

LEIGH ON MENDIP ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Meeting held at the Memorial Hall on Monday 16th May 2023

Present: Cllrs Dave Mattick (Chair), Iain Kirby, Estelle Kirby, Paula Freeland, Vicki Taylor, Martin Carter, Neil Crump and sixteen members of the public.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from County Councillor Phillip Ham and Councillor Vicki Trundle

2 To approve the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 17th May 2021

The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 17th May 2021 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3 To receive the Chairman's Annual Report

Cllr Dave Mattick as Chair of the Parish Council read out the Annual Report

4 Report from the Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee

Vicki Taylor as Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee read out the Annual Report

5 Report from the Recreation Field Management Committee

A representative from the Recreation Field Management Committee read out the Annual Report

6 Report from the Allotment Association

Tim Spurgeon read out the annual report from the Allotment Association

7 Matters to consider

(a) It was reported that there are now two defibrillators in the village

(b) District Councillor Alan Townsend was invited to read out his annual report.

All copies of the reports are attached to the minutes.

Meeting closed 7.02pm

Annual Report from the Chair of the Parish Council.

Welcome everyone and thank you for your interest and support. As our newsletter said, the Parish Council is proud to serve this vibrant and active community. We strive to be apolitical and to represent the views of all Parishioners, but that relies on you telling us your views. There are opportunities for this at this annual meeting but also at an Open Forum prior to every Parish Council meeting as well as your day-to-day social interactions with Councillors. We are keen to hear all views. The new team of Councillors are all here, with one new face (Neil Crump), and we'll be agreeing posts and responsibilities at the follow-on meeting. Vicki Trundle did not stand this year; her busy job in the MoD Main Building precludes her Council activities as she continues to defend the realm; we thank her for her support over the years.

Scope of Responsibility:

The PC holds leases with the Memorial Hall, Recreation Field and Allotment Association and you will hear from them later. We also support the village website and the village Facebook, encourage Rangers and Neighbourhood Watch and own the grass bordering Leigh Street north of Park Hayes, as well as the civil cemetery and its planned extension adjacent to the Hall.

We maintain liaison with the school, quarries, the church, PCSO's, highways, footpaths and Mendip District Council.

Planning:

A key function that we spend a lot of time and effort on is Planning. During the last year we held 12 Council meetings where planning was on the agenda and discussed 30 applications recommending approval for 10, refusal for 5 and leaving the decision to the planning officer for 6. The remainder were issues where comment was not specifically invited {such as Prior Approvals, Lawful Development Certificates, withdrawn and deferred applications and preparation for an Appeal}.

All in all, a busy year and there is still no news when the 40 houses appeal is to be heard. Whatever, the PC is planning to make strong representation to the Planning Inspector with the assistance of a contracted planning consultant.

Cemetery:

The current cemetery is getting full, and during the next year the PC expects to start preparing the land adjacent to the Hall car park for use and this will include consultation with parishioners.

Key Events:

This year we were deeply saddened by the death of Anthea Brooks who had been our Clerk since 2014, was born in the village and had served as secretary to many of the village organisation and was well remembered as church organist. With the assistance of Chris Cudmore and after a false start we have been fortunate to engage the services of Kate Egan who is helping us update our administrative practices.

On the positive side, as part of the Halecombe Quarry Community Fund Management team we have been party to allocating funds to requests raised by various village organisations. {It proved a challenging task as starting up the organisation involved accepting delay after delay}. Whatever, awards were made at the end of March for the September 21 planned meeting. All village organisations should be aware that the next round of applications are to be with the Administrator by end July. With planning applications being submitted by various local quarries, there are opportunities to seek funding from various sources for community activity. Indeed, your PC is seeking assistance to provide hard standing on the grass owned by us north of Park Hayes. Over the year, the 11 village Rangers, under the leadership of David Sparkes have undertaken about 90 volunteer hours taming hedgerows, clearing debris and many other maintenance tasks, including painting signs and the church gates; particular thanks to Chris Ingrem.

Over the last few weeks, led by Kate and Chris Cudmore, we have transferred the Village Website to a new server. This offers more functionality than the last server and particularly improves the website for a mobile. Do report any issues you come across so they can be worked out.

Governance and Finance:

Our annual audit covers both governance and financial activities. As shown on the governance statement in your packs, we identified some lapses in administration where, although we recall activity, we failed to record it. On the financial side your packs include the accounting statement, and it indicates that the funds are in a good shape with a £2,000 surplus this year. However, this is partly committed to funding the planning appeal preparations discussed previously. There continues to be potentially major calls on the funds: the new cemetery; issues arising from the ongoing local government reorganisation – more devolved responsibility may mean more expenditure; MDC policy changes indicate more support for the closed churchyard from the Parish Council; there are various village projects that the Council would like to fund such as seats and trees.

Finally: It has been a busy and challenging year and all Councillors have worked hard and been involved; we believe we have achieved a lot. We also recognise that the uncertainties transitioning to a Unitary authority, where MDC disappear, and bringing the outstanding appeal to a closure plus all the 'normal business' will make this year ... interesting.

My personal thanks to all Councillors and Clerks for their efforts, support and contributions which have made the last year enjoyable and interesting, and particular thanks to Chris Cudmore (once again) for stepping in to assist.

Memorial Hall Report to Annual Parish Meeting – May 2022

The fightback from Covid is well and truly on! Roger and Ann our Booking Clerks having worked tirelessly scanning Government Guidance for the last year are now happy that we just ask people using the Hall be mindful and take care, because Covid is still with us.

Bookings are now up to pre covid rates and the Hall is well used by numerous groups and classes.

Our Treasurer Dennis, is also happy, as we have a healthy bank balance due to several grants from Government.

The grants have enabled us to redecorate the Hall and thanks to Chris Ingrem our local painter and decorator, I hope you will agree it is looking wonderful. The whole committee were also involved in washing (and ironing!) the curtains and cleaning the tables (please try not to use Sellotape on them in future!). We were very grateful to the patience of our users, when reopening was delayed, due to Chris contracting covid.

We are always mindful of the needs of users of the Hall and after several requests the committee decided it was time we invested in an up to date music system. Roger has led on this and with very grateful thanks to Phil Davey for all his expertise and work, it is now in place. Another request was for a hearing loop, and this has been incorporated into the new music system. As also requested, there are mugs now almost available for all users.

What can I say! Yes on occasion the ROOF STILL LEAKS!! We are heartily fed up with it and will be looking for quotes to possibly replace a section. This will be expensive and we will be looking for grant funding to support this work.

At our AGM in October, Brenda agreed to be Secretary and Emma took on the job of ensuring we keep the village informed through the village newsletter. Emma also permanently took over the job of cleaning, when Mr Rabbis retired.

Sadly, Gill Baker felt she was unable to continue on the committee, she had served for over 20 years and we wish her well in the future. Mary Phillips has since joined us. My grateful thanks to all of them for their tireless work.

We are a very small committee, who take on an important role in the life of our community and would very much welcome more members to share the load.

Vicki Taylor – Chair Memorial Hall Committee.

LEIGH-ON –MENDIP RECREATION FIELD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE **CHAIR'S**

REPORT FOR AGM APRIL 2022

We have decided to hold our Annual General Meeting once again on a Saturday as we were thrilled to have such a good response from fellow villagers last year.

The Recreation field has continued to be a centre point for many villagers again this past year with many people just enjoying the peace and space the field provides.

Clubhouse

The building has been decorated over the winter, carpet tiles have been placed over the very old lino tiles which were put down when the building was erected and it was quite interesting to find out that the gentleman who laid the original tiles was the very same who came to give us a quote on the carpet tiles. We also have new blinds which brighten up the lounge.

Cricket

Leigh cricket team are once again limbering up for the season ahead. We wish them every success this year. I'm sure they would welcome the village support on match days and new team members.

There have been a couple of near misses when 6's were hit into the playground. We have looked at various options to keep children safe in the playground when cricket matches are taking place, but have not been able to come up with anything that is safe and practicable, so sadly we will again be closing the playground this year when cricket matches are taking place.

Tuesday Night Bowls

Bowls on the rec. continued last summer, with a few more members joining in. This is a fun session that anyone can join, it gives people the opportunity to meet new people get some gentle exercise and most importantly have fun!

If you would like to participate it will start early May. Times 6.30 to 8pm Tuesday evenings.

Fund Raising events

Once again this has been very difficult this year. We have continued with our monthly bonus ball draw and we thank everyone that has contributed to this. For the first time ever we have sold every ball on the 2 draws.

Vanessa very kindly ran the Wreath making workshops at Christmas and that was run over 2 sessions. People again went away with their wonderful creations. Thanks to all those who provided materials and supported us.

Finance

We did bid for and win Covid related grants from Mendip district council, some of this money will be used to match fund other grants for the development of the open space project.

The village Fair

Sadly the village fair was cancelled last year, but a smaller village day took place on the Rec. It was great to see the villagers gather once again. It was a good opportunity to meet new arrivals to our village. The village fair for this year is going to take place on July the 16 th slightly later than usual so if you are able to help please let a member of the committee know.

Queens Jubilee

There is a fun weekend planned for the celebrations this year. Two events being held at the rec are :- The lighting of the beacon on Thursday night 2nd of June, and a picnic at the park. This will be held on Sunday the 5th of June. There will be games for everyone so please bring your picnic and share the afternoon with us.

Grass cutting

Last year was the first year that we and the cricket club took on the task of cutting all of the grass. I hope you all thought it was completed to a reasonable standard. Thanks mainly go to Frank and Dave for their hard work.

Wild Flower meadow

We are now into the fifth year. I think you will all agree it was lovely to see so many different species of flower popping their heads up last year. It is establishing well.

Upkeep of the field

This continues to be a very big task and the committee do their best to keep this in hand. We do however need and accept any help in this area. So if you have any spare time we would be very grateful for any help that is offered.

Please just contact any member of the team for job suggestions. There are a lot of things going on behind the scenes, such as all the secretarial jobs completed by David, financial affairs completed by Denis and general maintenance of the field and club house completed by the committee and fellow villagers.

Shelter

We have just received news that we were successful in obtaining the grant we applied for. The application was for a wooden shelter which will be sited near to the pump track. This request came from the various consultations we have held in the past few years.

Dogs

A polite reminder that the Rec is a DOG ON LEAD AREA ONLY sadly there are some people who think this rule does not apply to them.

We kindly ask that all dogs are on leads and dog mess is picked up in the rec. field and everywhere else in the village.

OPEN SPACE EXTENTION TO THE REC

The lease with the parish council is now finalised and we now have a plan of how we are going to lay out the area adjacent to the allotments. We are in the process of applying for change of use for the land and when this has gone through we will start on the task of applying for grants to complete the vision.

The area is now fenced off and this will become a dog free zone where children can play safely.

We were lucky to receive several trees from the rotary club that were planted in the autumn and are now establishing themselves well.

We have received a grant from Whatley Quarry for the purchase of a willow den and some picnic tables which we hope will be in place shortly. The living willow den has been planted. It took a bit of a battering in the gales but is now coming out in leaf.

If you would like to get involved in this project and we don't have your details already we would welcome you.

Thank you's to:-

Vanessa Barnes We sadly said goodbye to Vanessa Barnes who was on our committee for several years. Thanks go to her for all the hard work she put into the rec being treasurer for several years, Fair rep and of course her wreath workshops. Vanessa has not moved far so we are hoping she will still do our wreath making workshops at Christmas.

Frank

Who continues to do the jobs I can't. All those that pick up rubbish and generally care about the Rec.

All the committee

The current committee members that help keep the Recreation field a very special place are:-

Committee members:-

Vicky Higgins - Chair

David Pattison – Secretary

Denis Pattison- Treasurer

Brenda Wigmore

Alan Dagger- Fair rep

Vicki Trundle / Vicki Taylor– PC rep

Ty Schlechter- School rep

Martin Carter- Cricket rep

Allotment Association Report

Report to Parish Council
Leigh on Mendip Allotment Association
May 2022

A Continued Growing Success!

The allotments continue to provide a wonderful resource for the village. Not only do allotmenters provide food for the table – increasingly important in a period of increasing costs of fresh food – we also get exercise and companionship. There continues to be a constant flow of villagers – with or without dogs – passing by and sharing greetings or further chats.

The last year has been one of consolidation. Last year's Parish Council grant of £1000 went towards the £1155.26 cost of laying the (now invisible) grass reinforcement across to the site from the car park and around the accessible plots. This ensures easy vehicle access in all weathers. Putting in the piped water replaced the need to fill the ibc tanks by hosepipe from the Rec Building. The water is metered separately which allows the rec committee to bill us accurately for any water used. We now have a ready supply of water to cater for another possible year of low rainfall.

Three plots became vacant during the year with people giving up their plots or moving away from the village. The vacant plots have been taken over by other plot holders and we run a waiting list. There are five 'full size' plots (10m x 10m), 10 half-size plots, 3 quarter size including one comprising raised beds. People grow a wide range of produce – vegetables and fruit - and flowers. And there is a healthy exchange of ideas and support as well as sharing plants between allotment holders.

We are grateful for much needed financial support in the past year from the Parish Council and individuals as well as support and encouragement from very many other individuals and the Recreation Field Management Committee.

It is great to see that, from the greenfield site only three years ago, the development of the allotments for the village has been made possible by the support of the Parish Council and many other people who have put a lot of hard work into it.

We look forward to the next phase of development which will provide tool and equipment storage (as well as shelter to escape to in any event of rain!) and a small area of seating to act as both for social events and for plot holders to rest their weary limbs after all their cultivating. This will be paid for by the successful grant application to the Halecombe Quarry Fund and the continued support of the Parish Council with their £800 grant. The Allotment Association is run by a small committee and each allotment holder holds membership of the National Allotment Society.

Report from District Councillor Alan Townsend

LOM PC ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2022

Three main items to report for the year:

Unitary – The Secretary of State confirmed that it was the Government's wish for the 4 Districts and the County Council to be merged into one unitary authority. He was not persuaded that the rival proposal for 2 separate unitaries, East and West Somerset, should proceed. The result of the election held on 5 th May was

LibDem 61

Conservative 36

Greens 5

Labour 5

Independent 3

The Councillors elected for our ward are Philip Ham and Barry Clarke. Cllrs Ham and Townsend will remain as ward councillors for Mendip DC until it is dissolved on 31-3-23.

Covid – There has been considerable diversion of resource to support the Vaccination Centre at Shape Mendip, and also the administration of over £60M of central government funded Covid support grants. A long period of hybrid working has not helped working efficiency.

Planning – The new Local Plan was formally adopted in December 2021. It does not show a forward 5 supply of housing land. As a result, sites outside village development limits are vulnerable to speculative application and we have already seen the approval of such applications in Coleford and by the White Post. There is no plan in place to rectify this shortfall. Mendip also suffer from the banning of developments that could discharge nitrates and phosphates into environmentally sensitive wetlands on the Levels.