

Leigh-on-Mendip Parish Council

Newsletter April 2006

The Annual General Meeting and the Parish Meeting will be held at 7.30 and 8.00 p.m. respectively, on the 15th May 2006. If you have anything that you would like to raise as being of concern to the village the APM is your opportunity to do so.

The Council has had a further change of two members since last year, Paul Moore leaving with our appreciation for dedicated service over many years, and Geoff Casey leaving with an increase in his personal commitments inhibiting his crusade for better roads. Our new members are Frank Higgins, and Jan Schlechter.

The present council is:

Steve Anderson: Two Gates, Whitehole Hill -----01761 233433

Chris Cudmore: 2 Oak Leaf Court -----813735

Graham Harris: Dovecote -----812889

Frank Higgins: Fox Hollow ----- 812087

Ty Schlechter: Savernake Cottage ----- 07834363189

Jan Schlechter: Savernake Cottage ----- 07989500964

John Wright: The Post House, Leigh Street.----- 812317

Parish Clerk

Jo Anderson: Two Gates, Whitehole Hill-----01761 233433

Cemetery Clerk

Mary Mears: Brookfield, The Old Sawmills----- -812415

Cemetery. The management of the closed churchyard is still under discussion in Mendip District Council, and it is regretted that we again cannot report any significant progress since last year. We are looking into the possibility of purchasing some of the adjacent ground if, and as, it becomes available. The standard of the maintenance remains high and we are fortunate that David Jarvis has again tendered for this work.

Planning. A variety of applications have been considered, and duly listed in the Parish Council minutes. If there are any queries on past applications, the minutes can be reviewed by arrangement with the parish clerk. It must be remembered that the Parish Council has only an advisory role.

Affordable Housing. The availability of land was confirmed by the County Council, and plans were submitted by the Housing Association. These were accepted by the PC, subject to suggested modifications and conditions, which were largely confirmed by the Planning dept in MDC. With the availability of government funding reportedly closing on April 7th, the project was cleared on April 6th.

A possible start date suggested is June (this year); and we have been asked to suggest a name for the development. Any suggestions should be given to a parish councillor, or brought to the APM.

Precept The parish precept for the present year is £5500, which represents an annual charge for a band D property of approx £28.35, significantly more than 2005/ 2006, but within the average of similar parishes. There are several reasons: the accounts for some years have been enhanced by the inclusion of the Cemetery account in the final balance, where it was never intended that this should subsidise the general expenditure; all costs continue to rise – salaries, occasional capital expenditure, membership fees and insurance. It was decided that we should start a modest reserve fund against the possibility of additional cemetery land purchase. We also have, in the persona of Graham Harris, a knowledgeable advocate for monies available to enhance facilities in the village. These frequently require a contribution as an earnest, or a float to start a project.

Website. The website, at www.leigh-on-mendip.org.uk, is kept up to date and full of interesting information by our webmaster, Chris Cudmore. All are urged to make use of the facility to advertise events, suggestions, and comments.

Footpaths and Roads: The roads within the village are being patch repaired following continual lobbying, but a significant number of potholes remain.

Following a meeting with a number of County Council heads of department representatives on the traffic problems at the school, at which it was decided that nothing could, or should, be done, an individual approach has relocated the traffic signs and painted school approach signs on the road. We are looking at possibility of a solar powered flashing sign on the Soho road.

The footpaths are in reasonable condition, but were badly cut up in the very wet autumn weather. Further kissing gates have been erected, and it is intended to continue with this programme. A village walk was established, starting on Leigh Street, and stiles/gates replaced by kissing gates. This is a significant village amenity which attracted a grant covering the main cost.

Parish Wardens The cost of the Parish Warden Scheme to participating parishes has remained at £300 per year. Although the government has announced that PCSO's will substitute for "Bobbies on the beat" throughout the country, the recruitment and training is likely to take years. In the circumstances, it was decided that the parish should continue funding for another year. It will have been noted that "our PCSO" is now managed from Wells instead of Frome.

Quarries. Tarmac, at Halecombe quarry, are resuming quarrying of stone with new, imported equipment. It will be assembled from April, with production scheduled for June/July. It is a mobile equipment and, working on the lower levels, should reduce previous noise/dust problems.

There has been little development activity in Barnes Close quarry, with the owner extending his compound at the maintenance shed and clearing an area at the south side of the gate. This limits the footpath to the published route, but approaches have been made to the owner to permit future walking access to the high bank on the west side of the quarry.

Amenities. There are now short mat bowls facilities in the Memorial Hall on Tuesday evenings, from 8 to 10 pm, and on Wednesday afternoon from 2 to 4 pm. All are welcome. A table tennis club, held in the Hall on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 pm, is suspended for the summer, and will reopen in September.

Vandalism. There have been several cases of apparently mindless destruction in the village. The PCSO can respond to information or alarms, but obviously can only be present for a very limited time. If the nuisance/damage is to be limited or stopped, then anyone recognising an offender must report it – to a councillor, or to the PCSO. Parents, too, should have an interest in where their children are.

General. We are currently assembling a **Village Plan**. This is to ascertain what ideas we have in the village for the future. There is a large amount of money available from various sources for established needs, but an essential requirement is that all are consulted, and participate if possible. Please make your views known!

I would like to thank the councillors for their (unpaid) enthusiasm and efforts, additionally the parish clerk for her communications and organisation; and all those who work to keep the village organisations running smoothly.

John Wright

Chairman

