

LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at Memorial Hall on Monday 21st July, 2025

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

Attending: Tom Kemp (Tree Adviser), Philip Ham (Somerset Council), one member of the public

1 Welcome by the Chairman

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She advised that scam emails were being sent to councillors purporting to be sent by her. These should be ignored.

2 Apologies for absence

Cllr Vicki Trundle; Cllr Barry Clarke (Somerset Council); Joe McGhee (Clerk).

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.

Cllr Paula Freeland has an approved request for dispensation in relation to St Giles Church until June 2029.

5 Public Session

No comments from members of the public.

6 County Councillor Reports

Cllr Ham delivered a verbal report.

There has been no progress on the speed limit of 20mpgh around the school, moving the 30mph limit past the Elm Close entrance and Barns Close drain, but he will continue to pursue.

Next year's Somerset Council budget shows a gap of £101M but a transformation programme is being started to reduce this gap.

£90M has been raised through the sale of assets.

The case at Saxonvale seems to have been lost.

There is still no S114 officer so interim arrangements continue.

The council planning section is currently short of staff and so applications are being delayed.

A national consultation is underway on the planning process in the UK. Councillors are invited to comment as appropriate. Cllr Ham will provide the Clerk with contact details.

Cllr E Kirby asked Cllr Ham if he felt it acceptable for the Parish Council to approach Somerset Council to enquire what the Special Expenses Account which appears on all our Council Tax demands is being used for. Cllr Ham suggested contacting I Tier at Somerset Council who will be able to answer this. Cllr Kirby will do so.

7 Monthly update from Tom Kemp – Parish Tree Officer

T Kemp provided further details of a proposed diversity plan for the churchyard. It includes four principles: improve biodiversity and environment, provide safe access, reduce carbon footprint, enhance beauty and heritage. The plan would contain a month by month schedule for the contractor to work to. The Parish Council will consider this at its next meeting.

Cllr Freeland felt that the PCC would like a little more detail on the plan should the Parish Council

decide to commission it. She pointed out that heritage works funded through grants may well start early next year and would need to be incorporated into any biodiversity plan.

28/25-26

8 To confirm the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 16th June, 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) 2025/1057/FUL

Convert and extend two agricultural buildings to create eight dwellings, involving building extension with parking and curtilage ground.

Tadhill Farm, Old Wells Road, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

The applicant was present. He provided an overview of the application which would increase the curtilage of the existing schedule Q proposal with a small lean-to extension. Primarily applying for full planning permission will give more time to develop the site. Cllr Freeland felt that more detail on the hard and soft landscaping around the proposed development would be useful for the planning officer. Cllr I Kirby recommended approval with the recommendation that further hard and soft landscaping plans were developed and submitted for planning officer comment. Cllr E Kirby seconded, and council resolved to recommend approval.

(b) 2025/1152/LBC

Repair of roof structure, replacement of missing truss, rafter repairs and replacement battens. Replace concrete tiles with natural slate. Reinstatement of fascias and lead flashings. Replacement of plastic rainwater goods with cast iron.

Cottage Garden, Leigh Street, Leigh On Mendip, Radstock, Somerset

Cllr Freeland provided an overview of the application and recommended approval. Cllr E Kirby seconded, and council resolved to recommend approval.

Clerk to apply appropriate comments at the Somerset Council planning portal.

11 Planning Applications – Decisions to be noted from Somerset Council

(a) 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

Decision. Application Refused..

(b) 2025/0849/HSE and 2025/0850/LBC

Dismantling, relocation & rebuilding of courtyard walls to principal dwelling & associated hard landscaping works

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

Decision. Approval (of both).

All decisions noted.

12 Finance and Annual Reporting

(a) To approve (or not) bank reconciliation at 16 Jul 2025 (Attachment 2)

Resolved. Approved.

(b) To approve (or not) receipts and payments as identified in the Cashflow 11 Jun 2025 to 16 Jul 2025 (Attachment 3).

Resolved. Approved.

(c) To approve (or not) the budget review at 30 Jun 2025 (Attachment 4).

Resolved. Approved.

13 Clerk's / Councillors' Report

- (a) The enquiry about a review of fire tender access to Park Hayes is now with Devon and Somerset Fire Service. Clerk has been told he will be contacted.
 - (b) The re-appointed internal auditor, Eleanor Greene of Do The Numbers Ltd, has been informed along with the appropriate minute reference.
 - (c) One ashes plot memorial was approved in June and the appropriate fee paid.
 - (d) An update on applications to the Halecombe Quarry Community Fund was posted on the website and Facebook groups.
 - (e) A notice about Whatley Quarry blasting was also posted; Council is not normally informed since the quarry is relatively far away but this instance involved some particularly heavy blasting.
 - (f) The Clerk was informed that the council's subscription with the Information Commissioner's Office will automatically renew in August.
 - (g) The draft minutes of the latest meetings of the Halecombe Quarry Liaison Group and Community Fund were published on the Halecombe Quarry page on the website
 - (h) Chris Cudmore provided a number of updates:
 - Following correspondence between Chris and Somerset Council about them no longer linking to the FixMyStreet web facility, they have improved their own reporting mechanism (use of maps and what3words web location facility)
 - Work on the reinstatement of the footpath south of Halecombe has been discussed by Tarmac with the contractor; now waiting for approval.
 - Explore Somerset (<https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map>) has been updated with the new OS base mapping and aerial photography.
 - A draft of the new Welcome Guide will be available this month.
- All points noted. Questions were raised about street cleaning. Cllr Ham suggested that the Clerk contact Charlie Higgins at Somerset Council who should be able to clarify.

14 To Be Discussed / Resolved

- (a) Development of biodiversity plan for churchyard/cemetery.
Previously discussed.
- (b) New cemetery (Cllr E Kirby).
Benches have been installed. A quotation for the removal of overhanging tree branches has been received; T Kemp will also provide a quotation.
- (c) Parking/speed restrictions (including 20mph signage) at the school (Cllr P Ham).
Previously discussed.
- (d) Community notice board – sketch and costings from Bell Inn landlord (Cllr Taylor).
Continues.
- (e) Repair shop questionnaire (Cllr Taylor – Attachment 5).
Council resolved to approve the questionnaire, with the addition of the Parish Council logo and space for anyone interested to provide contact details. Clerk to arrange printing and then Parish Council will distribute to every household as well as publishing on the website and social media.
- (f) Sludge tipping – brook at bottom of Leigh Street (Cllr Taylor).
Cllr Taylor provided an update on the recent disposal of sludge from “Drainline” and subsequent involvement of the Environment Agency. Tests have been carried out on the sludge and the results are due shortly.
- (g) Enhance Highways Maintenance Pilot (Attachments 6 and 7).
No need to progress this currently but a sub-meeting of the LCN is due to take place shortly to discuss this and other highway matters. Cllr I Kirby will attempt to attend.

(h) Somerset Council Transport Plan Documents.

All noted at this stage.

(i) Parish Preparedness Survey (Attachment 8).

The Parish Council has previously discussed this item following the training undertaken by Cllr I Kirby and the Clerk. Nothing further needs to be done at this stage as a course of action has already been agreed.

15 Matters to report / items for next agenda.

Memorial tree branch removal – Cllr Taylor.

Biodiversity plan proposal – council decision.

Purchase of red paint for the community telephone box – Cllr Freeland

New speed watch sign – Cllr Freeland.

16 Date and time of next meeting: Monday 15th September, 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.