

LEIGH AND BRANSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Leigh and Bransford Parish Council held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 23rd January 2024 at Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall

Present: Councillors: D Fereday (chair), P Ralph, J Sharp, N Christie, N Cresswell, G Jones, P Hawkins

5 members of the public, Cllr Whatley (MHDC), Cllr Hanks (WCC) (part meeting), J Barker (clerk)

75/23 Apologies – received and accepted from Cllr M McNally, Cllr S Rouse (MHDC)

76/23 a) Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda (personal and prejudicial) – None
b) Notification of any changes to the Register of Interests – None
c) To consider any written requests from Councillors to Grant a Dispensation (s33 of the Localism Act 2011) relating to items on the agenda - None

77/23 Public Participation

A Bransford resident expressed concern about the safety of a tree in Rectory Wood that is carrying a significant quantity of mistletoe and suggested the top branches be removed as they look to be in poor condition. To be discussed in item 79/23 (agenda item 10).

Concern was also expressed about the safety of cherry trees on land at the entrance to Orchard Way which are dead or in poor condition. It was confirmed that the land and trees belong to Platform Housing and that the parish council has contacted them about the trees on several occasions in the past. The chairman agreed the council would write to Platform requesting the trees are checked and dealt with. There are problems with the drains between the Leigh Rd/Suckley Rd junction, including a raised manhole cover – these will be followed up with Cllr Hanks.

A Leigh Sinton resident reiterated the previously raised request for a safety barrier between the path from Malvern Rise and the Malvern Road. Cllr Hanks agreed to follow up with the resident and WCC highways.

78/23 Reports of District and County Councillors

WCC – Cllr Hanks:

- WCC budget for 2024/25. Council tax will rise by the maximum 4.99% and some reserves will also be spent.
- Highways issues previously reported to her were discussed. She is due to meet with Cllr McNally soon.
- She will support the installation of the defibrillator at Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall.
- She has funds left in her 23/24 divisional budget and would like councils to consider schemes that may require WCC Cllr funding in 24/25.

Councillors noted that when Kiln Lane was developed s106 money was offered to install a bus shelter. It was not taken up at the time, but a subsequent request has been made for a pull-in and shelter. It is assumed the funds are still held for use in the parish. Cllr Hanks agreed to look into the matter.

MHDC – Cllr Whatley reported on the MHDC budget for 2024/25, changes that will mean council tax is charged to owners of second homes in Malvern Hills and a new planning framework that may result in more speculative applications. He noted the Neighbourhood Plan will give the parish more power to

resist these where appropriate. He also requested comments on the new 5-year plan and noted the boundary commission consultation.

Councillors raised the issue of the bill for £3,395 recently received from MHDC for the Leigh Parish election held on 4 May, expressing surprise at the cost given that Malvern Hills held an election on the same day. The bill has been queried and a response from MHDC is awaited.

It was agreed that agenda item 11 should be brought forward for the benefit of residents in attendance.

79/23 Rectory Wood – to note damage caused by a fallen tree and discuss future maintenance.

It was noted that a tree in Rectory Wood fell on 21st December during Storm Pia, damaging a resident’s car and bringing down power and telephone lines. After the removal of the fallen trunk a tree surgeon examined the remaining section of the tree which was found to be potentially dangerous and was taken down on 28th December. A full survey of the wood will be carried out as soon as possible but on the advice of the contractor who conducted the last survey this should not be done until the leaves break when it will be possible to accurately assess the health and condition of the trees. In the meantime, the condition of all trees in the wood will be monitored as usual, particularly during periods of high winds. It was agreed that the Chair should write a letter of thanks to the National Grid for repairing the power lines so quickly.

80/23 To approve the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held 28th November 2023.
Approved unanimously.

81/23 To consider applications for co-option. No applications. Carried forward to next meeting.
The clerk to obtain the councillor recruitment pack from Worcestershire CALC.

82/23 Planning

a) Updates on ongoing planning matters

- 1- To nominate representatives of the parish council to serve on a working group to meet with members of neighbouring parish councils affected by the application. Cllrs Sharp and Christie were nominated.
- 2- Solar Farm update – Cllr Christie provided an update. There will be a further meeting of the working group on 30th January which will be attended by representatives of the company proposing the development.

b) Planning applications received.

Reference	Proposal	Location	Recommendation
M/23/01759/FUL	Erection of two self-build dwellings as per planning reference 21/01256/FUL and appeal reference APP/J1860/W/22/3294214 - variation of conditions 2,3,4,5,7,8,9 and 12 attached to appeal decision.	Land At (Os 7895 5264) Suckley Road Leigh	Approval – agreed unanimously
M/23/01727/HP	Single storey rear and side extensions	7 Hop Pole Green, Leigh Sinton, Malvern, WR13 5DP	Approval – agreed unanimously.

Cllr Hanks left the meeting after planning application M/23/01759/FUL.

c) Planning decisions received.

MHDC Ref.	Proposal	Location	MHDC Decision
M/23/00385/AGR	Agricultural Building to be used as grain, machinery, straw, and hay store	Guinness Hop Farm, Worcester Road, Newland, Malvern, WR13 5BA	Approved
M/23/01494/FUL	Demolition of link building and erection of two replacement commercial units (Class E(g)(iii)) with associated parking	Upper Hill, Leigh, Worcester, WR6 5JU	Approved
M/23/01512/CLE	Application for Lawful Development Certificate for the continued use of the joining of two mobile homes to form a permanent dwelling house by reason of material operational development	Caravan 2 At, Dingle House, Teme Lane, Leigh, Worcester, WR6 5JY	Approved
M/23/01039/CLE	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for Sui Generis Use of Units 5, 6, 7 and yard for Garden and Commercial Machinery Maintenance/Repair and Sales	Units 5 To 7 - Leigh Sinton Garden Machinery At, Crowcroft House Farm, Crowcroft, Leigh Sinton, Malvern, WR13 5ED	Approved
M/23/01327/LB	Works to chimney, verge above patio door and end gable, replacement dormer window and replacement ridge tiles	Orchard Cottage, Brockamin, Leigh, Worcester, WR6 5LA	Approved
M/23/01515/HP	Erection of summerhouse (retrospective)	Old Byre, Dingle Road, Leigh, Worcester, WR6 5JX	Approved

83/23 To consider adopting the NALC Civility and Respect pledge. Approved unanimously. The Chair to sign the online declaration.

84/23 To consider submitting a revised application to Malvern Hills District Council requesting that the Royal Oak be designated an Asset of Community Value.
It was noted that since the closure of the pub a couple of residents had contacted the council voicing support for its retention and protection as an asset of community value. The matter was discussed, and it was agreed that insufficient comments had been received for the council to take any action. It was noted that the brewery who own the premises are trying to resolve the issue.

85/23 Grants and donations:

- a) To consider a request from Leigh Pioneer Explorer Scout Unit for a donation of £500 towards the purchase of equipment for the newly formed group.
A donation of £500 was approved unanimously.
- b) To consider an application from Leigh and Bransford Church Council for a donation of £1,500 towards the maintenance of the churchyard at Leigh church and the cemetery at Bransford.
A donation of £1500 was approved unanimously.
- c) To approve the annual donations to The Sphere and South Worcestershire Citizens Advice for 23/24.
Donations of £250 to South Worcestershire Citizens Advice and £25 to The Sphere magazine were approved unanimously.

86/23 Finance

a) To note and approve accounts paid.		
Staff costs	Clerk – Nov (inc. backpay)	£1247.85
NEST	Pension – Nov	£100.20
Lengthsman	Sept/Oct	£522.00
Lengthsman	Nov	£408.00
Staff costs	Clerk – Dec	£901.27
NEST	Pension – Dec	£66.87
Anker Tree Care	Tree surgery	£800.00
Viking	Office supplies	£29.59
Lengthsman	December	£540.00
R Wilks	Woodland maintenance	£180.00
CALC	training course	£72.00
Leigh & Bransford Hall	Hall Hire	£114.00
J Sharp	battery charger	£26.95
Balances at 16/01/2024		
	Community Current Account	£7,306.27
	Business Savings Account	£30,016.00

All payments approved unanimously.

- b) To note the verification of the 2nd and 3rd quarter bank reconciliations by Cllr Cresswell. Noted.
- c) To consider and approve the budget and precept for 2024/25.
Following circulation and discussion a precept request of £25,000 for 2024/25 was agreed unanimously.

87/23 To consider a response to the consultation on divisional boundaries in Worcestershire. The consultation documents had been circulated. It was agreed there was no need to comment.

88/23 To consider making an application to West Mercia PCC for Safer Roads grant funding. It was agreed no application should be made.

89/23 Reports from working groups and parish council representatives on other bodies.

Outdoor areas – Cllr Sharp reported the parish council contractor has tidied up Jubilee Garden as previously agreed, removed the Christmas tree, and returned the stand to Leigh Sinton Christmas Tree Farm. He has suggested moving some of the existing shrubs to one border, planting up another with new shrubs and reducing the height of the hedge slightly. His quote for this will be considered at the next meeting.

90/23 Progress reports on items from the previous meeting not otherwise listed on the agenda.

- Cllr McNally will meet with Cllr Hanks and a representative from Highways in the near future to progress current outstanding highways issues. It was noted that drains are a major problem currently.
- The process of adding Cllr McNally as a bank signatory is still in progress.
- The planned update to the Parish Council website will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Further feedback from councillors was requested.

91/23 Other reports and items for consideration at future meetings.

- A petition has been received calling for further action on speeding traffic through the village of Leigh Sinton. This will be passed to Cllr McNally for inclusion in her meeting with Cllr Hanks.
- It was noted that the Clerk had resigned and would be leaving the council at the end of February. The council expressed thanks for her work over many years. The process of recruiting a replacement will begin as soon as possible.

92/23 Date and time of next meeting

Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 26th March 2024
Planning committee meeting (if required) – Tuesday 27th February 2024.
Both 7.00pm at Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall

Chair.....

Date.....