

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Leigh Parish Council Meeting held 'on-line' at 7-30pm on Tuesday 16th March 2021.

Members of the public were invited to attend the meeting as usual by logging in on-line using the link provided by the Parish Clerk.

Logged on: Cllr A Bennett – Chairman; Cllrs G Bugler, C Dixon, S Scutt, and A Ward

Parish Clerk;

DCllr M Penfold (Public)

Public (12): Mr & Mrs Carter, Mr A Cummings, Mr M A Ditch, Mr J Dixon, Mr G Fudge, Mrs J Jepson, Dr G Morris, Mr & Mrs Parks and Mr & Mrs Salvesen

Item

Discussion and Decisions

Opening Remarks. The Chairman opened the on-line meeting by welcoming all present including 13 members of the public variously logged in.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr D Vincent.

2. **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr C Dixon for Item 4.

3. LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Draft minutes of the previous online Leigh Parish Council Meeting on 19th January 2021 circulated and checked by councillors in advance of publication.

3.1. It was proposed that the minutes be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting on 19th January.

Proposed: Cllr C Dixon; Seconded: Cllr G Bugler. Carried

3.2. Matters Arising were to be covered in the subsequent meeting agenda.

4. FUTURE CO-OPTION.

Dorset Electoral Services were notified of the upcoming casual vacancy on standdown of Cllr Bugler (effective at the AGM on 18 May 2021). In accordance with NALC Legal Note 8, 14-days' notice was given for parishioners to request a local election by 2 March 2021, after which the parish council was free to advertise for volunteers to be co-opted. By the date of the meeting there was one volunteer, Mr Jonathan Dixon. It was proposed that Mr Jonathan Dixon be co-opted at the next parish council meeting on 18 May 2021, when Cllr Bugler vacated office.

Proposed by: Cllr S Scutt; seconder: Cllr A Ward.

5. FINANCES OVERVIEW:

Accounts Spreadsheet reconciled to 28 February 2021 had been circulated before the meeting, with a draft update as at 15 March.

5.1. The Chairman referred to his pre-meeting email updating on his forecast for FY20/21 end of year figures. It was considered that the Parish would end the year marginally underspent.

5.1.1. **Ring fenced sub-account balances**, were Play Park: £6325; Village Green: £2266; Finger Post Project: £486. In-meeting payments were yet to be deducted and it was estimated that the Play Park account would end the year with a temporary deficit, expected to be picked up by a VAT refund claim.

5.2. **Precept FY 2021/21** –Leigh Parish's precept application for £9002 was submitted and agreed by Dorset County since the previous meeting.

5.3. **End of F/Y 2020/21 audit** arrangements for Smaller Authorities were yet to be

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Item

Discussion and Decisions

notified, and safest assumed that the AGAR would require clearance at the Parish Council AGM on 18th May 2021 to meet a late June submission. LPC spend was greater than £25K, but under £200K and would require the more detailed limited Assurance Review.

5.4 It was advised that 'Capex' spreadsheet is to be added as a new tab in the Finance workbook (RFO/PC Clerk).

6 APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

The consolidated schedule of payments spread sheet was circulated for review and agreement by Councillors – including:

6.1. One payment of £276-03 since the previous council meeting was agreed for formal record in minutes (Finger Posts spend within agreement).

6.2. Payments were agreed in meeting as adjusted, Schedule attached: **£8321.58**, resulting in £1705-72 from Main; £195-36 from the Village Green; £8090 from Signage; and £6411.60, leaving all bar the Play Park account (see 9.2.1) in credit.

6.2.1. Wriggle Valley Magazine (WVM) had requested top-up funds for its operations. The Chairman had contacted WVM; he suggested that £250 might be donated. This was unanimously agreed by the Council. (£250 is correspondingly included in the figure above).

6.3. Payments pending Financial 2020/2 year-end and/or pre-May 2021 meeting (in F/Y 2021/22) were resolved as far as practicable in-meeting.

7. DRAFT DORSET COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN – LEIGH PARISH RESPONSE

The Dorset Council Draft Local Plan had been opened for consultation immediately before previous Parish Council meeting. Whilst the consultation deadline was 15 March 2021, a deadline for response has been negotiated until 18 March to permit ratification in-meeting of Leigh Parish's draft response, circulated as Annex A to the Agenda. Many village residents had logged in for the meeting having already submitted input directly or to the Parish Council. Referring to his draft response, the Chairman opened the meeting to wider public comment, then to detailed comment from the Parish Council. It was agreed that the draft now should be submitted by the Chairman as the parish council's formal response.

8. GRANT APPLICATIONS AND OTHER FUNDING

Cllr Scutt updated the Parish Council on grant applications that she had drafted. She advised that with the large number of donations to date, and still arriving, that she would await a while before submission. There were plenty of sources for small grants, so the delayed timing was only beneficial to assure viable applications. This strategy was agreed. It was noted that additional funding would be required for Phase 3 of the Play Park development.

9 PLAYPARK UPDATE - including:

9.1. Application of current Covid-19 regulations. The Play Park remained open subject to users distancing and cleaning, although subject to impact of works at Item 9.2.

9.2. Cllr Bugler and Julia Jepson reported on the installation of the slide, topped by a small fort and associated works. They were bedding in post fit after 3 March and taped off accordingly. It was noted that there was great anticipation from potential users. There had been a site meeting the previous week and there was a need for more matting, which would be ordered at a cost of £260. Other works that might be needed such as more mats and/or steps would await establishment with time of the slide and ground works.

9.2.1. (See Item 6 Schedule). On completion of the slide fit the final payment of £6151.60 was due, although the supplier was content to wait for the VAT

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Item

Discussion and Decisions

element, it was agreed that it was simpler, especially for reclaiming VAT, to pay the whole. It was agreed that a small deficit would be carried pending VAT reclaim.

9.2.1.1. Additional (contingency) works. Described, Item 9.2, there were immediate minor works adding matting already quoted (£60 +£200) to establish the project. It was agreed that a further total spend of £260 would be incurred and temporarily overdraw the ring-fenced account by £87.

9.2.2. The new slide would require inclusion as a replacement on the insurance schedule.

9.2.3. Julia Jepson suggested that a future phase 3 of the development project might best focus on provision of equipment suitable for the older children in the village (aged 11 years and over, of which there are about ten). The Council thought this a good strategy.

9.2.4. Leigh Parish Council expressed its great appreciation for the hard work of the Play Park Committee.

10. **VILLAGE GREEN UPDATE** – Cllr Ward updated on continuing improvements to the Village Green.

10.1. **Tree planting.** Some 64 trees have been planted and staked under the leadership of Mr Bob Cutler and were bedding in, despite the impact of some recent high winds. Most of the cost was borne by donations. There were still markers to be fitted and perhaps some more stakes and protective netting.

10.2. **Benches.** At the date of the meeting there was funding or part funding for 3 benches from donations, with money still being banked. It was agreed that 3 benches should be ordered on this basis.

10.3. **Further Uses of Green.** The Chairman had been approached about erecting a football goal for use by older children:

10.3.1 The Council noted that the endorsed vision for the Green had been for '*...an open space that anyone could enjoy for short-term occasional activities such as: village events; picnics, informal family games and other such activities that families without access to a suitable garden might otherwise not be able to enjoy in the village*'. There are currently specific lessor's restrictions about fixtures that can be included on the Green (see original business case for the purchase) - although the Council could make an application to amend these.

10.3.1.1. Ad-hoc goal mouths (eg marked by sweaters or the like) were most welcome; and if something more was an imperative, there were also two permanent goal-mouths on the green at Chetnole.

10.3.2. Given the above, the idea had its merits (see Item 9.2.3 above), and it was considered that it would be best for now to allow at least this summer season to pass before making any decision.

11. **COMMUNITY ORCHARD AND ALLOTMENT PROPOSALS**

The Chairman introduced a suggestion that had been received via email pre-meeting: that a ½ acre area, on the 2 acres to the south of the Green currently let on an annual basis as pasture, be turned over to apple trees (over and above trees being planted on the established Green).

There had also been a suggestion that allotments might be considered. The nearest allotments were in Yetminster; these were used by about two Leigh residents. The Clerk had

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Item

Discussion and Decisions

responded on behalf of the parish to the Yetminster village allotments survey in 2019 and drew attention to the subsequent allotment report in Ryme & Yetminster minutes 2 October 2019 and thereafter. It was recognised that allotments are potentially a major undertaking for limited rental return (although templates were available through NALC).

After a short debate, the Council expressed no wish to be managing such projects itself. It was therefore decided that any progression on either of these proposals should wait until someone was prepared to produce a business case for the associated project, and take ownership of it via a properly established, sustainable group.

12. CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE.

Cllr Dixon reported that a Climate Group for Leigh was meeting monthly, currently virtually, and that there was a supporting Facebook grouping. Dorset Climate and Ecological Emergency Support Group was routinely the day after the Parish Council meeting and attended by Cllr Dixon as it provided opportunities to network or collaborate with other parish councils and even groups such as the Friary at Hilfield. She reported that St Andrew's, Leigh, had received an Eco Church Award.

Traffic calming remained a priority to encourage cycling and walking rather than driving and this was covered within Agenda Item 14. A cycle rack had been purchased as authorized at the previous meeting and it would be fitted in the Village Hall grounds after agreement with the Committee about the best place. Cost to be reimbursed and added to the Payments Schedule and it was agreed that aggregate would be purchased and repaid to aid fit of the rack.

13. PLANNING

Parish Planning Matters. Since circulation of the Agenda the Parish Clerk has received request for comment on:

WD/D/21/000121 - Outline planning permission to build a 3-bedroom dwelling adjacent to Greenham House. Concern was expressed about how any such development might be overbearing, given the raised aspect of the proposed site; from the application, there was no indication of the height or style of development envisaged. The application as is stood was therefore not supported. Parish Clerk to lodge response accordingly.

Clerk's Note: Further request for comment WD/D/21/000048 Drummers Farm Camp Site, arrived during the meeting, and too late to be discussed. Any response by 6 April 2021.

13.1. The Parish Clerk reported a request from contractors on behalf of the electricity suppliers to cut back tree branches around cables and the transformer at the entrance to Miz Maze, opposite the Post Office.

14. HIGHWAYS

14.1. **Gritting.** The Chairman reported on progress with Dorset Highways Department regarding the paucity of gritting the parish's access roads; the most recent cold snap had since seen some application, but the route to Longburton had remained untreated. However, Dorset Highways had agreed to consider the parish's proposal for such expanded application at its 'end of winter' gritting review.

14.1.1. The Parish Snow Plan had been circulated before the meeting and would require any updates before review at the Parish Council AGM, along with other plans and standing orders. The grit & salt bin at Club Corner had been recharged at the standard cost of £40-56 (including VAT).

14.2. **Speed limits** It was considered that traffic speeds were a danger through the 'Three Gates' on the road leading towards Hermitage; the Totnell 40mph zone ended some 400m to the north. It was a long time since the matter had been addressed and previously turned down (c.2007); High Stoy parish (in which part of Three Gates falls) had more recently been

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Item

Discussion and Decisions

told that prior to any change, a traffic survey would be required, which the village would have to fund.

The Chairman undertook to consider how any new bid to extend the 40mph zone might be best approached, and thereafter draft a letter in conjunction with High Stoy to Dorset Council.

14.2.1. Russell Jepson had written about more occurrences of speeding in the main part of Leigh village close to the Garage, where weight of traffic had increased making it dangerous pulling out onto the road.

14.2.2. Cllr Dixon referred to her discussion with Highways about traffic calming to make road use safer for all. Whereas there was neither funding nor room for some measures considered, brightening the existing painted road surface signs and adding others might assist. Ad hoc "20 is plenty" signs might also be a low-cost informal option. Parish consultation was required first, to achieve broad support Cllr Dixon agreed to lead on preparing a marked map for such a consultation, perhaps at the Parish AGM.

14.3. **Finger Post Project** – Graham Fudge was invited to update on the project. He noted that donations had covered costs to date: the roundel for the Totnell post was in course of supply, and the refurbishment of the post at the Cross was nearly complete. Next post was to be Club Corner.

14.3.1. It was noted that Ryme & Yetminster PC was already reviewing its posts and the Leigh project group had been in contact with Yetminster's representative as the post at Stake Ford was just within Yetminster's boundary. The finger post at Baily Ridge / Holm Bushes is within the Holnest boundary.

14.3.2. **Insurance.** For insurance purposes the Parish was responsible for the posts', fingers and top roundels; Dorset Council would only erect a post free of charge. The posts were being added individually to the insurance schedule ready for insurance renewal by 1 June 2021. Claims for damage or theft would require a crime number before making a claim through the insurance policy.

15. COVID -19 UPDATE.

Leigh Lifeline. Early use of the mobile phone line had been significant in resolving the early Lockdown issues and coordinating the village group of responders. However it was now 3 months since a call had been received on the publicized number. It was therefore agreed that the number was now no longer required. Claims for any outstanding costs should be submitted to the Parish Clerk.

15.1. The Parish Council recorded its heartfelt thanks to Julia Jepson and her team for meeting a vital need over the preceding year.

15.2. The Facebook page would continue and the traders attending the Wednesday Market planned to continue whilst there was business to justify setting up in the village.

16. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.

- NORCAT had emailed its thanks for the parish's grant (£400) and had updated on its activities in the lockdown, providing transport to vaccination centers. Routine operations would remain impossible for a few more weeks.
- Following a query from the Village Website administrators it was agreed that the Pop-Up Pub was eminently suitable for inclusion on the Website.

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

DCllr Penrose was asked for any updates from Dorset County. She reported that as for the previous meeting, meetings were still progressing virtually and Council staff were still working

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Item Discussion and Decisions

from home wherever possible.

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

Next Leigh PC meeting follows the Parish Council AGM at or after 7-30pm on Tuesday 18th May 2021 on completion of the Parish AGM. The Parish Council AGM includes ratification of accounts for previous year and establishes standing orders and processes for the financial year (2021/22). Village Hall bookings to be made on assumption that in-person meetings would be possible and required.

18.1. Parish AGM: Start time 19:00 / 7-00pm. Arrangements are dependent upon pandemic regulations in place see above.

18.2. Meetings are agreed as 3rd Tuesday in alternate (odd) months, and subsequent meeting dates in 2021 would be:

- 20 July,
- 21 September and
- 16 November 2021