

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) held on Thursday 9th May 2024 at 7:30pm in the Turner Hall, Church Road, North Leigh

Councillors Present: Andy Clements (Chair), Councillors Malcolm Shead (MS), Julie Minch (JM), Sarah Veasey (SV), Kevin Swann (KS), Fran Jeffes (FJ) and Robert Gunn (RG)

In attendance: Allison Leigh, Clerk, County Councillor Liam Walker, District Councillor Sarah Veasey

13/24. Election of Chair: JM nominated Andy Clements and SV seconded. The Council resolved to elected Andy Clements as Chair.

14/24. Election of Vice Chair (should the Council have one): The Council resolved not to have a Vice Chair.

15/24. Co-option for Casual Vacancies: The Council resolved to co-opt Robert Gunn onto the Parish Council. One vacancy remains.

16/24. Signing of Declaration of Acceptance forms: The Chair and Councillors MS, JM, SV, KS and FJ signed the Declaration of Acceptance forms. The Council resolved to have sign their Declaration of Acceptance forms at the June meeting RG and CF at the next meeting

17/24. Apologies for absence: The Council noted apologies from Carol Frost.

18/24. Declarations of interest: None.

19/24. Minutes of the following meetings: The minutes of the following meetings were approved and signed:

- Parish Council meeting of the 11th of April 2024
- Planning Committee meeting of the 19th of March 2024
- Staffing Committee meeting of the 18th of April 2024

20/24. Public Forum: No members of the public were present.

21/24. Reports from the County Councillor and District Councillor:

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

The County Councillor welcomed Sarah Veasey as District Councillor.

The County Councillor noted he would like to be a part of the meeting with Estelle Manor and the meeting regarding the Children's Playground lease.

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

The District Councillor reported she has been elected to the post as of Tuesday the 7th of May 2024. She has spoken to over 600 residents of North Leigh Parish and among the issues raised are:

- Estelle Manor
- Parking
- Adventure Playground refurbishment
- Thames Water
- WODC Local Plan 2041

22/24. Review and adoption of the following Council policies with no change:

The Council resolved to adopt the following Council policies with no change.

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Code of Conduct
- Document Retention Policy
- Equality Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Cemetery Regulations
- Cemetery Fees
- Terms of Reference for Planning Committee
- Terms of Reference for Neighbourhood Plan Committee
- Vacancy Procedure and Co-option Application Form
- Internal Financial Controls Policy and Checklist
- Councillors' Expense Policy
- Civility and Respect Pledge
- Communication Policy
- Publication Scheme

- Request for Information Policy
- Scheme of Delegation

23/24. Risk Assessment and Risk Management Policy: The Council resolved to adopt the Risk Management Policy. The Council is happy with the Risk Assessment with minor edits.

24/24. Donation/Grant Policy and Application Form:

- Donation/Grant Policy: The Council agreed with a change to the policy with wording to be written by KS and agreed at the June meeting.
- Grant/Donation Application Form: The Council resolved to adopt the Grant/Donation Application Form with no changes.

25/24. Asset Register: The Council resolved to accept the Asset Register.

26/24. Councillor Roles and Working Groups

- The Council agreed the Councillor Roles and Working Groups (see Attachment 1).
- The Council resolved to co-opt FJ as a member of the Staffing Committee.
- The Council resolved to co-opt RG as a member of the Planning Committee.
- The Council resolved to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee with minor edits.

27/24. Bank signatories: The Council confirmed the bank signatories as Chair Andy Clements, KS, MS and RB.

28/24. Meeting dates: The Council resolved the meeting schedule as the second Thursday of the month at 7:30pm with no regular meeting being held in August.

29/24. General Power of Competence:

- The Council noted it meets conditions of eligibility for General Powers of Competence, that being more than 2/3 of Councillors were elected, and the Proper Officer of the Council holds the CiLCA qualification.
- The Council resolved from 9th May 2024 until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council (May 2028), that having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and SI 965 The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, to adopt the General Power of Competence.

30/24. Leases:

Children's Playground

The Clerk reported that she is working with OCC to set up a call with regards to the Children's Playground.

Adventure Playground

The Clerk reported she had received an email from WODC stating that they would be sending the lease.

MS noted it might be wise to have a consultation of residents as to their thoughts on the land in conjunction with sorting the lease. The Council discussed meeting with village organisations for their thoughts. The Council resolved to establish a list of village organisations to visit and a list of questions for those organisations,

31/24. Action items and Clerk's Report:

- JM reported that she and MS has looked at the zip wire at the Children's Playground. It will need work but is not dangerous at the moment. They will be keeping an eye on it.
- JM reported that Proludic has sorted the issue with the wet pour at the Children's Playground.

32/24: Finance:

- **Payments and receipts:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Net</u>	<u>VAT</u>	<u>Total</u>
11/04/2024	Pension contribution	NEST	68.83	0.00	68.83
02/04/2024	Loan payment	PWLB	2,276.25	0.00	2,276.25
09/04/2024	Mailchimp	Mailchimp	25.13	0.00	25.13
09/04/2024	Training course	National Assoc. Local Councils	32.68	6.54	39.22
09/04/2024	Paper	Tesco	3.96	0.79	4.75
09/04/2024	Council mobile phone	Lebara	6.95	0.00	6.95
09/04/2024	Lloyds monthly	Lloyds Bank	3.00	0.00	3.00

	fee				
11/04/2024	SLCC membership	Society of Local Council Clerks	95.20	0.00	95.20
29/04/2024	NP Grant	Groundwork UK R/C	388.49	0.00	388.49
09/05/2024	ICCM Membership	Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management	100.00	0.00	100.00
09/05/2024	Library payment	OCC	3,148.00	0.00	3,148.00
09/05/2024	Notice Boards	Greenbarnes Ltd	1,588.81	317.76	1,906.57
09/05/2024	Training course	OALC	40.00	8.00	48.00
09/05/2024	Web hosting and WordPress updates	Dark White Digital	35.00	0.00	35.00
09/05/2024	Clerk mileage and home allowance	Allison Leigh	44.00	0.00	44.00
31/05/2024	Clerk salary	Allison Leigh	1,113.70	0.00	1,113.70
09/05/2024	Cemetery mapping	Pear Technology	90.00	18.00	108.00
09/05/2024	Cemetery bin management	Grundon	54.55	10.91	65.46
09/05/2024	NP Meeting Room Hire	North Leigh War Memorial Hall	36.30	0.00	36.30
09/05/2024	Room hire	North Leigh War Memorial Hall	12.00	0.00	12.00
Total			9,162.85	362.00	9,524.85

- **Statement of Accounts 2023/2024:** The Council acknowledged and accepted the statement of accounts for 2023/2024.

- **Insurance quotes and review of cover:** The Council resolved to proceed with Clear Councils provided they can confirm that the speed indicator devices are insured for damage and theft. If they cannot confirm this, the Council would like to proceed with Zurich.
- **Training:**
 - No courses were noted, but the Chair asked Councillors to advise the Clerk of any courses that arise.
 - The Chair will attend the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils Councillor Forum in June.
- **S106 funds:**
 - The Council noted it has received an email from a resident with a suggestion for a village map.
 - The Council considered the proposals sent by MS and KS for S106 expenditure:
 - The Council resolved for MS to obtain quotes for a parish map in East End, Wilcote and two in North Leigh.
 - The Council resolved for MS to obtain quotes for a metal signpost across from the Masons Arms.
- **Donation requests:**
 - **North Leigh Youth Project:** The Council resolved not to donate to the Youth Project at this time due to the level of reserves held. The Council would be happy to review this should their financial position change.
 - **Enrych:** The Council resolved not to donate to Enrych at this time.

33/24: Planning Applications:

- **New planning applications for consideration:**
 - 24/00836/HHD
2 Woodman Cottages
New Yatt Road, North Leigh
Comments due: 10/5/24
North Leigh Parish Council has no comments on this planning application.

- Manor Oak Appeal: The Council resolved to have attendance of the Parish Council at the Manor Oak appeal on the 27th of June 2024.
- **Planning responses from previous meetings:** The Parish Council has commented on the below:
 - RWE: See Attachment 2
 - North Witney: 24/00482/OUT: See Attachment 3
 - Football Club: 24/00596/S73: See Attachment 4
 - The previous District Councillor escalated this to the Lowlands Planning Committee.

34/24: Committees: The Council considered reports from the following committees:

- Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Committee: The NP Committee submitted a report. See Attachment 5
- Planning committee: SV noted the Parish Council has not yet been asked to comment on the proposed allocated sites for the WODC 2041 Local Plan.

35/24: Correspondence:

- The Council reviewed the correspondence since the last meeting
 - The Clerk noted that she is in touch with SSE regarding the works done on Common Road and making them good.
 - The Clerk noted she has had 2 emails regarding broken bridges on footpath bridges and has reported them to the Countryside Access Officer.

36/24. Matters for report:

- JM would like to request for the position of the dog waste bins on Park Road/Corner of Windmill Road to be changed. It was noted there isn't one by new estate off of Windmill Road.
- MS reported that the road works on Green Lane on potholes were done following his reporting them as a Fix My Street superuser.
- RG would like a discussion around a new dog waste bin in East End on the June agenda.

Date and time of next meeting: The Council agreed the next meeting as the 6th of June 2024.

37/24: Confidential item: The Council resolved to exclude members of the public from agenda item 38/25.

38/25: Staffing Committee:

- The Staffing Committee suggested, and the Council resolved the Clerk's working hours remain at 18 with scope to review if needed.
- The Council resolved for the Clerk's remuneration following the gaining of the CiLCA qualification to increase to SCP 26, back dated to date of receipt of CiLCA qualification.

The deadline for items for the June agenda is the 23rd of May 2024.

The meeting closed at 9:35PM

Attachment 1

Councillor Working Groups and Responsibilities

Role	Councillor	No Mow May
Chair of Parish Council	Andy Clements	
Cemetery grounds inspection to include grass, trees, benches and noticeboard	Clerk/Andy Clements	
Cemetery layout, maintenance, burials	Clerk /Andy Clements	
Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)	Kevin Swann	
Speedwatch equipment	Andy Clements	
Speedwatch	Andy Clements	
Adventure Playground inspection	Malcolm Shead	
School Playground inspection	Malcolm Shead	
Library	Julie Minch	
North Leigh Youth Project	Kevin Swann	
Inspection of finance control	Julie Minch	
Grass at Cemetery and Churchyard	Andy Clements	X
Grass at the Children's Playground	Malcolm Shead	
Grass at the Adventure Playground	Malcolm Shead	X
Cuckamus Green inspection to include grass, trees and benches	Carol Frost	X
Grass at bus shelters	Malcolm Shead	X
Triangular bits outside Masons Arms (corner of Perrots Close, Common Road and Park Road)	Fran Jeffes	
Nettles by the wall by the bus stop and around Common Road	Malcolm Shead	
Grass by the seat on Church Road	Fran Jeffes	X
Grass and beds at Windmill Heights	Malcolm Shead	X
Grass at Park Road opposite Eynsham Hall Entrance	Malcolm Shead	
Triangular grass at the top of Windmill Close	Malcolm Shead	X
Strip of grass from the Methodist Hall to the Park	Malcolm Shead	

Road junction		
Newsletter	Kevin Swann	
Planning Committee	Chair: Sarah Veasey Members: Julie Minch, Kevin Swann, Robert Gunn	
Staffing committee	Julie Minch, Carol Frost, Kevin Swann, Fran Jeffes	
Neighbourhood Plan Committee	Chair: Sherard Veasey Vice chair: Kevin Swann Secretary: Steve Legg Members: Robert Gunn, David Painter, Judith Wardle, Martin Bowsher, Adrian Watts, David Harris, Suzanne Millar	
East End Noticeboard	Andy Clements	
Cuckamus Green Noticeboard	Julie Minch	
Bench on Church Road	Fran Jeffes	
Bus shelters	Malcolm Shead	
Defibrillators	Clerk	
Office equipment	Clerk	
Salt bins	Andy Clements	
Internal Controls Checks	Julie Minch	

Attachment 2: RWE

Subject: Quarry Solar

North Leigh Parish Council know that your original application for Quarry Solar farm (23/01524/FUL) was turned down by WODC last year and that you seek to submit a new application with some minor changes in the next few weeks.

North Leigh Parish Council note from the information supplied by the applicant in their Screen Request letter dated 23 March 2023 that the proposed route for construction traffic is via the A4095, Common Road, Park Road and finally New Yatt Road. We also note that the applicant deems this route to be both suitable and ideal as the roads involved utilise the shortest route from the Application Site to the Strategic Highways Network. North Leigh Parish Council contest the suitability of this route for construction traffic rigorously on the basis of points made below.

Additionally, we note from answers supplied to me subsequent to a webinar on 21st February 2024 that you do not propose to change the route for construction traffic in the proposed new submittal.

North Leigh Parish Council (NLPC) estimates that the construction of the solar farm would generate at least 4,000 additional HGV journeys and we contest the suitability of the proposed route for the following reasons.

1. Common Road. This is a residential road which already experiences a significant volume of commercial traffic. The road itself is in a poor state of repair and any increase in HGV traffic will only serve to further its deterioration.
2. The junction of Park Road and New Yatt Road. This too is a residential road and at this point there is a narrowing of the carriageway causing a pinch point which only allows for vehicles to pass in one direction at a time. This is a dangerous section of road and any increase in HGV traffic will only increase the risks to pedestrians and other road users. Further, there are three domestic properties, Hill View, Paddock House and Gable Cottage, which have their walls and foundations particularly close to the highway and might be subject to damage resulting from both direct impact and ground vibration as a result of additional lorry movements.
3. New Yatt Road from the junction of Green Lane to Masons Grove. This section of road is particularly dangerous and has traffic calming, in the form of speed humps and a chicane, in place. This provides for the traffic travelling west away from the centre of North Leigh to have right of way over those entering the village. In practice these measures have been only partially successful and, as a Parish Council, we have received a number of reports of near misses, both vehicle to vehicle and vehicle to pedestrian. It is considered that any additional HGV movements are likely to increase the risk of accidents occurring.

4. New Yatt Road from Masons Grove to New Yatt. The carriageway between these two points is showing signs of serious deterioration with potholes, dips, damaged cambers and collapsing road margins. More importantly this length of road does not have a footpath and is used by parents walking their children to the village school, other pedestrians, cyclists and horses as well as cars and HGV's. As with the other sections of the route discussed above any additional HGV movements are likely to increase the risk of accidents occurring.

It is the view of the Parish Council that the proposed route would create unacceptable risks to other road users as well as causing additional severe damage to the carriageways of the roads in question. While it is understood that materials have to be delivered to the construction site the Parish Council believes that directing HGVs via the B4022 would prove to be a safer and more suitable route.

In addition to our comments on HGV traffic, North Leigh Parish Council also opposes a solar park at this location. This will have a severe impact on the views from the New Yatt Road and Footpath 15 and will require new site roads to be built in this area also which will cause disruption. Biodiversity concerns seem to have been addressed in a very superficial way. In addition North Leigh is currently under threat from the enormous Botley West Solar Farm (one of the largest in Europe if it goes ahead) to the other side of our village, this will literally result in North Leigh becoming an island surrounded by solar parks. It is clearly not appropriate that WODC views each one on a case by case basis without considering the impact as a whole on a small rural village such as ours.

We find your webinar of 21st February 2024 presented no new features that would contribute towards a change of NLPC's view on the solar farm. You mentioned that you would be submitting your revised plan to WODC in a few weeks, yet in response to questions below, you offered no answers to very basic issues.

1. You did not offer how many solar panels would be involved
2. You did not say how many support posts would be driven into the ground to support these panels
3. You did not offer a map of where BMV land is within the project boundary.
4. You will not be making hard copies of the proposal available (eg in North Leigh library) for those who don't wish to trawl through an online version of the application of those who have no access to suitable communication devices

Questions 1 and 2 have a direct bearing on how many HGV movements will be required.

In particular, you did not offer any new detail about construction traffic and you still propose that construction traffic will be via the A4095 Common Road, Park Road and New Yatt road, even though NLPC recommended on 30th August 2023 in their comprehensive view of the proposal that HGV traffic should use the B4022, as a safer alternative.

Attachment 3: North Witney: 24/00482/OUT

Currently the Witney North Development is included in the current WODC 2031 Plan, therefore it is unlikely that objections made at this stage will prevent the development from taking place.

However, the NLPC objects to the development proceeding as it has strong concerns on the grounds of:

- The amount of construction traffic that would potentially come through the Parish during construction.
- The increase in traffic potentially coming through the Parish after the development is completed.
- The increasing likelihood of convergence between Witney and the Parish as a result of North Witney other proposed developments including solar farms being permitted.
- The loss of the existing ecological and wildlife habitat.

If the development was to take place, then the NLPC would request that:

- All construction traffic would be directed to avoid access through North Leigh Parish and New Yatt Road
- At the start of construction, the New Yatt Road be permanently closed with a barrier just east of Merryfield Farm and the remainder of the New Yatt Road from the barrier at Merryfield Farm to the entrance to New Yatt to be made into a non vehicular, pedestrian/cycle/bridleway route. This would mean that domestic, commercial and agricultural vehicles from Merryfield Farm would exit the farm on the New Yatt Road in the direction of Woodgreen and would then travel on the Northern Distributor Road to reach either the A4095 or the B4022.
- If Merryfield Farm needed agricultural access to fields on the pedestrian portion of the New Yatt Road they could be granted access through the barrier
- We would also request a barrier at the New Yatt end of the pedestrianised section of the New Yatt Road for safety reasons to prevent traffic from entering the pedestrianised area from New Yatt
- If Home Farm or other farms in New Yatt needed agricultural access to fields on the pedestrian portion of the New Yatt Road, they could be given access through this second barrier- If the Quarry Farm Solar project at University Farm goes ahead, and access is needed to these fields then the Project/University Farm could be given access through this second barrier- The farms needing access would need to be clarified and an access agreement drafted in advance of the road being permanently closed.

Attachment 4:

Football Club: 24/00596/S73

As already detailed by North Leigh Ward District Councillor Harry St John, a number of issues have been raised regarding Eynsham Hall's non-compliance with the terms of their Interim Travel Plan. Councillor St John has requested that this application be brought to the WODC Lowlands Committee for further scrutiny as soon as possible and we fully support this request.

Attachment 5:

North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan Committee Update for Parish Council Meeting of 9th May 2024

Meetings

- Since the last Parish Council met, the North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (NLNP) Committee took part in a “Placecheck Walk” on the 9th April.
- The committee meeting agendas and minutes are being posted on the North Leigh Parish Council website.

Membership

Martin Bowsher, Paul Evans, David Harris, Steve Legg (Secretary), Suzanne Millar, David Painter, Kevin Swann (Vice Chair), Sherard Veasey (Chair), Judith Wardle, Adrian Watts.

Consultancy Support for the Neighbourhood Plan

Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) of Worton Park, near Cassington are acting as our consultants to assist with the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee has been working with CFO to finalise a questionnaire that can be circulated around the village.

CFO has also initiated a programme of work to put together a document which describes the design characteristics of various parts of the village. This document will eventually be used by CFO in drafting one of the sections of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Placecheck walk carried out on April 9th was the initial step in this process. The committee has since been working on drafting a set of Character Assessment documents.

Financial Situation

We initially received a grant of £6,960 from Locality to support our work until the end of March 2024. However, when we claimed the grant, Locality identified that some consultancy work had been done before the grant had been made and would have to be repaid. This amounted to £338.49 and was repaid by the PC.

We will be entitled to apply for a further grant to cover the work from the period from 1st April 2024 to the 31st March 2025. It is expected that the majority of the grant will be spent on consultancy fees.