

LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

YEARLY NEWSLETTER MAY 2004

General

During this year the Parish council members have been Geoff Casey, Gerald Jeanes, Paul Moore, Neville Park (Chairman), Michelle Taylor (Now resigned) and John Wright. After giving a sterling service over the years, Jackie Longley resigned as Parish Clerk in August 2003 and Jacqueline Witt has now taken on the onerous task of keeping us all on the straight and narrow. Mary Mears continues to provide an outstanding service as Cemetery Clerk. The council has operated with one member short for the whole of the period and now with a resignation and one member sidelined through illness, (we wish you a speedy recovery Paul), volunteers are urgently required. Any interested parties should contact either a Council member or the Parish Clerk.

Planning Applications

The council has dealt with 21 planning applications during the period April 2003 to March 2004, mainly for domestic dwellings. Recently the planning process was given, from a local perspective, a much welcome boost with the introduction of a policy, by Mendip District Council, to give more weight to decisions/remarks made by Parish Councils. The Parish Council continues to have due regard to the guidelines contained within the Village Design Statement when dealing with planning matters.

Affordable Housing

Following the housing survey, a need for affordable housing within the parish with priority given to local people was established. The process has now progressed with provisional drawings for three two-bedroom and three three-bedroom dwellings. A public consultation day when the proposed plans and artistic impressions will be available for viewing and comment will be held in the village hall in the very near future.

Financial

It has been necessary to increase the precept by above inflationary levels this year, this is due mainly to prudent increases in the past and rising costs, which have resulted in a fall in the reserve fund. However, overall the level of precept is still below many parishes of similar size in the area. During the financial year the council has made grants to the following organisations:

Relate: Victim Support: Bridget Parker Trust: Leigh Recreation Field: Leigh First School: The Parish Warden Scheme.

Quarry Matters

The main item of note this year has been the change of ownership of Barnes Close quarry. This initially created noise nuisance problems with an increased level of motorbike scrambling in the area. Following discussions with various representatives of parish and district councils and the new owner, this problem now appears to have diminished. The Parish Wardens are continuing to monitor the situation. As to the long term plans of the new owner for the future use of Barnes Close, no specific plan has been submitted and at the current time no planning application has been made for this property.

Roads and Footpaths

The council has continued to make representations to Somerset County Council Highways department with regard to outstanding maintenance work

required within the Parish, with limited success. Also a second request was made to extend the 30mph limit to include Townsend, unfortunately this was turned down. The policy to replace footpath stiles with kissing gates when possible is continuing.