

	<u>MINUTES</u> <u>LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING</u> <u>TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 1900</u>
	<u>Present – Councillors</u> Steve Humphries (SH) – Chairman Alan Bennett (AB) Alfie Southwell (AS) Leonora Stewart (LS) Chris Kippax (CK) – Ward Councillor Members of the public – 8
1.	<u>OPENING REMARKS by CHAIRMAN</u> • The chairman thanked those councillors in attendance and welcomed the audience to the meeting. • There were no declarations of interest from any councillor present.
2.	<u>APOLOGIES for ABSENCE</u> • Councillor Julie Taylor (JT) – these were accepted. • Councillor Sam Vincent (SV) – not present and no apologies sent.
3.	<u>LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES 13 JULY 2026</u> Minutes of 13 July 2026 Leigh Parish Council meeting were formally approved and signed by the chairman.
4.	<u>COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER KIPPAX</u> • Community Conversations – This is an important meeting and an opportunity that the parish council should not miss out on. The meeting is aimed to strengthen the parish council's relationship with Dorset Council, giving the parish council a stronger voice, the ability to influence decisions, join services and build relationships (further details are in section 16). • Ward boundaries – There is currently a consultation on the movement of ward boundaries. Although this does not directly affect Leigh, there are some changes within the ward where some villages are moving out and some villages are moving in to the Yetminster ward (further details are in section 16). • Reporting non-emergency highway issues – Dorset Council has a new system being implemented, which will pause the reporting of non-emergency highway issues between 14 and 22 September. The new Aurora system is planned to go live on 22 September, when the usual reporting process will resume. • County Hall flag – There is currently some debate over which flag should be flying over County Hall, in Dorchester. CK would appreciate views from anyone wishing to share them. • £1.1m has been awarded to Dorset Council to help tackle homelessness.

5.	<u>FINANCES OVERVIEW</u> 5.1 Reconciliation of bank account The parish council approved the bank reconciliation. Balance – £16,561.88 (as at 31/08/26) 5.2 Sums allocated to various subaccounts: <table border="1" data-bbox="272 465 1161 1055"> <tr> <td>Play Park</td><td>£779.47</td></tr> <tr> <td>Village Green</td><td>£717.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Repair and Replace Fund</td><td>£5,365.59</td></tr> <tr> <td>Village Green Legal Fees</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Total raised funds</td><td>£5,283.09</td></tr> <tr> <td>Parish council legal fees (first instalment)</td><td>- £1,236.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Vendor's legal and land agent fees</td><td>- £3,420.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Funds remaining</td><td>£627.09</td></tr> <tr> <td>FUNDS SUMMARY TOTAL</td><td>£7,489.85</td></tr> <tr> <td>Non-ring-fenced funds</td><td>£9,072.03</td></tr> </table> 5.3 Banking - Hinckley & Rugby Building Society – potential switch - Having had a look at the offer, SH reported that the account offered was only a savings account and not a bank account. All councillors were in agreement that the hassle involved setting up the account and transferring funds was not worth the little interest that would be gained. - Standing order update - SH updated the rest of the councillors that the standing order to Sarah Brockway (payroll) has been paused due to not having a clerk. - Payees removed - SH updated the rest of the councillors that he had removed all irrelevant payees set up on the banking system, so the parish council were not in possession of unwanted bank details.	Play Park	£779.47	Village Green	£717.70	Repair and Replace Fund	£5,365.59	Village Green Legal Fees		Total raised funds	£5,283.09	Parish council legal fees (first instalment)	- £1,236.00	Vendor's legal and land agent fees	- £3,420.00	Funds remaining	£627.09	FUNDS SUMMARY TOTAL	£7,489.85	Non-ring-fenced funds	£9,072.03
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6.	6.1 <u>INVOICES RECEIVED: PRE-APPROVED and PAID</u> - Lantern Accounting (06/07/26) audit – £145.00 - Lloyds (20/07/26) service charges – £4.25 - HMRC (23/07/26) – £134.40 - Mrs K Elston (23/07/26) wages – £202.55 - Mrs S Brockway (28/07/26) payroll – £20.00 - Leigh Village Hall (03/08/26) hall hire – £25.00 - TA Holder (03/08/26) grass cutting – £120.00 - Porter Dodson (04/08/26) legal fees – £1,236.00																				

	• Mr A Southwell (14/08/26) HR support – £510 • Porter Dodson (18/08/26) legal fees – £3,420.00 • Lloyds (18/08/26) service charges – £6.39 6.2 <u>FORTHCOMING PAYMENTS for APPROVAL</u> • Community Heartbeat, emergency call button line rental – £72. APPROVED. • Rely HR, clerk contract – £313.50 + VAT ○ Following issues with previous clerks, the parish council thinks it wise to have a contract for a period of three years for the next clerk. SH has contacted Rely HR for advice on how the parish council's wishes could be achieved. They have provided the above price to draw up a new contract. AB questioned whether a completely new contract would be required. SH agreed to go back to Rely to see if an alternative way forward can be agreed. However, the parish council unanimously agreed the above sum in principle and approved the money being spent if necessary following feedback from SH. 6.3 <u>BUDGET MONITORING 2026/27</u> AS informed the other councillors that all finances are currently on track, as planned, with the exception of the village green legal fees, which is an extraordinary event, although sufficient funds are in place to cover them. AS to provide a forecast and provisional budget for the next financial year at the November meeting. 6.4 <u>VAT RECLAIM</u> SH and JT are working on the VAT reclaim and will process it in due course.
7.	<u>AUDIT 2025/26</u> • All 2025/26 AGAR information has now been published on the website. • CIL reports circulated to councillors by SH – all councillors in agreement that these are accurate and can be published on the website. • SH reported that he and JT are working their way through the recommendation list, but it is a slow process.
8.	<u>PLANNING APPLICATIONS</u> • P/TRC/2026/04577 – Primrose Cottage, Chetnole Road, Leigh DT9 6HJ – TG4 cypress – Fell as close to ground level as possible. NO OBJECTION. • P/PABA/2026/04451 – The Poplars, Three Gates, Leigh DT9 6JQ – Erect agricultural barn. OBJECTION – based on historic use of the site and the current unauthorised use of the land. • Unauthorised use of land south of Brookfield Farm, Wriggle River Lane – AB and AS updated CK of the situation whereby Dorset Council has washed its hands of the issue of the land being used for unauthorised development, saying the time has run out for planning enforcement. CK has agreed to review the email trail and come back to AB in due course.

9.	<u>LOCAL PLAN</u> AB provided the following update, having attended the meeting in Dorchester: Dorset Council 8 September Planning Forum for town and parish councils: The recent English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026: • Provides for creation of Strategic Authorities. • Dorset Council forms part of the Wessex Partnership (includes BCP Council and others) ◦ Governs Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) – 25-year time span. The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force 17 August 2026. • 20 chapters, 131 policies (52 on plan-making, 79 on decision-making) ◦ These policies apply to all plans, national, local and neighbourhood. ◦ Can only be varied by addition of local factors (e.g. cliff erosion) unique to area. • Policy S4 ‘development within settlements’ will be a ‘default yes’ to housing planning applications, unless ‘substantially outweighed’ by negative factors. • The policy prioritises locations within a ten-minute walk of an intercity station that has at least two services an hour. • New ‘Medium’ category of development sites (10–49 houses). • Policies on climate change and mitigation. • Policy DM 8 on Enforcement. SDS: • Includes region’s allocation of mandated housing build required over a given timescale. • Dorset’s current Local Plan will be ‘reset’ to comply with this and the NPPF. ◦ Scoping stage – liaison with national authorities (e.g. Environment Agency, English Heritage, etc.) now started. ◦ Parish council will be consulted during later stages. ◦ During the Local Plan development, Planning Inspectorate set three ‘gateways’ to ensure the plan complies with legal and process hurdles at each stage. ▪ Gateway three is Inspectorate’s final sign-off. ◦ Above process designed to reduce the likelihood of judicial appeals, etc.
10.	<u>PLAY PARK</u> • Some of the sleepers around the climbing frame are rotten and broken in places – SH to monitor and report back at next meeting. • The climbing wall of the climbing frame has started to split at the corners – SH to monitor and report back at next meeting.
11.	<u>VILLAGE GREEN</u> • The vendor’s legal and land agent fees have now been paid, as per the agreement at the July meeting, and are within a holding account at Porter Dodson. The parish council is awaiting an update from HK Law regarding the overage agreement and the next steps.

	SH reported that Mr Richard Taylor, of Guyers, had been in contact regarding the condition of the hedge between the village green and his property. He is proposing that the dead trees, shrubs, etc. be cut to form a hedge. The parish council unanimously agreed that this is a good idea and is happy to contribute its share of the cost towards the work. SH to liaise with Mr Taylor and report back at the next meeting.
12.	<u>FOOTPATHS</u> - Long Bridge Drove – The new bridge across the river has now been installed by Dorset Council. LS has inspected the bridge with Stuart Semple, DC senior ranger, and verified that the bridge is suitably rated for horse movements but could be compromised if cattle were driven across it. The bridge has been sufficiently fixed down via several ground anchors to prevent movement during use and flooding. Stuart Semple has expressed that he is under pressure to reopen the drove to all traffic. LS expressed that this could result in damage to the new surface, but it is Stuart's decision to make. - Miz Maze – Dorset Council has agreed to clear the vegetation from the footpath over the winter period. Whether they are to re-erect or replace any of the fencing is unclear. - Stanley Waterfall Way – Dorset Council has strimmed and cleared the footpath vegetation along N18/8 but not along N18/3. LS has put in a separate request for this to be cleared. - Dorset Right of Way Improvement Plan consultation – There is currently a public survey being held by Dorset Council on how rights of ways can be improved. The cut-off date for submitting responses is 12 October 2026. - Walkabout project – Dorset Council is currently offering a service producing leaflets with information on local walking routes, with no charge to the parish council. These could be placed at the village shop and hall to inform locals and visitors of routes within the area. All councillors thought this was a good idea and something that the parish council should take advantage of. - Infrastructure survey – The information on the spreadsheet that LS compiled last year is yet to be uploaded onto the Dorset Council system.
13.	<u>RIVERS</u> - Paul Hollick (WATER) has been working with the Environment Agency and Wessex Water and has now had monitoring devices fitted at Yetminster and Leigh (near the shop). These monitor the condition of the water and evaluate what pollution is present at different locations. - Yeovil River Community Trust – AB reported that YRCT has been looking into the source of pollution within the local rivers, and it believes it is just as polluted upstream. A suggestion would be to have volunteers regularly sample the water and have it tested, so that a clear indication could start to point towards the potential source. AB to report back with more information at the next meeting.
14.	<u>PARISH TRAFFIC CALMING and SPEED AWARENESS</u> 20mph application - Due to a change of cabinet lead within Dorset Council from Cllr Andrews to Cllr Jeans, currently there is no update.

	- Community Speedwatch - Mr Chris Hood attended the meeting to express an interest in starting up a Community Speedwatch within the village. Mr Hood has previously and successfully run a CSW within Puddletown, so is well aware of the work involved. The parish council is in full support of the initiative and unanimously voted to adopt Mr Hood as the new CSW representative. He and the organisation will therefore be covered by the parish council's insurance and public liability policy. All councillors thanked Mr Hood for coming along and for his willingness to take on the role.
15.	<u>INFORMATION CIRCULATED</u> - DAPTC Newsletters - NALC Newsletters - Communications from Councillor C Kippax
16.	<u>CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED</u> - Community Conversations – Leigh Village Hall, 13/10/26 (1430–1730) and 11/11/26 (1300–1600). - Councillors agreed to look into this and let each other know if they were able to attend. - Ward boundaries survey – response due 09/11/26 - Councillors in agreement that boundaries need to change with the needs of the wards and the county – SH to submit response on behalf of the parish council. - Leigh Climate Group – <i>The People's Emergency Briefing</i> - Cate Dixon, of the Leigh Climate Group, attended the meeting to give the councillors and the audience more information on the film to be shown. - In November 2025, more than 1,200 MPs, peers and leaders from business, culture, faith, sport and media gathered at Westminster Hall for a landmark briefing delivered by UK experts. The event addressed the implications of climate and nature breakdown for food security, health, national security, infrastructure and the economy. Practical evidence on risk mitigation was included. That briefing has now been adapted into a new public film, <i>The People's Emergency Briefing</i>. The aim is simple, to make vital information accessible in every constituency, in a format that is clear, human and watchable. - After the screening, there will be a panel discussion. Members of the panel will include (but will not be limited to) Cllr Nick Ireland, leader of Dorset Council, Mr Paul Hollick, WATER, and Leigh Climate Group members. <u>Event details:</u> Leigh Village Hall Thursday 8 October Doors open 1915, screening 1945 Over 16s only Admission free Bar

	Please reserve your ticket in advance from Ticket Tailor or Leigh Climate Group
17.	<u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u> • The Leigh Flower and Craft Show committee has approached the parish council about holding a village event next year to celebrate their 90th anniversary and would like to use the village green along with the hall to hold the event. The proposal is to form a subcommittee of the parish council to organise the event and therefore be covered by the council's insurance and public liability policy. The parish council is in full support of this idea and for a subcommittee to be formed. Details of the chairperson and number of committee members are to be confirmed, and the parish council is to be responsible for no debts incurred. • The parish council would like to formally thank Sarah and Rahim Jadavji for all their hard work on reopening the Little Leigh Store. This is a very important village asset used by so many within the community, which has been greatly missed over the past months.
18.	<u>DATE(S) of NEXT MEETINGS:</u> Next scheduled meeting at 1900 on Tuesday 10 November 2026. Subsequent meetings (hall booked) as agreed: 12 January, 9 March, 11 May, 13 July, 14 September and 9 November 2026.

Meeting closed at 2100

Signed

Steve Humphries 10 November 2026
 Chairman, Leigh Parish Council