

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of Leigh Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th March 2022 in Leigh Village Hall.

Present: Cllr A Bennett, Chairman; Cllrs C Dixon, J Dixon, M Read, and S Vincent (to Item 15)

In attendance: DCllr M Penfold and B Harrison, Parish Clerk.

Opening Remarks. The chairman opened the meeting at 7-30pm.

1. Apologies for Absence: Nil

2. Declarations of Interest: Cllr M Read for 2 x properties in Item 14.2. Planning Matters.

3. LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

3.1. The minutes of the previous Parish Council Meeting, held on 18th January 2022 had been circulated, published and displayed. There was no further input required and the draft minutes were agreed as final and signed by the Chairman.

3.2. Matters Arising not subsequently included in the agenda:

3.2.1. Held over from Leigh PC AGM 18 May 2021 – Appointment of internal auditor. Details of two potential internal auditors were circulated by the Clerk with the basis for recommendations.

3.2.1.1. Decision: It was unanimously agreed that Paula Harding be appointed to complete Internal Audit of Leigh Parish Council accounts for year end 31 March 2022.

3.2.2. Parish Standing Orders. Update by Chairman carried over.

3.2.3. Documents for Upload. Agreed orders and policies were in process of upload, whilst a number required agreement before upload.

Other matters arising are covered in subsequent items.

4. PARISH COUNCILLOR RESIGNATIONS.

4.1. Cllr A Ward had resigned since the previous meeting and the resulting casual vacancy had been formally notified. Furthermore, Cllr S Scutt had also resigned shortly before the meeting and it was confirmed that the process ran separately for each vacancy. The parish council recorded its thanks for the hard work of both retiring councillors.

4.2. The Clerk updated on the statutory process ongoing to finding replacement qualified parish councillors, vice:

4.2.1. Cllr A Ward. Formal notice of the casual vacancy, on Cllr Ward's resignation, had been published, running out on 11th March and Electoral Services had confirmed that there was no request for an election. This left the parish free to co-opt a volunteer(s) to fill that that vacancy. A copy of a notice defining qualification, and seeking volunteers was circulated. Attached with these minutes.

4.2.2. Cllr S Scutt. Electoral Services had been notified of Sandra Scutt's resignation as a parish councillor and a new Casual Vacancy Notice dated 16th March 2022, and running out on 5th April 2022, as attached.

It was noted (LTN-08) that parish councils do not arrange elections. Accordingly Electoral Services notifies the clerk if ten electors request an election. Without such a request, in

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response to Cllr Scutt's resignation, Leigh parish is then free to continue to co-opt a second councillor to fill the second vacancy. This is without pre-empting any outcome about filling the vacancy, due before the next AGM/council meeting 17 May 2022.

5. FUTURE PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

5.1. Revised Meeting Dates. The Chairman proposed that Leigh parish council meetings might be moved to the second Tuesday of alternate months, starting as at Tuesday 12th July 2022. This will permit timely inclusion of the Chairman's parish council updates in the Wriggle Valley Magazine for the publication deadline.

5.2. Revised Times of Meetings. Councillors were asked to consider an earlier start time for meetings, currently 7-30pm, to avoid late finishes. Standing orders advise meetings no longer than 2 hours. 6-30 pm was suggested, a later time permitted inclusion of those working whilst still being finished by 9pm iaw the two hours of Standing Orders. After discussion it was proposed that Leigh parish council meetings should start at 7pm, commencing with the July 2022 meeting. It was also agreed that the impact of change would remain under review.

5.3. Decision: It was decided that Leigh Parish Council meetings from Tuesday 12 July 2022 would be held on 2nd Tuesday of 'uneven' alternate months, and that they would commence at 7pm. **Proposer Cllr A Bennett Seconded Cllr C Dixon.**

5.4. Parish Clerk to revise and confirm Leigh Village Hall bookings accordingly.

6. FINANCES OVERVIEW:

The accounts reconciled spreadsheet, using statement as at end February 2022 – to be circulated before meeting

6.1. Update on forecast for current FY2021/22. It was noted that the footpath gates included in the budget had not been fitted or invoiced. The parish would need to define what is carried forwards into the next year. As at the meeting the parish appeared to be up to £800 underspent on budget.

6.2. Independent bank statement reconciliation (Fin Regs) Cllr J Dixon tasked. Completed outside meeting.

6.3. End of year audit accounting actions. See Item 3.2.1. An internal auditor was appointed to complete first level audit of the parish accounts with effect 31 March 2022 and an audit period was notionally agreed so that the parish accounts were audited by the PC AGM on 17 May 2022, to meet return by the expected 'business as usual' deadline of 1 July 2022, pending receipt of instructions. Much of the audit process requires review of ready online access.

(Clerk's note: PKF Littlejohn External Audit instructions were received on 25 March 2022. The deadline agreed for audited accounts remained 1st July 2022, so sign off must be achieved at the council's AGM.)

6.4. Application and use of Community Infrastructure Funds (CIL). 'Maintenance' is listed as an option for CIL use in the Dorset County CIL guidance letter, received in support of funds paid to the parish in April 2021. Following a query during DAPTC training the Parish Clerk sought clarification from the Dorset CIL point of contact about the parish proposed use of CIL funds for grass cutting of the village green and playpark. The response was circulated to the council before the meeting (retained to support internal audit); main points taken as:

6.4.1 CIL funds are particularly to support measures to reduce the impact of

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the new building in the parish that attracts the levy, eg: support for increased facilities use, thus incurring more repairs, or measures to alleviate increased surface water run-off. It was particularly advised that the parish residents should be consulted.

6.4.1.1. "It's important to consider that the parish council may be asked to justify how they spend the CIL money and would need to be able provide adequate justification. Our advice would be to spend the CIL money on something tangible, like a piece of infrastructure, as this is something that is easy for people to see and understand.

6.4.1.2. However, it is up to the parish council how they choose to spend the CIL money. We would also advise consulting with your residents to see if there are projects they would like to see come forward in the area, which could be funded or part funded by the CIL money.

This advice from Dorset Council was received and noted. The Chairman pointed out that the Play Park and Village Green were both new developments. It was agreed that grass cutting should be funded from CIL for 2021/22; and was also included the budget for 2022/23, as previously agreed (minutes LPC Meeting 20220115 Item 4.2).

7. APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS.

A consolidated schedule of payments was agreed by the Councillors for payment from the man account, as attached, including:

7.1. Nil payments made since previous meeting, for formal approval record in minutes.

Total: £0

7.2. Payments for agreement in meeting: **£694-16** All from main account.

7.2.1. Impact of revised NALC pay rates. NALC had issued a belated revised pay scale for clerks and this was agreed for payment, reflecting in the overall clerk's pay in 7.2, including £28 to update the paid rate and subsequently applied for the remaining 3 months of the financial year. See variances sheet.

7.2.2. The consignment of dog waste sacks (2x packs/1600) was yet to be invoiced and would include post and packing up to a total of £65. (The final invoice was £64-26.)

7.3. Expected payments pending next meeting, ideally before year end: 31 March 2022: Village Hall invoice 2020 perhaps plus 2021 use: **up to £270-00**. Clerk's expenses had not been defined and were not submitted or expected by financial year end.

8. LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL LETTER TO DORSET'S COUNTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Subject: Failure of Dorset Council to provide adequate service. Response from Dorset CEO's office dated 20 Jan, plus other associated responses, are detailed under Items 14.1, 16.1 and 16.3 below.

9. PARISH COUNCIL (CLERK) INFORMATION STORAGE REVIEW

9.1. Cllr J Dixon's paper considering the parish information storage had been circulated. This recommended updated facilities, originally agreed with the clerk on appointment.

9.1.1. At the time, the appointment of the current clerk meant that Leigh lost access to the previously 'shared with other parishes' computer, as used by the outgoing clerk. It had been agreed that the incoming parish clerk would use her own laptop,

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wifi, security, programmes and printer, much as before with the only difference being the lap top provision.

9.1.2 It was noted by the clerk that her IT was professionally set up and included the parish email account that could then be routinely monitored. Parish information was stored to a separate hard drive. At the same time the parish had also ceased to pay a proportion of line charges and facilities use. It was confirmed that the parish was registered with the Information Commissioner, with the Parish Clerk as data protection officer. All official email contact with the parish was intended to be through the clerk on leigh@dorset-aptc.gov.uk.

9.2. All current councillors were 'on-line' and thus all would inevitably retain some parish council information. Councillors were expected to delete council material on ceasing to be a councillor. The council email was leigh@dorset-aptc.gov.uk and was to be used for official email contact. After discussion it was agreed that:

9.2.1. Cllr J Dixon would email councillors about how to set up their separate email address for Leigh parish council business. Councillors would then notify the parish clerk of their contact address and update individual Dorset ROI declarations accordingly.

9.2.2. The paper recommended that the council should consider the purchase of its own IT equipment. It was considered by council and as there were no strong views in support of the recommendation presented and because the Council's financial resources remain constrained, the Chairman proposed that the current arrangements would continue with an option to review again in the future. That proposal was unanimously agreed and the matter was closed.

9.2.3. Drafted (NALC-based) policies to be reviewed again for upload to the separate parish website.

10. PLAYPARK UPDATE.

Cllr Scutt, who would normally lead on the Playpark update, had recently resigned. The Chairman referred to a meeting at the Play Park the previous week with the Play Park Committee Chairman to view the equipment.

10.1. Repairs and works in response to the 2021 RoSPA Report. Cllr Scutt had previously circulated notes and costings to carry out repairs and upgrades after the playpark relocation. One mat had now been re-levelled. It was considered that the remaining identified issues, all assessed in the report as 'low risk', were acceptable for the time being. The next RoSPA annual safety inspection was due shortly and booked for May 2022.

10.2. Next Project / Future Works. There are about 25 older children in the parish for which there is no provision aside from the village green. The Playpark Committee had sought tenders to install a zip wire – costings were around £16k.

10.2.1. Councillors welcomed the concept and were appreciative of the work that the Playpark Committee had done. However, they were concerned there were a number of questions that needed to be resolved before a decision could be made:

- Expected life of the installation
- Expected routine and major maintenance schedules
- An outline of how the necessary funds would be raised. At the moment,
 - Some £2k is in the playpark sub account

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- It was understood that a similar amount was presently held by the Playpark committee
- If Grants etc were to be applied for, who was going to lead on this.

Nobody was present from the Playpark committee to advise on these issues. The PC therefore felt that, while the project had merit, it was in no position at the moment to give the project the go-ahead. It was hoped that further information would be available at the May meeting. The Chairman undertook to inform the Play Park Committee of the council's decision.

11. VILLAGE GREEN UPDATE.

11.1. Annabel Ward had been the Village Green lead. A replacement councillor was sought to take the lead on the project. Cllr M Read volunteered to fill the role in due course.

11.2. Grass Cutting (including Play Park.) 2022. Matter arising from previous meeting. The Clerk confirmed that she had contacted Mr Holder about grass cutting the Green and Playpark areas. It had been agreed by email that Mr Holder was available to complete the work across the same areas up to twice a month, depending on need:

- There would be a more extensive cut at greater cost, after the flowering season.
- Rates would be the same as for 2021 and invoiced to the Parish Clerk, who would monitor the work and its costs.

11.3. Dog waste bag dispensers. See Item 7.2.1. More bags were purchased by the Parish. The Clerk was topping up dispensers as required, although others were undertaking the same for the Village Hall Committee, so the apparent cost of £65 over nearly 2 years was short of reality. Accordingly, there was no clear view of use across the 3 dispensers, as the Village Hall had purchased more already, albeit not the correct size. The Clerk undertook to clarify more realistic and consistent top up arrangements.

12. CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE.

Cllr C Dixon reported that the parish had been successful in its grant application to fund a series of 10 talks over the next 12 months. The talks would be organized by Leigh Climate Group and held over a wider area than within Leigh alone. The grant received was ring fenced and spend against it was controlled by the Climate Group.

13. FLOOD ALLEVIATION.

13.1. East stream update. A local working party, made up of adjacent landowners and several Councillors, had cleared the debris build up along some 250m downstream of Leigh garage bridge.

13.2. West steam update. A 'leaky dam', consisting of a pipe and bund, was being considered as a possibility. FWAG(SW) had been approached with regard to advice and potential part funding. Any proposal would need the associated landowners' agreement.

14. PLANNING

14.1. County Planning Communications and yet to be Authorised Developments:

14.1.1. Two sites within the parish appear to have been or are being significantly developed without appropriate planning permission: 'The Poplars' at Three Gates; and a dwelling on the Leigh – Batcombe Road just south of where the River Wriggle flows under that road.

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14.1.2. Dorset Council has now served Planning Contravention Notices on the persons identified as holding Title to the land at both locations.

14.2. **To consider Parish Planning Matters.** Updates since previous meeting.

14.2.1. P/FUL/2022/00644 Agricultural Access at DT9 6HT. Response in support provided by 3 March 2022 deadline.

14.2.2. P/VOC/2021/05531. Hunts Bridge Farm. Permission granted 9 February 2022.

14.2.3. P/FUL/2021/05103. Frampton Farm. All weather riding arena. Permission granted 10 February 2022.

14.2.3. Awaiting Decisions (see previous minutes):

14.2.3.1. P/FUL/2021/04994. Land next to Rose Cottage, South Street (1 dwelling).

14.2.3.2. P/FUL/2021/03243. Carpenters Arms. Reconfigure dwellings. Plus parking and gardens.

14.2.3.3. P/FUL/2021/02492. Black Barn, Back Drove. Replace Pole barn with agricultural storage building.

14.2.3.4. WD/D/21/00121. Land next Greenham House – 1 x dwelling.

15. PARISH RESPONSE TO DORSET LOCAL PLAN

Cllr C Dixon had been asked to review and consider a CPRE report about the Dorset Local Plan Campaign Alliance. This urged Dorset Council to re-examine the housing targets and the underlying assumptions, and to revise the housing targets to meet a realistic figure to meet local need. She had circulated her observations in an email to the councillors on 28 February 2022 and recommended that LPC supported the campaign by adding its name to the list of supporting councils.

15.1. The Chairman thanked Cllr Dixon for her review. Concern was expressed that the Campaign Alliance had ignored the government figure regarding the number of new houses Dorset Council was legally mandated to provide. Moreover, the PC recognised the need for social housing and realistically affordable homes for Dorset residents.

15.2. **Decision.** On balance, the PC decided not to add its name to the Campaign Alliances letter at this stage.

HIGHWAYS AND BY-WAYS

16.1 Extension of Three Gates Speed limit. Mr Paul Thatcher (Dorset Highways) had now (email 21 Jan 2022) stated that despite the evidence of the speed of traffic through Three Gates, he considered '*there is not a need, nor significant support for the extension of the existing Totnell 40mph speed limit*'. However, he had provided no evidence to support his claim.

16.1.1. Accordingly, the Chairman thus proposed to survey the residents of Three Gates, and the users of the Equestrian Centre and Pogles Wood, for their views on the need for a speed limit below the current 60mph national limit. Once this was quantified, a further letter would be sent to the CEO. The PC endorsed this approach.

16.2. Community Speed Watch. It was confirmed that the scheme was formally operating in the village again. The PC expressed its appreciation to all those involved in

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the resurrection and now execution of this initiative.

16.3.1 Community Links: Road salt/gritting Dorset Council has now agreed to include, as part of Leigh's 'Blue Route community link', the road from Totnell Corner along Bailey Ridge to its junction with the A352 at Longburton,. Previously Leigh's community link had only connected with the main road system via the road to Chetnole.

16.3.2. It should be noted however that such community link routes are only treated when snow is forecast or if temperatures are expected to fall below freezing for a prolonged period. Even if the gritters are out on the main roads, it does not necessarily mean that Leigh's community link has been similarly treated.

Leigh's Winter weather plan to be revised accordingly – Clerk to action.

16.4. By-Ways:

16.4.1. Bound Lane - application T638 for change of status. The Clerk had circulated her research into the parish minutes lodged in the County Record Office. The definition of Leigh's various droves and tracks had been considered at a public meeting in November 1972. According to the minutes of this meeting, it had been agreed that Bound Lane should be classified as a Bridleway to the west of Bound Lane Farm. Further investigation was potentially required.

16.4.2. Longbridge Drove. In support of matters raised by 16.4.1, frequent and irregular use of the still closed Longbridge Drove, including 'nuisance driving', had been reported by a resident. She was advised to report the matter to the police and copied to Dorset Council (and Clerk) on each occurrence, where possible together with registration numbers and similar. Correspondence continues with the Parish Clerk.

17. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW.

The Chairman reported that he had discussed correspondence circulated previously with former councillor Graham Bugler, who had kindly undertaken to review the developments on behalf of the council. It was considered that proposals to date did not affect Leigh.

18. **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.** Not covered previously in meeting.

Notification of a county school bus review had been sent to the parish clerk. The parish clerk undertook to let users know, although it was taken to have been circulated through the schools.

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

19.1. Queen's Platinum Jubilee. See previous minutes defined as follows. Jubilee Information is centred on the Village Shop. Arrangements were in hand for:

19.1.1. 2nd June 2022: Proposed Beacon location adjacent to the Miz Maze – Cllr Vincent agreed to discuss with his father.

19.1.2. Sunday 5 June 2022: Village Lunch. The Parish Council was asked to fund for the village:

19.1.2.1. A Bouncy Castle

19.1.2.2. Ice cream

19.2. **Decision.** As so much of the celebration remained in plan, especially numbers and costs, it was considered that the parish council at this stage might grant up to £500 in support of Jubilee celebrations Agreed unanimously.

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20. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

20.1. The next Leigh PC meeting will be held immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting for Leigh residents on Tuesday 18th May 2022 and linked with Leigh parish council annual general meeting. Estimated times on 18th May being:

20.1.1. Village Meeting: Starting at 7-00pm

20.1.2. Parish Council Annual General Meeting (AGM): not before 7-30pm.

20.1.3. Parish council meeting following immediately from the Council AGM.

Business completed, the meeting was closed at 9-50pm

Attachments:

ITEM 4 - Replacement Councillors – Notices published

ITEM 7 – Schedule of Agreed Payments Meeting 15th March 2022			
Last previous cheque			
Date	Description	Value	Remarks
24 Jan 22	DAPTC Training Invoice – 0590 Induction Training – Vincent – £35-00		
2 Feb 22	DAPTC Training Invoice – 0605. Planning (Role of councils) Dixon £39-00		
7 Feb 22	DAPTC Training Invoice – 0621 Planning Concepts – Dixon £39-00	£113-00	Consolidated Cheque 0689
	Mr G Bugler – Defib maintenance update materials	£11-25	0690
15 Mar 22	Parish Clerk Pay: Update Apr – Dec 21 Backpay £28-08 Pay updated rate Jan – Mar 22 £541-83	£569-91	0691
		£694-16	
	Anticipated Invoices		
	Leigh Village Hall 2020 & 21	£270-00	692
	JRB Enterprises – Bags	£64-26	693
		£334-26	