

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting Held on-line at 7-30pm on Tuesday 15th September 2020.

Councillors Present: Councillors A Bennett (Chairman), G Bugler, C Dixon and S Scutt.

Members of public attending: DCllr M Penfold, Julie Jepson (Play Park Committee) to Item 6.

Access to the meeting was through emailed Zoom link to councillors and offered to members of the public wishing to attend on application to the Parish Clerk final meeting details.

ITEM

Discussion & Decisions

Opening Remarks. The Chairman welcomed those who were logged in. He welcomed Julia Jepson who was there to report on Item 6.

1. Apologies for Absence: Councillors M Read, D Vincent, and A Ward
2. Declarations of Interest: Nil
3. **LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES**

Minutes of the previous online Leigh Parish Council Meeting 21st July 2020 had been circulated and displayed. Cllr Dixon noted that Item 11 should read that Julia Jepson was responsible for arranging the Wednesday Market (Cllr Dixon arranged the Veg Box deliveries). Subject to that correction the minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3.1. Chairman to sign circulated hard copy as corrected.

3.2. Matters Arising

3.2.1. Standing Orders – Carried over (Chairman)

3.2.2. Risk Register – Several points remained outstanding on the current Risk Register. Parish Clerk to work with Cllr Bugler.

4. **FINANCES OVERVIEW: Current Year**

The Accounts Spreadsheet reconciled to 31 August 2020 was circulated before the meeting. The Chairman noted the bank balance of £20756.16, which comprised:

- £11248.94 in the Play Park sub-account (see Item 6)
- £3857.12 in the Village Green sub-account,
- Leaving a general balance of £5650.10.

It was noted that the recent VAT refund should be allocated as income on the variances sheet – Clerk/RFO to action (Completed). The second Precept installment was due at the end of September.

4.1. **External Audit**. The Parish Clerk reported that the AGAR for 2019/20 was with the External Auditors since before the 31 July deadline. The Notice of Public Rights of access to the accounts was published on 30 July and its 6-weeks duration was complete on 11 September 2020. There had been no public requests to examine the accounts during that time. The auditors were working through councils' AGARs in order of their receipt. Everything was noticeably slower and would be later this year. The accounts remained available on the website pending any audit notices.

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4.2. **A quarterly independent check** as per LPC Financial Regs has not been possible while councillors were not meeting face-to-face.

4.3. **Bank authorization future update** – cheques and payments are signed off by 2 of 3 current signatories. This needs review to ensure appropriate sign-off of payments, in advance of anticipated change of councillors.

5 APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

A consolidated pre-meeting schedule of payments was circulated for review by Councillors pending their agreement in-meeting.

5.1. There were no other payments made since those authorised in the previous meeting. A standing order mandate was signed off, but not applied by Lloyds pending clarification, by which time the standing order figure was superseded; see Item 5.2.1.

5.2. Payments listed, as attached, for consideration and agreement in meeting totaled: £1708-85. Proposed for payment Cllr Bugler; seconded Cllr Scutt.

5.2.1. The figure above included the impact of Staff Pay scales from 1 April 2020 which were belatedly issued by NALC (EO 01-20) on 26 August 2020. There were corrections to be applied and Cllr Dixon was asked to liaise with the Parish Clerk to check the calculations based on SCP6 and report back to the Chairman.

5.3. Payments pending before next meeting(s) listed, were of the order of £1200, plus the playpark slide costs

6 **PLAYPARK UPDATE.** Cllr Bugler updated on the Play Park status: the steps were still due to be re-engineered and painting was in-hand; nevertheless, the Play Park area received good use. Julia Jepson reported on her progress with pricing and sourcing a new slide for the Play Park. Julia identified that providers had been approached to quote for a new slide, although to different effect as it was impossible to directly compare like with like. A slide length of 4 ½ m let into the mound, was quoted consistently. It was considered that "Toy Barn", a local company, provided the most competitive quote. The mound was too high and would require slight reduction, covered in weeds, as ground scaping was not included, and it had not settled as much as expected. To progress, it was asked that Julia (and Graham) investigate:

6.1. Whether landscaping might be included in the fit, and its cost, to assured fit for purpose.

6.2. Feasibility and costs of the same work being carried out locally by Mr Holder and / or Mr Hambridge

6.3. With other costs inbound (steps and grass cutting) it was agreed that combined costs should not exceed £10K, including VAT. (See Item 4).

6.4. The new slide selected provided the flexibility to add other features later, perhaps when more funds became available.

Other tasks outstanding such as completing painting, maintaining the frame steps, replacing the outdated play cargo-net, as well as the routine maintenance, such as grass cutting would account for well over £1000, which would inevitably drive the funding control of the slide project.

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7. **VILLAGE GREEN UPDATE.** Cllr Bennett reported that the Village Green was receiving good use in its current form.

7.1. Rubbish bins were in their final position. The bin on the Village Green was being emptied by DC at an annual cost to the PC, while the Village Hall Committee was paying the costs of the bin on their land. Emptying is currently based on the village's fortnightly rubbish collection. Regularity was discussed, although it was currently considered best to first monitor use and need.

7.2. Tree planting remained a longer-term project to be progressed; Cllr Scutt reminded the PC that there remained an offer, by some residents, of saplings to plant, which would need following up to see if it remained viable. Potential locations for trees were discussed in general terms. It was considered that the southern boundary might be edged with trees on the left side, subject to discussion with David Vincent (tenant) about safe species. It was also considered that planted trees would benefit the soggy NW corner of the field by absorbing excess water. The project was with Cllr Ward who would be asked to progress the matter as appropriate.

7.3. **Grass Cutting.** A 2-metre uncut marginal strip was to be included as part of the planning permission for the Village Green, although it was agreed that such areas still required cutting at least once a year to open up the ground for seeds, as already included for the Play Park. It was noted that the major cut appeared to have been carried out by Mr Holder. Hedge cutting was also due; David Vincent had undertaken to do this.

8. **FINGER POST RESTORATION.** The first invoice for materials had been received for payment (Item 5). Graham Fudge emailed a report on progress since the last meeting. It is planned to restore two of the parish fingerposts this year, namely The Cross and Totnell Corner.

8.1. The order of posts to be refurbished was driven primarily by the restricted availability of the price discounted aluminium letters from DAONB, as a major cost item of the project. It is hoped, but not guaranteed, that in the next financial year, April 2021, that DAONB will be able to supply further letters to us at reduced price to enable us to restore further posts in the parish. New oak fingers and letters for the first two posts are in-hand and work is underway to cut and shape the fingers and to then trim and "fettle" the 200 + newly cast raw letters. Steve Addison (Bridge Garage) has kindly agreed to spray paint the letters for us before we attach them to the fingers. Visual evidence of work will be able to be seen before too long.

8.2 The Chairman asked DCllr Penfold if she knew about circumstance of transfer from Dorset County of responsibility for the older signage (finger posts) to the parishes. (Clerk's Note: Response from Highways Community Officer via Cllr Penfold received 16 September 2020, that road signage problems were identified to parish councils and it was for them to resolve appropriately.)

- 9 **CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE.** Cllr Dixon had circulated her discussion points applicable to Leigh, shortly before the meeting. She noted that they were based on recent local initiatives and discussion papers cascaded from DC, and they required reading in that context. There were both simple and more complex things that might be done over time, thereby improving environmental behaviour. After a wide-ranging discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Dixon would define 2 or 3 priorities applicable to Leigh and draft an article for the Wriggle Valley Magazine and/or the website.

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10. PLANNING

To consider Planning Matters. Publication remains Western Gazette and WVM although Blackmore Vale Magazine was re-publishing as an on-line publication. Following changes since previous meeting were:

- **WD/D/20/001158** - ILES FARM, SHERBORNE ROAD, LEIGH, SHERBORNE, DT9 6HW. Change of use of land from agricultural to a mixed agricultural and equestrian use, and the construction of a stable block, tractor shed and menage for private use. Approved 17 August 2020
- **WD/D/20/001416** LAND SOUTH OF LEIGH (Off Back Drove between Pound and Black Barn Farms) Erection of one dwelling and garaging together with alterations to existing vehicular access. Consultation input from LPC by deadline (agreed with comment). Permission refused dated 1 September 2020.
- **WD/D/20/000941 & 000942**: Lower Totnell Farm DT9 6HT, changes to old dairy building to increase accommodation. Council (previous meeting) response provided before expiry. Decision still awaited.
- **WD/D/20/000865 & 000866**: Whitehall Farm DT9 6JG. Planning permission for single storey, rear extension, internal alterations plus works. Planning permission and listed building consent on 5 August 2020, subject to 2 x conditions.
- **WD/D/20/001296**: Former bungalow demolition and build at "Three Gates", Leigh – ST630083 to reduce confusion, within parish boundary. Information very sketchy and Parish not consulted fully. No objection and planning approval given 17 August 2020. CIL Notice in force. Advise observation.

10.1. **WD/D/19/003181**: LAND AT, HIGHER STOCKBRIDGE FARM, HIGHER STOCKBRIDGE FARM, STOCKBRIDGE – Re-consult in August 2020 about the details of a renewable energy scheme comprising ground mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with support infrastructure. The matter was discussed to achieve consensus for the parish response that was required by 24 September 2020. It was decided that a drafted response be circulated amongst all Parish Councillors to be agreed before submission.

10.1.1. Meeting Note: The following response was submitted 22 September 2020 on behalf of LPC: "*This major development is just outside Leigh parish boundary. Leigh Parish Council considers that the positive contribution that it will deliver to the region's renewable energy generation is significant.*

Despite the c.20% footprint reduction of the arrays, the proposed development will inevitably still have a negative visual impact. However, given that:

- *it is to be sighted in a generally well screened, low lying valley that is only overlooked by relatively few houses and rights of way;*
- *it will cover only Grade 3 and 4 land;*
- *the very southern group of arrays (that were to be located immediately alongside Bailey Ridge Lane) have been erased, then*

Leigh PC has, by a majority vote, no objection – provided that, in order to reduce the visual impact when using Bailey Ridge Lane: the east-west hedge on the north side of Bailey Ridge Lane is allowed to grow and is thereafter preserved at a height of at least 6 feet, and the trees presently embedded therein to remain unmolested. "

10.2. **Yetminster & Ryme Intrinsic Neighbourhood Plan**. Parishes surrounding the area were circulated with the weighty documents to meet statutory consultation.

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Any response or observations were required to Y & RI parish council no later than 19 October 2020. Any observations or comments to the Parish Clerk to assure consistent parish response through Cllr Dixon before the deadline.

10.3. Leigh Parish Council – adopted policy with regard to housing planning applications on greenfield sites within the parish. Early versions of Leigh Parish Council's planning policy had been circulated some time previously, with no feedback and Version 3 was circulated, pre-meeting. In-meeting a minor wording adjustment was agreed to reflect a wider view and incorporated into Version 4. It was agreed that Version 4 be released and uploaded to the Website. Proposer: Cllr Dixon; Seconded: Cllr Bugler. Unanimous.

10.4. "The Poplars" Three Gates – Correspondence. The Chairman drew attention to his correspondence with DC regarding the outstanding unauthorised development.

11. **COVID -19 update.** No particular parish issues

12. **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.**

Not included in agenda to date. – Up to date list in meeting:

12.1. Query about bridge repairs redirected to Cam Vale

12.2. Overhanging foliage – actions to date.

13. **ITEMS OF AN URGENT NATURE – SUBJECT TO CHAIRMAN'S APPROVAL.** Nil

14. **DATE(S) OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

Next Scheduled LPC meeting at 7-30pm on Tuesday 17 November 2020. 'Virtual' arrangements to be agreed.

14.1. Meetings are held on 3rd Tuesday of alternate (odd) months, so meeting dates in 2021 will be:

- 19 January, 16 March, 18 May (to include Parish Council AGM), 20 July, 21 September and 16 November 2021. All commence at 19:30/7-30pm.
- The Parish AGM precedes the Parish Council AGM, at 19:00 / 7-30pm on 18 May 2021.