

LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at Memorial Hall on Monday 18th March, 2024, starting at 7:00pm

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

Attending: Cllrs Barry Clarke, Philip Ham (Somerset Council); Joe McGhee (Clerk); two members of the public (Nick Hiscox, Chris Beaver of PlanningSphere)

1 Welcome by the Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence

None

3 Absent

None

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

Councillors Paul Freeland, Estelle Kirby and Iain Kirby pointed out that they were on the notification list for planning application 2029/0279/FUL. They indicated that the notification list was extensive (this was confirmed by the Clerk who had had a conversation with the appropriate planning officer), that this was not a reason to consider they had a non-registrable interest in the application and that it would not inhibit them from viewing the application objectively on behalf of all parishioners. Council accepted this and confirmed they could be involved in discussions and recommendations as normal.

(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

None.

5 Public Session

No comments at this point from members of the public.

6 County Councillor Reports

Cllrs Clarke and Ham delivered a verbal report.

Somerset Council has set its budget for this year and next. £500M savings will still have to be found between now and 2029.

There has been a focus on repairs after recent flooding. BC and PH have been involved in discussions with the Environment Agency and Defra. Villages are being encouraged to work via Local Community Networks to tackle the issue of flooding.

Somerset Council have extended the availability of the cost of living supplement to September and this should be communicated as widely as possible.

There is a blood pressure monitor available for loan from Frome library.

Two Local Community Network meetings took place, producing lots of new ideas. There is now a specific sub-group on the subject of highways. There is another specifically targeted at flooding. BC indicated that Andrew Turner of Somerset Council's Highways Department is the person to contact re the clearing of gulleys.

7 Monthly update from Tom Kemp – Parish Tree Officer

None.

8 To confirm the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th February, 2024, previously circulated (Attachment 1).

Council **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 19th February, 2024, 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) 2024/0276/OUT

Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved to relocate one of three permitted holiday cottages with details of access, landscaping and layout.

Land South East of Hurdlestone Lodge, Whitehole Hill, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

The Parish Council had a number of concerns on this:

- very close to a public footpath and a building here would not blend into the locality or the landscape character, and would impact adversely on public amenity
- in this sensitive location it was felt that an outline application is not appropriate
- concern about highway safety in terms of additional traffic onto Whitehole Hill

Given these concerns, Cllr Carter proposed objecting to the application and Cllr I Kirby seconded. Council resolved to recommend refusal of the application and the Clerk will apply appropriate comments at the Somerset Council planning portal.

(b) 2024/0279/FUL

Operational development relating to proposed flood alleviation scheme comprising formation of:

- (i) hydraulic control point with penstock valves and hydrocarbon interceptor;
- (ii) 2 No. upper scrape features;
- (iii) upper attenuation / wildlife pond (part retrospective);
- (iv) 2 no. lower scrape features (part retrospective);
- (v) lower amenity / wildlife pond (part retrospective); and
- (vii) associated landscaping works.

Great House Farm, Hollybush Lane, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

Chris Beaver of PlanningSphere gave a comprehensive exposition of the history and rationale of the application, and answered a number of questions from councillors.

Council came to the following conclusions/observations re the application:

- it was noted that of 6 public comments at the planning portal, 5 are supportive
- councillors had received a number of positive comments from parishioners
- it is considered that the development will have a positive impact on the landscape's visual character (agreeing with the Landscape and Green Infrastructure officer observations)
- there are significant ecological benefits, including mitigation through tree planting
- there are no highways issues and neighbours are not considered to be impacted
- there is not considered to be any impact on the setting of the listed and associated buildings, indeed the work will safeguard the buildings

For the above reasons, Cllr Freeland proposed recommending acceptance of the application, Cllr I Kirby seconded. Council voted unanimously in favour. The Clerk will apply appropriate comments at the Somerset Council planning portal recommending approval of the application.

(c) Update on enforcement issue (Cllr Taylor)

Cllr Taylor reported on a complaint from a parishioner about a barn which had been constructed without planning permission. She took this up with the Enforcement Officer at Somerset Council and it is understood that this is now the subject of a retrospective planning application.

She also raised a complaint from a parishioner about a building constructed as a holiday let which now seems to be being used as a permanent residence. She passed the appropriate information to the Clerk who will take the issue up with the Enforcement Officer.

11 Planning Applications – Decisions to be noted from Somerset Council**(a) 2024/0076/APP**

Approval of details reserved by condition 5 (materials) on planning consent 2022/1019/OUT – 6 Park Hayes, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA3 5QN

Decision. Approval.

Noted.

12 To Be Discussed / Resolved**(a) Update on application for the new cemetery, incorporating landscaping design (Attachment 2) and access from Bellfield.**

Cllr E Kirby spoke to the draft landscaping design for the new cemetery. Council resolved that although the costs would be over budget, the design can be used as it stands for the purposes of the planning application. Cllrs E Kirby and Freeland to progress in April. An approach will also be made to the quarry fund for benches.

(b) Community Plan communication update – Cllrs Taylor, Sweet.

Cllr Sweet spoke to the updated action list. Progress has already been made on a number of actions and discussions are underway with a potential source of funding to facilitate others. Cllr Taylor supplied copies of a draft communication to go out to parishioners. On first viewing some were happy with it as it is and some thought it a little too informal. Cllr Taylor asked councillors to review in detail and provide feedback.

It was resolved that the annual parish meeting will take place on Saturday 18th May, from 2:00 to 3:30, and the communication will go out in advance of that.

The annual full council meeting will take place on Monday, 20th May, followed immediately by the regular, scheduled meeting.

Cllr Taylor indicated she will stand down as chair on 20th May but remain as a councillor.

Cllrs Clarke and Ham left the meeting at 20:40.

(c) Hardstanding at Park Hayes - update (Cllr Taylor).

No update. Continues.

(d) Update on additional dog bin at Sparks Field - Clerk.

Cllr Taylor indicated that a dog bin for Sparks Field had been donated by a Bristol company, Professional Hygiene. Clerk to send a letter of thanks.

The Clerk pointed out that a donation of £200 had been made towards the cost of a new bin.

The donor was asked if she wanted the money returned, but declined and asked that it be put to some other good cause by the Parish Council. The Clerk has thanked her again for her thoughtfulness and generosity.

(e) Grant requests from Recreation Field committee, including mowing the recreation field in 2024 (Attachment 3).

After a discussion on the level of continuing support for play area equipment in the Recreation Field, taking into account a request from earlier in the year for funding not carried forward from 2022-23, Cllr I Kirby proposed a grant of £2,000 and Cllr Taylor seconded. **RESOLVED** Council voted to approve the grant.

Council also considered the request from the Recreation Field Management Committee for a grant of £1,500 in the 2024-25 financial year towards grass cutting. **RESOLVED** Approved.

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- (f) N Hiscox presentation to school and other parishes – update from Cllrs E and I Kirby.
Discussions on this continue.
N Hiscox left the meeting at 21:03.
- (g) Highways updates:
 - 20mph sign at school – Clerk
No update has been received from Somerset Council. The Clerk will draft a follow-up message and copy to Cllr Ham.
 - Copper beech tree overhanging road at Recreation Field – Cllr Carter/T Kemp
Continues.
 - Possibility of dropped kerb at Park Hayes – Cllr Carter
Following further investigation on the benefits and disadvantages of installing a dropped kerb, it was decided not to pursue this matter further due to the potential issues this may create for existing residents.
- (h) Clerk grade and salary for 2024-25 – to approve, or not, grade of SCP 17 at National Joint Council agreed hourly rate of £14.95.
Cllr Taylor proposed acceptance of the upgrade in SCP level and salary for the Clerk. Cllr I Kirby seconded, and Council unanimously approved.
- (i) Consideration of Local Government Boundary Commission Review (deferred from 20th November) – Attachment 4.
This will be considered by councillors and be included on the agenda for the April meeting.
- (j) Mendip Local Plan Part II - Sparks Farm sites identified by Somerset Council for housing (Attachment 5).
This will be an agenda item for the April meeting, under Planning, for discussion with Somerset Councillors.
- (k) Annual Parish Meeting.
Resolved above.
- (l) Email from Cllr A McGuire on Parish Council priorities.
Noted.
- (m) Development of local flood plans via Somerset Council and LCN.
Covered above.

13 Clerk's / Councillors' Report

- (a) Budget for 2024-25 published on website.
- (b) Mells Park Trust approached re community fund invoice for 2024; Clerk was assured that this would be scheduled for payment in payroll in week ending 15th March.
Invoice was settled on the day of the meeting.
- (c) Email of complaint re lack of five-year plan finalised and sent to Cllr Ros Wyke et al – no response at time of writing. Copy forwarded by Cllr E Kirby to Cllr P Ham of Somerset Council.
- (d) Full amount of sponsorship - £200 – received for dog bin at Sparks Field. Donor wishes that donation be treated as anonymous.
- (e) Credit note for duplicate invoice received from Idverde; three invoices now scheduled for approval.
- (f) Battery and pads pack for cricket club defibrillator received and passed to T Schlechter.

(g) Further email sent to Traffic Management for clarity on direct contact on new signage at Park Hayes; response awaited. Also waiting on clarification on why 20mph sign not included with flashing lights at school.

Clerk to draft a follow-up email on the 20mph sign issue as well as signage at Park Hayes. Cllr Ham will be copied in.

(h) Revised role description for Tree and Biodiversity Officer published.

(i) Speedwatch signs ordered.

Signs handed over to Cllr Carter at the meeting.

(j) No response yet from 'Devolution' contact email address with regard to proposal for taking over land at Park Hayes.

Clerk to draft follow-up email; Cllr Carter to provide photos of damage to the surface of the land by contractors to support argument for Parish Council taking over ownership and maintenance.

(k) Latest set of forms completed and sent to NS&I to change contact details and list of signatories; confirmation awaited.

(l) Recommendations of approval posted on Somerset Council planning portal for applications 2024/0133/LBC and 2024/0077/VRC.

(m) Update from PPLO (Footpaths, Rangers, Website):

It is noted that planning application 2024/0276/OUT considered above is close to public footpath FR 8/7.

Despite repeated requests, no update has been received from Tarmac regarding the opening of footpath FR 8/24. Now informed that S Bosley has left the site – update requested from colleague Scott. It is requested that Cllr I Kirby identify the best contact and raise at the next Quarry Liaison meeting.

Awaiting PC response on query re insurance for volunteers and informing Parish Council when urgent work needed; Clerk to clarify with insurance company.

Website continues to be updated with historical minutes of meetings; those from 2010-19 now available under the 'History' section. More to follow.

14 Finance

Bank reconciliation (Attachment 6).

Bank Balances as at: 11th March, 2024

Current Account £5,555.30

Reserve Account £9,583.86

Receipts

Dog bin sponsorship - £200 – BACS 28 Feb 24.

Payments

(a) V Taylor – Gifts to Rangers - £45.00 – BACS - 20 Feb 24

(b) HMRC – Income tax February - £71.20 – BACS – 28 Feb 24

(c) J McGhee – Salary and expenses February - £291.50 – BACS – 28 Feb 24

(d) Ionos – web hosting - £15 – BACS 09 Feb 24

(e) Clerk salary March - £285.00

(f) HMRC Income tax March - £71.20

(g) Clerk expenses – Working from home February - £6.50.

(h) Clerk expenses – Speedwatch signs - £101.00

(i) Clerk expenses - 50% SLCC annual subscription - £74.00.

(j) Idverde – Inv 108905587 – Dec 23 - £113.5

(k) Idverde – Inv 10903308 – Jan 24 - £113.53

(l) Idverde – Inv 10907661 – Feb 24 - £113.53

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

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15 Correspondence to be noted.

- (a) B Clarke – Minutes Constitution and Government Committee; Portrait of the King - forwarded 16 Feb 24
- (b) Consultations East – Letter re application 2024/0276/OUT - forwarded 22 Feb 24
- (c) A McGuire – Email on parish priorities - forwarded 27 Feb 24
- (d) T Axford – attendance of PlanningSphere Ltd at meeting on 18th March – forwarded 28 Feb 24
- (e) Administrator Halecombe Quarry – agendas for meetings – forwarded 28 Feb 24
- (f) A Laing – Highways Services Devolution – forwarded 28 Feb 24
- (g) Monitoring Officer – Code of Conduct query – forwarded 28 Feb 24
- (h) B Clarke – Briefing sheet - forwarded 28 Feb 24
- (i) B Clarke – Flooding and Shepton LCN - forwarded 29 Feb 24
- (j) A Sestini – Mendip Local Plan Part II - forwarded 04 Mar 24
- (k) B Clarke – Approved capitalisations - forwarded 04 Mar 24
- (l) R Jefferies – Purchase of Shepton Mallet Amulet Theatre – forwarded 12 Mar 24

16 Matters to report / items for next agenda.

Planning for the annual parish meeting to be included on the agenda for the April meeting.

17 Date and time of next meeting: Monday 15th April, 2024 in the Memorial Hall starting at 7.00pm.

Meeting closed at 21:25