

MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting of North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) held on Thursday 8th December 2022 at 7:30pm in the North Leigh Youth Centre of North Leigh Memorial Hall

Councillors Present: Chairman Julie Minch (Chairman), Vice Chairman Robert Gunn (Vice Chairman), Councillors Susie Cusick (SC), Steve Ellis (SE), Kevin Swann (KS) and Sarah Veasey (SV)

In attendance: Clerk Allison Leigh (the Clerk)

164/22. Apologies for absence: Councillor Carol Frost (CF), District Councillor Harry St John (HSJ) and Liam Walker (County Councillor)

165/22. Declarations of interest: None

166/22. Minutes: The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 13th October were approved and signed. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 10th November 2022 were approved. The Clerk will bring them to the January meeting for signing. SV reported she has edits to the minutes of the Planning Committee held 2nd November 2022 which she will send to the Clerk.

167/22. Public Forum: No members of the public were in attendance.

168/22. District and County Councillor Reports:

West Oxfordshire District Council

HSJ sent a report. See Attachment 1.

Oxfordshire County Council

LW sent a statement on Botley West Solar Farm. See Attachment 2.

169/22: Election of Vice Chairman: SC proposed RG to be Vice Chairman. SV seconded this and RG accepted the role.

170/22: Declaration of Acceptance: The Clerk reported she has not received the Declaration of Acceptance forms from the District Council as of yet. She will follow up and bring them to the January meeting.

171/22. Finance Report:

- **2023/2024 budget:**
 - The Council reviewed the 2023/2024 budget. The Council would like to add in a new Parish Council laptop as the current one is 6 years old.
 - The Council agreed on a budget of £114,271.94.
- The Council agreed on a precept of £50,000.

- Payments authorised

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
11/10/2022	Neighbourhood Plan office supplies	Viking	117.43
15/10/2022	Neighbourhood Plan office supplies	Tesco	14.33
16/10/2022	Neighbourhood Plan office supplies	North Leigh Store	9.38
19/10/2022	Poppy wreath	Royal British Legion	23.98
20/10/2022	Paper	Appleton Community Shop	4.55
26/10/2022	Lloyds monthly fee	Lloyds Bank	3.00
31/12/2022	Clerk salary	Allison Leigh	586.54
08/12/2022	Adventure Playground Cleaning	WODC	145.76
08/12/2022	Cemetery bin management	Grundon	34.33
08/12/2022	Grass cutting - play area and Church Road seat	NPJ Green	264.00
08/12/2022	OALC Training	OALC	6.00
08/12/2022	Post of newsletter	Andy Clements	240.60
08/12/2022	Printing of Newsletter	The Flying Press	236.95
08/12/2022	Web hosting and WordPress updates	Dark White Digital	30.00
08/12/2022	Parish Online Subscription	Geosphere Ltd	120.00
08/12/2022	Room hire	North Leigh Youth Project	20.00
08/12/2022	Room hire	North Leigh Youth Project	25.00
08/12/2022	Room hire	North Leigh Youth Project	25.00
08/12/2022	Personnel services for a job evaluation	Personnel Advice & Solutions	120.00
08/12/2022	Clerk mileage and home allowance	Allison Leigh	53.00
08/12/2022	Library payment	Oxfordshire County Council	2,584.00
		Total	4,663.85

- Receipts since the last meeting

Date	Description	Supplier	Total
16/11/2022	Cemetery fees	Peter Wickson	35.00
22/11/2022	Cemetery fees	Greens Funeral services	500.00
22/11/2022	Cemetery fees	Cooperative Funeral Care	500.00
		Total	1,035.00

- The Clerk and AC will investigate the refund owed from the Post Office.
- SV reported she is looking into details about the Public Works Loan the Council has.
- The Council asked the Clerk to enquire as to the cost of the cleaning of the Adventure Playground.
- Savings account: JM will look into reasonable length of terms/rates with relatively ease of access.

172/22. Action items: The Council reviewed the status of action items.

The Council asked the Clerk to follow up with Oxfordshire County Council on the invoice for the bus stops.

173/22. Planning Applications:

<u>Planning number</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>NLPC Comments</u>
22/02740/FU	Land North of A4095 at E437664 N211817	Erection of a single storey dwelling with attached kennel, office and kitchen building along with construction of a kennel block all to be used in association with the existing dog training facility	<p>North Leigh Parish Council objects to this planning application.</p> <p>We note that the application is in the Parish of Hailey, although close to the boundary with North Leigh. North Leigh Parish Council has been invited by WODC to comment on this application but defers to any comments by Hailey Parish Council which may have more detailed information on the application than we have.</p> <p>We note that Mr Godfrey has much support for his longstanding successful dog training business and that he wishes to build a residence at the site of his existing dog training facilities. Whilst we welcome the expansion of this valuable local business, we are concerned about the location of the site of the proposed application. We are opposed to the construction of any newbuild residential building on a greenfield site in open countryside which would establish, in perpetuity, a residential site in a non-residential area and also set a dangerous precedent.</p> <p>We also note that this bridleway which has recently been restored and is well used and appreciated by the residents of North Leigh and others for walking, cycling and horse riding, will be impacted by the additional customer traffic generated by round the</p>

			clock residential dog kennels. It is a narrow track which gets very muddy in winter and these additional vehicles may prove to be a hazard for riders and walkers and also cyclists using the cycle track as visibility is limited in this area.
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- SV reported that the appeal for 44 Common Road has been allowed and planning permission has been granted.
- SV reported she had contacted AR Planning with regards to holding their event about the Land at New Yatt Road on a Sunday in January to include more residents. AR Planning has indicated they will not be able to do that and the meeting will be held on Tuesday, 24th January 2023.
- The Vice Chairman, SV and JSH went to the recent Thames Water event. The Vice Chairman reported that West Oxfordshire Against Sewage Pollution would like to do a session with North Leigh parish in early 2023.

174/22: Format of meetings: The Council would like to review the format of the meetings and would like to proceed with the following:

- Agenda items should only be those for decision or essential discussion
- Councillors should review the agenda and documents ahead of meetings
- Councillors should be concise in speaking in order to limit speaking time
- Discussions should be limited to agenda items
- The Council asked the Clerk to distribute the actions items as soon as possible after meetings.

175/22. Parish Councillor Vacancy: The Clerk reported she has not had any response to the advert for the PC vacancy. The Chairman asked the Clerk to refurbish the advert and see if it generates any interest.

176/22. Neighbourhood Plan: The Clerk reported she has had no response to correspondence sent regarding Committee members on the Neighbourhood Plan. The council asked the clerk to send another email, do a MailChimp and put something on the noticeboards.

SV will follow up with one of the interested parties.

177/22: Speedwatch

- **North Leigh Survey:** KS has worked on a survey of North Leigh. He will look to put maps in similar to that of Hailey
 - o The distribution of the survey was discussed. One possible method is Smart Survey.
- **New Yatt:** AC noted that it would be useful to wait for the results of Hailey's survey and then survey New Yatt residents.
- **Wilcote:** The issue was raised whether a survey should be done in Wilcote. There are 10 residents. The Council resolved to do a survey of Wilcote residents.
- **New Yatt speed signs:** AC reported that Hailey will be purchasing community speedwatch speed signs and asked if NLPC would purchase another sign at the North Leigh end of New Yatt. The Council resolved to purchase this.

178/22: Refurbishment of the Adventure Playground: The Council discussed that it is trying to establish whether to refurbish the Adventure Playground due to the possibility of the land being built on as well as the potential Rectory Homes development/MUGA.

The Adventure Playground Working Group will arrange meeting with scouts over the Christmas holidays.

179/22: Parking spot at Church Cottage: The Council discussed the request from the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for parking in the Turner Hall car park for Church Cottage. The Council does not believe it owns this space, but wouldn't wish to proceed with a space regardless. The Clerk will inform the PCC.

180/22: Library:

- AC reported there had been a Partnership Working Group meeting at the end of November along with the Friends of North Leigh Library. The Council discussed the working agreement with the library and is happy to commit through March 2024. The Council is happy to proceed with the invoice.
- The Friends of NL Library have recruited one or 2 more members. They are holding a warm space the 3rd Monday in the month, but the last one was not well attended.

181/22. Correspondence:

- The Council reviewed the correspondence since the last meeting.
- The Clerk will put a notice on the website regarding looking after neighbours during the cold weather.
- SC will respond to the Dark Skies survey.
- The Council asked the Clerk to invite the correspondent about Swifts to contact NL Facebook group

- The Council asked the Clerk to put the WODC warmth grant information on the website.
- KS reported he is interested in the courses being held by Breakthrough Communications.
- The Council would like to add an agenda item to January as to what information will go on the website.
- The Council resolved that the deadline for any correspondence to be considered at a meeting is by the Friday before the meeting once the agenda is published.

182/22. Matters for report: None.

183/22. Confidential item: The Council resolved to exclude the public from agenda item 184/22. The Clerk left the meeting at this stage.

184/22. Staff Salary:

- The Council resolved to adjust the clerk's salary to the NALC revised cost of living salary scale 2022/2023 together with the amount backdated from April.
- The Council also reviewed the Clerk's remuneration and working hours and have adjusted them based on an external review of the role.

Date and time of next meeting: The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday, 12th January 2023 at 7:30pm in the North Leigh Youth Centre of the Memorial Hall.

The meeting closed at 21:50.

Attachment 1

Report from District Councillor, Harry St John (unedited)

The 5 year housing land supply is assessed at 4.1 years so this means the tilting balance will favour applications if there are no other more weighty objections... so the appeal on 44 common road was granted consent by the Inspector in light of this as he did not consider the impact on the village was serious enough to refuse the application but he did not award costs as the appellant had claimed.

So we can probably expect a number of other applications of a speculative nature in the next 12 months after September next year the Council can revert to a more helpful formula on calculating housing land supply which will reduce the pressure.

If however the Rectory Homes application for 55 dwellings south of the bewley site were to be granted then that could help defeat other applications in our parish ...we will see. It is not on today's Lowlands agenda but might appear in Jan or Feb depending on how quickly the planning team deal with it and any outstanding information they have requested...

Bewley are arranging to put bollards on the pathway between Windmill Road and their site to prevent vehicles and hopefully motorbikes etc cutting thru to the A4095. I am glad to report the new children's play area there has now been opened for us.

the friends of North Leigh Common planted over 100 oak trees on Friday 25th Nov with stakes cut last winter from the common used to secure the recycled tree guards donated by Blenheim estate and I have registered the planting on the Platinum Jubilee Green Canopy website - in memory of our late Queen. I had collected the acorns two years ago and planted them out and grew them on in pots as saplings. We will see how many survive !

There was another "water day" run by WODC with Thames Water in November and out of that we are hoping to have a zoom meeting with the relevant members of the systems managers and a site meeting to discuss the problems we have been having over the last five years or so.... in an attempt to get them to commit to some improvement/upgrades and to learn what they are going to do about the STW capacity at Church Hanborough which serves our system.

TW have promised a schedule of the incidents in NL that have happened over the last 5 years or so - sewage blockages/bursts / surcharging etc and water main bursts. I am chasing this up.

There are discussions afoot about reviewing the waste collection system that WODC run - the current arrangements are being reviewed with climate change in mind and in due course residents will no doubt be asked to give their views on

a shortlist of alternative options- watch this space...the current contract expires in 2024 so we need to plan ahead.

I have reported on FMS two culvert problems on New yatt road at/near junctions with Church road and Bridewell Close where water surcharges out of gully grid and then runs down hill - potential damage to road and in icy conditions dangerous hazard... also about 200 metres of NYR needs complete rebuild/recamber /resurface west of the Masons Grove trun where edge of road is badly deformed and potholes/depressions are really bad especially for bikes/motorbikes and cars on sharp bends- forcing people out on those corners...

I am going to an Oxford airport liaison meeting tomorrow evening and will relay anything I glean before Thursday.

Attachment 2

Oxfordshire County Council (unedited)

Over the past few months, a number of residents have contacted me about the proposed Botley West Solar Farm and the impact this will have on our local area.

The main section of this proposal will mean large sections of West Oxfordshire farmland near Long Hanborough, Bladon, Begbroke, Tackley, Wootton, Bladon, Woodstock, Church Hanborough, Eynsham and Cassington covered in solar panels.

I recently sat down with the Chief Executive of Blenheim Palace to hear first-hand from them about these plans, as the main contributing landowner, and I attended one of the community drop in sessions held by Photovolt Development Partners to discuss this proposal with local residents and the project team. Since news of the plans were revealed I've been conducting an online survey asking for resident views on the proposal and 70% of those who responded were not in favour of the plans, 21% were somewhat in favour but had concerns and only 9% were in favour of this solar farm.

Whilst I welcome the push from Blenheim Palace and other land owners to increase the amount of electricity generated from renewable energy into the national grid, I cannot in good faith support this solar farm and I have serious concerns about the size and scale of this proposal.

Like many people, I understand and accept that the UK needs to increase renewable energy, the current war in Ukraine has highlighted just how sensitive our energy market has become, but I don't see how removing farmland can be justified in achieving this goal. I also believe that rather than using fields for solar farms we should be using existing buildings to install solar systems. As a major local housebuilding provider, Blenheim Palace have the resources to install solar panels on all their new homes, a point I pressed when I met with their Chief Executive.

The proposal for the Botley West Solar Farm in my view has no benefit to the local community that it will be impacting other than the promise of better walking routes and the possibility of green infrastructure.

The decision on whether this proposal goes ahead will be a matter for the government and when that moment comes, I will do all I can to make the case that massive solar farms are not the way forward and the government should promote schemes that will be acceptable to local communities.

Cllr Liam Walker

County Councillor
Hanborough & Minster Lovell Division