

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE JUBILEE HALL ON 16th APRIL 2025

Present: Mrs Caroline Hjorth (Chair)
Mr Duncan Boulton (Vice Chair)
Mr John Poole
Mr Ray Hudson
Mrs Margaret Poole

Mrs Donna Evans (Clerk)

Also present was: 1 member of the public and parish councillor candidate Mrs Andrea Fawell
Apologies were received from: Cllr Georgina Heritage (SODC)

Item 1: MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None were received.

Item 2: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the parish council meeting held on 10th March 2025 were accepted as being a true record of proceedings by councillors and signed accordingly by the Chair.

Item 3: MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising that are not covered under other items.

Item 4: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SESSION

There was none.

Item 5: PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

- a) It was noted that confirmation had been received from Electoral services on 17th March 2025 and that no requests for an election had been called so the parish council could proceed with co-option.
- b) There had been a few candidates interested in the vacancy but only one application received. The councillors all noted that they had received the letter from Mrs Andrea Fawell who was also present at the meeting. Cllr Hjorth asked if she was still keen on the position and asked her if she wished to speak to the councillors. Mrs Fawell stated that she is interested in the position and keen to be able to be an active parish councillor, who can challenge and serve the local community. Cllr Hjorth was able to give an overview of the role of the parish council and how they support the parish. The councillors took a vote on the co-option of Mrs Andrea Fawell with a show of hands. This was proposed by Cllr Hjorth, seconded by Cllr Boulton and all parish councillors were in favour. Mrs Andrew Fawell signed the acceptance of office, along with the proper officer of the council and she joined the table to take part in the meeting.

Item 6: THAMES VALLEY POLICE

There was no police report.

Cllr Hjorth shared that she had received a road safety report from Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire regarding how many mobile fixed speed cameras had been around. She stated that she could share it with any councillors that wished to see it. Cllr Hudson asked to read it. They were in Postcombe on 15th and 16th April 2025.

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Cllr Margaret Poole shared that they had carried out a Speedwatch on Friday 11th April 2025. They had over 300 cars in 1.5 hours in one direction infringing the speed limit. Cllr Margaret Poole also stated that there is also a new member of the speedwatch team.

Item 7: DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

The council noted receipt of monthly reports from both Cllr Heritage (April). This report shared the announcement from the Haseley Brook ward, that South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse councils are the new owners of Haseley Trading Estate and, subject to planning, the site will be used as a long-term vehicle depot for waste and street cleaning fleet. She also shared news of the Everyone Active Grant that is available to Parish Councils. The update on the reorganisation of local councils introduced Ridgeway Council, which is a proposal to create a new council that reflects the make-up of our rural and market town identity and maintains local representation. An initial proposal has been submitted on behalf of West Berkshire Council and the district councils in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse for the creation of a new unitary council that would see the three areas combined. The move is in response to the government invitation following its announcement in December 2024 to end two-tier authorities like those in Oxfordshire. Cllr Heritage also noted the extent of fly tipping in her report and how from 1st April 2025 there are now stricter penalties for fly tipping which is part of a national crackdown on anti-social behaviour and illegal disposal of waste.

The council noted that they need to remain vigilant with this as it is an issue within the parish. Cllr Margaret Poole noted that in Postcombe they have noticed garden waste being tipped locally. They are monitoring this and reporting it as they see it. Cllr John Poole noted large items being tipped on the laybys in Postcombe, these were cleared quickly highlighting the importance of reporting things as soon as they are seen with photographs.

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There was no report from Cllr Van Mierlo but there was a letter asking for feedback for Thames Water however it was felt that there was responses needed as the items identified for comment were to do with sewage leaks, tankering and bills. Cllr Hjorth noted that she was going to respond to Cllr Van Mierlo with a parish council response around not wanting bills to increase. Cllr Boulton noted that Postcombe is completely self-serviced so there is no Thames Water remit to assist Postcombe.

Councillors also noted the work going on at the treatment works in Lewknor, this was confirmed by Cllr Hjorth that they were laying new pipework and installing a shower in case of contamination.

Item 8: END OF YEAR FINANCES 2024-25

- a) The council received, agreed and signed the Financial Statement for 2024/25
- b) The council received, agreed and signed the Payments, Receipts, Petty Cash, Clerk's Salary & Expenses, Outturn, Cashflow, CIL, NP and S137 spreadsheets for 2024/25
- c) The council received the Clerk's End of Year financial report.
- d) The council noted that the RFO had submitted a VAT reclaim for 2024/25 but this had not been received yet.
- e) The RFO told the council that she had submitted LPC's documentation for Internal Audit and had spoken with the Internal Auditor. The auditor's report is awaited.
- f) The council noted that the clerk's salary was paid on 12th April and covered the period from 4th March – 31st March 2025. This was approved by Cllr John Poole and Cllr Margaret Poole following discussion and agreement with Cllr Boulton as there were no other councillors available to make the payment approvals.
- g) The council noted that there would be a revised SOs for the Clerk's pay for the agreed salary increase from 1st April.

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Item 9: FINANCE

a) The council received and noted the budgetary control report for year to date from the RFO and noted that the RFO transferred £2,000 from LPC's savings to Treasurers account (on 11th March 2025).

b) The council noted approval of the following accounts:

Supplier	Detail	Amount	Accounting Code
i) Grapevine	Annual Allowance	£700.00	S.232 LGA 1972
ii) PetWasteSolutions	Dog bin emptying	£102.25	S.111 LGA 1972
iii) The Play Inspection Company	Playground Inspection	£222.00	CIL
iv) ONPA	Membership	£50.00	S.111 LGA 1972
v) Heat Industrial	Boiler Service	£708.00	S.111 LGA 1972
vi) Heat Industrial	Pressure Investigation	£126.00	S111 LGA 1972
vii) Heat Industrial (note d below)	Deposit for Pressure rectification work	£1536.00	S111 LGA 1972
viii) Oxfordshire Pension Fund	Pension cont. March	£150.79	S.112 (2) LGA 1972
ix) Lisa Armstrong	Lewknor Planters	£151.00	CIL
x) CLB Landscaping	Sand for Playground	£300.00	CIL
xi) Oxford County Council	Hill Road Steps	£1,800	CIL

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c) The council noted payments on the purchasing card in March/April:

i) McAfee AntiVirus £29.99

ii) Amazon Smoke Detectors £63.00

d) The council noted the repairs needed to the boiler in the Village Hall following the service in February 2025 and the subsequent invoices to be paid this month. These repairs will see a replacement system pressurisation unit installed. These costs are being met by the village hall account.

e) The council noted that all companies approached for renewal quotes have either come in higher than we currently pay or they have said they cannot quote as it would not match what is currently paid and advised we stay with our current provider. The councillors agreed that this seemed sensible and voted to proceed with another 3-year agreement with Community First. The council instructed the RFO to action this.

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f) The council noted receipt of the first half of LPC's precept for 2025/26. £6000 was transferred to the Business Savings Account, £3,500 was transferred to LPRG&H and £2000 was left in the treasurers account.

g) The council noted that the RFO has transferred its LPRG&H annual allowance and solar panel grant money to its LPRG&H acc - £3,500 + £6,100 = £9,600.

h) The council noted the ICO's annual fee of \$47 has been paid by direct debit. The fees did increase to £2 in September 2024 however as we pay by direct debit we receive a £5 reduction.

i) The council noted that the Clerk mobile phone account is in credit by £20 as we met all of the terms so there are no direct debits to be taken in March and April 2025

j) The RFO and Cllr Duncan Boulton discussed the need to move away from using a spreadsheet to manage the finances and use a financial software system, as there are concerns over only 1 councillor knowing how the spreadsheet works and poses room for error. Following discussions with other local councils the RFO and Cllr Boulton attended a demonstration with Scribe Accounts and presented this to councillors. The cost involved is an initial £398 and then £31 per month which can be paid by direct debit. The councillors had been sent the PPT presentation ahead of the meeting and all agreed that this was a sensible move forward for the council but did note that this had not been budgeted for this year so would need to be taken into consideration throughout the year. All councillors voted to move to this new software package and instructed the RFO to action this.

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k) The council discussed the S137 donations for 2025/26. The council have been approached by Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue, Age UK and Sobell & Katherine House Hospices recently. Cllr Margaret Poole discussed with the councillors that she thought supporting the food bank would be very welcomed as the cost of living crisis was impacting the parish. All councillors agreed they wanted to support locally where possible. It was agreed that the following organisations would be supported in 2025/26 the RFO will look at adding these to the payment schedule: Watlington Hospital Charitable Trust, TV & Chilterns Air Ambulance, Lewknor PCC, South Weston PCC, Marie Curie, Sharing Life Trust, Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue and Sobell & Katherine House Hospices. The council does also subscribe to Community First Oxfordshire, CPRE and Friends of the Ridgeway. DE

Item 10: PLANNING

a) The council noted the following new planning applications:

<p>i) P25/S0723/HH, for development work at the following location: 4 Hill Road Lewknor</p> <p>The application is for: New detached garage with ancillary accommodation and associated external landscaping.</p>	<p>End Consultation Period: 31st March 2025</p> <p>Target Decision Date: 2nd May 2025</p> <p>Comments submitted by LPC</p> <p>Cllr John Poole told councillors that this application has been re-submitted with a lower roof and velux windows instead of dormas. When changes are received by LPC the council agreed that Cllr John Poole could produce comments and these could be agreed outside the meeting so that no submission deadlines were missed.</p>
<p>ii) P25/S0700/DIS, for development work at the following location: Sheep Brook Cottage Nethercote Lane near Lewknor</p> <p>The application is for: Discharge of condition 3 (materials & finishes) and 7 (external lighting) on application P24/S2648/HH (Two storey side extension, the addition of dormer windows in the loft and internal alterations).</p>	<p>Target Decision Date: 29th April 2025</p> <p>This does not need a comment or response from LPC.</p>
<p>iii) P25/S1022/T28, for development work at the following location: S/O Mill Lane Cherry Tree Road Chinnor Kingston Blount</p> <p>The application is for: Regulation 5 Notice of Intention to Install Fixed Line Broadband Apparatus.</p>	<p>Target Decision Date: 28th April 2025</p> <p>This is a statutory notification</p>

b) The council noted the status of the following applications:

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i) APP/Q3115/W/24/3352135 on P24/S1542/FUL Lancing, 11A Weston Road, Lewknor Division of site. Construction of a new house and retention of existing bungalow	Decision awaited – it was noted that this is going to be longer as it is an appeal
ii) P25/S0116/N4B, for development work at the following location: Upper Copcourt Farm Thame Road Postcombe The application is for: Change of Use of agricultural barn to 3 bedroom dwellinghouse.	Application withdrawn on 25 th March 2025 however it was noted that this is within LPC's boundary
iii) <u>P24/S2648/HH</u> Sheep Brook Cottage Nethercote Lane Lewknor - The application s for discharge of conditions 3 (slab levels & materials), 4 (tree protection), 5 (CEMP), 6 (biodiversity enhancements), 7 (external lighting) & 8 (GCN licence) on application P24/S2648/HH (Two storey side extension, the addition of dormer windows in the loft and internal alterations).	Target Decision Dae: 31 st March 2025
iiii) P25/S0632/N4C, for development work at the following location: Poplars Farm Chalford Road Postcombe The application is for: Conversion and change of use of two barns from agricultural use to a storage/distribution Class B8 use.	Target Decision Date: 23 rd April 2025
iiiii) P25/S0633/N4C, for development work at the following location: Poplars Farm Chalford Road Postcombe The application is for: Change of use of an area of hardstanding within the curtilage of a barn to Class F2(c) for the provision of an open tennis court	Target Decision Date: 23 rd April 2025

- c) The council noted that there was no further development concerning the proposed solar farm.
d) The council noted that the newsletter from Rainier had been received throughout the parish and the deadline for responses had now passed (11th April 2025). The clerk has emailed Rainier for an update on this but has not heard anything further.

Item 10: HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

- a) The council noted that the Hill Road step handrails had been completed in March and local residents were very pleased with these. There was no update on the electricity cables, Cllr Hjorth would follow up on this.
b) The council noted there were not further updates from Traffic and Road Safety on 20mph signage and VAS. The clerk would follow up on this as these were needed in Salt Lane and South Weston
c) The council noted that there were no further updates on the Manor Close entrance but they would speak to the residents to see if they had heard anything from Paul Beeks
d) The council received confirmation from Cllr Hjorth that the Jubilee Hall driveway was being completed on 17th April and this was being paid for by the hall committee.
e) The council noted that the Tree officer from OCC had visited on 21st March and concluded the following:

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Hedge row, Manor farm, South Weston.	There is a bank with an overgrown hedge growing out of the top of it at this location. Highway records have confirmed that the top of the bank is the highway boundary and therefore any vegetation growing out of the side of the bank is falls under HMPE (Highway Maintained at Public Expense). This being the case I will raise works to have this vegetation cut back to the highway boundary.	
Yew Junction of Weston Road and High Street.	I inspected this tree, and I agree it does need cutting back from the property, I will raise works with one of our contractors to cut this tree back from the property by 1 meter. (This is the most the tree can be cut back without affecting its health detrimentally).	
Overgrown hedge row Manor close.	These trees are part of an historic field boundary and not HMPE. The highway boundary is the roadside edge of the ditch. You can see the field boundary prior to the housing development on Google Streetview (Apr 2011). This means that these trees are the responsibility of the adjacent landowners. The clerk confirmed that Manor Close residents have instructed a tree surgeon to carry out all the works required and this would be taking place next week. The new hedges will be arriving in November 2025 to plant on the Manor Close boundary and will be maintained by the residents.	

f) To note or discuss any other issues arising in the parish

- i) Cllr Margaret Poole asked if the tree officer could visit Box tree Lane to establish who is responsible for the conifer trees at the end of this road. The clerk will contact them to discuss.
- ii) Cllr Hjorth confirmed that the Highways Engagement team had been out and were undertaking work on Nethercote Lane to deal with the potholes.
- iii) Cllr John Poole noted that the weight restriction signs had been replaced on Salt Lane.
- iiii) The council discussed the Chalk Stream and the funding request from Chalgrove Parish Council to support the Natural Flood Management (NFM) project that they are currently working on with River Thame Conservation Trust. NFM includes soil and land management, river and floodplain management, woodland management, and run-off management, all of which directly affect us along the length of the Chalgrove Brook. Because NFM projects require funding, and NFM on only one part of the Brook will not be as effective as NFM along the entire length, the suggestion is that we discuss the matter with the Parish Councils along the entire route of the Chalgrove Brook to discuss whether it is possible to combine forces to fund a programme of NFM along the length of the Brook, and reduce the flood risk for all parishes. The Lewknor Brook flows into the Chalgrove Brook (classified as 'main river' by the EA), so is part of the River Thame catchment. The proposed scheme is intended to be catchment-wide, starting with the Chalgrove Brook tributary and all brooks/streams that connect to the Chalgrove Brook. Unless it is catchment-wide, there is a concern that it will not carry sufficient weight with all local landowners. Catchment-wide NFM will be a significant factor in preventing flood events further downstream. The council agreed to approach Savills about offering a donation towards this in the first instance.

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Item 12: CIL

- a) The council noted The Play Inspection Company had been instructed to carry out the inspections of the playground equipment in June. The council agreed to instructing Allen Landscaping to remove the a-frame on the playground prior to this (£220 +VAT).

Chair:

Date:.....

b) The council agreed that play safe bark was needed for the for the playground along with weed control membrane but the clerk would contact the CIL team regarding the remaining funds before this was purchased. It was agreed that should we need to purchase it before the end of April then the Clerk could do this.

c) The council noted the completion of handrails on Hill Road Steps and how good these would be for the local community. However, there was concerns over the conditions of the steps that they were looking into further.

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Item 13: Grants

a) The council received an update from Cllr Hjorth who has been working with the hall committee to explore the Centrica grant to help fund the second half of solar grant. A proposal for £12,200 has been requested to source the other half of the grant money and the battery that will ned needed.

b) The council noted the Everyone Active grant that opened on 1st April and Cllr Hjorth was going to look into this as there was a need to replace the basketball net and back board in the playground.

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Item 14: ANNUAL PARISH MEETING & ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

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a) The council discussed the annual meetings due to be held on 12th May 2025 and concluded that there was nothing key to add to this agenda but that the Watlington Road development would come up. It was agreed that councillors would discuss this over the coming weeks and Cllr Hjorth would prepare the end of year report. It was also noted the policy review needed to take place along with an update to the new financial regulations. The clerk would look into this and Cllr Boulton would support where needed.

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Item 15: FLOODING

a) The council noted the flood project funding Expressions of Interest - Oxfordshire County Council Priority Action flood projects 2025/6 needed to be sent by 18th April but it was agreed this wouldn't be done.

Item 16: CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

a) The council noted the clerk and Cllr Hjorth have instructed the family that the bench can be purchased and the location has been agreed. This is now with the family to purchase.

b) The council noted and email received from a resident of Barley Close about the bollards being put up on the steps. This was responded to by Cllr Hjorth but no further dialogue has been received.

b) The council noted the letter received regarding Race to the Stone event taking place in July. Information posted on Lewknor Parish Council website and sent to councillors.

c) The council noted that the clerk had received a response from Hall committee regarding summer event and this is not proceeding any further.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 12th May 2025 (7pm) Annual Parish Meeting (open to all residents) followed by Annual Parish Council Meeting

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Chair:

Date:.....