

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Leigh Parish Council Meeting Tuesday 5 October 2021 in Leigh Village Hall.

Present: Councillors A Bennett (Chairman), C Dixon, J Dixon, M Read, S Scutt, S Vincent and A Ward.

In Attendance: DCllr M Penfold, Ms R Graham (Footpaths), Ms B Harrison, Parish Clerk

Opening Remarks. The Chairman welcomed those attending. The retimed meeting, replacing that called for 21 September 2021, as the council was unexpectedly inquorate on 21 September and unable to conduct business.

1. Apologies for Absence: Nil.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation that all councillors were able to be present. Reflecting on the cancelled meeting, he reminded councillors that they were expected to provide apologies to the clerk as soon as they knew that they could not attend a scheduled meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest: Cllr Vincent for part of Item 9.

3. **LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES**

3.1. Minutes of the previous Leigh Parish Council Meeting, 20 July 2021 had been circulated and displayed, without request for addition or amendment.

3.1.1. The meeting agreed the minutes for the Chairman to sign (hard copy).

3.1.2. Matter Arising Matters arising were covered in the following agenda items except for:

3.1.2.1. Village Shop (Item 16.) The Chairman reported that plans were in place to continue a shop facility in the village as reported in the October Wriggle Valley Magazine in an article by Sica Burton. Any identification of appropriate community funding opportunities would be welcomed by Sica. Post Office facilities would be provided once per week with a mobile Post Office, otherwise post office facilities over and above on-line were in Yetminster, Thornford or Cerne Abbas. On closure of the Garage, the next nearest repair garage would be in Yetminster.

4. **FINANCES OVERVIEW:**

The accounts spreadsheet dated 30 September 2021 reflected the current state of finances and included receipt of the 2nd precept installment. The Chairman stated that the precept application process for the next FY will start by considering a draft budget for 2022/23 at the November meeting; councillors were asked to consider their areas for where precept funds were required. Precept applications were to be agreed by 31 January.

4.1. Update on forecast for FY21/22. Funds were healthy as the 2021/22 precept was fully deposited with a Cashbook balance of £25585. Ring fenced fund balances were: Play Park - £1766; Village Green - £2250; Heritage Signage - £484 and CIL funds - £9310. This left £11776 with approximately £7K projected expenditure in-year. The Chairman queried outstanding capital balance of the loan for the Village Green. *(Clerk's note: £36876 was outstanding as PWLB certificate on the AGAR for 31 March 2021 - recirculated. A further £1231-47 was paid on 10 Jun 21, leaving a principal of £36072.58, and next installment was due on 10 December and the PWLB tab is again*

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

added to the accounts workbook.)

4.2. Bank administration: An on-line banking request was ready for signature prior to action through Lloyds Bank.

4.3. External audit. The external auditors, PKF Littlejohn, had certified completion of audit of Leigh's Part 3 AGAR with one resolved observation and an invoice of £200+VAT (£240 total) was payable (Item 5). The more detailed searching audit (rather than council self-certification and subsequent public notices) had been required for the past three returns in 2019-2021, because income and / or expenditure had exceeded £25K, placing the parish in a larger authority bracket. Parts 1-3 of the signed-off return was published as required, and the full accounts remained available for inspection by Leigh parishioners on application. Parishioners may also purchase a printed copy, in event of query.

4.4. Revisions and adjustments to the following documents in support of the AGAR were in hand with councillors:

4.4.1. Asset Register – review held over (Cllr Ward).

4.4.2. Risk Register review – Suggested edits to the Risk Register were circulated by Cllr J Dixon and some further changes were added by Cllr Bennett. Cllr Dixon noted that he did not include scoring in his review. It was agreed that the amendments be included and circulated again for the next meeting where it would be subject to parish council agreement.

4.5. Community Infrastructure Funds (CIL) Use of the CIL ringfenced funds remained under consideration whilst noting that ongoing spends such as Play Park equipment repairs, or Village Green facilities were appropriate and needed recording as such when drawn. Cllr Scutt raised the issue of possible matched funding for playpark additional equipment (see Item 6). The impact, on a small parish council, of such CIL windfalls needs to be noted in the light of Item 4.3 if it over increases income.

5 APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

A consolidated schedule of payments was circulated for review, and formal agreement by Councillors:

5.1. There were no payments requiring agreement since the previous meeting.

5.2. Payments for agreement in meeting were as per the attached previously circulated schedule, total: £1150-00 and impacting accounts as follows:

5.2.1. Main expenses (variance) £290-00 (including agreement to pay a £20-00 donation to the RBL Poppy Appeal in respect of a wreath)

5.2.2. Grass Cutting three months total £860, consisting of: Play Park: £260-00, Village Green: £600-00.

5.3. Payments expected pending the next meeting were: October Grass Cutting 2 x £110; DAPTC Training invoice £39 (with agreement to incur further 2 x module booking costs of £78). A Village Hall hire invoice for 2020 had been requested. Any payments to be made pre-meeting would be circulated for agreement.

Impact on the accounts would be circulated with the minutes to the parish council, by which time the next bank reconciliation would be complete.

6. **PLAYPARK UPDATE.** Cllr Scutt updated the meeting. The Play Park Committee was in the process of producing plans for the next phase; matched funding could be

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

required to underpin a grant application (see Item 4.4). Play Park accounts showed that the ongoing base annual expenditure (grass cutting, annual inspection) was c.£600 pa (not including any repairs required), representing a significant recurring financial commitment.

The Chairman observed that CIL funds could be used to support this, and we now had the 'Repair and Replacement' fund to help fund such costs over £300.

7. **VILLAGE GREEN UPDATE.** Cllr Ward provided a short update on the Village Green. The 3 benches were now installed and secured. The planted trees were being monitored with a view to replacing any failing to establish. The council stated that it would gladly fund any such replacement. See Item 8 about potential inclusion in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Canopy, and balance with Item 7.1 below.

7.1. The Chairman had pre-circulated a draft policy statement regarding the Village Green. It was considered that it would now benefit from a settling period; the aim of the policy was to preserve the green's 'uncluttered' state. Minor changes were considered to the draft wording and the attached draft wording was deemed satisfactory. It was agreed to provisionally adopt the policy, pending formal adoption at the next meeting.

7.1.1. Many residents had contributed most generously to the cost of establishing the trees and benches (and one bench donated in recognition of all the valuable work undertaken by the Leigh WI). The Parish council again expressed its appreciation of these generous donations as record.

8. **CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE.** Cllr C Dixon updated the meeting on parish climate issues. The Leigh Climate Group (LCG) continued to meet, and the parish received regular minutes from and provided input to the County Climate & Ecological Emergency Support group. LCG hoped to run a series of talks over the coming year to raise awareness of climate and environment as part of the Together for Our Planet initiative. The LCG was applying for Lottery funding for this, which if allocated would need to be paid through the parish council. The council supported this approach.

The council also supported the concept that recent and ongoing tree planting in the village might be declared as part of the Queen's Canopy initiative. An individual tree could be planted to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Various locations were briefly considered (between two of the VG benches; adjacent to the footpath crossing the field to the south of the VG; village hall; elsewhere in the village); Cllr C Dixon was encouraged to work with the LCG to propose a site.

9. PLANNING

To consider Parish Planning Matters. Updates since previous meeting. Item 9.1 was moved to the end of the agenda, to permit discussion after departure of Cllr Vincent (on account of his declaration of interest).

9.1. P/FUL/2021/01677 Full retrospective planning permission for 2 x agricultural buildings at Whitehall Farm DT9 6JG. This description had been revised on the date of the meeting. of 17 October 2021 was added for input. A discussion ensued about the application covering matters such as access, surface water, noise and potential direction of future development on the site.

9.1.1. From the vote taken: 4 'no objections', one 'objection'. Parish clerk to provide feedback to Dorset Planning that the parish council had 'no objection'.

9.2. P/HOU/2021/02237 Single storey extension Rossendale DT9 6HL. Deadline for

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

comment was 23 Sep '21 and it was agreed that nil LPC comment was required.

9.3. Application P/PAAC/2021/03731 Isles Farm (DT9 6HW) was for notification of change of use, rather than a parish council decision and action was with Dorset Council.

9.4. The new Dorset Planning website is undergoing update. Immediately before the meeting it was 'down' for the incorporation of East Dorset. Parish consultation would no doubt be clarified; currently, parish council agreement was automatically assumed if no comment was recorded. Cllr C Dixon was attending the 3 x Planning module training sessions as Leigh PC's planning lead.

10 HIGHWAYS

10.1 **Speed limits.** The requested survey was on-going and running in parallel with High Stoy PC (in Hermitage)

10.1.1 Road markings and speed calming points were marked on the main route through the village (Totnell and Chetnole Road) for refreshment or addition; yet to be done.

10.1.2. Community Speed Watch It was reported that the Community Speed Watch Group now had equipment and that training would soon be arranged.

10.2. **Winter Gritting Plan.** The Parish Winter Management Plan had been updated and was being uploaded for general access. Grit bins (5 in the parish) had been checked and top up was not considered necessary. Council lead to be decided.

10.3. **Finger Post Project.** The 'Club Corner' top roundel is on order. Work has started on the Stake Ford junction sign, for which the costs will be split with Yetminster as the sign was within the Yetminster parish boundary, although it benefitted Leigh. Cam Vale parish council had also responded regarding its sign at the Bailey Ridge junction and had agreed to fund work to the value of £200 on the understanding that 'Holnest' could be included. The top roundel does not require replacement. Once more the parish council expressed its thanks to the project group restoring the finger posts, and those donating.

10.3.1. A parishioner had emailed a query about the milestone on Bailey Ridge, as it was heeled over. The parish clerk forwarded the query, as repetition of a previous question, to the Community Highways Officer. Dorset Highways response was directly to the parishioner but did achieve the aim of getting a definitive answer about status of finger posts and milestones, which were stated to be the responsibility of the council. The two milestones in the village are scheduled (listed monuments) and subject to protection. Instruction has been that they should not be painted as modern non-breathable paints are damaging to the Hamstone.

11 **APPLICATION FOR A DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION.** Correspondence was received regarding an application to Dorset Council to change the map definition of T638, Bound Lane, between Leigh and Chetnole to a Byway open to all traffic (BOAT), from its status as a 'track'.

The Chairman had clarified the status of 'track' with Dorset Council. The main difference appeared to be about paying for repairs, which were often significant. It was considered that the application was likely to succeed unless historical evidence could be submitted showing that BOAT was not justified. He had notified people in the area in search of such evidence and undertook to contact Alastair Dennis, a subject matter

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

expert about the matter. David Vincent had also volunteered to remain as lead on the area's 'green lanes'.

12 STANDING ORDERS, AND PROCESSES.

12.1. Leigh Standing Orders – any revision of 2014 orders carried over. *2018 used by Clerk in parallel to assure currency with legislation.*

12.2. Code of Conduct. Council Code of Conduct training had been linked with other training on introduction of the new councillors registration of interests procedure (Item 12.3.)

12.3. Registration of Interests. Many councillors had attended training provided. Links to register being sent by Parish Clerk and the revised submission date for councillors is 31 October 2021. Councillors were asked to contact the Parish Clerk if there are any delays or concerns in meeting the deadline.

12.4. Consolidated Parish Councils Websites. DAPTC had established a consolidated website for Dorset parishes providing templates to meet accessibility and legal requirements. The Parish Clerk had logged onto the briefing for the site and had been advised that adopting the format available at: <https://www.dorsetparishes.gov.uk/> would leave the parish less exposed and improve accessibility. (See Item 4.3). The council noted this, but decided to remain with the *status quo*, as a section within <https://www.leighvillage.org.uk/parish-council/> .

13 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW. Public Consultation was ongoing until 31 October 2021 and could be accessed through:

<http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/community-governance-review%20> The Chairman outlined the review where it concerned parish councils:

Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes; the naming of parishes and the style of new parishes and the creation of town councils; parish electoral arrangements eg: the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding, grouping under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes or other types of local arrangements, including parish meetings

The Review excludes: changing the number of councillors on Dorset Council or their Dorset Council ward boundaries; or changing the amount of money that a parish council raises through the precept.

14 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.

14.1. Police Report(s) had been circulated as received, with no specific crimes ascribed in Leigh although there were general observations applicable. Cllr Scutt drew attention to Community Support Officers attending the Church Coffee Morning and had particularly encouraged greater use of 'What three words' to assist locating village properties in an emergency. (On the Village Facebook page).

14.2. Platinum Commemorations 2022. – email being forwarded.

15 ITEMS OF AN URGENT NATURE – SUBJECT TO CHAIRMAN'S APPROVAL NTR.

16 DATE(S) OF NEXT MEETINGS:

The next Leigh PC meeting is at 7-30pm on Tuesday 16 November 2021, to be held in the Village Hall.

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

16.1. Meetings in 2022 until AGM are on Tuesdays: 18 January; 15 March and 17 May 2022.

Drafted Provisional Policy for Leigh Village Green

The Leigh village green was established in order to provide 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 (Annex G to the Leigh Village Green business case, 12 March 2019).

The planting of some 50 trees around the perimeter, together with the establishment of a few occasional benches within a wildflower border, now completes the green's intended development.

While the funding of the green was paid for by Leigh parish council, a significant proportion of the cost of the trees and benches was paid for by private donation. Leigh parish council remains extremely grateful to all who donated so generously.

Looking forward, Leigh parish council believes that the interest of our community is best served by maintaining the green in its present 'uncluttered' state, i.e. without an addition of further fixtures or plantings. Complementary to this, it is intended that the benches should remain without inscriptions or plaques, and that similarly the trees should remain unmarked.

This policy was provisionally adopted at the parish council meeting held on 5 October 2021, with a view to formal adoption at the meeting of 16 November 2021. The policy once adopted, will be reviewed with other parish policies, at the Parish Council AGM following the next parish council election (TBC- May 2024)