

Leigh-on-Mendip Parish Council

Newsletter April 2015

www.leigh-on-mendip.org.uk

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 8.00 pm on Monday the 18th May 2015 in the Memorial Hall, all parishioners are encouraged to attend. This is an opportunity for you to hear what has been happening in your village and to raise any issues which concern you. The Annual Parish Council Meeting will precede the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30pm.

All six of the current councillors stood for election on 7th May and once again this will be uncontested. Hopefully someone will soon come forward to be co-opted to make up our full strength of seven.

Councillors have attended Mendip DC and Somerset CC meetings where they have an impact on our village. We were pleased to have support from Philip Ham (County and District Councillor) and Val Horner (District Councillor) at most of our meetings.

Anthea Brooks, our Clerk, has coped with ever changing regulations and hopefully you will have been following the Parish Council activities in her full and comprehensive minutes!

The present council is:

Vikki Batten	Cowslip Cottage	07932 735623	(Facebook administrator)
Chris Cudmore	2 Oak Leaf Court	813735	(Chairman, Highways & Web)
David Mattick	Field View	812734	(Vice Chairman, Mem. Hall rep)
Gill Newbury	Island Cottage	813031	(School, Police & Coleford Hub)
Kiley Pescott	Lilac Cottage	07796 955357	
David Sparkes	Greenshutters	01749 938928	(Footpaths & Quarry Liaison)
One vacancy			

Parish & Cemetery Clerk - Mrs Anthea Brooks
Ashville, Monger Lane, Midsomer Norton BA3 2SP

Email lom.pc@btinternet.com
Tel 01761 418737

 **Aims** The Parish Council represents the parish objectively and without prejudice, to liaise with both county and district councils to ensure effective services, manage the spending of precept for the benefit of the parish and to protect and improve the parish's assets. We do this through consultation - Parish Plan, Village Design Statement, ad hoc open meetings and at monthly Parish Council meetings - and through delegation to management committees for the Memorial Hall and the Recreation Field. **Representations can be made at any time to the members of the Parish Council or the Clerk.**



Communication is by the two Parish Noticeboards, the Village Website and Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/LeighonMendip/ which is available for anyone to share details about your village event, discuss village concerns or contact other members. This has proved very popular and currently has 87 members. Don't forget to use the old telephone box as an alternative to the computer for your notices, items for sale, wanted, swaps etc.



Finance The parish precept for 2015/16 was increased by £300 to £6,500. We have also received a grant of £220 as a result of the Council Tax Support changes and a £2,000 payment from the Soho Solar Farm. This has resulted in an increase of approximately 2% to the Parish charge within the Council Tax (less than £1 per annum!). Expenditure in the last year was again split between (a) salaries of Clerk and Cemetery Clerk (b) maintenance & administration and (c) grants to support our village facilities. Grants included contributions towards signs and grass mowing (rec.field), picnic bench (school), disabled ramp (church) and floor refurb (hall). Part of the cemetery maintenance costs were covered by the cemetery fees.

We are considering the provision of a defibrillator this year. If you would like to be included in the training please contact any Parish Councillor or our Clerk.



Planning The Parish Council has only an advisory role to uphold the long-term interests of the parish. Twelve applications have been considered and recommendations made to Mendip DC, of which 11 have been supported and approved and 1 was recommended for refusal (decision is outstanding). The Mendip Local Plan is now adopted which classifies us as a "smaller" village, limiting new development to exceptional affordable or locally promoted schemes. The Parish Council will generally support limited development of lower cost houses (vital to maintain the vitality and demographics of the village) as long as it does not detract from the character and layout of the parish (as in Village Design Statement). Planning information is available on the Mendip DC website. One bit of good news - we have been notified of a proposal for a new mobile telephone mast between Soho and Coleford which should improve mobile coverage in our area.



Emergency Plan The Parish Council are preparing a Contingency / Emergency Plan for possible incidents where response from the emergency services might be delayed, the most likely being cut off by severe weather. As part of this we would like to generate a list of people with heating / cooking facilities that don't depend on electricity; people with electrical generator sets that could be available and people with suitable transport such as 4 wheel drive vehicles and tractors. Also, we would like to have a list of medical and first aid trained people in the village. If you have such facilities or training and are willing to use them in an emergency, please contact any Parish Councillor or our Clerk.



Cemetery The management of the closed churchyard still remains with Mendip DC who have commenced a 5 year project to reduce the size of the yew trees. Fencing has been replaced (thanks Tom) and the grass mowing and hedge trimming continue to be contracted by the parish. We have continued to follow opportunities to extend the cemetery and, having completed a budgeting exercise, we are currently waiting for a decision on the availability of an alternative plot of land.



Police Community Support Officer The village currently shares two PCSOs. A number of Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the village have lapsed. Two schemes are being restarted, if there is sufficient response. If you are unsure of whether you are covered please contact the PCSO (tel. 101). Warnings of local criminal trends are provided to scheme members by our NHW co-ordinators (notices are also on the website).



Highways We have successfully petitioned for more warning signs on the Old Wells Road. Pavements have been patched and full resurfacing is on the 2016/2017 programme. Please report any hazardous defects on pavements or highways directly to Somerset CC (details on website) and they will be repaired. As an alternative the "fixmystreet" website can be used to report all sorts of problems (e.g. fly tipping, street lights, potholes)



Street cleaning has continued 5 times per year. Dates are advertised on the noticeboards and on the website, but leaflets have proven to be the most effective way of reminding residents to move cars (thanks to Gill for distribution); unfortunately there are still a small number who ignore the request. Thanks again to the WI for organising the Village Spring Clean and to everyone who collects litter as they walk around our beautiful parish.

Please help to keep our village and lanes clean throughout the year and report any fly-tipping to Mendip DC. EVERYONE is requested to take responsibility for their own neighbourhood (pick up litter, cut back any overhanging plants etc).



Footpaths David Sparkes, our Footpaths Officer, has worked with SCC, Mendip Ramblers and landowners to ensure that our Rights of Way are accessible for the public and that the landowners' rights are protected. The Parish Council is looking for volunteers to help look after our footpaths, primarily any minor pruning if necessary and reporting any significant access issues to our Footpaths Officer. We've had a good response so far but there are plenty left!

Note that it is the responsibility of the landowner to maintain Rights of Way, especially when growing crops.

The Parish Council is supporting the Somerset Wildlife Trust's initiative to create wild flower meadows in our parish. If you can identify a potential wild flower meadow site then please let us know.



Dog owners, please remember to control dogs wherever there may be livestock. Dog waste bins are situated next to the church entrance and two on the Rec Field. Remember it is an offence to foul pavements & public areas.



Quarry Liaison Meetings, chaired by our County Councillor, Philip Ham, were held in October & April. Lafarge Tarmac supports our village by sponsorship of the Country Fair and continuing activities with the school. We are very grateful for this generous support (special thanks to Vaughan Gray).

Following lengthy discussions with SCC, we have now accepted the assurances for the security of the Long Term Management Fund to be held by SCC. The transfer of back payments and the detailed agreement are due to be completed in the near future.

Any villager who wishes to report any incident to Lafarge Tarmac should telephone the quarry on 01373 812800.



Community Hub In February Coleford launched its new Youth and Community Hub, at the newly refurbished Old School in Lower Coleford. The Hub will be a venue where the whole community, including neighbouring parishes can meet, exchange information and socialise. Already there are activities run by community groups and these are open to parishioners of Leigh. If you would like more information please contact Gill Newbury who is the contact for Leigh.



Website The Village Website, at www.leigh-on-mendip.org.uk, provides the latest events, minutes, contact information and pictures. All are urged to make use of the facility to advertise events, submit pictures and any village articles, suggestions, and comments via the Webmaster (Chris Cudmore) or the Clerk. If you are new to the village, download the "**Welcome Booklet**" Thanks to Dave & Tom Turner for hosting the website and providing technical support respectively.

Superfast Broadband is coming to Leigh on Mendip !! Currently planned within 18 months.



Finally, a "thank you" to the Councillors for their (unpaid) enthusiasm and efforts, the Parish Clerk for her communications and organisation and to all those who work to keep the village organisations running smoothly.

We still have one Parish Council vacancy, so if you think you may be interested please speak to any of the Councillors or Clerk for more details.

Chris Cudmore, Chairman