

Leigh-on-Mendip Parish Council

Newsletter April 2008

The Annual Parish Council Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting will be held at 7.30 and 8.00 p.m. respectively, on Monday 19th May 2008. 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.

No election was necessary last May as there were only 3 nominees. Fortunately Alf, Frank, Marsha and Rose have been co-opted and we now have a full and committed Parish Council. Sandrine Vaillant took over the role of Parish Clerk and Cemetery Clerk from Jo Anderson in September. It was an effective handover due to Jo's excellent organisation and Sandrine's fast learning of the Clerk's rulebook. The new councillors & clerk have taken full advantage of the available training events. Councillors have attended forums and Mendip DC meetings where they have an impact on our village. We are pleased to have support from both our District Councillors (Claire Fleming and Philip Ham) at most of our meetings, as well as our County Councillor (Gloria Cawood).

The present council is:

Chris Cudmore: 2 Oak Leaf Court	813735
Frank Higgins: Fox Hollow	812087
Rose Martin: 2 Park Hayes	813680
Marsha Read: Grove Shute Farm	812917
Ty Schlechter: Savernake Cottage	07834 363189
Alf Smith: Ivy Lodge	813478
Vicki Taylor: 3 Perrys Cottages	813942

Parish & Cemetery Clerk

Sandrine Vaillant: Burleigh Cottage 812563

Email: lom.pc@btinternet.com

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. Representations can be made at any time to the members of the Parish Council or the Clerk. Communication is by the two Parish Noticeboards and the Village Website.

During the last year the Parish Council has adopted a new Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. Responses have been made to consultations on Post Office closures, planning application guidelines and the East Mendip Community Partnership.

Precept. The parish precept for the present year is £5840, an increase of 4% which represents an annual charge for a band D property of £29.41.

Expenditure in the last year was approximately split equally between (a) grants to support actions from the Parish Plan, (b) maintenance & administration and (c) salaries of Clerk and Cemetery Clerk. We have committed to provide financial support to the Memorial Hall extension from the 08/09 and 09/10 precepts.

Cemetery. The management of the closed churchyard remains with Mendip District Council. The grass mowing continues to be contracted by the parish to ensure a high standard.

Planning. 12 applications have been considered and recommendations made to Mendip DC. The aim has been to uphold the long-term interests of the parish within the current planning policies. All planning information (plans, responses, decisions) is now available on the Mendip DC website. The main issues have been to conform with the Village Design Statement and to minimise street parking. The Village Design Statement was reviewed and re-affirmed without change.

Parish Plan. Following the issue of the Parish Plan a number of the actions have progressed. The Parish Council routinely monitors the action plan to identify opportunities to pursue. The Community Activity Project (a sub-committee of the RFMC) has been foremost in progressing developments to the Recreation Field building and new village activities. Graham and Caroline Harris have worked tirelessly seeking grants and organising activities from a Youth Club to the Active Living Centre for the over 50's.

Somerset Village of the Year. We were delighted to be awarded the Calor Somerset Village of the Year for 2007. Judges commented on the “..high level of village activities which, per capita, outstripped other short listed contenders..” Again thanks are largely due to Graham and Caroline Harris. We are currently making our presentation to the Regional heats.

Highways. An open meeting was held on 11th July to discuss the road safety problems in the village. A site meeting was arranged with SCC Highways Department on 18th December. All those who work in school, park outside or unload their cars in the morning are encouraged to park further up the road or in the Hall car park. The only other option is to involve the police to prevent dangerous parking. A hand held speed visor shared with other local villages is being pursued. SCC has agreed to exaggerate the narrowing of the road with white lines to encourage traffic to slow down at the Townsend chicane. Street cleaning has now increased to 5 times per year. Leaflets have proven to be the most effective way of reminding residents to move cars; unfortunately there are still a small number who ignore the request.

Police Community Support Officer. We were pleased to welcome Peter Williams as our new PCSO. Peter has continued Paul Emery's good work in policing the misuse of the quarries, vandalism and speeding traffic. Some vandalism occurred in the church porch during the winter. The Neighbourhood Watch coordinators continue to pass on relevant warnings.

Footpaths. A public meeting was held on 14th Sept to canvass input to the Rights of Way Network Improvement Plan. Mendip Ramblers have installed new stiles & kissing gates on many of the footpaths in our parish towards Coleford. Issues have been dealt with concerning dogs restricting access to a footpath and dog fouling on pavements & on the Recreation Field. Several fields around the Parish have been put to crop which were previously fallow and meadow. Where these have erased footpaths, it is imperative that

people continue to use and re-establish them in the correct direction and course. Copies of footpath maps can be obtained on request from the Footpath Officer (Ty Schlechter).

Quarries. A liaison meeting has been held with Tarmac at Halecombe quarry who continue to be responsive to village requests. A meeting with the full Parish Council is planned for June. If there are any points which parishioners think should be taken up at the next meeting they should be notified to a Councillor.

Website. The Village Website, at www.leigh-on-mendip.org.uk, is kept up to date with events, minutes, contact information and pictures. Graphics are minimised to provide quick access with dial-up for those without Broadband. All are urged to make use of the facility to advertise events, submit pictures and any village articles via the Webmaster (Chris Cudmore) or the Clerk. Thanks to Dave Turner for hosting the website.

Finally, a “thank you” to 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.

Chris Cudmore

Chairman