

MINUTES OF
LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 3 JULY 2001
IN THE SCHOOL

Councillors present: M Loten, P Moore, N Park, J Wright (Chairman) and P Knowles and A Gould who arrived late.

Apologies were accepted from G Jeanes.

G Cawood, District and County Councillor sent her apologies.

JW welcomed Derek Hooper and Chris Atkinson from Mendip District Council.

[P Knowles arrived]

DH gave Councillors the background to Mendip's view on the future of closed churchyards. Following consultations with various bodies Mendip wanted to take on the strategic and long term role, that is looking at plans for future burial options and the logistics of burials working with all parties concerned with burials, and leave the day to day running of open and closed burial facilities to Parish and Town Councils. As St Giles was the last churchyard to be closed and accepted by Mendip they would like to enter talks to use it as a pilot to develop long term maintenance arrangements. It was envisaged that the responsibility for grass cutting, walls, monuments and trees would be devolved to the PC. A structural survey of the walls had been done and showed the officials said that no major work needed doing. [A Gould arrived]

From 1/04/02 a Special Expenses Rate will be applied for work needing to be done to both open and closed churchyards. This means that money will be levied on the rate payers of the parish for work to the churchyards within their parish. Mendip plan to accumulate the money that was paid out in Burial Grants and use it to make grants towards major repairs to the estate. It was felt that local management of closed churchyards would be cheaper overall and that the people would get the type of churchyard they wished. He complimented Leigh on the state of St Giles's.

CA reported that the structural survey of the walls suggested the following needed to be done - the ivy cleared as it may cause or be causing structural problems; re-pointing; top stones replaced; and the bulge investigated. ML explained that the church had money for re-roofing the shed, and for some of the wall repairs but were having problems getting the builder who had quoted to do the work to carry it out, she asked if Mendip had a list of builders who they recommended and was told they would provide her with names.

Mendip were aware that a considerable amount of money was needed to do the necessary backlog of repairs. DH suggested that Mendip could do the work identified in the survey before the churchyard was handed back to the Parish Council.

Discussion took place on the 'topple test' for monuments and the possibility of laying monuments flat. Health and Safety aspects of churchyards must be considered and Mendip were in talks with the diocese on the principle of putting gravestones around churchyard walls.

The PC must agree to take back the maintenance of the churchyard and it was suggested that discussions took place, if Councillors were willing, to see how this could be achieved. There may be a possibility for using part of the churchyard as a managed conservation area and it was suggested that Lucy Corner from Mendip visited to site to assess it's potential.

It was agreed that further discussions would take place.

Chris Atkinson and Derek Hooper were thanked for attending the meeting.

JW welcomed the Parish Wardens to the meeting. They are producing a flyer which will be distributed to all the houses in their area giving details of how they can be contacted. Information will be displayed on the noticeboards.

A parishioner who had come to discuss with Councillors his proposals for an extension to his property was welcomed and a general discussion took place. It was pointed out that until the actual application came before the Council no commitment could be made as to the reaction of the Council to the proposal.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record and signed.

All letters sent.

YOUTH MATTERS – the basketball area had been dug out and only awaited the asphalt which J Robson was trying to get donated. JW suggested the PC put up a plaque explaining how the money had been raised.

JW and the Clerk had attended a BBQ run by the Youth Service at the Rec Field and spoken to John Stowe (the co-coordinator) Helen and Shirley who had been running the meetings and to Colin. The 'bus' would stop coming at the end of July but if the young people expressed a desire for excursions or talks they could be organized.

ROADS & FOOTPATHS – the Clerk had contacted Sheila Petherbridge concerning kissing gates and the Parish had been given 2 gates which were being delivered to GJ. He was getting estimates for putting the one in at Sparks Farm Field and will identify another site. **CLERK & GJ**

FINANCE

Notice of Audit had been displayed on the boards from 7 June. The Audit will start on 13 August.

PARISH WARDEN CONTRIBUTION – cheque 348 on the current a/c dated 16 June for £200 had been sent to Mendip. Discussion took place as to whether this could be an S137 payment but it was decided that it was more in the nature of a grant and will be shown in the accounts as such.

JW proposed acceptance of the FINANCIAL REPORT for July, AG seconded and all agreed. The report was signed.

CLERK'S SALARY & EXPENSES – the Clerk claimed Salary April-June of £300.30

Expenses £28.53

TOTAL £328.83

The new salary scale had been received from SALC. The Clerk was on SCP 21 for which the hourly rate from April 1 is £7.974. PM proposed increasing the Clerk's wage in line with national guidelines, AG seconded and all agreed. The rise will take effect from April 1 but payment for April/June will be added to the next salary claim. JW proposed payment of the Clerk's claim, AG seconded all agreed. A crossed warrant was made out and signed.

PM proposed that the Cemetery Clerk's wage be increased by one spine point with effect from 1 April 2001. PK seconded and all agreed. **CLERK**

MOWING BILL – Cemetery a/c. For cuts on 1 and 15 June £68.75. PK proposed payment, NP seconded all agreed. Cheque 19 was made out and signed. **ML**

ROADS & FOOTPATHS

A notification that the government had announced that all footpaths were to be open by 14 July had been received. Concern was felt at the arbitrary manner of this edict after the precautions farmers had taken to protect their livestock and especially in view of the fact that the Foot and Mouth outbreak is not yet over.

Pot holes and the sign at Ham will be brought to the attention of WS Atkins. **CLERK**

PLANNING

Conservatory at Kalynda, Leigh Street – no objection. **CLERK**

A letter from G Cawood (District Councillor) concerning the planning officers belief that the wall at the Townsend Farm development had ‘toned down’ had been received. The PC agreed with GC and the matter was being pursued.

REC FIELD - Minutes for 6 June circulated.

QUARRY MATTERS

MINERAL PLAN INQUIRY – objections had been put in and the inquiry date was 6 November. JW will progress the matter. **JW**

HALL REPORT – PM

The roots of the trees at the side of the Hall were causing concern. ML gave PM details of the last time the problem of trees had been addressed at the site.

MEETINGS ATTENDED

EMRTF – NP. Agriculture Support Officer now in place at Mendip – Charlotte Woodford. A Herbert was looking into IT training in the villages.

SALC – JW. The split with the Community Council and the funding needed by SALC was discussed. Quality PC Guidance will be circulated later. A Regionalisation White Paper will be published later in the year.

CORRESPONDENCE

NP was given the Hall’s Charity Newsletter. Mells PC had queried whose Parish Park Corner was in.

VITAL VILLAGE Pack; Somerset Home Guard circulated.

A letter from a Parishioner asking to purchase land belonging to the PC had been received by the Chairman who had replied that the area was not for sale.

NEXT MEETING DATES – AUGUST 7 and SEPTEMBER 4 2001.

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