

Minutes of Lyneham & Bradenstoke Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 20th December 2016 in Bradenstoke Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Present

Cllrs: G Jackson-Haines (Chairman), J Webb, T Webb, J Digman, R Selby-Boothroyd and R Glover
Clerk to the meeting: Jacquie Henly

There were 11 members of the public present.

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting.

1) Capt. Lee McCrum from the MoD covered the following items:

- a) The MoD base is now in a stand down period and will re-open on Tuesday 3rd January at mid day.
- b) Gareth Rees was introduced to all present; he is the head of the MoD Base security. Gareth gave a brief description of his role and explained he is working closely with the local police. All present were encouraged to get in touch if there were any security concerns.

Cllr R Glover had to leave the meeting during public participation, as he was not feeling well.

2) Cllr Allison Bucknell had previously sent her apologies and had forwarded a report that was read out by the Chairman:

- a) Solar Park - The inaugural meeting of the Bradenstoke Community Fund Grants Body will take place in January. Once the necessary framework has been approved, the fund will be open for applications.
 - b) GP Surgery provision - A follow up meeting with NHS England will take place on December 22nd where the decision that Lyneham has "no unmet need" for medical provision will be further discussed.
 - c) Road Safety - The pedestrian crossing at MoD Lyneham main gate has now been reinstated. Further issues including a request for Metrocounts on the A3102 and Bradenstoke Junction safety improvements (to be discussed at the PC meeting tonight) will be taken to the Jan 5th CATG meeting.
 - d) Young People - Connecting Youth continue to provide weekly sessions in Lyneham. Wiltshire Council has funding available for provision of Positive Leisure activities for Young People aged 13-19 (25 if they have a disability) through the RoyalWootton Bassett & Cricklade Area Board. Any organisation can apply for funding to extend and enhance their provision to this age group.
 - e) Planning - Nothing new to report.
 - f) Area Board - There was good representation from Lyneham and Bradenstoke residents at the special Joint Strategic Assessment Area Board in November. A huge amount of ideas were generated which will give the Area Board a lot to do over the coming months and years. The next Area Board meeting is January 18th 2017 in Cricklade Town Hall.
 - g) Other - The #GBSpringClean will take place from March 3-5, 2017, and is being supported by, among others, TV naturalist and writer Steve Backshall. Hopefully the Parish Council will be encouraging people to take part in this; we will be promoting this through Wiltshire Council.
 - h) I would like to take this opportunity to extend festive wishes to the Parish Councillors and the Clerk.
- 3) The Chairman invited comments from members of the public present on items listed on the Agenda.
- a) No comments were received.
 - b) Cllr R Selby-Boothroyd invited Kate McFarlane to speak regarding the Community Benefit Fund. Following the recent press release Mrs McFarlane was still concerned about the set up of the management committee and was disappointed to learn that no member representing Bradenstoke had been invited to join the committee. Cllr R Selby-Boothroyd suggested that this concern was covered later during the meeting.

Item 1 - Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Pollard, L Thrussell, J Selby-Boothroyd, D Lambourne, and R Gill.

Item 2 – Declaration of Interest in items on the Agenda.

Cllr J Webb mentioned that all members present had an interest in item 8e approving the budget and setting the precept. The Clerk reminded all present that dispensations had been granted in December 2014 and were valid for 4 years.

Item 3 – Approval of Minutes from the previous meeting

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 8th November 2016 were approved by those present and signed by the Chairman.

Item 4 – To receive items on the Clerk's Report

4.1 Sent in comments to the Planning Department regarding the planning applications discussed at the November Meeting.

4.2 Returned the signed agreement to Steve Andrews regarding the naming of the new development at

Edmonds Garage in Lyneham.

4.3 Contacted NHS England to arrange a meeting date with the Parish Council, to date no response has been received.

4.4 Prepared the Budget/Precept ready for discussion and approval at the December meeting.

4.5 Auditors report was received for the 2015/2016 accounts. An observation from the auditors has been questioned and satisfactorily resolved.

4.6 Amended the Standing Orders as agreed at the November meeting and updated the web site with the new document.

4.7 Contacted Wiltshire Council regarding the outstanding Private and Confidential Matter. Requesting information on whether progress is being made and requesting if the issue could be resolved before our December meeting.

4.8 Booked a First Aid Training Course for Lyneham and Bradenstoke residents for Tuesday 24th January 2017 starting at 6.00pm in the Church Hall Lyneham.

4.9 Along with Cllrs Jackson-Haines, Thrussell, Digman and R Selby-Boothroyd helped at and supported the Community Christmas Party organised for elderly residents of the Parish.

4.10 Thanked Martin Cook for organising the re-painting of the zebra crossing in Lyneham.

Item 5 – To receive update reports from working groups, committees and representative members of outside bodies.

5.1 Report from the Allotment Working Group:

There is currently 1 allotment available to rent.

5.2 Report from Communications Working Group:

Enquiries about advertising in the Spring Edition of the Parish Magazine are already being received.

5.3 Report from the Open Spaces Working Group:

Major work to the trees on The Green commenced on 21st November and has now been completed. The team working on the trees received many positive comments from local residents.

5.4 Report from Councillor J Webb re The Neighbourhood Plan:

At long last, after eleven months, when we were told that the process would take between six and thirteen weeks, we have been given permission to produce a neighbourhood plan for our parish.

The first question we must ask ourselves is; do we now want to continue with this process, which will include a lot of work for all those involved, or do we wish to follow the advice of our Wiltshire Councillor and no bother because there is no need for any new housing in our area, regardless of what the known evidence suggests? This is an item for discussion on the agenda for December.

Assuming that we decide to go ahead with producing a neighbourhood plan, the next thing we need to do is to set up a steering group, made up of councillors and people who live or work in the Parish, and to establish the terms of reference for the group. Also an agenda item at the December meeting.

Given that, as described in Wiltshire Council's 2013 guide to neighbourhood planning; Neighbourhood plans can propose more development than the Wiltshire Core Strategy, shape an direct future development, help to determine what type of development should take place and identify the most suitable sites for development. The Neighbourhood Plan cannot propose less growth than in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and it cannot prevent any development from ever taking place in an area.

A spatial planning officer has been designated to oversee our plan and to make sure that our process is legally compliant at all stages including the setting up of the steering group and its terms of reference.

With regard to the formation of the steering group the guide suggests,

1. Local residents, in our case representing Lyneham, Bradenstoke and hopefully Preston/Thickthorn.
2. Local community groups, which I would like to see include youth groups.
3. Local business representation, which I feel should include our forthcoming tourist attraction, the REME Museum.
4. Other key stakeholders, which would include the Military and the School.

Draft Terms of Reference have been circulated for approval at the December meeting.

That is where we stand at this point in time.

5.5 Update and more information regarding the conduct of the Community Benefit Fund related to the Solar Farm at Bradenstoke.

Our Chairman has been invited to attend a Local Grant Committee Meeting (Invitees are listed below)

Chairs of Parish Councils from Lyneham & Bradenstoke, Bremhill, Hilmarton and Christian Malford

Wiltshire Council Member for Lyneham

Chair of Lyneham Business Buddies

Commandant of MoD Lyneham

MoD Lyneham Defence Infrastructure Organisation

MoD Lyneham Garrison Welfare Officer

MoD Lyneham Garrison Quartermaster

The following is a press release giving details of the solar park and management of the fund:

Bradenstoke Solar Park – Press Release – 13/12/2016

Bradenstoke Solar Park Limited (BSPL), the owner of the UK's second largest photovoltaic solar farm

built on MOD Lyneham (formerly RAF Lyneham), is pleased to announce that the export of electricity to the National Grid commenced at the end of September 2016.

An important part of the development is the benefit to the local community that borders the base, this will consist of an annual community benefit fund of £50,000, index linked, which will be paid by the solar park owner every year until the park ceases to operate. The park is expected to be in operation for at least 20 years.

In order to oversee the distribution of this significant fund fairly and independently, a Local Grant Committee is being established. The Committee will consist of various stakeholders, including the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Wiltshire Council, Parish Councils, Army Welfare Services and a representative of local businesses. The fund is hoping to launch in early 2017 and will be seeking grant applications for projects that fall into the following categories:

- Alleviating fuel poverty
- Developing community scale and micro renewable energy schemes
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Advancing efficiency in the use of natural resources
- Protecting or enhancing the natural environment
- Protecting or enhancing biodiversity
- Promoting environmental sustainability
- Other purposes in the interest of the community

The fund will be administered by the Community Energy Foundation, a not for profit company limited by guarantee. The Local Grant Committee will be governed as an Unincorporated Association and the funds will be held in a dedicated ethical bank account provided by Triodos Bank in Bristol. Over the lifespan of the solar park the community benefit aspect of the development constitutes a very significant ongoing financial contribution to local causes.

BSPL was developed and constructed by British Solar Renewables Limited, the UK's largest developer and builder of large scale PV solar farms, in conjunction with the MOD.

Item 6 - To consider and approve a letter of response to Mr A Gardiner from Gladman Developments Ltd regarding the development of Green Farm, Chippenham Road, Lyneham.

A draft response of the letter had previously been circulated to members, the content was approved and the Clerk will forward the response to Mr Gardiner inviting Gladman Developments to put forward their proposal for future development in the form of a consultation to the local community.

Item 7 – To consider an issue raised by a resident that has subsequently been put forward for consideration to CATG – Issue number 5026.

The issue was discussed. Cllr J Webb recommended the Parish Council request that Wiltshire Council send an Enforcement Order to the residents with the large hedge, asking for it to be significantly cut back as this can only help to improve the visibility issue. It was resolved to support issue 5026 to be considered by CATG at its meeting in January, with the condition that no rumble strips are painted on the road, as these could prove to be noisy for residents living next to that stretch of road.

Item 8 – Finance

8.1 Account Balances inclusive of all cheques written and deposits made - Current Account £30013.44

Deposit Account – £58185.20

8.2

Cheque No	Payee	Amount
683	Royal British Legion – Poppy Wreaths	51.00
684	Thames Water – Public Toilets	18.60
685	A W Services – Toilets & Grass cutting	3579.01
686	Bradenstoke Village Hall – Hall Hire	7.00
687	Grant Thornton – External Audit Fees	360.00
688	J Henly – Clerks Salary Nov	547.58
689	SLCC – Annual Subscription	90.35
690	Franklins Gardens Services – Tree Work	6930.00
691	J Henly – Clerks Salary Dec	547.58
692	Lyneham PCC – Churchyard Grass Cutting	2000.00
693	J May – Expenses for Community Christmas Party (Grant)	266.00
	Money Received	Amount
	Allotment Rents	126.00
	Adverting	275.00

8.3 Quotes have been obtained for the supply of banners for the ROSE Litter Campaign. For the supply of 5 large banners, to be positioned strategically around the Parish the cost will be no more than £170.00. The Clerk was asked to find out if the Keep Britain Tidy logo has copyright rules before including it on the poster. It was agreed a new image of a rose and a slight reformat of the poster should be circulated to members for approval. Once approval had been given for the new design, members present agreed the purchase of the posters should go ahead.

8.4 A request from Lyneham Primary School had been put forward to help try and resolve the problem of an extremely slippery path, used by parents and children attending the School. After considering the problem and speaking with a Wiltshire Council Officer it was considered the best solution would be the purchase of a salt bin being placed next to the path. The purchase cost of the bin is £99.00 those members present agreed the purchase should go ahead. Wiltshire Council have approved the site for where the bin can be positioned.

8.5 The Budget and Precept request details for 2017/2018 had previously been circulated to members. Following discussion it was resolved the Precept request would be £44,000.

Item 9 – Planning

9.1 An update on planning applications had previously been distributed to members and was approved.

Item 10 – Neighbourhood Plan – Steering Group

10.1 It was confirmed that the Designation of Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish Neighbourhood Area has been approved by Wiltshire Council with Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish Council as the qualifying body leading the production. Cllr J Webb gave a brief update of where we are now.

10.2 A draft Terms of Reference Document had previously been circulated to members. Following discussion it was resolved the document should be approved and adopted. A copy will be sent to the Wiltshire Council Officer who has been appointed to advise on the production of the Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish Neighbourhood Plan, for his final approval.

10.3 A discussion took place regarding the organisation of a community event to be hosted by the Parish Council to take place in the New Year, the event will be held to inform the community about neighbourhood planning and to engage people from all sections of our community in the process.

item 11 - Exchange of Information

11.1 Cllr T Webb asked if a request could be made of Wiltshire Council to assess the safety concern of many residents regarding the mini roundabout in Lyneham at the junction leading to Preston Lane. Although the roundabout has recently been re-painted it is often not seen or recognised by drivers not from the area. This has been the cause of many near misses when vehicles are trying to exit from Preston Lane, turning right onto the A3102.

11.2 Cllr J Digman also raised a concern about vehicles being allowed to park in the lay-by on the opposite side of the road just before the entrance to Tesco's. When vehicles are parked there it obscures visibility for people trying to exit the allocated car park.

11.3 Cllr J Webb suggested that an agenda item for the next meeting should include a review of salt bins for the whole Parish. Suggestions for the purchase of extra salt bins should be sent to Clerk by members before the next agenda is due to be published.

11.4 Cllr R Selby-Boothroyd described some of the incidents which had occurred during the development of the Bradenstoke Solar Farm and the misinformation which had been circulating regarding the setting up of a Community Benefit Fund, as now revealed by a press release from a company called the Community Energy Foundation which detailed the composition of a committee to decide the distribution of one million pounds over the next twenty years. He recommended that before the Parish Council Chairman takes up his role as one of the appointees to this committee, the Council should meet to discuss and agree the mandate that the Chairman is to have as the sole elected representative of the residents of this Parish and, in particular, of Bradenstoke. Cllr R Selby-Boothroyd suggested that the Council may resolve (1) to challenge the composition of the committee before its inaugural meeting, since that composition was decided in secret, kept from the Parish Council and is now seen to be outrageously unrepresentative and unsuitably qualified, (2) to call for the meetings of the new committee to be held in public with agenda and papers published in advance and (3) to issue a press release explaining the Parish Council's response to the information now received.

11.5 Cllr R Selby-Boothroyd made the following statement:

I came to Lyneham and Bradenstoke in September 2011 as the Church of England house for duty Associate Priest for the Parish – that means unpaid and part time. I encountered a Parish Council which had for years accepted its role as limited – owing to the local services provided by and the major influence of the RAF Station which had dominated the Parish for 70 years. But things were changing. The RAF was due to depart and the unitary authority, in existence for less than 3 years had high aspirations of exercising local control through its community area arrangements but was failing, as it still does, to grasp the meaning of the word community. I was able to view the local situation with my experience of having been clerk to two rural parish councils, each for over five years.

When Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish Council dismissed its clerk in 2014 and was in crisis, I offered the Chairman my assistance to regularise the accounts until a new clerk could be found. By November 2014 I was being asked to continue helping and, since by law all members of a parish council's finance committee must be council members, I was co-opted as a parish councillor. Immediately I was criticised by a member of my Church congregation for taking on this part time role, significantly being sent a note of criticism following a Friday morning meeting of the weekly Extend class conducted by our Wiltshire Councillor. As the Bible reading in Church the following Sunday was the Parable of the Talents, I explained to all who were in Church that morning that a common interpretation of the parable or Bible story is that it is wicked not to employ the God-given talents that we have for the betterment of our community. I would have been negligent as your Parish Priest if I had not stepped in to use my experience to help the Council serve its community.

In the intervening two years, when I have also been the Priest in Charge of the Parish of Lyneham with Bradenstoke – still unpaid and still part time – I have received several personal attacks in my role as a co-opted member of this Council. Most of those attacks have been clearly identifiable as being initiated by the Wiltshire Councillor who is absent from our meeting this evening. One of the attacks even involved a written complaint about my behaviour – although no details were described to help anyone understand the real issues – being sent to the Church authorities, presumably in the hope of having me disciplined in some way. Also emanating from the same source have been a whole series of interfering and destructive actions hampering the effectiveness of the Parish Council in serving its community, the most serious and costly of which we have already heard about this evening. Recently we have heard that our Member of Parliament has also been criticising our Parish Councillors in public – where did he get his negative opinion from, I wonder?

There is another Bible story that fits this situation very well. Some of you may know it. It comes from several hundred years before the Parable of the Talents and involves King Solomon who was asked to judge which of two women was the genuine mother of a baby they both claimed. Solomon asked for a sword to cut the baby in half so that the two women could share in the possession. Immediately one of the women gave up her claim, so that the baby's life would be saved, and so identified herself as the real mother. The story of that judgement is often referred to as the Wisdom of Solomon. Some years ago, I knew a married couple who had three children, but the couple fell out and the wife began abusing her husband until he left home. When he tried to continue his relationship with his children, his wife claimed that his visits to the children were upsetting them – of course she was turning her abuse on the children, though in many other respects she was a caring mother. The husband judged that, despite his wish to share in his children's upbringing, they would fare better without his intervention causing their mother to make them upset. When the husband explained himself to a High Court judge at the divorce hearing, he was praised for his wise sacrifice for the benefit of his children.

I see a parallel here. It has become clear to me – and, owing to recent attempts to resolve our problems, many of my colleague Parish Councillors will have received the same clarity – that it is partly my presence on this Council which has, for some reason known only to the perpetrator, caused the attacks and obstruction. If the baby is to survive, if the children are to grow peaceably, if the Parish Council is to hope to overcome the present regime of deceit and obstruction, then I must leave.

I had already decided that as I would not be seeking election to the Parish Council in May next year then I would be leaving before then. With the approval this evening of the Council's Budget and Precept Request for next year, the purpose for my presence on the Council has been fulfilled. Now, I have recognised that the attacks on me in this role are not only damaging the Parish Council but have begun to contaminate relationships in the Church, too. There is where my priority must lie and that is why my decision has been brought forward to this month.

Before I do leave, though, I wish to clarify for our public what it is that has been dominating all those secret meetings the Parish Council has been having in recent months – the public meetings which end with a resolution to exclude the press and public while the Council discusses a matter deemed by Wiltshire Council to be confidential. The details of the discussions must unfortunately remain confidential, but I will not leave with the possibility that any of our residents might imagine that I have been involved in anything that I would wish to remain hidden. The single issue that has preoccupied this Council's secret meetings has been how to get our Wiltshire Councillor to work with us and not against us. As I say, the details are subject to some degree of confidentiality but the public should know what we have been struggling with. How the struggle may be resolved, I know not and I shall not be a part of the solution though hopefully my departure may contribute to it.

I have tremendous respect for all of you who serve on this Council, for the effort you put in and how you have consistently overcome the unwarranted criticism and abuse directed at you collectively and in many cases as individuals. I have found it a privilege to work with you and serve you and the community in the way that I have been able to. My resignation will take effect from tomorrow morning. I am not walking away this evening and if anyone wants to talk to me about anything I have said, any conversation will be with me still as a Parish Councillor.

I shall continue to pray for you as councillors, for everyone in this community and, as always, I shall continue to pray for those who wish me harm.

Cllrs present expressed their sadness that things had come to this. Cllr R Selby-Boothroyd was thanked by members present for his support during his time as a Parish Councillor, his knowledge and experience had proved invaluable.

Item 12 – Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of Lyneham and Bradenstoke Parish Council is to be held on Tuesday 10th January 2017 in Lyneham Church Hall at 7.00pm.

Since the close of the December Parish Council Meeting it was agreed not to hold a meeting in January. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 14th February at Lyneham Church Hall starting at 7.00pm.

The Chairman then wished all present a very Merry Christmas.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

Signed
Chairman

Date