

LEIGH ON MENDIP PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

Attending: Barry Clarke (Somerset Council); Tom Kemp (Tree and Biodiversity Adviser); one member of the public.

1 Welcome by the Chairman

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence

None.

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.

None.

5 Public Session

No comments at this stage from the member of the public.

6 County Councillor Reports

See under item 12 below.

7 Monthly update from Tom Kemp – Parish Tree Officer

No update at this point; biodiversity plan discussed under item 14.

8 To confirm the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 17th November, 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) 2025/2072/FUL

Erection of detached bungalow and attached garage.

Land at 369293 147420 Quarry Lane, Leigh On Mendip, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.

Council discussed this application from the points of view of impact on public visual amenity, traffic and impact on neighbours. Council resolved to recommend approval of the application.

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

11 Planning Applications – Decisions to be noted from Somerset Council

None.

12 Finance and Annual Reporting

- (a) To approve (or not) bank reconciliation at 10 Dec 2025 (Attachment 2)

Resolved. Approved.

- (b) To approve (or not) receipts and payments as identified in the Cashflow 12 Nov 2025 to 10 Dec 2025 (Attachment 3).

Resolved. Approved.

- (c) To approve draft budget for 2026-27 (Attachment 4) including setting level of precept. Council resolved, given the level of general reserves, that an increase in the level of precept for 2026-27 could not be justified. It shall be held at the 2025-26 level. Clerk to complete precept form and submit to Somerset Council. Council resolved to approve the draft budget with one modification – the allowance for new cemetery costs should be increased to £3,000. Clerk to update and present at the January meeting for final approval.

Cllr Clarke joined the meeting at 7:25 and made several points in support of a written update already circulated:

- several red flags have been raised by auditors with regard to Somerset Council accounts
- there is a new overall head of planning at the council.
- more planning officers are to be appointed.

13 Clerk's / Councillors' Report

- (a) A response was received on the query about a definition of Somerset Council's responsibilities for road cleaning/maintenance. This repeated the information about activities and training which village volunteers can undertake. The information does refer to Somerset Council continuing to have "regular grass cutting, general vegetation clearance and gully-cleaning as part of a wider highway maintenance schedule". Cllr Clarke advised that the definition sought does exist and suggested that Somerset Council be approached again. Clerk to pursue.
- (b) Following the resignation of two councillors, standard actions were completed – deletion of email accounts, website update, liaison with Democratic Services at Somerset Council, advertising opportunity to request by-elections. If no such request by 12th December, vacancies can be advertised.
- (c) Clerk liaising with new Halecombe Quarry manager to provide notice to parishioners of blasting.
- (d) A number of items were published:
- Invitation to comment on LGBC revision of Somerset Council divisions; this was reopened because of confusion over possibility of continuing multi-councillor divisions.
 - Minutes of the most recent meeting of the Whatley and Westdown Quarries Community Liaison Group
 - Information on free business support for SMEs and individuals.
 - Poster on the Halecombe Quarry Community Fund; applications invited by end of January 2026.
- (e) The school was informed of the resignation of councillor E Kirby, and that a new liaison councillor will be agreed at the December Parish Council meeting.

14 To Be Discussed / Resolved

- (a) Councillor resignation/recruitment.**
Continued to January meeting. All avenues for publicising vacancies will be considered. Clerk to produce artwork for a flyer/poster. Cllr Trundle to draft description of reasons for becoming a councillor.
- (b) Biodiversity scheme (Attachment 5).**
Clerk to provide feedback to T Kemp and to organise a meeting with him and the current contractor in January to discuss practical implementation.
T Kemp to take proposal to PCC.
- (c) Draft application to Halecombe Quarry Community Fund for grant to purchase SID (Attachment 6).**
Clerk to complete and submit to January PC meeting. PC will fund training and seek full capital funding for SID.
- (d) Proposal from Somerset Council to transfer land to the Parish Council.**
Transfer now has Somerset Council approval; Clerk waiting for contact from Somerset Council legal department.
- (e) Councillor to liaise with school.**
Deferred until new councillors recruited.
- (f) New cemetery**
 - Memorial tree branch removal.
Complete.
 - Procurement of chain link fence.
T Kemp to provide quote for installation.
 - Drawings and quote for gates.
Cllr Sweet progressing and will update council at the January meeting.
 - Agree area closed to general use once cemetery ready to be used.
Council resolved that once the gates, signage and fencing are in place and the cemetery ready for use, no other activities will be allowed on the land.
 - Agree allocation of plots in old/new cemeteries.
Applicants can request a plot in either the old or new cemetery while such remains available., but priority in the old cemetery will be given to those with relatives already there.
 - Review of cemetery rules.
This will be done as part of the annual review of policies in April/May 2026.
 - Charges for wall plaques.
Charges and permissible design of wall plaques will be defined as part of the review of cemetery rules in 2026.
- (g) Repair shop questionnaire.**
E Kirby is now driving this and will provide an update on a number of points, including a definition of how the repair shop will work in practice, at the January meeting.
- (h) Youth services survey.**
Complete.
- (i) EV charging points**
Cllr Taylor continues to liaise with the Memorial Hall Committee and Cllr Trundle with the Recreation Field Committee.
- (j) Rec Field ground maintenance**
Sums available covered under budget discussion above. Rec Field Committee to provide a grant form for this year and another for 2026-27 at the appropriate time.

(k) AGAR 2025-26 – Assertion 10.

Clerk provided background to Assertion 10 in the AGAR for 2025-26. He will send more background information to councillors and submit several policy documents for approval to the January meeting.

(l) Christmas presents – Rangers and SpeedWatch Team.
Completed by Cllr Taylor.

15 Matters to report / items for next agenda.

Cllr Trundle offered apologies for having to miss the January meeting.

16 Date and time of next meeting: Monday 19th January, 2026, 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.