

LANDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the LANDFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting held on 11th January 2023 Start time 7.15pm

Landford Village Hall (Blue Room)

Councillors present Nik Bishop NB (Chair) – Ken Parker KP (Vice Chair) – Mary Davies MD – Rob Bird RB – Nick Hall NH – Damien Swancott DS – Geff Hewson GH – John Bonney JB and Zoe Clewer ZC (Wiltshire Council).

Plus;

PC Peter Jung and 7 members of the public attended.

MINUTES

001/23 Apologies for absence

Cllr. Glen Keirl - Gemma Wilkes (Cycling Group)

002/ 23 Declarations of interest

None

003/23 Minutes

The minutes of the Parish Council's Meeting held on 14th December were approved.

004/23 Planning

- i) Applications received were considered. (see planning schedule)
- i) GREEN HILL FARM – an application for the discharge of Conditions 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 16 & 22 of planning permission (21/00928) was noted.

005/23 Finance

Precept

In the light of concerns expressed by a Parishioner for the size of the Precept for 2023/ 24 Councillor Bird provided an explanation.

The key points made were:-

- i) The events of the last 2 – 3 years ie. Covid, Fuel Crisis, spiralling inflation could not have been predicted.
- ii) LPC agreed to reduce the Precept from £51,000 in 20/21 to £40,000 to support the community during Covid and as we exited lockdown. This level of Precept was known not to be financially sustainable and is forecast to consume £22,000 of LPC reserves in 22/23.
- iii) The focus has been on maintaining and not increasing services in 23/24, hence minimal new projects for next 12 months apart from much needed Youth Club initiative.
- iv) LPC has a responsibility to maintain a minimum level of liquidity. The level of forecast reserves made it necessary to set the 23/24 Precept to cover LPC's expenditure (£65,000.)
- v) The LPC were expecting a minimum expenditure of £5,000 on rectification work to Landford and Nomansland play areas in 23/24 following recent RoSPA reports.
- vi) The budget assumes the Clerk / RFO roles will be split wef 1/1/23. A new Clerk is being recruited.
- vii) The 23.24 Precept includes a contingency of £4,000 to cover further unexpected maintenance costs, locum costs and inflation.

In response 2 Parishioners expressed their concern that:-

- i) The reduction in the Precept in 20/21 and 21/22 was a mistake when it resulted in the available funds being reduced so dramatically.
- ii) It was felt that if reducing the Precept in 20/21 and 21/22 was 'looking out' / 'caring' for the community, then increasing it dramatically in 23/24 was 'unkind'.
- iii) There should have been more openness / transparency regarding LPC finances.

In response to iii (above) it was pointed out that both the proposed Budget and Precept were identified as specific items in the last 3 agendas (October, November & December) and that the public were invited to attend and to comment and ask questions. No member of the public spoke at these meetings and no questions were raised.

Parish Clerk

Counsellor Bishop confirmed that the Parish Clerk had resigned as a result of several incidents of unpleasant and misinformed comments / insinuations about her hours and role. The Parish is a large and complex one with many issues to be dealt with; the Clerk has worked exceptionally hard in fulfilling her role. Counsellor Bishop confirmed what an asset the very highly qualified and professional Clerk had been and that replacing her would be very difficult. In the interim members of the LPC had stepped up to take on a range of roles and responsibilities; it was agreed that this would give Counsellors an insight into the nature of the job.

The outgoing Clerk will continue as RFO and decisions regarding the future will depend on the qualifications / expertise of applicants for the vacant position. The new Clerk would be paid according to the National Pay Scale.

Counsellor Bishop confirmed that she and the HR committee were entirely happy that the Clerk had been fulfilling her hours properly and that 'time sheets' were not required. When questioned about the need for an HR committee for 1 employee, NB confirmed that it was a legal requirement. However, for the single role of RFO timesheets would be produced.

The LPC asked if Parishioners wished to apply for the role or knew of potential Clerks to step forward.

006/23

Councillor Reports

NH - reported that the fallen tree across the footpath in Maybush Copse has been removed.

JB – i) asked whether a list of regularly used contractors could be produced. **NB** suggested that it should be in the outgoing Clerk's files.

ii) reported that the rubber matting beneath the Zip Wire on Landford Rec. was disappearing beneath the mud / grass. A small work party may be needed to remove topsoil and expose matting. **NH /JB** to inspect and formulate a plan

MD – The LPC will convene its second 'Affordable Housing Group' introductory meeting at the Nomansland Reading Room on 18/1/23 at 7.00pm

007/23

To receive a report from Councillor Zoe Clewer (Wiltshire Council)

- i) The WC Planning Portal has recently had an upgrade and guidance on its use has been circulated.
- ii) The MyWilts app continues to be promoted for the reporting of issues relating to Roads, flytipping etc.

- iii) Graham Axtell (Wiltshire Highways) has visited both New Rd. and Hamptworth Road to view problems of deteriorating road surfaces. He has determined that there are no 'priority defects' on New Road and the issues are of surface delamination; patching will be part of a long term plan. Hamptworth was identified as a 'priority defect' and the Parish Steward was aware.
- iv) ZC has met with the LPCP Cycling Group and will continue to support as best she can.
- v) ZC sent her apologies for not being able to attend the next Affordable Housing Group briefing.
- vi) Counsellor Clewer's e-mail on the above will be forwarded to the LPC.

008/23 To receive a report from the Cycling Group (Robin Nelson)

Robin Nelson, in the absence of Gemma Wilkes, spoke about the activities of the Cycling Group. Issues covered (and submitted to the LPC prior to the meeting) included:-

- i) Mission of the Cycling Group
- ii) Outreach – engagement with relevant authorities, neighbouring communities, local businesses etc. The Cycling Group has already met with Counsellor Clewer and Adam Vaisey re. developing a Cycling Infrastructure.
- iii) The translation of high level goals (UK Gov cycling strategy, WC, NFNPA, Forestry England etc.) into specific improvements in local cycling provision.
- iv) Mapping of cycle routes
- v) Community representation in Cycling UK meetings reference the New Forest initiative.
- vi) It was suggested that the Cycling Group set up its own website to promote its activities etc. and to link with the Landford Hub.
- vii) Governance – the PC recommended the Cycling Group should not be governed by the LPC itself (its autonomy being vital) but that it would formally request an update every six months to show its support of the Cycling Group's aims.
- viii) Members of the LPC were invited to join the Cycling Group if they were so inclined.

09/23 Correspondence, AOB, urgent matters

- i) The recent gift of £1000, in memory of Hilda Maud Judd and dedicated to the Nomansland Reading Room, was discussed. It was agreed that the LPC should plan how it could be best used; suggestions included a new carpet, outside lighting, Low cost internal LED lighting, a group of volunteers to repaint.

- ii) **PC Jung** reported the following incidents in the Parish:-
- 18/12/22 Stolen Ford Transit and vandalism in Avery's yard on New Road (12 company vehicles and 6 private cars).
 - 17/12/22 Handbag stolen from car outside the Lamb Inn.
 - 19/12/22 South Lane (Nomansland) attempted car theft.
 - 10/01/23 Theft of 4 wheels from Peugeot car.

PC Jung's replacement will be inducted over the coming months.

- iii) A member of the public asked whether there had been a spate of burnt out vehicles in the Parish in the light of a car dumped in Bramshaw Wood. PC Jung was not aware of any other recent incidents.
- iv) Surface Water Management – a question was raised about water on local roads. Who had responsibility for clearing gullies, grips, culverts, drains etc.?

010/23 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting for **Landford Parish Council** will be on **Wednesday 8th February 2023** at **7.15** in the **Nomansland Reading Room**.

Being no further business, NB closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

DRAFT MINUTES TO BE SIGNED AT THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.