

LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at Memorial Hall on Monday 20th November 2023, starting at 7:00pm

Present: Cllrs Vicki Taylor (Chair), Martin Carter, Paula Freeland, Iain Kirby, Estelle Kirby,

Attending: Philip Ham (Somerset Council); Joe McGhee (Clerk);
3 members of the public including Chris Cudmore (Parish Path Liaison Officer) and Tom Kemp (Tree Officer).

1 Welcome by the Chairman

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence

Cllr Sue Sweet ; Cllr Barry Clarke (Somerset Council)

3 Absent

There were no absences.

4 (a) To receive declaration of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest from councillors in items on the agenda.

(b) To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests

Cllr Martin Carter has a written request for dispensation in relation to Leigh on Mendip Recreation Association for four years (June 2027). Cllr Vicki Taylor has a written request for dispensation in relation to Leigh on Mendip War Memorial Hall for one year (June 2024)

(c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate

There were no requests for dispensation.

5 Public Session

C Cudmore spoke to a number of points.

(a) EV Charging Points

Grants were not available at the time of email from CC to parish councillors in April 23. The Parish Council will monitor and consider EV charging for those without private drives.

(b) Welcome Booklet reissue.

To be considered as part of the Community Action Plan.

(c) Responses to highway issues.

The issues with roadside marker posts and hedge cutting (Quarry Lane) and vegetation on lanes (Pitten Street and Roundhill Cottage Lane) were acknowledged by Cllr Ham and will be reported by Cllr Carter.

(d) Control of weeds in Leigh Street gutters

Discussed under agenda item 12(i) below. The use of glyphosate weedkiller was agreed. Village rangers to purchase weedkiller and invoice the Parish Council.

(e) Historic Parish Council minutes

Parish Council confirmed acceptance; CC to continue publishing remaining past minutes on website.

(f) Halecombe Quarry Long Term Maintenance Fund

It was confirmed that six-monthly financial statements are being issued by Somerset and that the S106 actions to protect the real time value of the fund are being taken.

6 County Councillor Reports

Cllr Ham spoke briefly to the situation with Somerset Council finances and steps being taken to resolve the situation.

7 Monthly update from Tom Kemp – Parish Tree Officer

- (a) Option for replacement of damaged tree at Apple Meadow View.
TK submitted a quotation for a recommended tree and related materials. Clerk to draft a proposal for replacement of the tree and forward to Cllr Taylor and TK.
- (b) Refined plans and costing for tree planting at Park Hayes.
TK supplied a costed list of trees and related materials. This will be put on the agenda for the next meeting to consider financing the work.
- (c) Update of Tree Officer job description to include biodiversity.
TK will issue a revised job description to councillors for consideration before the next Council meeting. It will include TK as a Council point of contact for those interested in biodiversity, both to offer advice and to raise awareness.

8 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 16th October, previously circulated (Attachment 1).

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 16th October as a true record; these were signed and dated by the Chair.

9 Matters arising from the minutes but not on the agenda.

None.

10 Planning Applications – If other planning applications are received between the date of this notice and the date of the meeting, they may be considered.

- (a) **2023/2090/HSE** Removal of existing chimney, one and a half storey side extension, enlarged and enclosed replacement front porch and associated site works. Clifton Lodge, Knapp Hill, Leigh on Mendip. Council **RESOLVED** to recommend approval.
- (b) **2023/2032/HSE** Construction of garden room. Tweed Farm House, Hippys Farm Lane, Coleford, Frome, Somerset. Council **RESOLVED** to recommend approval.
Cllr Freeland will forward remarks for each application; Clerk will incorporate those in comments on behalf of the Parish Council on the Somerset Council planning portal.

11 Planning Applications – Responses to be noted from Somerset Council

- (a) **2023/0693/FUL** Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 5 (Drainage) on planning consent 2023/0693/FUL. Ivy Cottage, Quarry Lane, Leigh on Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA3 5QG. **Decision.** Approval.
- (b) **2023/1084/FUL** Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (Materials) on planning consent 2023/1084/FUL. Land at 369311 147357 Quarry Lane, Leigh on Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset. **Decision.** Approval.

12 To Be Discussed / Resolved

- (a) Update from Cllrs Estelle Kirby and Paula Freeland on the planning application for the area of land being considered for the new Cemetery.
Cllr E Kirby provided an update on the planning application and the need for a material/structural change, such as an interment, to happen to avoid approval lapsing. Following a discussion, Cllr I Kirby proposed a pre-application be produced incorporating a landscaping scheme to allow a definitive answer from planning on whether the application would be acceptable and final if approved. Cllr Carter seconded. **RESOLVED.** Cllrs Freeland and E Kirby to produced pre-application incorporating landscaping scheme. Tree Officer, T Kemp, to assist.
- (b) Guidance on complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman (Attachment 2).
Following consideration of this document, Cllr E Kirby given action to draft statement on the lack of a five-year plan at Somerset Council.
- (c) Review of councillor responsibilities.
Deferred to next meeting.

(d) Community Action Plan (Attachment 3).

This will be considered for approval and put to a councillor to drive forward at the next meeting under item (c) above.

Cllr Freeland left the meeting at 20:20.

(e) Local Boundary Commission Review (Attachment 4).

Noted, and to be considered at the Council meeting in March or April 2024.

(f) Approach from Recreation Field Committee for funding (Attachment 5).

Council discussed funding already provided to the Recreation Field Management Committee and agreed that further funding cannot be provided at this point. This will be reconsidered at the Council meeting in February. Cllr Carter to liaise with David Pattison of the Recreation Field Committee to update him.

T Kemp left the meeting 20:30.

(g) PPLO report; listing of priority footpaths, change of stiles to kissing gates (Attachment 6).**a. The following stiles are top priority to be replaced by kissing gates:**

- i.** North of Pitten House on path FR 8/7, stile #36843
- ii.** SS bars south of Thrice Barn on path FR 8/34, stile #36853
- iii.** Blackers Lane, opposite Hillcrest, Tadhil (stile with stone slab) on path FR 8/34, stile #36856
- iv.** South of 3Acre Annex (beyond stream) on path FR 8/28, stile #36877

b. The following stiles are lower priority to be replaced by kissing gates:

- i.** North west of Tadhil Farm, on path FR 8/30, stile #36865
- ii.** South east end of Leigh Woods on path FR 8/10, stile #36801

Several kissing gates have recently been installed around Stoke St Michael by Somerset Council. PPLO to contact Stoke St Michael Parish Council and Clare Haskins (Somerset RoW) and action. (Post meeting – PPLO has spoken to CH and provided request).

c. PPLO report as follows:

- i.** The Whitehole tuffa springs footbridge (#4377) has been repaired.
- ii.** Following the temporary closure of the Halecombe circular path, Tarmac kindly posted notices on the access points. The path is now open again.
- iii.** The Definitive Rights of Way from park Corner to Great House Farm (FR 8/24) is impassable. A stakeholder discussion is proposed (Parish Council, Tarmac, PPLO and Somerset RoW). PPLO to arrange.
- iv.** An alternative route around Tweed Farm has been agreed with Somerset RoW. PPLO to discuss with landowner.
- v.** Response given to Cllr I Kirby concerning access for dogs. Although not a legal requirement, it was suggested that dog walkers and landowners should agree and install dog gates. 3Acre Annex issue resolved with unlocked gate.
- vi.** Thanks to all parishioners who care for a stretch of footpath. Almost all are now adopted.
- vii.** Parish footpath information is maintained on the village website at <https://leigh-on-mendip.org.uk/footpaths>.

(h) Damming of streams – Cllr Sweet approach to Environment Agency.

Deferred to next meeting for Cllr Sweet to provide an update.

- (i) Combining Council Clerk and Cemetery Clerk roles (Attachment 7).
The revised job description was noted as was the proposal from the Clerk that his SCP level should be increased one step to 16, with commensurate hourly salary change from £13.45 to £13.70 to compensate for loss of cemetery salary. Cllr I Kirby proposed both be accepted; Cllr E Kirby seconded. Council **RESOLVED** to accept both.
- (j) Confirmation of positions for finger post and road sign to allow communication with Sara Davis (Traffic Engineer) to be concluded (Attachment 8).
Council recognised that funding isn't available for these changes and consideration of them was abandoned for the time being.
On a related issue, Cllr Carter will draft a letter to Charlie Higgins of Somerset Council on the possibility of clarification of the signage related to Apple Meadow/Park Hayes.
- (k) Biodiversity contact within Somerset Council.
Council noted that because of staff issues an appropriate contact is not available.
- (l) Street cleaning and weed control.
This was covered under item 5(d) above – village rangers approved to use glyphosate weedkiller and to invoice Parish Council. The Parish Council will endeavour to help with village ranger recruitment.
- (m) Highways/Community Speed Watch.
Cllr Carter gave a verbal report.
- (n) Somerset Council – Devolution of Assets and Services (Attachment 9).
Council noted the proposals from Somerset Council but will take no action at this stage.
- (o) Approach from Zero Hour for formal support (Attachment 10).
The request from Zero Hour was noted but Council decided not to do so to avoid compromising its apolitical character.

13 Clerk's / Councillors Report

- (a) Email from Simon James Ltd. forwarded to T Kemp. SJL informed.
- (b) Grant from SALC received.
Clerk to raise payment of funds to Recreation Field Management Committee.
- (c) NORI form for Cllr Sweet sent to Electoral Services at Somerset Council.
- (d) Engagement proforma returned to appointed internal auditor, Eleanor Greene.
- (e) Website updated re new councillor.
- (f) Issue with activation codes resolved with HMRC.
- (g) Cllr Taylor advised that parishioners using Sparks Field want an additional dog bin. Cllr Taylor has spoken to the landowner who has agreed to this. Subject to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.
- (h) Cllr Taylor advised that the Memorial Hall committee has decided that the Parish Council, as trustees of the hall, don't need to pay to hire it for meetings.
- (i) Cllr I Kirby referred to a discussion on proposed work covered under item 10 of the Council meeting of 16th October, 2023. He spoke to a representative of Halecombe Quarry and they assert that they are unaware of the proposed work.
- (j) Cllr Carter mentioned a request made for a communal village notice board. Cllr I Kirby advised that this is included in the action plan to be discussed at the next meeting.
- (k) Cllr E Kirby advised she has been in contact with the primary school and will be having a meeting with the executive officer and lead teacher in January, 2024.

14 Finance

Bank reconciliation (Attachment 11).

Bank Balances as at: 30th October 2023

Current Account £7,295.30

Reserve Account £9,583.86

Receipts

(a) SALC Health & Wellbeing Grant - £1,750 – transferred on 06 Nov 23

Payments

(a) Idverde grass cutting August - £113.53 – BACS transfer on 09 Oct 23

(b) K Egan salary and expenses - £680.68 – BACS transfer on 09 Oct 23

(c) Internet charges - £13.20 – taken by DD on 11 Oct 23

(d) Idverde grass cutting September - £113.53 – BACS transfer on 27 Oct 23

(e) SALC and NALC affiliation fees – £158.23 – BACS transfer on 27 Oct 23

(f) Clerk's salary & expenses October - £350.90 – BACS transfer on 27 Oct 23

(g) HMRC income tax October - £86 – BACS transfer 27 Oct 23

(h) Internet charges - £13.20 – taken by DD on 09 Nov 23

(i) Clerk salary November - £285.00

(j) HMRC income tax - £71.20

(k) Clerk expenses – working from home - £6.50.

(l) Idverde churchyard grass cutting October - £113.53

(m) FILCA course for Clerk – SLCC - £144

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the above receipts and payments.

The Clerk will revise the format of the bank reconciliation to reconcile to a date nearer the date of the Council meeting, and present this to the next meeting.

15 Correspondence to be noted.

(a) Update on repairs to Stoke Lane culvert – forwarded 12 Oct 23

(b) Westdown Quarries Liaison Group Meeting agenda – forwarded 17 Oct 23

(c) Local Boundary Commission Review – forwarded 19 Oct 23

(d) Somerset Council finances – forwarded 21 Oct 23

(e) Cookswood – Meeting with Leigh on Mendip Parish Council – forwarded 26 Oct 23

(f) Biodiversity (Somerset Council contact) – forwarded 31 Oct 23

(g) Draft minutes Halecombe Quarry Liaison meeting and Community Fund meeting – forwarded 03 Nov 23

(h) News for November (Cllr Barry Clarke) – forwarded 03 Nov 23

(i) Shepton LCN minutes – forwarded 07 Nov 23

(j) Asset and Service Devolution – opportunities for parishes – forwarded 08 Nov 23

(k) Boundary Commission presentation to Somerset Council (slides) – forwarded 08 Nov 23

(l) Proposed revised scheme of working for Westdown quarry – forwarded 10 Nov 23

16 Matters to report / items for next agenda.

There were no further matters to report or items for the next agenda.

17 Date and time of next meeting: Monday 18th December, 2023 in the Memorial Hall starting at 7.00pm.

Meeting closed at 21:20.