

**MINUTES
LEIGH-ON-MENDIP ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 16 MAY 2016 AT 8.00 P.M. IN THE MEMORIAL HALL**

Present	Chris Cudmore	CC
	David Mattick	DM
	David Sparkes	DS
	Vicki Trundle	VT
	Paula Freeland (part meeting)	PF
In attendance	Anthea Brooks, Clerk	AB
	Alan Townsend, District Councillor	AT
	12 members of the public	

1 APOLOGIES **ACTIONS**

1.1 Apologies were received from Philip Ham (PH), County and District Councillor and Sue Vaughan (SV), Chair and Secretary of the Hall Management Committee

2 REPORT FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

- 2.1 The Chairman gave the Parish Council report as follows,
- 2.2 All households in the parish should have received a copy of the Parish Council Newsletter. Six councillors stood for the uncontested election in May. During the year two councillors resigned and two more were co-opted. However there are still two vacancies and the Council is keen to co-opt.
- 2.3 **Finance** - the Parish Precept was increased by £300 to £6800 which has resulted in an increase of less than £2 per annum for a Band D property. A grant was received of £230 as a result of the Council Tax Support changes and £2000 annual payment was received from the Soho Solar Farm. There were several commitments in the budget for the coming year including the pump track and the cemetery extension.
- 2.4 **Planning** – five applications had been considered of which three were supported and approved and two recommended for refusal. Public consultations on Part 2 of the Mendip Local Plan have been held and a draft plan is due to be issued by the end of 2016. .
- 2.5 **New Cemetery** – after many years of looking for a convenient site the plot of land adjacent to the hall car park is being purchased to provide an extension to the existing cemetery.

- 2.6 **Communication** – the noticeboard at Herbert Dun House has recently been replaced by the craftsmanship of Simon Thomas. The Leigh-on-Mendip facebook page continues to be popular and has attracted 123 members so far. The village website remains a good source of information for the village.
- 2.7 **Defibrillators** – the Parish Council is pleased to announce that two defibrillators situated at the Memorial Hall and the Recreation Field are to be installed. Training sessions will be arranged and advertised. The units have largely been funded by the Community Resilience in Somerset Project and also from donations from Tarmac and the Short Mat Bowls Group. Thanks are extended to Dave Mattick for leading this action.
- 2.8 **Neighbourhood Watch** – two schemes have been restarted covering Tadhill/Townsend and the central/east part of Leigh Street. Some other schemes in the village have lapsed.
- 2.9 **Highways** – the FixMyStreet website is a simple and effective method of reporting all sorts of problems (fly tipping, street lights, potholes etc.). Three road improvements are being pursued (junction signs on Old Wells Road, position of HGV signs at Soho and traffic calming at Townsend). Resurfacing of most of the pavements in Leigh Street and Bellfield are scheduled for this summer. Work is also scheduled to take place on the drainage at Townsend and the repair of a culvert. A volunteer has come forward to refurbish some of the finger posts.
- 2.10 **Footpaths** – David Sparkes as Rights of Way Officer gave a brief update and thanked the eleven volunteers who have come forward to help look after the footpaths and carry out minor pruning work and reporting of problems.
- 2.11 **Halecombe Quarry** – Tarmac has recently won awards from Mendip Council and the Aggregates Association for quality and design of restoration work on Rookery Farm. The village has received generous support from Tarmac for the Fair, school activities and the Christmas Tree Festival. A donation was also made to the defibrillator appeal fund. All this is much appreciated with special thanks to Gary Wason and Vaughan Gray for their continuing help.
- 2.12 In conclusion I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their enthusiasm and efforts, the Parish Clerk for her communications and organisation and to all those who

work to keep the village organisations running smoothly.

3 REPORT FROM THE MEMORIAL HALL COMMITTEE

3.1 Denis Pattison on behalf of Sue Vaughan presented the report from the Memorial Hall Committee and the following points were noted

- A major overhaul of storage was led by Denis Pattison which included changing the access to the area under the stage so the display boards for the Annual Art Exhibition can now be stored.
- Work has started to smarten up the gents and disabled toilets and the flooring in these areas will be replaced in the summer.
- Jobs at the annual maintenance morning included retreating the chair shed, the gutters were cleared out and the gate to the children's play area was repaired.
- Regular bookings have continued to be good with quite a few one off bookings but there are still plenty of Friday and weekend slots available throughout the year. Costs continue to be met from hiring charges and it was possible to donate £100 towards one of the defibrillators and to pay the small yearly electrical cost of having it on the wall of the Hall.
- Two quizzes were run last year and it is hoped that the same will happen this year with an autumn one in addition to the annual Tarmac quiz in March.
- The Hall has a great committee with everyone helping in a variety of ways to keep the building a pleasant and safe place for villagers to use for their meetings, activities and social activities.
- Finally DP added that if anyone has ideas for improving the hall or for new facilities please let the Committee know. The projector and screen is now available and perhaps consideration could be given to film nights which take place in other villages.

3.2 The Chairman thanked Sue Vaughan and the Memorial Hall Committee for their work.

4 REPORT FROM THE RECREATION FIELD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4.1 Vicky Higgins presented the report from the Recreation

Field Management Committee and the following points were noted

- The Recreation Field continues to be used by many villagers and within the last few months a portable football net has been obtained which has been used nearly every day since its arrival. Thanks are extended to those working behind the scenes such as David as Secretary and Vanessa as Treasurer. Additional thanks to David Duncan who cut the outfield verge last year, Matthew for continuing to cut the play park and of course Frank who continues to do all those other little jobs which occur. A recreation tidy day was held last June and the Committee was delighted by the response to our plea for help so a big thank you to all those who turned up. There will be another session this year just before the Fair.
- **Club house** is in good repair and the changing rooms have been redecorated this year.
- **Football** – unfortunately there has been no football this year but if anyone knows of a team needing a home pitch please let us know
- **Cricket** – the Cricket club continue to play and it is great to see this happening during the summer. We hosted a fun match in September which was a great success.
- **Tuesday night bowls** are available for anyone and those attending are still trying to bear the rather bumpy, rough terrain they call the green!
- **Finances** look healthy owing to the amount of fund raising towards the pump track and thanks to Vanessa for her work as Treasurer
- **Fund Raising Events** – a Christmas wreath making morning organised by Vanessa was a big success. Monthly whist drives continue on the third Friday of the month. The village fair was held on the field in June and was a great day. Anyone who is willing to help in any capacity should let a member of the committee know.
- **Pump Track** – work is still going on behind the scenes to move this forward, the application was approved by Mendip last week.

- **Grass Cutting** – the committee are grateful to the Parish Council for agreeing to pay for the grass cutting. The contractor works closely with the Committee and we are very pleased with the result.
- **Wildflower Meadow** – in the summer a patch of field near the boundary will be prepared to sow wild flower seeds. Anyone who is interested in getting involved should let the committee know. It is hoped it will enhance the field and create an environment for wild life.
- **Upkeep of the field** – this is a very big task and the committee do their best to keep this in hand. Any help with the upkeep of the field would be gratefully received.
- **Dog Fouling** – despite signs asking dog owners to keep their dogs on leads there are some people who still believe this does not apply to them. The committee do understand that these people may actually clear up after their dogs but if those not quite so courteous dog owners see other dogs off the lead they will think it is all right to do so. Therefore we kindly ask that all dogs are on leads and dog mess is picked up.

4.2 The Chairman thanked Vicky Higgins and the Management Committee of the Recreation Field.

5 LEIGH-ON-MENDIP FIRST SCHOOL

5.1 Vicki Taylor (VT), Chair of Governors and Mary Sturgess (MS) Head Teacher gave a report on the current status of Leigh-on-Mendip First School.

5.2 VT reported that Leigh-on-Mendip is a happy, vibrant and well achieving school but the challenges of setting a budget for the past three years have been difficult. The Government announced some time ago that all schools were to become academies but Leigh-on-Mendip was too small. As a result consideration was given to primary school status which would bring more pupils. Discussions took place with the Local Authority who were not happy about that as there is a three tier system in the Frome area. It was therefore decided to look at the possibility of becoming part of a local Multi-Academy Trust.

5.3 Four different Trusts were invited to come and present to the governing body and as a result the Governors are in the process of negotiating to become part of one of those Trusts.

5.4 MS stated that the pre-school on site which is run independently is finding it increasingly difficult to find people and parents with young children who are prepared to commit to becoming a member of the committee. Leigh-on-Mendip First School have been approached by the pre-school to ask if the management could be taken over by the First School. The paperwork for that is currently in hand and will happen by September of this year.

5.5 Any comments about these plans would be welcome either by email (address on the village website) or by letter to the school office.

5.6 The Chairman thanked VT and MS for their report.

6 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR ALAN TOWNSEND

6.1 AT gave a short report and made the following points

- MDC is reviewing its Council Tax debt collection procedures where vulnerable people and families with children are involved, and to only use bailiffs as an absolute last resort
- Shepton Mallet is considering free parking on Fridays to try and encourage trade.
- Wind turbines – Torr 4 have been turned down as well as two smaller turbines on the edge of West Pennard
- Attended a presentation on the rejuvenation of Frome/Radstock railway.
- Fly tipping around Frome has proved very expensive to clear and a joint endeavour between police/MDC and the Environment Agency is taking place

6.2 This has been my first few months as District Councillor and I would like to thank everyone who has supported me so far, I am looking forward to the next three years.

7 OPEN MEETING

7.1 The Chair asked those members of the general public who were present if there were any issues that they wished to raise (please see separate sheet of questions and answers).

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1 The next Parish Council Meeting will take place on Monday 20 June at 7.00 p.m. in the Memorial Hall.

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GENERAL PUBLIC QUESTIONS AT THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
16.05.16**

- AW asked for the name of the sponsor who is responsible for the footpath across his land. **DS agreed to inform AW.**

- 2. Ty Schlechter (TS) asked about broadband access. CC - it is up to the purchaser to discuss with the provider the most suitable package for your individual needs. Fibre output is now available from Mells exchange to the cabinet on the corner opposite the Firs – from then it is original copper wires.

- 3. PACT Meetings – does the PC get represented at the PACT meetings. CC - the PC did have a representative who attended the Police Liaison meetings but these have been discontinued. PACT meetings are open to the general public and anyone can attend and report on an issue. **However the PC will consider the possibility of representation at the PACT meetings and will discuss at its next meeting.** CC stated that any parishioner who is aware of a problem should contact the PCSO, Mike Storey.

- 4. Finance – the precept was increased slightly this year to cover various commitments. The percentage figure at 5.47% seems to be actually higher than the amount involved.

- 5. Neighbourhood Watch – TS asked about the scheme in the village. CC stated that each co-ordinator would cover 20 – 25 houses and if there is none in your particular area then it is possible to get something established. **CC has recently set up a scheme in Townsend and Tadhil and will pass on information which is also available on the police website.**

It was suggested that there should be something on the website stating which areas are not covered. CC stated that this is police information and if you need to have any further information you should contact the PCSO or the contact in Bridgwater.

- 6. Caroline Harris – irresponsible dog walkers. During the recent litter pick by the WI there were bags hanging off trees and bushes along the back lane. CC stated that all the PC can do is to ask people to keep their eyes open to try and identify the culprits.

- 7. School – Phil Streater to Vicki Taylor – if you had not agreed to take the option of joining a multi-academy Trust this would have meant closure of the school within a couple of years. Do you have written or verbal assurance from Dragonfly Trust that they will not close you if you join them.

We will be exploring ways in which the new contract will be of benefit to the school as we move forward and more funding should be available to the school although there will be inevitably some teething problems.

TS – there would potentially be an issue if the status of the school became a primary rather than a first school.

VT – Dragonfly are interested in making that happen and it would not be in their interest to close the school especially as it is rated as outstanding.

PS – merely seeking reassurance. TS – 40% of children from Leigh-on-Mendip go to Writhlington when they progress. I cannot see that they would want to close Leigh-on-Mendip School but there is no reason why we cannot seek that reassurance.

CC – if the school becomes part of the Writhlington Multi Academy Trust will the children from Leigh-on-Mendip be able to enter into Writhlington. VT – yes it is parent choice but presumably only if the village school becomes a primary in the two tier system when at present the links with Frome are a three tier system. If we were a primary within the Dragonfly Trust then the children would be able to go to Writhlington but it is ultimately parent choice.

8 Quarry – PS query regarding the quarry boundary. At the moment Tarmac want to move the tarmac plant up near the farmhouse and then quarry where the tarmac plant is currently located. This is all within existing boundaries. When they move the tarmac plant it may be seen by the village because it will be on a higher level. They have been told that would not be popular. The quarry have taken this on board and have decided to move the environmental bank. These things will be presented to the village by presentation at the Village Hall and at the Village Fair, the Estates Manager will be there to discuss matters.

9 Pharmacy at Coleford – Alastair Weston. Alan Townsend stated that a second application has been received which is a duplicate of the first application. Coleford PC are trying to investigate any collusion between the two applicants one of which is not known in the public domain at all. Coleford PC has lodged an objection to the first application and will be discussing the second application at its next meeting.

CC stated that Leigh-on-Mendip PC have agreed to support the GP practice and have put in a letter to oppose the application and have also received the second application which needs to be discussed. Coleford PC did debate whether it was the right thing to oppose a commercial issue because Mendip Country Practice is to some extent a commercial operation. The conclusion was that MCP is for the benefit of the village and the surrounding villages and because of that the commercial aspect is not an issue.

AT stated that there the actual site of the proposed pharmacies is not known although would probably be within 100 yards of the Co-operative store but specific premises have not been identified. The applicants will wait to see if they receive a licence and will then consider a property.

TS stated that he would like to say on behalf of the village people a big thank you to the Parish Council for all the work they do.

The meeting ended at 9.10 p.m.