£3,750.58	
Amazon	2 x XL Ink Cartridges and A4 paper	Debit Card	£38.15		LGA1972 s.111

The above receipts and payments were approved.

Recreation & Leisure

23. **Play Area & Defibrillators Report** – The Clerk reported on the monthly inspection and urgent remedial works:
- 23.1. The defibrillator at the Village Hall had the sticker torn off the cabinet. This had now been replaced.
 - 23.2. The skate park had the nuts and bolts on the retaining fencing deliberately loosened and replaced, resulting in the fencing falling on a skate park user. The fixings were tack welded to avoid future tampering at a total cost of £408.
 - 23.3. The Wicksteed Junior Multi-play had a broken chain which required replacement and this had been completed along with a loose bar and bolt on the toddler multi-play slide.
 - 23.4. The fencing on the far side of the old play area was previously mended on a temporary basis. A permanent fix was now urgent as the fence and gate posts continued to rot and were unsteady. The Clerk to chase McCrackens for a quote. The Clerk to purchase a metal chain and padlock for securing any equipment which needs to be taken out of service in the future.
24. **Village Hall Updates** –
- 24.1. Cllr Pearce thanked Committees members for working together and all those who had helped to clear up following the break in and criminal damage sustained to the Village Hall and Pavilion last Wednesday evening.
 - 24.2. The Clerk reported that the area behind the Pavilion and Village Hall was again overgrown meaning that the rear fire exits were virtually unuseable. A quote had been requested from McCrackens to trim and a more permanent solution to be sought in conjunction with the Village Hall extension project such as a gravel path.
 - 24.3. CCTV - a solution was still being sought to reinstate the equipment. The Clerk was sourcing a requote following feedback from Councillors. Cllr Pearce had discussed the CCTV with Thames Valley Police following the break-in and they made suggestions on a small system. Cllr Pearce to forward details to the Clerk. It was thought that a temporary solution could be installed prior to the Village Hall Extension Project which would necessitate any wiring installed at this stage to be moved following the extension being built.

Environment

25. **Chimney End Land Ownership: Agreement to use Wellers Hedleys Solicitors at an approx. cost of £510 plus VAT.** The Chairman closed the meeting to allow Caroline Bayliss to briefly outline the situation where some of her land at Chimney End had been registered as part of the Village Green in error. Following this, Cllr Pearce confirmed that it was unclear how the land had become incorrectly registered but the intention was to re-register the parts that did not belong to the Parish Council. Councillors agreed to use a solicitor to manage this process and that Wellers Hedleys specialised in working with parish councils.

A member of the public asked whether the blue plastic around the land in question could be removed. Caroline Bayliss confirmed this was to show the property boundary. Councillor Pearce confirmed that this request would need to be made direct to the land-owner as the plastic had not been put in place by the Council.

26. **Burial Ground - Review of Project Progress.** Cllr Pearce confirmed that the Council had requested quotes from CDS for developing a percentage of the new burial ground. The consultation had been postponed but the requirement to hold a consultation would need to be revisited. A resident had come forward to ask why the burial ground project was being given priority.

It was noted that the Forest Edge News had not confirmed the planned closure of Churchyard. Cllr Hamilton asked what alternatives there were to a new burial ground and Cllr Pearce confirm that there was some availability at local churchyards but that cemeteries in other areas don't have to accept applications from outside their area. There was no requirement for a parish council to provide a burial ground but the village voted for the Leafield PC to purchase the burial ground around 15 years ago.

Councillors discussed the fact that there were more people wanting non-religious ceremonies and the Council may be able to offer a package to include the Village Hall as part of the funeral arrangements. Natural burial grounds were popular as an alternative to cremation. Cllr Pearce outlined the situation to date in relation to the St Michael's Minute 30/2019

Church proposal to pass responsibility for the Churchyard maintenance to the PC when it was closed. WODC only look after one other closed churchyard in Bladon. Leafield has a large churchyard with retaining walls with no structure behind them which could be expensive to maintain.

27. **Churchyard – Agreement to Commission a Condition Survey by CDS:** – Approx cost £520 + VAT. Cllr Pearce stated that whether the Parish or District Council take over the Churchyard maintenance they have a right for it to be in a good condition prior to acceptance. The PCC have stated that it is in good condition but councillors would like further reassurance in order to know what financial and other liabilities could be involved.

The Parish Council had already agreed with the PCC that the next Quinquennial Survey of the Church would include additional detail on the condition of the Churchyard so this could be reviewed in conjunction with a survey from CDS. The Clerk was asked to request a copy of tree survey for the Churchyard for review. Cllr Pearce said there was an informal requirement for the PCC to give the Parish Council twelve months' notice prior to the three months' Notice of Closure. There was discussion around the timing of the proposed CDS survey. Cllr Pearce to check what notice the Parish Council was required to give the District Council if there was a request to pass the maintenance of the Churchyard to them. Councillors agreed that a Condition Survey should be commissioned but the timing was still to be confirmed.

28. **Gigaclear: Update on proposals for installation.** An updated Agreement was expected from the contractor following the Council's feedback but this had yet to be received. The Clerk to chase Gigaclear.

29. **Climate Change: Discussion on future actions.** Cllr Caunt outlined his concern for this subject and how it would affect local residents. It was agreed to add to the June agenda a resolution to declare a 'climate emergency' and create an action plan to create a carbon neutral village.

Planning

30. Planning Applications Received & Decision Notices

Received				
Ref	Address	Proposal	Deadline	Comments by LPC
19/00965/HHD	16 Fairspear Road	Erection of a single and two storey rear extension	Passed	No comments submitted
Decision Notices				
Ref	Address	Proposal	Decision	
19/00672/HHD	Windy Ridge The Green Leafield	Erection of single storey rear and side extension to link main house to existing garage/study	Approved	
19/00919/HHD	Stonelea, 71 Lower End, OX29 9QG	Erection of two storey rear and single storey front extensions	Withdrawn	
19/01134/HHD	Pinewood 89 Lower End Leafield	Erection of replacement shed.	Approved	

Councillors discussed their concerns with work being carried out on residents' trees without permission from the District Council. The Clerk was asked to enquire about how to get TPOs put on trees and the whole village was within the AONB so permission was required even if outside the Conservation Area.

Consultation & Communication

31. **Review of Correspondence Register:** The register was reviewed but all items had been covered.
32. **Any Other Business:** Cllr Ward commented that the land at the rear of Greenwich Lane had been used by temporary residents over the winter and asked whether this land had been considered for the burial ground. Councillors confirmed that this land was in private ownership and it was understood that the temporary residents had been there with the landowner's permission.

33. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 12th June at 8pm in the Pavilion

There being no further business the Meeting closed at 22.08 hours.

Signed: C Pearce Chairman

Date: 12 JUNE 2019