

## Minutes of Leigh Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 20 July 2021 in Leigh Village Hall.

Councillors Present: Cllr A Bennett – Chairman; Cllrs C Dixon, J Dixon, S Scutt, A Ward. Plus Cllr S Vincent from Item 3.

Others Present: Dorset Cllr M Penfold, Cllr D Whiteoak (Chairman High Stoy PC), Ms B Harrison – Parish Clerk

Opening Remarks. The Chairman opened the meeting at 7-30pm and introduced those present

1. Apologies for Absence: Nil
2. Declarations of Interest: Nil
3. **COOPTION FILL TO LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL CASUAL VACANCY.**

A casual vacancy had been notified for Leigh Parish Council and Mr Sam Vincent had responded to a request for volunteers. He was asked to introduce himself. It was agreed that he be co-opted to fill the 7<sup>th</sup> Leigh parish councillor position that was vacant.

Proposed Cllr Bennett; seconded: Cllr C Dixon – nil against.

Cllr Vincent signed acceptance of office declaration and took his place on Leigh Parish Council.

### 4. LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

4.1. Draft minutes of the previous Leigh Parish Council Meeting, with its AGM, held on 18 May 2021 had been circulated and displayed.

4.1.1. There were no further corrections. It was proposed by Cllr Ward, seconded by Cllr Scutt that the Chairman signed the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

4.1.2. Matters Arising. Action on the following governance and policy documents required completion or review on carrying over from the previous meeting:

4.1.2.1. Item 2.2 - LPC Asset Register. The Chairman sought volunteers to review the Asset register, as suggested at the previous meeting. Cllr Ward agreed to review the Asset Register in time for the next meeting.

4.1.2.2. Item 2.3.- LPC Risk Register. The Risk Register reviewed with the AGAR for 2020/21 had been updated by the Clerk to accord with the AGAR Practitioners' Guide and the insurance policy. The Chairman asked for volunteers to review the updated register. Cllr J Dixon volunteered. Hard copies were handed over at the meeting and Parish Clerk to forward the associated documents and schedules on-line, to permit realistic review by the next Parish Council meeting.

4.1.2.3. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. NALC provides templates, updated to incorporate current legislation. Leigh's Financial Regulations followed the most recent issue, but it had previously been decided that Leigh's Standing Orders would follow the older 2014 NALC Template, with consequent mismatched cross references. The Chairman

undertook to review the documents. Clerk to forward the current NALC standing orders template, as already updated for Leigh's use, with NALC's supporting documents.

4.2. Parish Meeting Draft Minutes. The draft minutes of the Parish's meeting on 18 May 2021 had been circulated amongst Parish Councillors for comment before general release. It was agreed that the draft minutes should now be released for upload to the Parish website.

## 5. FINANCES OVERVIEW:

The accounts workbook, with bank reconciled to 30 June 2021, was circulated in advance of the meeting, reflecting recent transactions (see Item 6). As at 20 July 2021 the cashbook balance was £21084 of which £13809 was ringfenced with CIL funds of £9310 (see Item 5.2).

5.1. Update on forecast for FY21/22. The Chairman noted that the budget for this FY had been set in Jan 21 with a £800 deficit; on the current spreadsheet this had grown to £1100. An adjustment to the original fingerpost allocation (from £750 to £450) was made to reflect the £300 since removed from the originally budget income for fingerposts (now accounted for under a separate Fingerpost fund). This would restore the originally set budget deficit of £800.

5.2. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Leigh Parish had received £9310 CIL funding in-year. It was the second such credit received; it required accounting for use, within the defined initial 5-year time scale. (The previous CIL credit was absorbed in-year at the time.) The councillors were referred to the circulated policy document that defined CIL uses and a 5-years' time limit, for that use. The Chairman had sought initial proposals for projects to which the funds could be applied. Various suggestions had been made; it was agreed that any allocation should be deferred until the next meeting.

5.3. Repair & Replacement Fund. Formerly called CAPEX, but better described as a Repair & Replace Fund. An associated further tab has been generated on the accounts workbook to be ringfenced as a fund to provide for repair and replacement of existing assets. The newly attached V4 spreadsheet reflected the current understanding.

5.4. Bank administration – The Clerk reported Lloyds Bank confirmation of Leigh Parish's banking admin changes requested at the previous meeting. It was intended to progress to on-line banking for Leigh Parish Council.

5.5. External audit progress. The Clerk reported timely dispatch of the signed 2020/21 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) to the external auditors and that public notification was posted on 22 June 2021 for public review. Members of the public could ask to view the accounts, pending completion of audit, until 3 August 2021. The auditors are scheduled to issue a statement of audit by 30 September 2021. See Item 4.1. The clerk was still researching a cost-effective internal auditor for 2021/22, who should be in place before the financial year end.

## 6 APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

A consolidated schedule of payments had been circulated with the agenda.

6.1. Payments of £1736-48 had been made since the previous parish council meeting and were reflected in the accounts presented. It was formally recorded

in minutes (see Schedule) that the payments were agreed.

6.2. There were nil payments for agreement in meeting.

6.3. Expected payments pending the September 2021 meeting – grass cutting at £220 per month. Paid until end of June 2021. Clerk's pay pending on-line banking arrangements.

## 7. GRANT APPLICATIONS AND OTHER FUNDING

Cllr Scutt referred to previous minutes about it being better to define needs for any funding, whilst bearing in mind the discussions at Item 5.2, which indicated it was better to use the large CIL balance within its 5-year time scale.

## 8. PLAYPARK UPDATE

Cllr Scutt reported that she had generated an action list stemming from the RoSPA annual safety report received in May. Several minor corrections had been tasked and Toy Barn had carried out minor corrections and fitted mats as tasked within the original slide project. The gate presented a minor trap hazard that remained to be resolved. The Play Park Committee had met and discussed its next steps. New committee members were being encouraged. The new slide was in use and well received by its users.

8.1. Teen Shelter / Facilities for older Play Park users. It was noted that there were at least 12 older children in the village not catered for by the current play park facilities. It had been suggested that a zip-wire would be well received and would be cheaper than a previously roughly costed 'Teen shelter'. Discussions were ongoing about potential items to meet the need, at least in part.

## 9. VILLAGE GREEN UPDATE

Cllr Ward reported that 3 x benches had been delivered (and being kindly stored by the Village Hall); the securing tie downs were still awaited. Only one of the benches required an engraved plate on it and it would be tasked through the Clerk when required. It was agreed that the 3 funded benches would suffice initially. Markers for trees would be arranged once they had grown a little more. To date a couple of trees had died and would be replaced in the autumn.

## 10. CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVES.

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Cllr C Dixon reported that Plastic-Free July was well underway. The Parish Council conveyed a vote of thanks to the Leigh Climate Group for their work to promote Plastic Free July within the village and Cllr Scutt recorded her thanks to the volunteers of the Leigh Climate Group for the bags that they had prepared in support of the initiative. It was noted that all the items had been donated so that there was no need to use the grant of £30 previously requested. The bike racks were ordered for siting close to the Village Hall, and which requiring concreting in to permit secure parking for up to 4 bikes.

- See Items 12.2.1 & 2 for traffic calming measures to encourage greater pedestrian access and bike use.

## 11. PLANNING

• To consider Parish Planning Matters. Nil updates since previous meeting.

## 12 HIGHWAYS

- 12.1. Gritting – Parish Snow Plan required review and update as Dorset County circulates parish councils in the autumn to agree pre-winter top-up of grit bins. Previously overseen by David Vincent, now resigned as a councillor. Carried forwards to September’s meeting.

12.2. Speed limits The Chairman referred to his correspondence about extension of 40mph limit to beyond Three Gates and he introduced David Whiteoak, chairman of High Stoy Parish Council. A traffic survey at Three Gates, jointly funded by both parishes, was scheduled through Dorset Highways for September (High Stoy would separately be taking advantage of a ‘discounted second simultaneous survey’ offer in Hermitage). It was agreed that recording and reporting traffic incidents will support the move to lower the speed limit at Three Gates. Cllr C Dixon agreed to draft a short notice to be published on the village website, Facebook page and in the Wriggle Valley News to ask people to record such incidents with Dorset Police.

12.2.1. Road markings and speed calming. Cllr C Dixon reported that she had agreed updated and refreshed road markings for the main route through the village – Totnell / Chetnole Road – maps included in the Parish Meeting minutes – in the hope that it would calm traffic through the village.

12.2.1.1. Community Speed Watch (CSW). Volunteers were being collected to commence the project under Sarah Rudd’s lead.

12.2.2. Speed identification device (SID). Equipment costs were being investigated yet had proved significant at £2.3K + plus running costs. It was considered that before embarking on this option, CSW should first be up and running.

12.3. Finger Post Project – Progress on refurbishing Leigh’s four main posts was being maintained. It was considered a ‘joint’ view was appropriate regarding posts on the parish boundary, but just within other parishes, namely: Stake Ford Cross (RIYPC parish) and Bailey Ridge junction (Cam Vale parish), as Leigh also benefitted from such sign posting.

Correspondence regarding the Stake Ford post had borne fruit: at the RIYPC 14 July meeting it was confirmed that the cost would be split between the parishes. The damaged “finger” had been retrieved although the fitting was fractured, assumed from grass cutting. It was noted that reused materials were allocated.

A direction “finger” was also retrieved from Bailey Ridge by the restoration team pending decision to restore. Cam Vale parish had been contacted accordingly.

- 13 **COVID -19 update**. Reduction of pandemic restrictions removed the need for this as a standard agenda item.
- 14 **NEW DORSET CODE OF CONDUCT**. Last update to Dorset CoC was in 2011 and whilst it is advised for PCs, the new Councillor’s Register of Interests (ROI) process is mandatory and due to go live before the next LPC meeting. Councillors must register on the new system by 30 Sep ’21. It was taken as an opportunity to consolidate training in linked important areas. The Draft Code of Conduct template and some links had been forwarded. Training was available on-line, with dates being added for best availability, whilst the presentation slides had already been forwarded for information. All councils were being invoiced in accordance with size rather than numbers

attending, or not. (Latterly noted that the new mandatory Register of Interest process would not go live until August 2021.) Cllr Whiteoak commended the benefit and accessibility of the training to Leigh's Parish Councillors.

**15 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.**

- 15.1. Councillors guide to Rural Housing formed part of the 7 July 2021 Dorset Council Newsletter and easily missed if not downloading all images.
- 15.2. WVM Notice about Village Shop Post Office. See item 16 below

**16 ITEMS OF AN URGENT NATURE – SUBJECT TO CHAIRMAN'S APPROVAL**

- Village Shop /Post Office and Garage. Brenda and Steve Addison had run the three important village facilities for 32 years but had recently notified their decision to close the businesses on 31 October 2021. It was noted that the loss would be significant for Leigh, whilst also moving such facilities still further away for remoter villages such as Batcombe and Hilfield.

Future continuation of these services thus depended on someone being prepared to take on the various business opportunities, including finding premises (the current location of the shop and post office were unlikely to be available) and funding. A 'community shop' might be a way ahead, although it would require someone to lead such a project. Other options were discussed, including how other villages coped.

It was considered that at present all the PC could do was publicise the situation. Other options such as a mobile shop, or post office, plus simple transport to other shops were to be investigated and considered by the next meeting. It was agreed to keep DCllr Penfold informed of developments.

**17 DATE(S) OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

- Next Leigh PC meeting follows the Parish Council AGM at 7-30pm on Tuesday 21 September 2021 on completion of the Parish AGM.

17.1. Meetings are 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in alternate (odd-numbered) months, subsequent meeting would be 16 November 2021, VH booked. Subsequent meetings until the next LPC AGM would be 18 January; 15 March and 17 May 2022 – last date is Parish Council AGM, preceded by Parish General Meeting at 7pm