

Leigh on Mendip – YOUR VILLAGE

This is the 2021 annual newsletter from your Parish Council. A “Welcome booklet” is available on the village website www.leigh-on-mendip.org.uk and hard copy for everyone who is new to the village. Over the past year the Covid 19 Coronavirus pandemic has dominated our lives and given your Parish Council and the village organisations many new challenges; we hope we have responded as you would wish.

Recreation Field and Community Open Space: The Recreation Field Management Committee (RFMC) manage these areas. Last year saw an increase in use of the field. More family time including picnics, meetings of WI groups, book clubs, Tai chi and yoga classes along with the usual events such as cricket, football and bowls when restrictions allowed. The Open Space project is still very much in the RFMC minds and when the ground lease is finalised they will apply for grants to implement some ideas from the two recent consultations.

Memorial Hall: The hall committee have worked hard to keep covid compliant and are ready to open again as soon as regulations allow. Please see village website for regular activities. Over the last year the Hall hosted the school (while they had building work) and made sure the leak in the roof was finally stopped (fingers crossed). We look forward to everyone being able to use **the hall again soon.**

Allotment Association: There are now 17 very productive allotments of varying sizes, including two accessible, involving 23 villagers. There is a waiting list and the association is raising funds to develop the site further with an all-weather accessible path and a building for tools storage - and shelter! The allotments will continue to develop as a much-needed resource for health and well-being as it has been during the recent restrictions.

Leigh on Mendip School: The Governors and Senior Leadership Team were delighted with the return to school of all children in March. The school is busy planning for the next academic year and wants to keep the Parish informed of progress; exciting times continue as the journey to being a primary school approaches completion. Planning proposals are now approved to extend the main building and provide an additional classroom. A new teacher has been appointed to start in September who has considerable experience of small schools and mixed-age teaching. The Governors wish to thank everyone for their support for Leigh School which continues as a wonderful safe place for children to learn and develop.

Quarry: The new tarmac plant is now fully operational, and the enlarged quarry development is underway. The village school continues to enjoy the outdoor classroom facility, which will soon be expanded with additional features. A new site entrance onto Limekiln Lane awaits planning approval and will allow the short diversion of the perimeter path to be removed. Sadly, the Information Boards around the footpath were recently destroyed by vandals but will be replaced soon. Coronavirus has delayed the launch of the Community Support Fund that will benefit village organisations. Except for deliveries Halecombe lorries should not use Leigh Street; if you see one in the village then report details to Halecombe Quarry Tel. 01373 812800 for investigation.

Planning: Local planning policies identify Leigh on Mendip as an isolated settlement with strictly controlled development. However, while Mendip District Council (MDC) cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Developers are taking the opportunity to seek developments claiming sustainability outweighing the harm of their application. At present, the major application for outline planning permission for up to 40 dwellings is pending decision. Another major application pending decision is for various commercial and industrial activities at Barns Close Quarry, involving partial infilling. The Parish Council thanks everybody who shared their views and commented on the MDC planning website, we have represented your majority view and recommended that both applications are refused. We have also been consulted on and responded to MDC about several smaller planning applications during the year. We are keen that the design of new development follows our Village Design Statement. It is available on the website and seeks to set out what makes our parish special in terms of design. It is a great starting point if you are considering home or property improvements, even if they do not need planning permission.

Getting involved – contact a Parish Councillor if you are interested in the following:

- **Being a Councillor:** The Parish Council will have more vacancies in the forthcoming year and volunteers to join the Council are welcome and becoming urgently needed. Do come and join us to help maintain the village involvement during the forthcoming local government reorganisations and beyond.
- **Land:** The Council is keen to plant more trees. Do you have a spare corner of a field that could be developed as a coppice or orchard?
- **Neighbourhood Watch:** Most areas in the village have a Neighbourhood Watch coordinator to send you messages about recent incidents, warnings and security hints. If you aren't receiving these messages, it means you are not a member of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. To join, liaise with a Councillor or the PCSO.
- **Footpaths:** Most of our footpaths are supervised by volunteers who report problems or deal with them if possible. Our network of footpaths is extensive and needs constant attention. If you are inclined to help out, please let us know. Landowners are reminded of their responsibilities and are thanked for their work in maintaining the Rights of Way over their land.
- **Parish Rangers:** At present, we have eight volunteer Rangers who carry out care and maintenance jobs around the Parish. Activity has been severely restricted by Covid but some work continued and is much appreciated. Special thanks go to Chris Ingrem who quietly and diligently paints the heritage fingerposts as required. The signpost at Downhead crossroads recently lost a finger in a traffic accident and is now repaired; which finger was missing? Also, many thanks to our litter pickers who work to keep our street and lanes clear of offensive litter of all kinds. If you do see a job to be done, tell a Councillor - and think about becoming a LoMe Ranger yourself.

Leigh on Mendip Website & Facebook Both are exclusive to Leigh on Mendip and have been well used during the recent restrictions to stay in touch and communicate information / contacts, lost / found and sales / wants. The website has a specific Coronavirus section that includes information on support available from local resources. It is kept current, thanks to the webmaster Chris Cudmore. There are also the two Parish Council Noticeboards and the old telephone box (which anyone can use).

Report Problems When You See Them

Most issues can now be reported directly by the public, try www.fixmystreet.com to report irritations like potholes, street lighting outage and fly-tipping. Various other contacts are on the village website.

Remember – Defibrillators are at the Memorial Hall & the Rec Field clubhouse. First Aid courses have been held which are free to all parishioners; if you want more, contact any Councillor.

Parish Councillors for the 21/22 year are Martin Carter, Paula Freeland, David Mattick, Vicki Taylor and Vicki Trundle, their contact details are on the village website.

Parish and Cemetery Clerk - Mrs Anthea Brooks, Tel: 01761 418737. Address: Ashville, Monger Lane, Midsomer Norton BA3 2SP, Email: clerklom@gmail.com

The **Annual Parish Meeting** is planned this year for 17 May but may be online due to Covid restrictions. Monthly Parish Council meetings are currently held online; if you want to attend, please contact any Councillor for a link.

Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic, is still affecting all our lives and making significant demands on our way of life. The Parish Council liaises with the various village organisations and with the local care and wellness organisations supporting villagers. If you need help, [contact a Councillor](#). The restrictions are not yet over so let us all do our bit and follow guidelines, take the job when offered, look to help our at-risk neighbours and share confidence, care and compassion throughout our community.

It's a great village to live in – let us all keep it that way and enjoy being part of it.