

LEAFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held as a Virtual Meeting at 8pm on Wednesday 8th April 2020

Those Present: Cllr Gina Pearce (Chairman), Cllrs Luke Caunt, Richard Hamilton (attended to 9pm), Jeremy Russ & Kevin Ward

In attendance: Sharon Henley, Clerk/RFO, County Cllr Liam Walker, District Cllr Kieran Mullins

Members of Public: Charlie Clews joined the meeting at 8.30pm to discuss the burial ground project at item 21.1.

1. **Welcome & Apologies for Absence:** None. It was agreed to bring items 19 (VE Day) and 22 (Grass Cutting Tender) forward on the agenda to ensure Cllr Hamilton was present to comment and vote on these items.

Ordinary Council Meeting Standing Items

2. **Declarations of Interest in items on the Agenda:** Cllrs Pearce and Russ declared an interest in TGC Horticulture who submitted a grass cutting tender.

3. **Approval of Draft Minutes:**

- 3.1. Ordinary Parish Council Meeting on 12th February 2020. Approved.
- 3.2. Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting on 23rd March 2020. Approved.

4. **Clerk's Report/Matters Arising:**

- 4.1. **Decisions taken under delegated powers, as agreed at 23rd March meeting:**

- 4.1.1. **Grass Cutting:** McCrackens had been asked to complete a one-off grass cut in the village to allow the open spaces to be kept in good condition for exercise and dog walking during the period of 'lock-down'. The contractors confirmed that they would practice social distancing by using separate vehicles.

- 4.1.2. **Gym Committee Rent:** The Committee asked for a 'rent holiday' whilst the Gym was shut in accordance with government instruction. This was agreed following Council consultation.

- 4.2. **Councillor Training:** Cllr Pearce had been booked onto the Chairmanship Skills course by OALC on 15th July, if courses were able to be run by July.

- 4.3. The Gym Committee donated £1,000 towards the car park project and this had been added to Earmarked Reserves. The Clerk was to thank the Committee again.

- 4.4. The Dog Waste Bins had become overfull recently as WODC had been struggling to with manpower to empty them during the current Covid-19 crisis. However, they had been emptied last week following a request from the Clerk.

- 4.5. Following reports from councillors and residents, the Clerk had reported fly tipping and perimeter fence damage at Leafield Technical Centre to the contact at WODC who deals with the Administrator for the site. There had been no updates but the Chairman noted that the perimeter fence had since been secured.

5. **County & District Councillors' Reports:**

- 5.1. County Cllr Liam Walker reported:

Covid-19 had taken over how the County Council were operating. All front line services were running but most buildings were now closed with staff working from home. Social care workers and the Highways team were still working and key workers were still running services. Deaths in Oxford had increased with lots of local cases. Council business was still progressing but some items were on hold as the County Council wished to lead by example with social distancing and not sharing vehicles. They had closed recycling sites and hoped this would not lead to an increase in fly tipping.

- 5.2. District Cllr Kieran Mullins reported:

Frontline services at the District Council were still operational, including the Planning Dept who were working on cases from home. An instance of fly tipping had been cleared along Witney Lane. Bin collections had been pushed back due to the Easter weekend so collections would now be on Wed 15th. He offered WODC's help

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to identify vulnerable residents who were shielding but it was understood that the church were already actively helping with this. The Chairman thanked Councillor Hamilton for his efforts to set up the volunteer group.

Councillors Walker and Mullins left the meeting following their reports.

6. Opportunity for the Public to Speak:

Policy & Finance

7. Approval of Receipts and Payments for April

| Payee | Reason | Payment Method | Payment inc VAT | Receipt | Power Spend | To |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|------|
| Ubico | Dog Waste Bin Emptying 1st Apr 19 - 31st Mar 20 | BACs | £97.69 | | Litter 1983 ss5-6 | Act |
| Wilsham Consulting | Village Hall Car Park Phase C Tender Assistance | BACs | £372.00 | | LGA s.133 | 1972 |
| OALC | Chairmanship Skills Training for G Pearce 15th July | BACs | £108.00 | | LGA s.111 | 1972 |
| Bitdefender | Clerk's Anti-Virus for Laptop Renewal | DD | £39.99 | | LGA s.111 | 1972 |
| Zoom | Video Conferencing Monthly Subs | DD | £14.39 | | LGA s.111 | 1972 |
| Sharon Henley | Clerk's Salary for April | Personal | | | LGA s.112(2) | 1972 |
| Local Govt Pension Scheme | Sharon Henley Clerk's Pension for April | | | | LGA s.112(2) | 1972 |
| HMRC | Sharon Henley Clerk's NI & Tax for April | | | | LGA s.112(2) | 1972 |
| Gym Committee | Car Park Project Donation | BACs | | £1,000.00 | | |

The above payments were all approved.

8. RFO Update:

8.1. Internal Audit: Owing to Covid-19 the Clerk/RFO was working with IAC on a paperless audit with a list of documents to be submitted by 17th April.

8.2. AGAR (End of Year Accounts) and External Audit: There had been statutory changes to requirements in response to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency. The regulations will move the statutory deadlines back by **2 months:**

- Accounts and AGAR to be approved and published by 31 August 2020 at the latest
- Public rights period to commence on or before 1 **September 2020.**
- Final audited accounts and external auditor report and certificate to be published by 30 November 2020

The Clerk/RFO was also working on draft End of Year figures to be submitted with the internal audit prior to Council approval.

9. Approval of Three Year Budget Estimates for 2020-21: The Clerk/RFO prepared this spreadsheet for submission with the DCLG loan application for the Burial Ground. This was previously distributed and reviewed by councillors at the meeting and showed a predicted decrease in budget 13% next year and an increase of 3% on that figure in the following two years. This was approved.

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- 10. Internal Controls – review and approval of checklist and additional controls required:** The Clerk/RFO met Cllr Russ during March to complete the list of checks. Cllr Russ confirmed that items checked had been satisfactory, apart from a couple of invoices which required a second councillor signature and that of the Clerk/RFO. Councillors approved this report.
- 11. DCLG Loan Application for the New Burial Ground:**
11.1 Review & Approval of Business Case: Councillors reviewed the document circulated by the Clerk and approved its submission as part of the DCLG loan application.
11.2 Resolution to apply to DCLG for borrowing approval for a loan of £40,000: The Clerk recirculated the breakdown of costs and funding available in Earmarked Reserves. Councillors approved the submission of the loan application.
- 12. Standing Orders March 2020 – review and approval of draft document:** Updated Standing Orders had been drafted and circulated using the updated NALC template in March 2020. These were approved.
- 13. Financial Regulations March 2020 – review and approval of draft document:** Updated Financial Regulations had been drafted and circulated using the updated NALC template in March 2020. The new document contained the same monetary authorities as the 2019 document but with slightly updated wording. The document was Approved.
- 14. Risk Assessment March 2020 – review and approval of draft document:** The Clerk circulated and updated draft document for review and this was Approved.

Cllr Hamilton left the meeting after this item, although items 19 and 22 had been brought forward on the agenda to include him.

- 15. Review of template Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Policy:** This document template was sent by the LGPS as a means of documenting the organisation's policy on pensions in the case of early retirement, ill health retirement, redundancy etc. The Clerk had circulated a draft LPC Policy which was reviewed and approved. The Clerk to ask Oxon LGPS to review to ensure its suitability and confirm back to Council.

Recreation & Leisure

- 16. Play Area Monthly Report:** The playgrounds had been closed on 24th March in line with government instructions on Covid-19. Signage had been placed at the entrances but had been removed and replaced with hazard tape also erected. Cllr Pearce had completed play area and defibrillator checks and there were no urgent items to report. Cllr Pearce noted that the playing fields and Greens looked much improved following the one-off grass cut by McCrackens that week.

Cllr Pearce had also checked the CCTV in the Village Hall and it was thought that the system was no longer recording. The Clerk to ask the CCTV contractor to attend site and advise.

- 17. Village Hall General Updates:** Cllr Pearce confirmed that two virtual Committee meetings had been held. The Hall was closed to all bookings until the end of May due to Covid-19 and they were not taking any new bookings for any time in the future at present. The website had been updated accordingly. Three one-off large bookings had to be postponed but it was hoped to rearrange. There was no perceived financial risk at present as funds were in the bank and running costs were going down with less heating and lighting being used.

The Cleaner had resigned and they would review the cleaning once Covid-19 restrictions were over. A Committee member was doing a deep clean whilst the Hall was closed. The Pre-School was having to open for 2 mornings a week Tues/Wed 9-12 for child of key worker and was running at a loss as two staff members were needed for one child.

The viability of the extension project had been discussed and it was hoped to go ahead on scaled-down basis with additional storage capacity and toilets with storage behind. It was hoped to link the Village Hall and Pavilion and have one set of toilets to service both buildings. The heating upgrade would still be part of project.

A volunteer from the village was helping with new plans which were more financially viable. It was hoped to incorporate storage for the PC with CCTV and wi-fi for whole building.

18. **Village Hall Car Park – Progress with Tender:** Cllr Caunt reported that the Tender had gone out and he awaited submissions in early May.
19. **VE Day Event & Grant:** The VE Day event had to be postponed due to Covid-19 and other events across the country were being postponed until VJ Day. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to WODC to ask whether the £375 grant could be held over to use for an event later in the year.

Environment

20. St Michael & All Angel’s Churchyard:

- 20.1. **Progress on Closure:** There had been a delay in the application being discussed by the Privy Council and it was understood that it would be at least June before the Council would be asked to take on the closed Churchyard. The Clerk to enquire about progress given current circumstances.
- 20.2. **Lych Gate Repairs:** A volunteer from the village had obtained a quote for repairs, totalling around £5,500 including VAT. The War Memorials Trust had confirmed that the Council could apply for a grant but additional quotes may be required as well as permission from Historic England for work to a listed structure. The Clerk to make further enquiries and report back.

21. New Burial Ground:

21.1 Progress on Project: The loan application would be submitted following approval earlier in the meeting. The creation of the new burial ground was viewed by the Council as essential work and the contractors involved had been informed of the Council’s wish to press on with the project. Initial site clearance of Phase 1 had been completed in order to comply with environmental restrictions and the contractor had been asked to pencil in June for commencement of the work.

21.2 Discussion on Project Management for Construction Phase: Local resident Charlie Clews joined the meeting to discuss the Council’s request for his assistance. It was agreed that he would help by monitoring work on site but CDS would be retained in their professional capacity. Charlie suggested being the first point of contact for site enquiries and would provide information for the website and other parish updates.

22. Grass Cutting

22.1 Agreement on Temporary Arrangements in accordance with Government Guidelines: As per the Clerk’s report, McCrackens had completed a one-off cut.

22.2 Review of Tender Submissions: The Clerk summarised the three submissions for the meeting.

22.3 Approval of Contractor for 2020: Cllrs Pearce and Russ had declared an interest in one contractor so did not participate in discussion or voting. The three remaining councillors unanimously agreed that McCrackens should be awarded the tenders on the strength of good value for money and previous experience of working with the Parish and providing a good service.

23. Planning

Planning Applications Received & Decision Notices

| Received | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------|
| Ref | Address | Proposal | Deadline |
| 20/00675/S73 | Roselyne 60 Lower End Leafield | Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of replacement dwelling (amended description and plans) | 28/04/2020 |
| Minute 20/2020 | | | |

LPC Comments:

The new application was for a larger property all round than previously. The Clerk to chase up a query to the Planning Officer about the reason for restrictions on the use of the garage. Following confirmation, comments to be submitted that the Council were satisfied with the revised plans subject to there being no vehicular access on the landowner's property to the rear of the proposed new property. There was also continued concern about the traffic access to the property from Lower End and the Council would ask that it was ensured that was minimised as much as possible.

Decision Notices

| Ref | Address | Proposal | Decision |
|--------------|---|---|----------|
| 20/00328/HHD | 15 Fairspear Road Leafield Witney | Alterations and erection of single storey front and rear extensions | Approved |
| 19/03284/LBC | Old George House The Green Leafield | Rebuild of three existing chimneys, Remedial works to existing porch and re glazing and remedial works to existing garden room. | Approved |
| 20/00428/HHD | 97A Lower End Leafield Witney Oxfordshire OX29 9QG | Erection of a detached carport and the construction of an outbuilding | Approved |

Consultation & Communication

24. **Review of Correspondence Register:** There were no outstanding items to discuss.

Transport & Highways**Ordinary Council Meeting Standing Items****25. Around the Village – Items to note or for future discussion**

- 23.1. Concern had been raised in the village about the drainage on the main Green which had clearly failed as it had not dried out and was very uneven. It was agreed to add this to the July or August agenda and the Clerk to ask Highways if there was a map available of drainage on the Greens.
- 23.2. The drainage ditches by Lower end chicane, near allotments were full and contractors had opened up a channel from the road and water drained from the ditch to the road. This was not thought to be a priority at this time but the Clerk was asked to contact Highways to discuss.

26. Date of Next Meeting:

- 25.1. The Clerk had cancelled the Annual Parish Meeting following advice that it was unlikely to be possible to hold this during the statutory timescales in 2020 and could not be held remotely as many attendees were invited.
- 25.2. The Ordinary Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday 13th May at 8pm was likely be held virtually but the agenda would confirm the details.
- 25.3. The Annual Meeting was scheduled for Wed 20th May and councillors agreed to also hold this meeting remotely if necessary.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.37 hours.

Signed: _____

Date: _____