

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the 10 January 2023 Leigh Parish Council meeting (7:00 PM) in Leigh Village Hall

1.

APOLOGIES

Received from Cllr C Adey. She had circulated notes for the meeting via email.

2.

MINUTES

Minutes of the 8 November 2022 Leigh Parish Council meeting, previously shared and approved by all via email, were signed.

3.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Precept discussion: declarations of interest by Councillors and the Clerk.

4.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION / URGENT MATTERS

There were no petitions sought by those of the public attending.

Urgent matters raised:

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The environment agency has sent an email concerning groundwater flooding. Members of the public and business owners “can sign up for groundwater flood warnings at www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings ; alternatively call Floodline on 0345 988 118 (24 hour)”

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Cllr J Dixon has been approached about an extinguished light over the defibrillator. It was considered that the light belongs to the Leigh Village Hall, as Leigh Parish Council only maintains the Defibrillator itself.

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Chris Loder MP has notified West Dorset parish councils that he will aim to attend some of the annual Parish Meetings (Leigh: 9 May). The council agreed he would be most welcome.

5.

FINANCES OVERVIEW

5.1. **Reconciliation of bank account (see foot of agenda)**

Council approved the Bank Reconciliation: **£21,763.74** on 31st of December with the following note:

Cheque no 728 (PKF (external auditors) £240.00) has been lost in transit and will be cancelled. A bank transfer in lieu will be made.

5.2. **Sums allocated to various Sub Accounts**

On 31st December 2022, the sums allocated to the ‘sub accounts’ stood at

Play Park				£ 2,398.87
Heritage Signage				£ 296.53
Village Green				£ 2,663.20
Community Infrastructure Funds				£ 5,979.60
Repair and Replace Fund				£ 3,000.00
National Lottery Environment Talks Fund				£ 1,077.24
	F			£ 15,415.44

This leaves **£6,348.30** for VAR expenditure as per the FY 2022-23 budget.

5.3. **VAT reclaim for FY 2021-22**

VAT reclaim finalised by Clerk and now sent to HMRC. A copy is available to the Councillors via Google Drive.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In view of this, Cllr A Bennett and C Dixon had now been set up as 'Full Authorization' signatories. This now enabled them to act as on-line second signatories. • Cllr M Read will be set up to be the 4th online signatory. This will provide better resilience in the event that other signatories were unavailable. • LPC is therefore now 'up and running' with online banking. The first successful result had been the Clerk salary for December being paid by this means on 3rd of January 2023 (as pre-approved in the November meeting). <p>10.2 <u>Electronic payments Process</u></p> <p>Council agreed that the Clerk should be the only one authorised to set up a payment, once approved in meetings. A second signature will then be obtained (via the on line banking application) from one of the other 3 signatories for the payment to be released.</p> <p>Cllr J Dixon offered to revise the Financial Regulations accordingly. This was gratefully accepted.</p>
11.	<p><u>PROGRESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS</u></p> <p>11.1. <u>Update on CIL Accounting and Expenditure</u></p> <p>As agreed at the last meeting, the Chairman had since had a detailed conversation on 2 December with the Internal Auditor (Ms Paula Harding) with regard to CIL expenditure being a 'pick up' point by her in the audit of FY 2021-22. The Internal Auditor was informed that the External Auditor had expressed no concern on this issue. The Chairman was keen that this was not again an issue at the FY 2022-23 Internal Audit.</p> <p>Details of the conversation were circulated in the Chairman's email of 11 December. In summary, provided the minutes (see *note below) clearly reflected Council's agreement, the Internal Auditor was now content that CIL money could be used for <i>maintenance of infrastructure</i> (one of the named uses of CIL in Dorset Council's June 2020 <i>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): Guidance Note for Town & Parish Councils</i>); and that Village Green grass cutting could be included under this use.</p> <p>*Note: How best to use CIL funding had been considered at the July 2021 (Minutes, para 5) and Oct 2021 (Minutes, para 4) meetings. In the absence of any higher priority, viable, costed infrastructure proposal(s) being offered to the council, and cognisant of '<i>maintenance of infrastructure</i>' being listed as a permitted use of CIL funds, at the November 2021 meeting (Minutes, para 4), it was accordingly agreed by council to transfer a total of £1,830 from the CIL sub-account to the Village Green and Play Park sub accounts in order to cover a proportion of the FY 2020-21 and 2021-22 grass cutting maintenance costs (actual total: £3,720). Similarly, a further £1500 was subsequently (Nov 2022) transferred from the CIL sub account to the VG sub account to offset the FY2022-23 VG and PP grass cutting costs.</p> <p>Looking forward, the Chairman therefore proposed (as detailed in his 11 December email) that:</p> <p><i>Unless or until a new play park equipment or other infrastructure project, that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>has sufficient evidence of widespread community support, and</i> • <i>is properly costed, and</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>has an identifiable and viable funding proposal (via CIL, grants, fundraising initiative with identified leader etc)</i> <p><i>is presented and endorsed by the council, Leigh parish council resolves to budget for the transfer of a further £1000 from the CIL sub account towards the cost of playpark and village green grass cutting in FY 2023-24.</i></p> <p>The Council unanimously agreed this proposal.</p> <p>11.2. <u>Current 'Contracts and Leases' (as per tab on Council Finance Spreadsheet)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contracts and leases tab in the Finance Spreadsheet has been updated by the Chairman and Clerk. - Copies have been collected under 'Contracts & Leases' in the clerk's Google Drive and have been shared with the council. - It was commented that an additional long-standing contract with a local farmer (Jason Griffen) for snow ploughing, should it ever be needed, may still be extant. The Chairman was grateful for this input, and stated he would contact Mr Griffen for more information.
12.	<p><u>VILLAGE GREEN</u></p> <p>12.1. <u>Blackmore Vale Hunt – Cllr J Dixon</u></p> <p>The Blackmore Vale Hunt had crossed the village green on 3 December without council's prior permission. Cllr Dixon drew attention to the potential safety issues to legitimate users, and that it was a matter of particular concern to a number of people.</p> <p>Cllr Dixon proposed that the council should accordingly write to the hunt master, that in view of the obvious potential risk to other village green users that could have included unaccompanied children, the council strongly objected to what had occurred, and sought their reassurance that there would be no reoccurrence. Cllr Dixon offered a view that if the Village Green had been similarly crossed by motorcyclists, it seemed highly likely that police intervention would have been sought.</p> <p>An alternative view was aired: the hunt master had immediately apologised for its inadvertent transgression (he had not appreciated that there had been a change of use of the land); within 3 days the hunt had repaired the broken fence rail (it later transpired that the rail had actually been broken for some weeks beforehand); and they had offered to pay for the green to be rolled to reduce the impact of the divots.</p> <p>Following much discussion, the council voted against the proposal.</p> <p>The Chairman asked Cllr M Read to contact Tim Holder (grass cutting contractor) to obtain an estimate for the rolling of the green, and for this to be undertaken as soon as the weather and green condition permitted. The invoice should be made out to the Blackmore Vale Hunt.</p> <p>12.2. <u>Additional Fixtures or Fittings – Cllr J Dixon</u></p> <p>The draft survey seeking opinions is under preparation. The Chairman asked that, as the green had been established in accordance with the 'Business Case</p>

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	<p>for establishing a Village Green in Leigh, Annex D' (publicity preceding 22 June 2017 formal poll), the draft should draw attention to this 'foundation stone'.</p> <p>12.3. <u>Incidents of Dog fouling</u></p> <p>A group of dogwalkers who use the green for exercise have, under the leadership of Richard Taylor, has volunteered to undertake frequent checks, and is now removing anything untoward. The council expressed its profound appreciation to Richard and his 'dog poo patrol' group.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Clerk should make available to the group a box of dog-poo bags (800) to facilitate this initiative.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, the council unanimously emphasised that it was individual dog walkers, and not Richard Taylor's group, who remained entirely responsible for immediately cleaning up after their own animals.</p>
13.	<p><u>PLAYPARK</u></p> <p>13.1. <u>RoSPA Playsafety pick up points</u></p> <p>Cllr Adey being absent, this would now be on the March agenda.</p> <p>13.2. <u>Future equipment project: update on ideas for future equipment</u></p> <p>Cllr Adey had secured a £5000 grant for the Playpark Committee for the purchase of outdoor gym equipment for older children/teenagers. Cllr Adey is seeking quotes.</p> <p>The council expressed its appreciation of Cllr Adey's progress to date.</p>
14.	<p><u>HIGHWAYS</u></p> <p>14.1. <u>Three Gates speed limit application</u></p> <p>Dorset Police had advised Dorset Council that they did not see it necessary to extend the existing Totnell 40mph zone to include Three Gates. Dorset Council had therefore rejected the parish council's application.</p> <p>The Chairman considered that Dorset Police had been cursory in their assessment of the situation, and had yet to respond to his email seeking further detail from them.</p> <p>Council unanimously endorsed the Chairman's suggestion that he continue to pursue the issue.</p> <p>14.2. <u>Heritage fingerpost refurbishment</u></p> <p>It is hoped that the Stake Ford cross would soon be fitted with its roundel. This was the only work outstanding on this project.</p> <p>14.3. <u>Litter Pick – January</u></p> <p>Council expressed its appreciation of the large number of people who had responded to Andrew Little's call. The 'litter pick fortnight' was now in progress.</p> <p>14.4 <u>Footpaths</u></p> <p>The Higher Totnell hazardous gate on N18/17 will be removed by Dorset Council Dave Aceley's Byways team.</p>
15.	<p><u>LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL – FUTURE REPRESENTATION</u></p> <p>15.1. <u>Replacement councillors</u></p> <p>Cllr J Dixon and Cllr C Dixon formally expressed their intent to step down (by 14 March and 9 May respectively) due to other commitments. A formal</p>

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	<p>advertisement for the vacancies will now be placed in the February Wriggle Valley Magazine.</p> <p>The council expressed its appreciation of all that Cllr Dixon had achieved during his period on the council. This included an update of the Financial Regulations, and the generation of the comprehensive Grass Cutting contract.</p> <p>Following the article in the December Wriggle Valley Magazine, interest has been expressed about the role by 2, possibly 3, residents to date.</p> <p>15.2 <u>Clerk's future intentions</u></p> <p>The Clerk formally declared her intent to now step down due to her expanding role in other employment. An advertisement for the role will therefore be placed in the Wriggle Valley Magazine, and with DAPTC. It is planned that the successful applicant will formally assume the role at the 14 March parish council meeting.</p>
16.	<p><u>COUNCIL POLICIES – REVISION</u></p> <p>16.1. <u>Website</u></p> <p>Cllr Adey has listed all of the current policies and is progressing work to align them.</p> <p>16.2. <u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>A programme for review of the policies will be discussed at the March meeting.</p>
17.	<p><u>PARISH CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE</u></p> <p>17.1 <u>Update</u></p> <p>Cllr C Dixon gave an update on the forthcoming programme. The National Lottery grant runs until the end of March 2023 and the Leigh Talks series is planned up to the end. In January the topic is reducing food waste, in February, Everyday Plastic will consider the problem of plastic waste and in March the subject of gardening in a changing climate will be discussed. The Leigh Climate Group will consider the future of the project beyond March.</p> <p>17.2. <u>Accounting</u></p> <p>The initial grant was now almost 100% expended. Any remaining grant funding is returned to the National Lottery at the end of this financial year. Cllr Cate Dixon will prepare the final record of income and expenditure as part of the project evaluation report to submit to the funder. Income of £610.00 from the sale of tickets to the October talk has now been deposited in the LPC bank account. This will be held in the National Lottery Environment Talks Fund. The income may be retained by the parish to fund the Leigh Climate Group events in the future.</p>
	<p><u>PLANNING</u></p> <p><u>Applications</u></p> <p>Although there was one application in Leigh for November, the parish Clerk had not received notification of this. She undertook to delve into why this was.</p> <p>Cllr Penfold offered her support should it be necessary.</p>
19.	<p><u>CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED</u></p> <p>19.1. <u>October and December Crime Report</u></p>

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	<p>Missing Crime Report for November has been requested by clerk via email. Nothing to report in Leigh.</p> <p>19.2. <u>Dorset Council Grant</u> See Playpark item 13.2.</p> <p>19.3. <u>Register of Interests</u> Previous issue now appears to be resolved. A new link to be sent to Cllr Humphrey and Cllr Adey.</p> <p>19.4. <u>HMRC – NI Employers contributions</u> Ongoing. Cllr J Dixon offered to assist in resolving the issue.</p> <p>19.5. <u>Housing Register of Dorset Council</u> Any family in need of a two-bedroom social housing should apply to Housing Register, Dorset Council. One of Leigh's social houses will soon be available.</p> <p>19.6. <u>Fostering Team of Dorset Council</u> Publication to come.</p> <p>19.7. <u>Update from NALC on the finance settlement for 23/24</u> Shared via email to councillors. No further comments.</p> <p>19.8. <u>PKF – Accountants</u> Non-receipt of cheque (mid-December). See item 5.1.</p> <p>19.9. <u>SAAA - Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments</u> External Audit appointment: BDO LLP, from Financial Year 2022-23 to 2026-27. Council briefed.</p> <p>19.10. <u>DAPTC – with NALC/SLCC</u> Recommend that councils adopt the most recent LGA Code of Conduct (December 2020) as opposed to the old one (2011). Will be added to item 16.2 for the next meeting.</p> <p>19.11. <u>Patient Participation Group - Grove Medical Centre</u> Work on the map is ongoing. It will be published on the Village Website once completed. The PPG is satisfied with that option.</p>
20.	<p><u>VILLAGE HALL BOOKINGS</u></p> <p>Council will meet in FY 2023-24 on the following dates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9th May 2023 (combined annual Village Meeting, PC AGM, and PC meeting) - 11th July - 12th September - 14th November - 9th January 2024 - 12th March - 14th May (combined annual Village Meeting, PC AGM, and PC meeting) <p>The Clerk was asked to make the associated bookings with the Leigh Village Hall.</p>

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21.	<u>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</u> Leigh Village Hall, 7:00 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 14th March- 9th May (combined annual Village Meeting, PC AGM, and PC meeting)
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