

## LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at Memorial Hall on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2025

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

Attending: Joe McGhee (Clerk); Tom Kemp (Tree Officer & BNG Adviser); Cllrs Philip Ham, Barry Clarke (Somerset Council); 2 members of the public.

**1 Welcome by the Chairman**

**2 Apologies for absence**

Cllrs E Kirby and S Sweet.

**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**

No comments from the public.

**6 County Councillor Reports**

Cllr Clarke provided some comments further to a monthly update he had sent|:

- surveys are being carried out on the Boundary Commission review of divisions/councillors in Somerset

- a Somerset business survey is to be carried out

- the public space protection order is being renewed because the previous one has lapsed

- the householder support fund closes at the end of March

- the "man in a van" scheme to provide highways support to parish councils has proved too expensive to be practical for smaller councils

- the last council meeting included a motion in support of local farmers

- some, but not all, councillors involved in reviewing it have provided feedback on the Boundary Commissions proposals for changes to divisions/councillors in Somerset

Cllr Ham added a number of points:

- a new NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) came out before Christmas, with a 41% increase in the government requirement for housebuilding and an associated hardening of grounds for refusing planning permission

- January is a critical month for the resolution of a budget for Somerset Council

- he has communicated with Somerset Council Highways Department on flooding and the damaged grit bin, and awaits a response

- a Shepton Local Community Network meeting is due on 27<sup>th</sup> January, but no paperwork has been issued yet

- farmers have been invited to propose areas of land which could be used in the Biodiversity Net Gain scheme

**7 Monthly update from Tom Kemp – Parish Tree Officer**

TK is waiting for a response from Willmotts on light pollution; Cllr Clarke offered to obtain contact details for Andy Stott as the appropriate person to speak to.

He has planted a 45 metre long beech hedge in the village, comprising 300 trees.

He will draft some words on BNG to reach out to the parish in his role as Biodiversity Adviser to the council. He will forward the draft to the Clerk for circulation to councillors.

**8 To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December, 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) 2024/2257/FUL**

Proposed erection of 2 no. 2 bed dwellings attached to existing dwelling.

1 Park Hayes, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA3 5QN

The applicant, Simon James, was present and spoke briefly to his application, answering several questions. He confirmed requirements for parking will be accommodated off road at the property. Comments from parishioners were noted regretting the amount of development which has gone on in Park Hayes and expressing concern at another increase in traffic. After a discussion on design and appearance, highways implications and amenity, Cllr Freeland proposed that on balance the council should recommend approval if the Planning Officer takes into account the Five Year Plan with regard to housing, as well as the Community Plan in which a desire was expressed for more two-bedroom, affordable housing in the parish. Cllr I Kirby seconded and the council voted unanimously to recommend approval. Cllr Freeland to draft comments/arguments and Clerk to apply appropriate comments at the Somerset Council planning portal.

S James and one member of the public left the meeting at this point (19:20).

**11 Planning Applications – Decisions to be noted from Somerset Council****(a) 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.

**(b) 2024/1471/FUL**

Erection of 4 self-build detached dwellings (Bungalows)

Land Rear of Ivy Cottage, Quarry Lane, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

**Decision.** Approval.

**(c) 2024/1855/VRC**

Application to vary condition 2 (List of approved drawings) of planning approval

2024/1217/FUL (Erection of farm buildings to include storage of wood chip for on farm use.)

Gove Shute Farm, Towns End Lane, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA3 5QT.

**Decision.** Approval.

**12 Finance**

**(a)** To approve (or not) bank reconciliation at 11 Jan 2025 (Attachment 2)

**Resolved.** Approved.

**(b)** To approve (or not) receipts and payments as identified in the Cashflow 11 Dec 2024 to 11 Jan 2025 (Attachment 3).

**Resolved.** Approved.

- (a) To approve (or not) budget review at 31 Dec 2024 (Attachment 4).

**Resolved.** Approved.

- (b) To agree precept increase and approve (or not) draft budget for 2025-26 (Attachment 5).  
Cllr Taylor proposed a 5% increase in the precept for 2025-26 to £14,327 and the agreement of the corresponding budget option (with one revision, to increase the budgeted grant to the Recreation Field for grass cutting to £2,000). Cllr Freeland seconded, and council voted unanimously in favour. Clerk to revise and reissue budget, and to submit precept request to Somerset Council.

### 13 Clerk's / Councillors' Report

- (a) The current account update information send to NS&I in relation to the council investment account seems to have resolved any confusion on their part. They have now transferred almost all the funds from the investment account to the council's Unity Trust bank current account, confirmed the investment account balance of £78.01 (including a modest amount of interest) and confirmed the signatories are the clerk along with councillors Taylor and I Kirby. Another form will be submitted to close the account completely.
- (b) The benches for the new cemetery have been ordered from Charltons Timberstore and paid for. Clerk will liaise with supplier, councillors Sweet and E Kirby to have the benches delivered and stored.
- (c) The donation from Whatley Quarry, via James Reed Public Relations, of £600 for the new benches has been received.
- (d) Christmas gifts for the Rangers for the sterling work they do for the parish were organised by C Cudmore; Clerk resolved funding.
- (e) Notification has been received from the Police Community Support Officer that because of poor attendance at the drop-in sessions which have been held they will be discontinued.

### 14 Be Discussed / Resolved

- (a) Request for parking restrictions at the school  
Clerk to send details of request to Cllr Ham to inform discussions with Somerset Council Highways. Cllr E Kirby to take up the suggestion with her school contact. Clerk to update parishioner who made the suggestion.
- (b) Quarterly review of the community plan  
Deferred.
- (c) Volunteer report (Attachment 6)  
Cllr Taylor spoke to the report; she had already updated some of the volunteer numbers in it, and will finalise and issue. Clerk to publish on the website.
- (d) Contact with fire service re width of road at Park Hayes (Clerk).  
Clerk has made multiple attempts to discuss with a fire officer; as advised by Fire and Rescue agent, he will try again early in the day in the hope of finding an officer available.
- (e) Flooding at Barns Close (Cllr Ham of Somerset Council to take up with Highways)  
Cllr Ham will also speak to R Massey of Barns Close Quarry regarding actions which could be taken there to mitigate the situation.
- (f) Emergency plan – refresh of 2015 plan (Cllr I Kirby)  
Continues; Cllr Kirby requested this be an item on the March agenda.
- (g) Cemetery development – update (Cllr E Kirby)  
Continues; see remarks on benches above.
- (h) Unit Trust Bank signatory update (Clerk)  
Clerk has drafted a letter, signed at the meeting, requesting Admin status to allow viewing of those with account access and their levels of access. Letter to go to Unity Trust and Clerk to report at next meeting.

- (i) Grit bin replacement (Cllr Ham of Somerset Council).  
Cllr Ham continues to liaise with Somerset Council Highways.
- (j) Communication with LPA re village shop and self-build applications (Clerk).  
Email sent to A Sestini.
- (k) Community notice board – sketch and costings from Bell Inn landlord (Cllr Taylor)
- (l) Halecombe Quarry exit signage (Cllr I Kirby)  
Cllr Kirby will take up at the next quarry meeting in March.
- (m) Hall and recreation committees (Cllr Taylor)  
Updates will be provided as committee meetings happen.

**15 Matters to report / items for next agenda.**

Forward Plan items.

**16 Date and time of next meeting: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, 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.