

LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at Memorial Hall on Monday 18th November, 2024

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

Attending: Cllr Philip Ham (Somerset Council); Tom Kemp (Tree Officer); Chris Cudmore (Parish Footpath Liaison Officer); 3 members of the public.

1 Welcome by the Chairman

2 Apologies for absence

Joe McGhee (Clerk); Cllr Barry Clarke (Somerset Council)

3 Absent

None.

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

None.

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

Cllr Vicki Taylor has an approved request for dispensation in relation to Leigh On Mendip Memorial Hall until June 2027.

(c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate

None.

5 Public Session

A member of the public representing Apple Meadow View residents expressed concern that the current parking arrangements through Park Hayes would prevent a Fire Service vehicle from attending any of their properties because the parking of cars made the road narrower than required, i.e. 3.7m. The road has been measured and the available space and it is only 3.2m. Je requested that the Parish Council contact the Fire Service and ask if they could attend site and carry out a review of the situation and report back with any suggested actions. Council agreed to do this; Clerk to contact the Fire Service.

Another member of the public mentioned a collapsed drain outside of their property and was advised to report this on the Somerset Council "Fix My Street" website

6 County Councillor Reports

Cllr Ham provided a verbal update to the notes previously circulated by Cllr Clarke. The first of next year's budget setting meetings will take place on the 25th November 2024 with the Section 151 Officer currently advising a deficit of between £80m-£160m with all reserves having been used. Currently planning meetings are proving difficult to get through the agenda items so a proposal to extend the time for the meeting has been made. The Local Community Networks (LCN) have been reduced to just four meetings a year with officer support now being shared across a number of LCNs. There have been some calls to stop them altogether. Cllr Ham has a meeting with Highways next week and will be raising again the issue of the flooding at Barns Close and the re-positioning of the 30MPH signs at the bottom of the village which he has already discussed with the Council Chief Executive. Boundary changes due to happen in 2027 are likely to mean that it will go back to one Councillor representing one area.

7 Monthly update from Tom Kemp – Parish Tree Officer

Tom has met a resident who contacted him for advice about planting hedging. In relation to the Memorial Hall trees, he does have some concern about the very large sycamore tree in the middle of the others; he needs to look in more detail at its base which he will do over the next few days. In terms of the ongoing discussion about light pollution from the Willmotts site, he has suggested a softer approach whereby he offers to carry out a site visit from a bio-diversity

perspective. Cllr Ham knows the owner of the site so will make this offer to him and then contact Tom. Tom is planning to meet with the Recreation Field committee to discuss the placing of charcoal around the base of the ash trees in the field.

36/24-25

8 To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 21st October, 2024, previously circulated (Attachment 1)

Resolved. Confirmed.

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) 2024/1855/VRC

Application to vary condition 2 (List of approved drawings) of planning approval 2021/1217/FUL (Erection of farm building to include storage of wood chip for on farm use) Grove Shute Farm, Towns End Lane, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset
The Council discussed the notes provided by Cllr Freeland. Cllr Freeland proposed that the Council should recommend approval; Cllr E Kirby seconded. Council voted unanimously to recommend approval.

(b) 2024/1939/HSE

Erection of a field shelter/tractor shed.
Clearwood, Leigh Street, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset
The applicants were present. They explained that they required storage space for various items and that they had designed the shelter/tractor shed to be as similar to an agricultural building as possible. The finished building would have hedging planted around it. They confirmed they had consulted neighbours about the location of shelter. The Council then discussed the notes provided by Cllr Freeland. Cllr Freeland proposed that the Council should recommend approval; Cllr E Kirby seconded. Council voted unanimously to recommend approval.

(c) 2024/1956/HSE

Conversion of existing outbuildings into an open plan kitchen, dining, and living area. Works to include repositioning of existing garage and addition of a ground floor WC.
Manor Farm, Leigh Street, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset
The Council discussed the notes provided by Cllr Freeland. Cllr Freeland proposed that the Council should recommend approval; Cllr E Kirby seconded. Council voted unanimously to recommend approval.

(d) 2024/1957/LBC

Conversion of existing outbuildings into an open plan kitchen, dining, and living area. Works to include repositioning of existing garage and addition of a ground floor WC.
Manor Farm, Leigh Street, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset
The Council discussed the notes provided by Cllr Freeland. Cllr Freeland proposed that the Council should recommend approval; Cllr E Kirby seconded. Council voted unanimously to recommend approval.

11 Planning Applications – Decisions to be noted from Somerset Council

(a) 2024/1532/APP

Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 5 (Wildlife Protection and Enhancement) on planning consent 2024/1084/FUL
Land at 369311 147357 Quarry Lane, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset
Decision. Approval.

(b) 2024/1472/FUL

Erection of 1 no. detached self-build bungalow
Land at 1 Park hayes, Leigh On Mendip, Radstock, Somerset.

Decision. Approval.

(c) 2024/1368/FUL

Erection of 1 no. single storey holiday let and field shelter.
Land at 367365 145942 Old Wells Road, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

Decision. Application withdrawn.

(d) 2024/1635/HSE

Erection of single-storey side and rear extension and porch to new entrance.
Sugar Bush Cottage, Leigh Street, Leigh On Mendip, Radstock, Somerset, BA3 5QQ.

Decision. Approval.

Resolved. All decisions noted.

12 Finance

- (a)** To approve (or not) bank reconciliation at 12 Nov 2024 (Attachment 2)

Resolved. Approved.

- (b)** Following NJC agreement on local government staff salaries for 2024-25, to approve (or not) increase in clerk hourly rate from £14.95 to £15.58, backdated to April 2024.

Resolved. Approved.

- (c)** To approve (or not) receipts and payments as identified in the Cashflow 14 Oct 2024 to 12 Nov 2024 (Attachment 3).

Resolved. Approved.

- (d)** To agree precept increase and approve (or not) draft budget for 2025-26 (Attachment 4).

The Council discussed the various options for next year's budget and concluded that it should wait until next month to see if there are any further details from Somerset Council on the activities which Council may have to fund going forward. In principle at this stage Council may increase the precept by a small amount subject to further information from Somerset Council.

- (e)** To approve (or not) grant to Recreation Field Committee of £1,500.

Resolved. Approved.

13 Clerk's / Councillors' Report

- (a)** The correct form was finally received from NS&I to update bank details. It was returned by the Clerk and confirmation is expected shortly after which the correct withdrawal form will be confirmed and funds removed to the council's current account. .

- (b)** An invoice was sent to James Reed Public Relations for the Heidelberg Materials (Whately Quarry) donation of £600 for cemetery benches.

- (c)** Clerk liaising with Cllrs E Kirby and Sweet on the procurement of the benches for the new cemetery. Order and delivery imminent.

- (d)** Clerk attended Code of Conduct training on 13th November.

- (e)** Clerk attended a Somerset Council briefing on devolution (from central government to Somerset Council) and boundary changes. Somerset will move to 96 councillors in 96 divisions from the current 55 divisions with 2 councillors representing each.

- (f)** Sarah Stanistreet confirmed as the contact at Somerset Council for volunteer training.

- (g)** The Community Review Action plan updated provided at the October meeting was published on the village website Community Plan and Design Statement page.

- (h)** There will be one interment of ashes in the cemetery in late November.

All points noted.

14 To Be Discussed / Resolved

- (a)** Emergency plan feedback (Cllr Taylor)
Cllr I Kirby will look at what work would be involved in refreshing the 2015 Emergency Plan and report to Council.
- (b)** Forward plan
It was confirmed that Council is following the Forward Plan and items appear on the agenda as planned.
- (c)** LCN Update
Cllrs E and I Kirby attended the most recent LCN meeting which had a very useful discussion about what Somerset Council may stop providing. As yet there has been no communication confirming exactly what that might be and the general view of the meeting was that town and parish councils just don't have the resources to take anything on.
- (d)** Somerset Local Plan
Councillors agreed to read and keep an eye on developments at this stage.
- (e)** Cemetery development (Cllr E Kirby)
Benches will be on order shortly. Gates are slightly larger than the gap so Cllrs E and I Kirby will look at ways of mounting them using the existing posts.
- (f)** Rights of Way/local path maintenance
Chris Cudmore reported that the rangers and footpath adopters already carry out the maintenance of our paths and communicate with landowners where necessary.
- (g)** SRA Flood Action Fund
Not relevant to this parish.
- (h)** Unit Trust Bank signatory update (Clerk)
Update to be provided at next meeting.
- (i)** Grit bin (Clerk).
Cllr Ham will take this up within Somerset Council because it appears from comments on Facebook that it was a Somerset Council contractor vehicle which damaged the bin.
- (j)** Communication with Willmotts re light pollution (Cllr Taylor)
Already discussed in Tree Officer's report.
- (k)** Community Review Action Plan (Cllrs Taylor, Sweet)
Councillors should provide any feedback on Action Plan reporting to Cllr Sweet.
- (l)** Somerset Day 2025.
Noted. No action at this stage.
- (m)** Communication with LPA re village shop and self-build applications.
Council discussed Cllr Freeland's proposal to write to the local planning authority to advise them that there is no longer a shop in the village or a usable bus service for those who have to work. Cllr Ham suggested writing to the Principal Planning Officer East (Simon Trafford/Andre Sestini)
- (n)** Mobile repair shop facility (Cllr Taylor)
Investigation into this possibility continues.
- (o)** Community notice board (Cllr Taylor)
The landlord of the Bell Inn has agreed to provide a sketch and costings for a Community Notice Board.
- (p)** Welcome guide (Cllr Sweet)
The work so far completed by Chris Cudmore was applauded by Councillors; he will continue developing the rest of the guide.
- (q)** Halecombe Quarry exit signage (Cllr I Kirby)
Cllr I Kirby will raise at the next community meeting with Halecombe Quarry.

15 Matters to report / items for next agenda.

- Volunteers report
- Footpaths/rights of way and rangers (C Cudmore)
- Hall and recreation committees (Cllr Taylor)

16 Date and time of next meeting: Monday 16th December, 2024 in the Memorial Hall starting at 7.00pm.

Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions; Equal opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights.