

LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at Memorial Hall on Monday 17th March, 2025

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

Attending: Joe McGhee (Clerk); Cllr Barry Clarke (Somerset Council); 2 members of the public.

1 Welcome by the Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair raised the fact that in the previous week a parishioner had been seriously assaulted. Councillors were unanimous in their shock and disgust that this had happened. Councillors and the Clerk signed a card to be passed to the parishioner with their sympathy and best wishes for a full and speedy recovery.

2 Apologies for absence

Cllr Philip Ham (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

Consideration of request from Cllr V Trundle for dispensation in respect of the Recreation Field Committee.

Resolved. Council approved request for dispensation for Cllr Trundle in relation to the Recreation Field Committee until March 2029.

5 Public Session

No comments from members of the public at this point.

6 County Councillor Reports

Cllr Clarke made a few points further to a written update he had already provided.

- Somerset Council has set a budget, including a council tax increase of 7.49% and a capitalisation direction (selling assets) of £43m. The longer-term financial situation remains critical.
- The Boundary Commission is now considering responses to its proposals and will return in the summer for a public consultation with published recommendations before the end of the year
- The call for sites for development has been completed
- The scheme for planned roadworks has been released for the coming year. Cllr Clarke will request more information and pass it on.
- Cllr Ham spoke to R Massey about flooding at Barns Close. RM clarified this is not related to run off from nearby property and will consider recommendations to be made to Somerset Council for improved drainage.

7 Monthly update from Tom Kemp – Parish Tree Officer

No report at this stage – T Kemp not present.

8 To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 17th February, 2025, 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) 2025/0303/FUL**

Proposed field shelter, tractor shed and store.

Clearwood, Leigh Street, Leigh On Mendip, Radstock, Somerset

This is a resubmitted application with updated paperwork. The applicants were present and spoke briefly to the application. The Clerk read a submission from a neighbour expressing concerns on the impact on the view from their property. Cllr I Kirby proposed once again recommending approval of the application; Cllr E Kirby seconded and council voted unanimously to do so.

(b) 2025/0163/LBC

Alteration to Leigh St. vehicular entrance & provision of new timber entrance gate, pedestrian timber gate & associated works (revised design).

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

This application has been resubmitted with amendments recommended by the Parish Council when previously considered. The same remarks apply to item 10(c), which is concerned with the same development. Cllr I Kirby proposed recommending approval of this application as well as application 2025/0162/FUL (item 10(c)); Cllr Trundle seconded and council voted unanimously to do so.

(c) 2025/0162/FUL

Alteration to Leigh St. vehicular entrance & provision of new timber entrance gate, pedestrian timber gate & associated works (revised design).

Great House Farm, Hollybush Lane, Leigh On Mendip, Radstock, Somerset

See remarks for item 10(b).

(d) 2024/2257/FUL

Erection of 2 no. 2 bed dwellings attached to existing dwelling.

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

Council recommended this application previously. Council noted that that recommendation stands and no further comment is necessary.

11 Planning Applications – Decisions to be noted from Somerset Council**(a) 2025/0171/AGR**

Application for prior notification of an agricultural development: proposed farm track.

Great House Farm, Hollybush Lane, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA3 5QZ

Decision. Prior Approval Given.

(b) 2025/0377/APP

Approval of details reserved by condition 7 (Surface Water Drainage System) on consent 2021/0646/FUL.

Horizons, Blackers Lane, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA3 5QU

Decision. Approval.

12 Finance

(a) To approve (or not) bank reconciliation at 12 Mar 2025 (Attachment 2)

Resolved. Approved.

(b) To approve (or not) receipts and payments as identified in the Cashflow 12 Feb 2024 to 12 Mar 2025 (Attachment 3).

Resolved. Approved

13 Clerk's / Councillors' Report

- (a) Cllr I Kirby and the Clerk attended an emergency planning workshop hosted by Stoke St Michael parish council and presented by Bel Deering, Paul Elliston and Nicola Dawson of Somerset Council. A report on this will be given under item 14(a).
- (b) Email was organised for new councillor Trundle and the website was updated. She completed a Register of Members Interests form which was sent by the Clerk to Democratic Services at Somerset Council. They have not yet published it on their website; Clerk will liaise with them to ensure this is done and the form is visible to the public.
- (c) Access to the Unity Trust account has been updated. One legacy access removed so that those with access are now the Clerk along with councillors Taylor, I Kirby and Freeland.
- (d) The annual invoice for a community payment of £2,000 in relation to the solar panel array at Soho Farm and which was sent to Mells Park Trust in January has been settled.
- (e) A parishioner raised an issue with discarded signs at the convergence of Blackers Lane and Tadhill. He was directed to the Somerset Council website to log the issue, with the Clerk also logging it.
The Clerk was contacted by C Cudmore who had been in contact with the relevant contractor and got them to remove the signs.
- (f) A warning about blasting at Halecombe Quarry was published on the Parish Council and Leigh On Mendip Facebook pages and on the Parish Council website.
C Cudmore also advised that warnings are being provided for major blasts at the quarry to be communicated to parishioners but that smaller blasts which can still be heard across the village are not being advertised. Clerk to contact the quarry about the feasibility of being warned about such blasts.

14 To Be Discussed / Resolved

- (a) Emergency planning (Cllr I Kirby, Clerk).
Cllr I Kirby provided a report on the emergency planning workshop presented by Somerset Council staff and hosted in the Stoke St Michael village hall. The workshop was very useful. The idea was suggested of holding such a workshop for parishioners. After discussion, council resolved that the best way forward on this is to communicate information and resources available to parishioners to develop household plans. Cllr I Kirby will draft text to go into the annual newsletter.
- (b) Date of Annual Parish Meeting.
Council resolved to hold the Annual Parish Meeting on Saturday, 17th May, from 2:00pm until 4:00pm (in advance of the Annual Full Council Meeting on Monday, 19th). The format will be as last year, with village groups originated by, or who are lessees of, the Parish Council being invited to report. Cllr Taylor will draft a newsletter by the next council meeting. The newsletter will be published no later than the weekend before the parish meeting.
- (c) Speedwatch update.
A speedwatch update had been provided by M Carter and forwarded to councillors shortly before the meeting.
- (d) Re-affirmation/update of policies (Clerk).
Council resolved that policies will be reviewed and reaffirmed at the Annual Full Council meeting on Monday, 19th May.
- (e) Request for parking restrictions at the school.
It was noted that the speedwatch report referred to two traffic incidents in the vicinity of the school. Cllr E Kirby will continue discussions with the school on ways to improve safety, particularly in relation to parking. She will also liaise with quarry authorities about a field they have which may be useful for parking.

- (f) Contact with fire service re width of road at Park Hayes (Clerk).
The Clerk was contacted by the manager of Radstock Fire Station who will look into access at Park Hayes. Action continues.
- (g) Flooding at Barns Close (Cllr Ham).
Covered under item 6.
- (h) Cemetery development – update (Cllr E Kirby).
The benches have been constructed and will be installed in the new cemetery towards the summer. Cllr E Kirby is liaising with T Kemp on planting, and is in discussions on the possibility of upgrading the path between the church and the new cemetery. Cllr Freeland will engage with neighbours who already maintain sections of that path.
- (i) Community notice board – sketch and costings from Bell Inn landlord (Cllr Taylor).
Continued to the next meeting.
- (j) Statement on biodiversity (T Kemp, Clerk).
Continued to the next meeting.
- (k) Idverde proposed increase in charges.
The Clerk advised council of a proposed significant increase in charges by Idverde for cemetery maintenance. Council resolved not to continue with that contract at the increased cost but to seek several competitive quotations. An extraordinary council meeting will be called if necessary to implement a new contract as soon as possible. Clerk to progress.
- (l) Halecombe Quarry exit signage.
Cllr Taylor took this up during a meeting with quarry authorities. They are putting up improved signage and will also trim foliage to improve visibility.
- (m) Coleford meeting on community sheds (Cllr Sweet).
Cllr Sweet provided an update on a meeting she and Cllr Taylor attended at the Coleford Hub where representatives of the Mens Sheds Association (MSA) presented. There is clearly a need for such facilities. It may be that a joint venture with Coleford is the best way to proceed, and funding may be available from the MSA. Cllr Sweet will liaise with Coleford and keep council informed.
- (n) VE Day celebrations.
Council have no specific plans for VE Day, but will monitor information which arrives and advertise appropriately.

15 Matters to report / items for next agenda.

- Forward plan
- VE Day celebrations
- Newsletter
- Cemetery maintenance contract
- Internal audit
- External audit exemption form

16 Date and time of next meeting: Monday 28th April, 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.