

LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at Memorial Hall on Monday 19th May, 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); Kerry Greenhalgh (PlanningSphere)

1 Welcome by the Chairman

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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.

Cllr Vicki Trundle has an approved request for dispensation in relation to Leigh On Mendip Recreation Field Committee until March 2029.

(c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate.

After discussion it was agreed that Cllr Freeland should request a dispensation in respect of her involvement with St Giles Church; Clerk to forward appropriate form to Cllr Freeland for inclusion in the agenda of the meeting on 16th June.

5 Public Session

No members of the public present.

6 County Councillor Reports

Cllr Clarke provided a verbal report.

- the Local Government Boundary Commission review consultation process continues over the summer
- Somerset Council property sales are currently running at an £7M loss
- the possibility of a cultural twinning programmes with a town in central Ukraine is being considered
- the household relief grant programme has been extended until the end of March 2026
- Cllr Clarke has forwarded information on parish council takeover of land at Trudoxhill from Somerset Council; this could inform the Leigh On Mendip negotiations which have begun with Somerset Council and will be borne in mind
- the "man with a van" scheme has been abandoned
- there have been reports of mischief makers stealing village signs and putting them up at other villages; everyone is encouraged to remain alert

7 Monthly update from Tom Kemp – Parish Tree Officer

Tom Kemp was not present, but it was noted that he had given a comprehensive update at the Annual Parish Meeting on Saturday, 17th May, as recorded in the meeting minutes which are on the parish council website.

8 To confirm the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 28th April, 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) 2025/0849/HSE

Dismantle, relocation and rebuilding of courtyard walls to principal dwelling and associated hard landscaping works.

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

The agent for this application was present and spoke about the application. Cllr Freeland pointed out the test for changes in such a listed structure of “less than substantial harm” being overcome by public benefits and said that in this case she was not convinced that the benefits merited the demolition and rebuild involved. The consensus among other councillors was that this was a rather technical topic and knowledge was generally insufficient to come to a conclusion. The planning agent proposed a site visit so that councillors could become better informed and council agreed this was a good idea. The Clerk will liaise with councillors and the agent to identify a date/time for a site visit, and will also request from the planning office a delay in the deadline for comments. This, and the related LBC application, will be revisited in the agenda for the June meeting.

KH left the meeting at 19:50.

(b) 2025/0849/LBC

Dismantle, relocation and rebuilding of courtyard walls to principal dwelling and associated hard landscaping works.

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

Refer to the remarks in item 10(a).

11 Planning Applications – Decisions to be noted from Somerset Council

(a) 2025/0489/PAA

Prior Approval for a proposed change of use of agricultural building to 1 no. dwellinghouse (Class C3)

Barn at 368266 147425 Pitten Street, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset

Decision. Approval Refused.

(b) 2024/2164/APP

Approval of details reserved by condition 3 (Land Drainage and Flood Management System) on consent 2024/0279/FUL (further details re: Condition 3 rec'd 25.04.25)

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

Decision. Approval.

(c) 2025/0438/PAA

Prior Approval for the change of use of 2 no. agricultural buildings to create 8 no. dwellings including associated operational works.

Tadhill Farm, Old Wells Road, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA3 5QX

Decision. Prior Approval Given.

All decisions noted by council.

12 Finance and Annual Reporting

(a) To approve (or not) bank reconciliation at 14 May 2025 (Attachment 2)

RESOLVED. Approved.

(b) To approve (or not) receipts and payments as identified in the Cashflow 23 Apr 2025 to 14 May 2025 (Attachment 3).

RESOLVED. Approved.

Cllr Clarke left the meeting at 10:05.

21/25-26

13 Clerk's / Councillors' Report

- (a) The Certificate of Exemption (from external audit) has been sent to the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn.
- (b) The AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Review) Form 2 information has been published on the website. This incorporates:
 - the Certificate of Exemption
 - The Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25
 - The Annual Governance Statement 2024/25
 - The Accounting Statements 2024/25
 - The Bank Reconciliation at 31st March 2025
 - The Explanation of Variances
 - The Notice of Public Rights
- (c) The council's insurance has been renewed with Zurich Municipal.
- (d) The Clerk confirmed to Somerset Council that the Parish Council is still interested in taking over land on Park Hayes, and possibly other plots if Somerset Council can identify them. Somerset Council will complete a form to begin the process of transfer and come back to the Parish Council for discussions to progress the transfer. The SALC has provided the names of two specialist firms of solicitors who can be approached for legal advice.
- (e) A query has been made about the maintenance of graves in the churchyard/cemetery by a former parishioner. The Clerk will investigate and put on the June agenda. There is a meeting in the churchyard/cemetery scheduled immediately before that Parish Council meeting.

Cllr Freeland had done some research on this topic. In February 2000 the Parochial Church Council had declared the closure of the churchyard cemetery and handed responsibility for it to the Parish Council. The Parish Council in turn decided, as it was entitled to do, not to take on that responsibility but refer it to Mendip District Council; MDC was informed of this decision. It is understood the responsibility for headstones lies with descendants of the deceased.

- (f) An update from the project manager of the work to upgrade the Whatley Quarry Loop Walk was posted on the website and Facebook.
- (g) Information on the division review being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission was circulated.
- (h) An approach has been made to the manager of Radstock Fire Station for an update on progress with assessing access for fire vehicles to Park Hayes.

14 To Be Discussed / Resolved

- (a) Matters arising from the Annual Parish Meeting
 - The Parish Council should make a request to the Village Rangers to see if they could tidy the hedges at the crossroads at Knapp Hill. Clerk to contact the Village Rangers.
 - the Parish Council should continue to liaise with Cllr Ham of Somerset Council to see if a resolution can be reached on the issue of flooding at Barns Close.
- (b) Churchyard/cemetery maintenance (Clerk)

Council discussed three quotations and resolved to award the work to Hill & Hill Ground Maintenance. Clerk to inform liaison with Hill & Hill on the decision and a maintenance schedule.

(c) LCN update (Cllr E and I Kirby)

As reported at the Annual Parish Meeting, the LCN has now been in operation for nearly two years with little progress on its stated aims. It is felt, however, that it can still be a positive body and council will continue to engage constructively.

(d) New cemetery (Cllr E Kirby)

- Suggested wording for the new plaques has been received and is being considered.
- A meeting is scheduled for 21st May with Whatley Quarry to discuss their possible support with the footpath upgrade.
- Council approved a spend of up to £400 for the secure implementation of the gates.
- Cllr E Kirby will speak to Daniel Gordon of Somerset Council with regard to a dropped kerb at Bellfield to ease access to the new cemetery.

(e) Parking/speed restrictions (including 20mph signage) at the school (Cllr P Ham).

Continue to next meeting.

(f) Community notice board – sketch and costings from Bell Inn landlord (Cllr Taylor).

Landlord is sourcing materials for the new notice board; Cllr Taylor will continue to liaise.

(g) Repair shop (Cllr Taylor)

It is understood that Coleford PC is aiming to go ahead with a “men’s shed”. David Mears will attend meetings on behalf of Leigh On Mendip PC and keep Cllr Taylor informed.

(h) Quarries report update.

Cllr I Kirby advised he had been approached by the Recreation Field Committee to ask quarry authorities if, through the Earth Science Project, they would provide trips during the car show scheduled for 6th July. He has emailed to ask and awaits a response.

15 Matters to report / items for next agenda.

- Cemetery
- Forward plan
- Churchyard

16 Date and time of next meeting: Monday 16th June, 2025, at 7:00pm in the Memorial Hall.

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.