

LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held at Memorial Hall on Monday 15th September, 2025

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

Attending: Joe McGhee (Clerk), Tom Kemp (Tree Adviser), Barry Clarke (Somerset Council)

1 Welcome by the Chairman

The Chair welcome everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs E Kirby, I Kirby, V Trundle; and 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.

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

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

None.

5 Public Session

There were no members of the public present.

6 County Councillor Reports

The interim measures put in place to deal with the planning application backlog continue, nominally until 28th October. No decision has been made about whether that date will be extended. If there are concerns about this arrangement, and specifically its impact on the Parish Council's opportunity to properly consider and comment on applications, they should be taken up with the Head of Planning at Somerset Council.

Cllr Clarke mentioned Somerset Council's Preparedness Survey; that was considered by the Parish Council at its July meeting.

7 Monthly update from Tom Kemp – Parish Tree Officer

The situation with ash die-back seems to be improving with some trees with the apparent development of a natural resistance among the ash population.

TK has submitted details of a proposal to develop a biodiversity plan for the churchyard/cemetery – discussed later in the meeting.

The issue of overgrown trees/bushes on the periphery of the churchyard/cemetery (both PC and church owned areas) was discussed. It was resolved that TK and Cllr Freeland (as both parish councillor and church warden) will walk round the area, review the situation and report to the next meeting.

8 To confirm the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 21st July, 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) 2025/1374/FUL**

Erection of an attached 3-bedroom dwellinghouse.

Land at 368913 147215 Park Hayes, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

Cllr Freeland presented comments on the application in terms of design and appearance, traffic implications and amenity. Council noted it had supported a similar application in the past and after consideration resolved unanimously to support this application; Clerk to apply appropriate comments at the Somerset Council planning portal.

11 Planning Applications – Decisions to be noted from Somerset Council**(a) 2025/1291/NMA**

Non-material amendments to consent 2022/1669/HSE (Erection of 2 rear dormers, creation of ensuite and relocation of external door and internal stairs)

1-2 Perrys Cottages, Leigh Street, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA3 5QW

Decision. Approval Non-Material Amendment.

(b) 2025/1257/PAH

The erection of a single storey rear extension.

Holly House, Leigh Street, Leigh On Mendip, Radstock, Somerset BA3 5QP

Decision. Prior Approval Not Required.

(c) 2025/1057/FUL

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

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

Decision. Approval.

All decisions noted.

12 Finance and Annual Reporting**(a) To approve (or not) bank reconciliation at 10 Sep 2025 (Attachment 2)**

Resolved. Approved.

(b) To approve (or not) receipts and payments as identified in the Cashflow 16 Jul 2025 to 10 Sep 2025 (Attachment 3), incorporating increase in hourly rate for clerk's local government grade, SCP 17, as agreed by the National Joint Council and backdated to 1st April 2025.

Resolved. Approved.

13 Clerk's / Councillors' Report**(a) The council's eligibility to be covered by the FSCS scheme has been confirmed with Unity Trust Bank.****(b) Exemption from external audit has been confirmed by the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn.****(c) Comments were applied at the Somerset Council planning portal on applications 2025/1057/FUL (Tadhill Farm) and 2025/1152/LBC (Cottage Garden, Leigh Street), in favour of approval in both cases.****(d) Emails of thanks were sent to the directors of Advantage FS and to Halecombe Quarry for their financial support for the car show and village day.****(e) A Coleford resident asked for the dangerous nature of the SOHO junction on the road between Leigh On Mendip and Vobster to be taken up following a collision in which both cars were written off, the latest in a series of collisions. A request for a review of the junction and its signage was raised on the Somerset Council Highways website.**

- (f) Somerset Council requested a review and report on the status of the parish's grit bins prior to preparation for the winter. Cllr I Kirby carried out a survey and the Clerk reported the results to Somerset Council.
- (g) The request to Devon and Somerset Fire Service for a review of fire tender access to Park Hayes was repeated via email to an address provided by their enquiry desk. Response awaited.
- (h) Because an extension to the deadline for comments on planning application 2025/1375/FUL (Conversion of garage to a dwelling house) was not granted, councillors considered the application, including a site visit and discussions with the applicant. Clerk applied a comment to the effect that the council will defer to the planning authority view but asked that Somerset Council Highways carry out a review of traffic implications.
Cllr Taylor advised that the applicant had indicated in the discussions with the parish councillors that he was happy with the consideration which had been given.
- (i) A contractor was requested to remove a portaloos which has been left on Leigh Street following works, and undertook to remove within the week.
- (j) The Information Commissioners Office confirmed that the Parish Council's registration has been renewed.
- (k) Information on council meetings – rules for scheduling along with information provided in advance – was updated on the website.
- (l) An email was sent to Somerset Council seeking clarity on the council's responsibilities for street cleaning.
- (m) C Cudmore reported that the stile on the path north of Pitten House is to be replaced with a kissing gate. Once that is done there will be no stiles on the path from Pitten Street to Tufa Falls.

14 To Be Discussed / Resolved

- (a) Proposal from Somerset Council to transfer land to the Parish Council.
Council resolved to proceed with the transfer of the identified land from Somerset Council to the Parish Council. Clerk to update Somerset Council and obtain indicative costs of legal fees should the PC need to engage a solicitor.
- (b) Development of biodiversity plan for churchyard/cemetery.
Cllr Freeland will take this proposal to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and invite T Kemp to present as necessary.
Council resolved to request T Kemp to proceed with the production of the biodiversity plan as quoted; Clerk to formally confirm in an email to TK.
- (c) New cemetery
 - Memorial tree branch removal.
Continued.
 - Procurement of chain link fence.
Clerk to ensure all councillors have the link describing the proposed fence.
Continued.
 - Drawings and quote for gates.
Continued.
 - Signage
Continued.
- (d) Community notice board – sketch and costings from Bell Inn landlord.
Cancelled as an agenda item. Council no longer using this noticeboard. Cllr Taylor will advise if any developments.

(e) Repair shop questionnaire.

Clerk to update with addition of logo and change of return deadline of Monday, 10th November; Clerk to arrange printing of 250 copies, double-sided single sheet.

(f) Somerset Council interim planning application process.

As covered above, if PC has an issue it will approach the Head of Planning at Somerset Council.

(g) Annual letter to Recreation Field car park neighbours.

Clerk to update/edit with a view to approval at the next council meeting.

(h) M Carter request for PC to issue invitation for new Speedwatch team members.

Clerk to issue invitation via usual channels.

(i) Advert for new councillor.

Clerk to issue advert for councillor vacancy, via usual channels, for possible co-option at the October meeting.

(j) Request to EA to investigate stream under the road near Great House Farm.

Clerk to confirm details with Cllr I Kirby and approach the Environment Agency.

(k) Telephone box:

- purchase of red paint

Action on Cllr Freeland.

- purchase of appropriate signage

After discussions with those maintaining the box and consideration of its historical nature, council resolved to maintain the current signage.

(l) C Cudmore requests:

- Application to Somerset Council for EV charging points in the village under the funding they have received for this; possible inclusion in the Community Plan.

Cllr Taylor will take to the Memorial Hall Committee and request V Higgins does the same with the Recreation Field Committee.

- Hedge cutter funding to clear the hedge on the corner of the road entering the village from Hollybush.

Clerk will endeavour to identify who is responsible for this hedge and draft a communication requesting it be trimmed.

- Approval of updated Welcome Guide.

Council resolved to approve the guide subject to removal, from Sections 6 and 11, of

references to the noticeboard outside the Bell Inn since that is no longer in use by the council.

Council expressed its gratitude to Chris Cudmore for the tremendous effort he has made to produce such a comprehensive Welcome Guide.

15 Matters to report / items for next agenda.

None.

16 Date and time of next meeting: Monday 20th October, 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.