

**LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**MINUTES**

held at Leigh Village Hall on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017 at 7 p.m.

**1. Apologies**

**2. To receive Minutes of previous Meeting** – unanimously approved.

**3. Welcome by Cllr Scutt, Chairman of Leigh Parish Council & Report**

The purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting is so that the Parish Council can explain what it has been doing over the last year and it enables the electors to have their say on anything they consider is important to the people of the Parish.

This year has been very eventful, but particular thanks must go to each of the Councillors, who have overseen various aspects of the work of the Parish Council and have given of their time and energy. There are also those who work either on their own or in sub groups that aid the work of the Parish Council, some of whom will provide reports on their work. All these people give of their time on a voluntary basis.

Without them there would be no Parish Council. However, it is of particular concern that whilst valuable work is undertaken by various people, there is a dire need for others to step forward. We will be spending some effort in trying to provide for succession planning as whilst retired people may be able to spend time on these issues, we are getting older and need the younger people to be able to take over from us in the future. After all, it is also their village and we would want their input to help sustainability. If our Parish Council does not exist, then all local matters will revert to West Dorset District Council. With an impending prospect of becoming a Unitary Authority, this would mean that it will become even more difficult to resolve issues locally. Please, if anyone has an interest to help, then let one of us know so that we can discuss with you and perhaps plan for the future.

Thanks also go to our Local District and County Councillors, Mary Penfold and Matt Hall that for the past year have ably provided advice and action to resolve queries. They not only give help to our village, but have responsibility for other villages, so we greatly appreciate the time they devote to Leigh.

With most of our activity moving on-line, I would like to thank Jack Patterson for continuing to keep the village web site going. There is a weekly list of what's on activities for Leigh and surrounding villages, and I would urge people to subscribe to this weekly list – it is free, and then support the activities that abound here. At the same time, please peruse the web site, as we will be trying to place consultation papers and items of interest sent to the Parish Council. Whilst Richard Smith will report on the Neighbourhood Plan, he has resigned as Parish Councillor to devote his time to that project. Thank you Richard for the work that you have done, and continue to undertake. There is a section on the web site for people to keep up to date with those developments.

An initiative by the Parish Council was to plant an English Oak to commemorate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Situated in the meadow at the back of the hall it can be viewed by the residents of the Old Vicarage as well as enjoyed by those visiting the meadow. There was help given to provide the plaque and stand by yet another volunteer.

The work continues through Trevor Evans to replace stiles with self closing gates in some of our footpaths. He has negotiated with farmers and the Parish Council to get this work undertaken and together with Councillor Mark Stillitano enabled the Annie Sinnot Walk to be inaugurated. This was a great day and enabled us to get together with Annie and Ian's daughters, walk the circular route, and raise a glass in their memories. Trevor is yet another

volunteer. We continue to have a contract with the County Council for some extra work in cutting verges on a footpath and will continue to monitor this progress.

We all know how much our public services are being cut and the consequences for us as a rural village. Sadly there is little we can do to affect the outcomes, but sometimes volunteers can help with alternative services. As a Parish Council we are unable to undertake all this work ourselves. Aspects that we are unable to progress are community transport and libraries. None of us have the time or resources. It is possible for villages to minimise the impact, as have some other villages, but again it does need the people power.

Through Councillor Bennett, Andrew Denham has volunteered to help set up the Community Speedwatch project. A separate report is to be presented, but demonstrates how much the village can achieve and take matters into their own hands when needed.

Councillor Bennett will also present a report as flood warden for the village.

A litter pick was managed by Paul Orchard, who volunteered his services – or was that coerced? However, it was very successful and quite a bit was removed from our lanes and verges. Thank you Paul.

A report on the Play Park will be presented, but their relocation to a new site took a lot of our time this past year. We are grateful to the sub group of the play park committee in undertaking research and fundraising for this project and working with Councillor Bugler on behalf of the Parish Council. Also thanks to the various landowners who were willing to offer land. Now that the decision to move to the meadow has been made, the group can move forward with plans to that end.

It is to be noted that Fiona and John Parks are ending their work to provide Movieola here, so someone is required to continue with this if we are to continue to hold these events in this village.

Councillor Bennett has been overseeing our financial and insurance issues, which led us into trimming our outgoings two years ago, as reported on last year. This has enabled us to provide finance for the play park. It is monitored regularly so that we are able to ensure all commitments are provided for.

Councillor Bugler, in association with the Village Hall obtained finance and provided the village with a defibrillator, situated outside the hall. Training has been provided free and was a great success.

Finally, our clerk, Carinna Vickers provides an invaluable service to us. We are grateful for her forbearance with us, when we request information, advice and guidance, as well as dealing with villagers who also make requests. She keeps us in order and manages the volume of circulars, meeting agendas and meetings. We really would be all at sea without her, so thank you from all of us, Carinna.

We still have a lot to do this coming year, getting our projects into fruition and particularly with regard to monitoring the services that Dorset County Council might wish to delegate. I make no apologies for harking on about volunteers, but they really are the backbone of this village. I do know from the open day Richard and I held for the start of the Neighbourhood Plan, that there are many who would be willing to help in one way or another, it will just take that one step further to put that willingness into practice.

#### **4. Reports by elected representatives**

##### **Leigh Parish Lands Charity (Candle Auction) – from Gordon Morris (Chairman)**

I am writing to advise the parish council that the following Trustees are willing to continue to serve for a further four-year term: Alan Hill, Sue Fudge, Dennis Fudge, Michelle Read, David Vincent and Les Wallis

The auction, held on 22 June 2016, raised £630.00 (the candle was very helpful for once!).

The successful bid for Beer Mill Mead was made by Charles Read (£360.00). Graham Fudge was the successful bidder for Alton Mead (£270.00).

The Trustees awarded £250.00 to Pogles Wood to help Eddie and Philippa Upton replace some of the equipment lost to burglars some months ago.

This year's auction will be held in the village hall on Wednesday, 21 June, at 7.30pm.

### **Flooding at Bridge Garage – reported by Cllr Bennett**

A flood engineer from Dorset CC attended an on-site meeting in 2016, but subsequently stated that DCC did not consider the issue a priority, and that any work done to alleviate the situation would need to be on a self-help basis. Subsequently, a representative of the 'Hills to Levels' project, Mr Roy Hayes, was contacted and attended an on-site meeting in March 2017. Mr Hayes had some provisional ideas with regard to slowing flood spate arriving from above the village; his formal response is currently awaited.

### **Community Speed Watch – reported by Cllr Bennett**

Many residents have commented on the number of vehicles frequently speeding through the village. Following an initiative by Mr Andrew Denham, a meeting was held with the Dorset Police Community Speed Watch PCSO. Ten residents of Leigh have subsequently volunteered to act as Leigh CSW representatives; the aim is to reduce the incidence of speeding through the village, so improving our quality of life. On-site training for these representatives is expected to take place shortly. Thereafter, Dorset Police will serve warning letters to those vehicles that the Leigh CSW teams register transgressing the speed limit, and ultimately will charge serial transgressors.

### **Boyles Trust 2016-17 Annual Report – Report from Richard Smith.**

**Maintaining property:** All the Trust's buildings are Grade II Listed and are expensive to maintain. The sale of one parcel of land in 2010 enabled the Trust to do some extensive repairs and improvements to the School House. The sale of a second parcel of land (which had no financial income to the Trust) went on the market in June 2016 and raised over £100k.

**Finances:** Mainly from the sale of a piece of land the current balance now stands at £129,450.50 of which about £115,000 couldn't be spent on grants as it was part of the fabric of the Trust. This major part must be invested for the benefit of the Trust. This creates much debate amongst the trustees.

**Numbers receiving grants:** Five students received a grant of £500 each, 3 from Yetminster, 1 from Chetnole and only 1 from Leigh. Four applicants were turned down as they lived outside the area or had previously received a grant for the same level of course.

In 2016, 3 applications were received from organisations and grants were approved:

Leigh Brownies and Rainbows	£84
Pogles Wood	£450
Yetminster Scouts	£200

**My resignation:** I have resigned from being the Leigh's representative of the Boyle's Trust. There is now an opening for someone to become a landlord and dispense monies to needy Leigh students going onto further education.

### **Neighbourhood Plan 2016-17 Annual Report - Richard Smith, Chairman**

It's hard to believe that it was in February 2016 we, and Yetminster, held our first public meetings on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP). It came across strongly at those meetings that Leigh wanted our own Plan rather than get embroiled with Gladman's approach to build around 200 houses in Yetminster. That followed by a recruitment campaign to create our Steering Group. In Leigh, we managed to get six volunteers who wanted to involve the villagers to find out the issues which we need to address in the NP.

We ended up with the suggestion from many villagers attending our Drop-In sessions of using the Leigh Parish area as our Plan area. This was ratified by WDDC on 6May2016. With

the Steering Group now formed, we decided to create a Questionnaire for every household that proved harder than expected. How should we handle the issues that were arising? The Playpark, the Recreational area – should they be part of the NP? Timescales to solve these issues prevented that.

In November 2016, our next major decision was to employ a professional to help us through the NP process. At £500 per hour costs we had to ensure the professional's time is used wisely. Rather than increase the Parish Precept we were to obtain the grant for a NP. This took over two months. I'm glad to report that now we have our grant money for the next six months' work in the Parish Council's bank account.

With three of the Steering Group resigning over the time taken to move the process forward we now want at least three more to share the work-load. Does anyone want to help? I'll come to your house to privately discuss how you can help - with no obligation. I've stepped down from the Parish Council to devote all my time to the NP.

Let's get on with it.....

### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FOOTPATH LIASON OFFICER 2017 by Trevor Evans**

Madam Chairman and Parish Councillors, I am delighted to report the success of the process of replacing stiles with gates, culminating in the opening of the Annie Synnott Way in March of this year. What is most pleasing and encouraging is the fact that many of our Parishioners are using the path and enjoying the opportunities to explore the country side within the Parish, indeed many have expressed their delight with the policy of the Parish Council, and I know that other Parish Councils are interested in following our lead.

In past reports I have indicated that I would like to extend the process to the Stanley Waterfall Way, so that there would be a complete circle of gated accessible footpaths around the village. This however has proven to be more difficult, resulting from changing land ownership, and difficulties resulting from disagreements with regard to the actual line of footpaths in some cases and the setting up of Permissive Paths in others. There are however other footpaths which are widely used which would benefit walkers if stiles were replaced, but these are radial, and often cross Parish Boundaries. However there is scope here to set up routes which link Parishes together with mutual benefit to those Parishes involved.

As you are aware, Longbridge Drove, a BOAT underwent an expensive update fairly recently, the update concentrated on that part of the Drove from Upper Totnell to the junction with Boulters Drove. This part of the Drove has performed well largely as a result of 4x4s not being able to use the Drove as a throughway. Up until recently Boulters Drove has also performed well, but the heavy rainfall, the clay surface and the recent heavy use by 4x4s has really damaged the surface, together with the lower Batcombe end of the Drove where poor drainage in addition to 4X4 use has resulted in the need for repair and upgrading. As a result DROW decided to close the whole of Longbridge Drove and Boulters Drove to mechanised traffic until repairs had been undertaken. It is hoped that Boulters Drove at least will be repaired this summer, depending on finance and materials being made available.

While generally the stock of footpaths are in good order, there is still a worrying trend by some landowners to ignore footpaths when ploughing and planting crops, indeed in many cases the routes of some footpath have been completely obscured. In some cases as well, deep ploughing has resulted in tree roots being destroyed much to the detriment of our countryside. I am however pleased to report that DROW react very quickly to problems which arise, I am also pleased that Parishioners both inside and outside of our Parish keep me informed of any problems they experience by e-mail and telephone. I am also pleased to report that we in Leigh have a good reputation when it comes to the management of our paths, and as long as we are prepared to put some effort in we get a positive and quick response in return from the County Council, despite the fact that all repairs and upgrades inevitably have to be prioritised.

## **LEIGH WI reported by Inga James, Secretary Leigh WI**

It's been a busy 12 months for Leigh WI who celebrated their 90th Birthday in March with a party and 'fun' evening.

During the past year there have been fund raising mornings, theatre trips, the annual Outing last year to Minterne House and Gardens. Many diverse Speakers have kept us entertained each month, their subjects ranging from Street Pastors in Yeovil to Jewellery Making. Our Jumble Sale at the beginning of March, which raises money for our WI funds was a great success, with everyone involved. Our very popular monthly Lunch Club visits venues old and new and our Christmas Meal is also very popular. Each year a number of events are put on by the Dorset Federation of WI's and they too have been enjoyed by several of our Members.

Leigh WI has a very healthy membership. We are a friendly bunch of ladies and anyone who would like to join us will be made most welcome.

## **Play Park Report from Mel Shine, read by Graham Bugler**

The past year has been an eventful year. The lease will run out on the existing Playpark site in 2020, so a new site had to be found. It was always our hope that the Playpark could be situated close to the Village Hall as it would benefit the users of the hall and parents. We are grateful to the Parish Council for exploring the possibility of purchasing land adjacent to the Village Hall, and for their support whilst the other options were proposed and discussed. We are also very grateful to the Village Hall Committee and Trustees for their offer of the wildflower meadow. Duncan Moore and Paul Orchard are at present kindly sorting out the lease.

We will draw plans this summer to submit to the Parish Council, and hope to make a Playpark of which the whole village can be proud.

Maintenance of the Playpark has been undertaken with regular mowing, a renewal of woodchip and a cleaning session. The ROSPA inspection is booked for May and the committee will decide who undertakes future inspections on an annual basis. Any recommendations from them will be acted upon. All in all I can confirm that the playpark is in sound condition for our children to play.

During the year, we had one resignation from the committee and two new recruits – Cathy Purcell and David Woodridge. Thanks also to the Grass cutting team: made up of the Committee members with extra helpers - Emma Harris, Craig Fox, DarynElford, Andy Goodfellow, Paul Hambridge, Paul Bowditch, and Tim Rand.

The current Committee is made up of:

Mel Shine - Chairman

Graham Bugler - LPC Rep

Colin House - Treasurer

Julia Jepson – Secretary

Hannah Gillibrand

Sarah Knowles

David Woodridge

Cathy Purcell

## **Loss of Bus Service - David Torrance, Lead – Wriggle Valley Transport Group**

The Wriggle Valley Transport Group (consisting of representatives from Yetminster, Chetnole and Leigh PC's and residents) has now met to discuss the options available.

Damory have indicated that the cost of running the 74 service was £75,000. Although they do not want to be involved with any community initiative they have offered the contact names of organisations that might be useful.

There were several community bus services in existence but it is felt that that they tended to be for hospital runs etc and needed to be booked in advance.

Funding was available from DCC up to £5000 per “community” but had to be matched. An article on the options available had been submitted to the WVM and this would hopefully appear in the May/June edition.

It was agreed that the group would review the information available re funding and explore the transport options that existed at the moment – can they be used etc.? The cost of some form of “shared” Community vehicle would be explored and we would approach Tesco re their free bus – does it still operate and can it be extended etc. - and also approach other Supermarkets re setting up a similar or a supported service.

Helping Hands had suggested using their 24/7 phone line to provide a contact point for car sharing and we are to review the feasibility of this and how it would work

We are also to contact adjoining parishes and find out what they are doing and whether they would want to join the WVTG and participate in a wider initiative.

It is proposed to create a questionnaire (Survey Monkey?) to determine the likely demand for any community / voluntary service.

Progress will be reported to the Parish Council as necessary

Cllr Penfold outlined their community volunteer scheme run in Cerne Abbas over several years. They have eleven cars. One organizer who runs it 5 days a week. People ring the organizer and book transport. Just over 400 people live in the village. The charge is 40p per mile. Each driver puts in 5p per mile for insurance.

## 6. Purchase of land.

Cllr Scutt has received a number of emails both in support and against. Cllr Scutt has spoken to the land agent but that they were not prepared to discuss any sale until there was a serious bid.

Cllr Bennett updated the meeting on how and why the question of land purchase arose. It is not a decision it is a question. At the moment it is at the concept phase as outlined along the lines in the wriggle valley magazine. No decisions have been made and the purpose of the meeting is to engage with villagers to see if this is something that should be explored.

## 7. Question and answer session

7.1 Charlie Read indicated that as this was such a contentious issue that there was a need to have a poll.

Mrs Nash propose that there should be a poll carried out by the district council and it be conducted as a proper election. More than ten electors stood in support of this request. A discussion regarding the correct wording took place. Cllr Bennett read out the legal requirements to enact a poll and the requirements for exact wording so that a yes or no answer could be given by the electorate. There was concern that the word village green could have legal interpretations that could be unhelpful.

The wording was agreed and in respect of this Sandra Scutt proposed a poll with the wording:- **Do you support the concept of a community open space for Leigh.** All those present were asked if this was agreeable. There was general agreement that this was appropriate and over 10 electors agreed that this should go forward.

7.2 A resident complained of the heavy goods vehicles going through the village and scraping the hedges.

7.3 Residents complained of the speeding of contractors.

Cllr Scutt indicated that these were problems that the PC would be thinking about and that initiatives such as the community speed watch group and the neighbourhood plan might find answers and solutions to these problems.