

LEIGH AND BRANSFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Leigh and Bransford Parish Council held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 28th January 2025 at Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall

Present: Councillors: D Fereday, J Sharp, N Christie, P Ralph, N Cresswell, J Beach, P Hawkins, G Jones, L Bayston, P Whatley (part). Clerk: A Briggs Members of Public: 6

73/24 Apologies – received and accepted from Cllrs M McNally, S Rouse, K Hanks

74/24 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.

75/24 Public Participation. Public Participation - Residents are invited to address the council on any local matters and agenda items.

(Meeting Closed)

One member of the public raised the matter of the visual impact of the panels and the possible impact on bats. Another raised his concerns about construction and maintenance traffic from Braces Leigh leaving and entering the site onto the A4103.

A couple of questions were raised from two residents.

Q1. They asked if there had been any progress on the S106 land adjacent to the Lioncourt site which has been earmarked for recreational purposes and are the Parish Council doing anything to proactively progress this? They thought Cllr Rouse had given an update last September which was quite a while ago. Cllr Fereday confirmed that she did give a brief update to say not much had happened, but he did flag one change she mentioned in that there will be a reduction in excavation required below the big oak tree. Cllr Fereday confirmed we don't have a PC member on the S106 Group which is a shame and that he would seek an update from Cllr Rouse. Cllr Whatley said he wasn't aware of any updates concerning the S106 Group when asked.

Q2. The residents noticed in the Minutes from the last meeting and Agenda Item 6 – Footpaths in today's meeting: They asked if they could help in clarifying their position because they weren't invited to attend with regard to this part of the meeting or involved in any conversations. It was referenced to a potential meeting with Cllr Hanks. Cllr Fereday said an incorrect decision was made at the last meeting, because we didn't know the history of what's been discussed with regard to the Malvern Rise Management Company.

Cllr Fereday thought we would probably look at it differently now with the information that Cllr Rouse sent. To be discussed further at Agenda item 6.

(Meeting Open).

76/24 Reports of District & County Councillors

Cllr Rouse/Cllr Whatley Report attached to covering email.

Cllr Whatley added that The Secretary of State will request that elections will not take place in May of this year. He confirmed that SWDPr is still carrying on and has gone to the Inspector. Whatever happens it will go back into review again not least because the plan is old and because of the new administration.

Around April, funds from MHDC will be available for new facilities in our area so the Parish would need to start thinking about this now. Cllr Fereday asked about the 5 year land supply (we currently have 3.7) with Cllr Whatley saying it depends on what the inspectors take on that. Cllr Whatley also confirmed he'd been lobbying hard for a zero council tax rise increase this year which has generally been accepted.

A discussion took place around the future of MHDC and who will be responsible for what (including the planned £20M investment for Malvern Theatre. Will the new Malvern Town Council be responsible for parks etc? Cllr Whatley said it will only be responsible for parks if it decides to purchase them, otherwise they will pass to the County Council.

WCC - Cllr Hanks

Report attached to covering email.

No questions from the floor but Cllr Sharp confirmed that Cllr Hanks had sent her apologies.

77/24 Discuss reported speeding in Suckley Road

A Parishioner has written to Cllr Sharp commenting on the speeding in Suckley Road; Cllr Sharp has dealt with the Parishioner's issue. Discussions took place around speeding in the parish and the various challenges faced. Cllr Sharp confirmed VAS detail isn't deemed particularly accurate and is not recognised by the police as official data. (The data is still useful though and Cllr Sharp confirmed he'd distribute readings end Feb). It was noted police were carrying out speeding observations locally and that the Speed Enforcement Officer lives in our Parish. Community Speed Watch was also discussed. Cllrs Sharp and McNally to speak to the relevant Speed Enforcement Officer who lives in our Parish.

78/24 To discuss further the pedestrian walkways linking the new sites in Leigh Sinton . The representative of Malvern Rise Management Company raised concern that they knew nothing about this statement and voiced their concerns around the potential path build and its various implications, especially financial. Cllr Fereday said it looks like a legal situation between MHDC and the Malvern Rise Management Company (MRMC). He also said that any implications, financial or otherwise concerning the MRMC had not been discussed. The MRMC representative said they should be involved in the legal conversations which Cllr Rouse is referring to. Cllr Fereday confirmed again what Cllr Rouse had stated in her note and he also referred to the report Lee Walton (MHDC Planner) had given when he approved the site. Cllr Fereday said he would have thought the MRMC could have had a copy of this report (they said they hadn't had it). Cllr Fereday asked if anyone has anything to add. Cllr Sharp said it looks like the three metre buffer zone would be staying in place but now belonged to the Cotswold Oak site. He also said the idea had been to connect up to the Bromford housing estate, but Cotswold Oak are saying there's only one entrance. Cllr Sharp said the original landowners are keen to see all three sites linked up. Cllr Fereday to liaise with Cllr Rouse and Lee Walton as to what the next steps are and to seek clarification.

Cllr Whatley said there seems to be some confusion as to what was said, by whom. Clerk to send copy of Cllr Rouse's report to the 2 residents as requested by them.

79/24 To consider and approve the minutes of 26th November 2024 Parish Council Meeting. Having been circulated the minutes were approved unanimously.

80/24 Planning

a) To consider and approve the minutes of the planning committee meeting held 17th December 2024. Having been circulated the minutes were approved unanimously.

b) Updates on ongoing planning matters. None.

(2 members of public leave meeting).

c) Planning applications for consideration.

MHDC Reference	Location	Proposal	Outcome
M/24/01781/FUL	Monksfield Farm Monksfield Lane Newland Worcester WR13 5BB	Construction of a solar farm and battery energy storage system together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.	Approved: Proposed: N Christie. Seconded: J Sharp. Abstain: P Hawkins Majority in Agreement: *See comments below.
Cllr Whatley and other members of public leave meeting.			
M/24/01618/HP	36 Suckley Road Leigh Worcester WR6 5LE	Two Storey rear extension	Approved: Proposed: N Christie. Seconded: G Jones. Unanimous Approve.
M/24/01757/CLE	Land At (Os 7739 5363), Brockamin Lane, Leigh	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for Existing Use of land for Storage of Materials and Equipment associated with a Landscaping Business	Approved: Proposed: G Jones Seconded: N Christie. Unanimous Approve.
M/24/01379/FUL	The Fold Bransford WorcesterWR6 5JB	Proposed Polythene Tunnel and growing areas; erection of water tank and timber shed; proposed Plant Sales area with timber retail cabin; compost sales area	Approved: Proposed: P Hawkins Seconded: L Bayston. Unanimous Approve.
M/24/01765/FUL	Victoria House Hereford Road Leigh Sinton WR13 5DS	Erection of detached two storey dwellinghouse with vehicular access from Clewer Croft	Approved: Proposed: P Ralph. Seconded: P Hawkins. Unanimous Approve.

***A comprehensive discussion took place around the solar panel farm, with Cllr Fereday showing a small number of informative slides. The conclusion being:
Leigh and Bransford Parish Council voted to approve the solar panel farm.
The following concerns were raised at the meeting for RWE to consider:**

- Traffic turning right onto the A4103 from the site entrance (WR13 5BG). It's an extremely dangerous junction as it is and to introduce heavy, construction traffic will compound the issue. Even with the introduction of temporary traffic lights, it's still a major concern.
- Glint and Glare. This will affect a certain amount of people living in the vicinity. It's understood that young vegetation will be planted in front of the relevant 3 metre panels, but this will take a long time to grow. (already being discussed with RWE)
- A member of the public queried the accuracy of the bat survey. Also, the welfare of the white-clawed crayfish which live in Carey's Brook was discussed.
- **Community Benefit Fund**
Following a zoom meeting with RWE on the morning of the meeting RWE confirmed the fund would be £660,000.00 divided by the 3 parishes of Leigh & Bransford, Newland and Powick.

The division of the fund between parishes to be confirmed. The fund would be paid over 40 years with an up-front payment of 20%. RWE suggested that the fund could be administered by ‘Grantscape’ who receive the fund from RWE. Following discussion, the PC resolved that the Community Benefit Fund should be a direct agreement between RWE and the relevant Parish Councils and not administered through a third party. The PC highlighted that the importance of reflecting our local community needs would be better served by not engaging with further organisations. Cllr Christie would advise the other parishes.

d) To note Planning decisions received.

M/24/01370/HP - Deja View Stocks Lane. Proposed balcony. **Approved.** Noted.

M/24/01511/OUT – Sunningdale, Stocks Lane. Outline application for single dwelling. **Approved.**

Noted,

M/24/01438/FUL - Hop Cottage, Leigh Sinton. Conversion of existing workshop/storage building into one self-build dwellinghouse. **Refused.** Noted.

M/24/01401/HP - Foxes Cottage, Stitchins Hill. Two storey extension and double garage. **Approved.**

Noted.

M/24/01397/FUL – The Orchard, Bransford. Change of use of the land from a residential boarding school (Class C2) to a day school (Class F1). **Approved.** Noted.

- 81/24 (a) To consider a £2,708.06 grant application for replacement furniture for Leigh Memorial Hall update. Cllr Fereday refreshed everyone’s memories of the options discussed in November. Cllr Sharp proposed we purchase and give the furniture to the memorial hall; the hall is very much a community affair. Cllr Beach Seconded. Cllr Fereday abstained. Majority in favour. Cllr Sharp also made the point that the scouts should be aware of potential MHDC money available for their use but would need to get their application in quickly. Cllr Fereday to follow up. Cllr Beach suggested the possibility of a potential meet between scouts and the PC to discuss their plans. It was noted that the scouts have presented their plans at a previous meeting.

(Cllr Ralph left the meeting).

- (b) To consider a grant towards the maintenance of Leigh churchyard, the grounds around Bransford chapel and Bransford Cemetery. To give the whole requested grant of £1,500 proposed by Cllr Christie, Seconded Cllr Cresswell. All in favour.

- (c) To consider a small grant to help with bollards upkeep in Cole’s Green update. Cllr Sharp confirmed the funding is in the Lengthsman’s budget and the works will be carried out before the end of the financial year.

Cllr Sharp proposed the annual grants to CAB and Sphere. To CAB £250.00 – Proposed by Cllr Christie. Seconded Cllr Sharp. All in favour. To Sphere £25.00. Cllr Christie Approved. Seconded Cllr Hawkins. All in favour.

82/24 Finance

- a) To note and approve accounts paid.

CALC	Staff Training (Councillor)	£42.00
James Monk Design	Admin (disk space upgrade)	£6.00
Staff Costs	Clerk – Nov, plus SSCL Pub & Easyspace Domain	£1,314.50
NEST	Clerk – November	£58.77
Viking Office UK	Stationery Order	£47.51
Memorial Hall	Small Meeting Room hire	£144.00
Staff Costs	Clerk – December	£801.76

NEST	Clerk – December	£58.77
Leigh Sinton Store	Defibrillator batteries	£93.95
CALC	Staff Training (Clerk)	£19.20
R Wilks	Lengthsman – Nov and Dec 2024	£378.00

Balance as at: 27th January 2025

Community Current Account: £13,163.67

Business Savings Account: £64,574.74

Payments noted and approved: Proposed by J Beach; Seconded N Cresswell. All in favour.

b) To consider and approve the budget and precept request for 2025-26. Precept to be kept at £25,000. P Hawkins Approved. N Christie Seconded. All in favour.

83/24. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Update. After checking with CALC Cllr Fereday confirmed the scouts would be eligible for some money. The Parish Council also ascertain what the wider Parish community may want to spend the money on. Cllr Fereday and Clerk to draft letter to those on the attendance list for this year's annual parish meeting. Cllr Sharp suggested the path linking Leigh Sinton to Malvern should still be considered and to be partly funded by CIL money.

84/24 To consider Defibrillator Training. Update. After a brief discussion Cllr Beach confirmed she would like to attend one of their courses. It was also suggested that Heart Start hold a training session in the hall for those who hold classes there. Clerk to liaise with Richard at Heart Start on both points.

85/24 To consider street naming and numbering at land at (OS 7826 5082), Leigh Sinton. After a brief discussion, 5 names were chosen: Stocks End, Wheelwright Avenue, Poplar Road, Morgan Close and Leigh View. Clerk to report back to planning and to inform and thank FB community.

86/24 Website update. There's still a problem with the new.gov.uk which needs to be ironed out. Until this is done the shadow system can't be progressed. Clerk is liaising with James Monk and will report back when sorted. Cllr Christie gave thanks to the Clerk for working on FB and its coverage – viewings are considerably up by 25%.

87/24 Reports from working groups and representatives

a. Memorial Hall Committee. Cllr Beach reported back on her first meeting, confirming her responsibility was that of a Rep and nothing more. Bookings are up and a discussion took place concerning their advertising. Further discussions around improvements and grounds and also the Remembrance event which follows on from the Church event and would look at a specific time and to make it more official. WI are already knitting poppies.

(Cllr Cresswell leaves meeting).

b. New-build developments. Cllr Beach gave a quick update on contacting the relevant developers and still awaiting to hear back from them.

c. Play areas. Cllr Chrisie. All mechanically fine, it just needs a bit of clean. The RoSPA inspection is due in the next couple of months.

c. Open Spaces/Hedges. Cllr Sharp. All hedges have been cut by the wood and hedges now been cut around Jubilee Gardens. There is a quote from the Lengthsman to supply and replant dead shrubs for £240 (plus VAT). There's also a quote to replace the wooden edging boards with Everedge metal edging. This comes in at £1,946. Cllr Sharp will request another quote. Cllr Sharp also

mentioned the quote for next year's Grass Cutting. Clerk to confirm receipt. Cllr Sharp also confirmed no tree damage was present during the recent storms.

- d. Lengthsman scheme. Cllr Sharp confirmed there are some blocked drains around the parish, but the Lengthsman can't deal with blocked drains. Cllr Sharp said the Lengthsman is very busy but if anything urgent is required, he will sort it.
- e. Parish Footpaths. Cllr Sharp recapped that all ok with the solar farm. Our footpath warden is doing what he can. If anyone sees any problems, please report it and to get out and make use of all our footpaths.
- f. Highways and Road Safety. To note some footpaths may have been cleaned around Bransford and towards Leigh Sinton which is a good thing. Cllr Sharp recapped on the speeding issues which is ongoing.

88/24 Progress reports on items from previous meeting not otherwise listed on the agenda. Two items:

- a) The £70 for the Lengthsman (which was covered earlier at 81/24(c).
- b) the flood barrier referred to on last month's minutes (61/24). Cllr Hanks not present for update. Cllr Fereday to follow up with Cllr Hanks.

Cllr Sharp also requested that the £240 referred to at 87/24(c) above be approved. Approved by Cllr Fereday; works to go ahead.

89/24 Other reports and items for future consideration. None

90/24 Planning committee meeting: 25th February 2025
Parish Council meeting: 25th March 2025.

All meetings 7pm at Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall

Meeting closed: 9.20pm

Chair..... Date.....

Clerk's notes: After the meeting Cllr Fereday received a letter from the Director of *Malvern Rise Management Co Ltd (MRMCL)* – Attached to covering email.

Below - Document from Myra Jones sent to the Clerk on 24/2/25 – to be seen and used as an attachment only and not part of the minutes.

A representative of Malvern Rise Management Co Ltd (MRMCL) stated that in the November 2024 Parish Council meeting a Parishioner had raised a concern regarding the lack of footpaths connecting the new estates in Leigh Sinton. It was agreed in that meeting that Cllr Hanks would facilitate a meeting with Highways, Planning, MHDC, L&B Parish Council and the Parishioner. MRMCL asked if this meeting had taken place - any talks regarding Malvern Rise should involve a representative from MRMCL. Cllrs Fereday and Whatley stated that they were not aware that a meeting had taken place. Cllr Fereday then readout a statement from Cllr Rouse where she had liaised with Leigh Sinton Farms & Nurseries Ltd to gain access via their land to have footpath access to the Bromford estate. Leigh Sinton Farms & Nurseries Ltd had given permission for access. She stated that MRMCL had refused to remove a section of their boundary fencing. The MRMCL representative stated that Cllr Rouse had never liaised with them to remove a section of their boundary fencing. Over the years, MRMCL had only seen conversations from Cllr Rouse via Facebook regarding this matter. The MRMCL representative stated that they did not conduct company business via Facebook. The

MRMCL representative stated that to remove a section of the boundary fencing would involve financial implications ie., Solicitors fees for a legal agreement between MRMCL and Potters Reach Management Co Ltd; higher insurance costs and a road safety audit. Cllr Rouse's statement continued where she stated that she had worked on this matter for sometime and that she was delighted that Cllr Hanks had offered to take the lead. Cllr Fereday referred to the report that Lee Walton (MHDC Planner) had given when he approved the site. Cllr Fereday stated that MRMCL should be given a copy of the report as they had not seen it. MRMCL also asked for a copy of Cllr Rouse's statement to which Cllr Fereday agreed to provide this. Cllr Fereday asked if anyone had anything to add. Cllr Sharp stated that it looked like the three metre buffer zone would be staying in place but now belonged to the Cotswold Oak site. MRMCL agreed that this was correct.

Cllr Fereday asked Cllr Whatley what his thoughts were on the matter. Cllr Whatley stated that it was planning law -v- civil law. Cllr Fereday to liaise with Cllr Rouse and Lee Walton as to what the next steps are and to seek clarification.

NOTES:

1. Please do not reference the meeting as a '*legal*' meeting. It was never referenced as this.
2. We had a telephone call from Cllr Hanks on Wednesday, 19th February 2025. She is not taking the '*lead*' regarding this matter. She stated that she would be informing the Parish Council of this. Therefore, should this be added as a subsequent note to the minutes?
3. It is Malvern Rise Management Company Ltd (MRMCL) and not '*Malvern Rise Management Company*' (MRMC).