

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR THE PARISHES OF BRANSFORD AND LEIGH

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18th April 2023, 7pm at Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall

Present: 21 parishioners and representatives of local organisations

1. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

John Sharp, chairman of the parish council, was elected Chairman for the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 10th MAY 2023

Having been previously circulated the minutes were approved unanimously.

3. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Chair John Sharp delivered a report on the previous year. The full report is shown in the Appendix.

4. REPORTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

Police Safer neighbourhoods Team – John Sharp read out a report provided by the local Safer Neighbourhoods Team. Full report included in the appendix.

1st Leigh Rainbows – Ann Osborne gave a report. The group is thriving with 12 members and 5 on the waiting list. The group has enjoyed lots of trips and outings over the year, including a fun day and will be going on a County trip to Conkers in summer. The Rainbows have had a lots of fun and earned many awards and badges.

1st Leigh Scout group – Numbers are back to full strength and there is a waiting list to join. There have been many camps and activities and the summer camp is fully booked with Scouts, Cubs and Beavers attending. A young leaders section is planned and the group are looking into starting a Squirrels section for 4-6 year-olds.

Leigh Guides – Valda Cane introduced Charley, who will be taking over as group leader. She thanked Ann Somers who has stepped down after many years. The guides have enjoyed lots of trips and activities over the year including cookouts in the woods, a trip to Warwick Castle and a summer camp, and have completed lots of badges.

Leigh & District Gardening Club – Chair Steve Kemp reported on a full programme, including a talk by Chris Beardshaw. His full report is included in the appendix.

Leigh & Bransford WI – President Elaine Shaw reported on a full year of activities for the group. Her full report is included in the appendix.

Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall – Jon Gamble gave a report. The hall was able to obtain grants and support during the Covid pandemic which have been used to make improvements to the facilities. Improvements included new internal and external doors and blinds. He paid thanks to the volunteers who enable the hall to run so successfully including the volunteer warden and the volunteer who cuts the grass. The installation of solar panels and storage was timely given the increase in energy costs and will generate a large proportion of the hall's energy needs. Future plans include more improvements, including improved acoustics in the coming year.

Short Mat Bowls – the group is doing well and meet once a week at the hall.

Leigh & Bransford Charities – John Sharp gave a short report on the work of the Trustees which is included in the appendix.

5. OPEN FORUM AND DISCUSSION

There was a short discussion after which the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and contributing. The meeting then closed for refreshments.

Signed

Dated

Appendix

Chairman's Report

I start my report with the sad news that Councillor Roger Husband passed away early this month. Roger has been an active member of the Parish Council for many years. He had been involved in other parish organisations, including acting as a trustee of the Memorial Hall. We extend our sympathies to Mary, his wife, and all his family.

Your Parish Council has been able to physically meet on 12 occasions in the past year, 6 of which were full council meetings. Planning applications were considered each month to ensure the Parish Council's opinions were submitted to MHDC on time. We considered 33 applications over the 12 months. 10 related to property extensions, 5 to the provision of new agricultural buildings, 4 requests for Listed Building Consent, 3 industrial buildings and 3 major developments.

One major achievement this past year has been the making of our Neighbourhood Plan. This was subject to a public referendum on the 3rd November 2022 and was passed by 86% of those who voted. It became a legal document following a meeting of MHDC on the 29th November. All planning applications from that date have to show that they meet the appropriate policies contained in the NP. Our thanks to all those councillors who have spent considerable time over the years in preparing the plan.

The Parish Council objected to the Boundary Commissions proposal to change the District Council ward boundaries and put Bransford with Rushwick as one ward and leave Leigh with Alfrick and Suckley as another. Our objection was upheld by the Commissioners and as a result the ward now covers Alfrick, Bransford, Leigh, Ruswick and Suckley.

This year the Parish Council has made grants to local organisations to the value of £8355. These included a grant of £5000 to the Memorial Hall to instal a solar powered system to help reduce the running costs of the Hall.

The Parish Council approved a budget and precept for the year 2023 to 2024 of £24,000. This represents an increase of £2,000. This was necessary due to increasing costs of wages, rent, insurance and other operational costs. The precept had been held at the previous level for 3 years.

Speeding throughout our Parish continues to be a concern for our residents. A meeting was held with the WCC cabinet member for Highways, our WCC and District councillors and the Highways Liaison Officer to put forward our concerns and try to get improvements to the highway infrastructure. A subsequent meeting looked at the footpath issue between Dragons Cross and Leigh Sinton and the need for a bus stop at Suffield Close. The footpath issue is being addressed in the near future but the request for the bus stop is awaiting WCC bus service review.

We have asked WCC to consider a 40mph speed limit between Interfields and the re-aligned 30 mph limit when the Xmas Tree site is developed. We have been asked to provide an additional Speed Indicating Device for use on the Malvern Road but have delayed the decision until the new development infrastructure has been completed and WCC decide on our 40mph request. I am pleased to announce that we have a young volunteer from of Leigh Sinton who is now downloading the data from the speeding devices and producing the reports.

We have tried to persuade the Safer Roads Partnership and the Police to allow the parish to set up a Community Speed Watch system but without success. We have volunteers who are willing to do this once approval is given.

As part of the planning permission for 52 houses on land on the A4103 opposite the school 5.5 hectares of land have been made available for community use. Policy LB/H/6 of the Neighbourhood Plan supports the adoption of this site for development and the creation of community sports and recreation facilities. The Parish Council formed a project group to determine what facilities should be provided on the site and what costs would be involved. Subsequently, due to conditions imposed by MHDC, this project group was disbanded and a new project group was created involving interested parties, including the Parish Council. At this stage no definite costs have been identified or timescales for delivery. The eventual ownership of the community land has yet to be decided.

I am pleased to announce that the Parish Council has agreed to establish a wild flower area on the A4103 on the Hereford approach to Leigh Sinton. This is being supported by WCC and will be created by the end of this month.

Garry Sutton, our footpath warden, continues to be active to ensure the many public footpaths in our Parish are accessible. We are grateful for his work. There is a small volunteer team in Leigh Sinton who undertake work on the Jubilee Garden during the summer. We thank them for this work. Their excellent efforts are supported by a local contractor who carries out the heavier work. Our Lengthsman, Rob Wilks, and his team continue to do an excellent job throughout the parish.

There are three councillors standing down this year. Dr Marc Hinchliffe, Brian Porter and myself. I thank Marc and Brian for their service and wish them well in the future. Brian and his late wife, Anne, have been stalwarts of our community over many years. My thanks to my fellow councillors who have supported me in the role of Chairman over many years and finally, I wish to thank Jacqui Barker, the Parish Clerk, for all her work over the past year in administrating the Parish Council.

John Sharp
Chair, Leigh and Bransford Parish Council
18 April 2023

Report from Police Safer Neighbourhood Team – April 2023

The Team sends apologies for not being able to attend this evening, but PCSO Knight has supplied a short report.

Good News – we now have three members of the team, PC Stanley who was standing in for PC Hand during his year off is remaining in post. We have argued the need for a second officer and a CSO on the area for some time, not only has the population in Kempsey grown exponentially in recent years but new housing planned in Rushwick and Lower Broadheath will add greatly to the population. The additional officer will clearly provide a benefit to the surrounding parishes.

Whilst Leigh and Bransford remain a low crime level community there has been the occasional month where the average crime figure of 2.5 per month has been exceeded threefold. The reasons for the higher incidents in April '22, July '22 and Feb '23 appear to be domestics at the same address or neighbour disputes.

We don't consider these incidents should be of concern for the community.

Leigh & Bransford WI Annual Parish Report - May 2023

With the ending of Covid restrictions Leigh & Bransford WI have returned to a full programme of activities. Most members have been happy to come back to meetings so the membership has remained stable and we have been pleased to welcome some new members.

We have had various speakers including a talk on a walk round the coast of England, a talk about trading standards and from the police about cyber crime and fraud. There were also some craft sessions including our own show, the standard of exhibits from members was very high.

We celebrated Christmas with a party at which we held a collection of new toys which were donated to the Salvation Army to be given to needy children of Malvern.

Later this year we look forward to a talk on the local environment at Woodford Meadow and we support the resolution campaign of the WI National Federation urging government to support 'the cleaning up of rivers for people and wildlife'.

There are also 2 smaller sub-groups that meet regularly; the book club and an embroidery group.

We are going to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III in style with an afternoon tea. Next year's programme is being planned to include a variety of speakers and more craft sessions.

In conclusion I would like to say that Leigh & Bransford WI are a friendly caring group and we hope that more ladies will come and join us or visit us to see what we are about.

Elaine Shaw 18th May 2023

Leigh & Bransford United Charities Report - April 2023

At Christmas 2022 the charity supported 19 residents of Bransford, Leigh and part of Malvern Link (this was part of the old parish of Leigh).

A donation was made to Leigh & Bransford Primary School to be used at the discretion of the headmaster to support the educational needs of appropriate children.

The Charity's income comes from investments of around £36,000 and the rent from 22 acres of farmland at Guarlford.

The Charity is managed by 8 trustees, 3 appointed by the Parish Council and 5 by the District Council.

Leigh & District Gardeners' Club

Last year Garden Club was able to enjoy a full year's programme since Covid.

Garden Club usually organises four summer visits, either to gardens not open to the public, or to other gardens with a special guided tour. Last year's visits were to Hereford Cathedral Gardens, Spetchley Park, Hergest Croft, and Kiftsgate. Summer meetings always include tea/coffee and cake!

The full programme of indoor meetings included an evening of talks from the well-known broadcaster Chris Beardshaw, who spoke at length and kept a packed hall thoroughly entertained.

Evening meetings in the autumn and winter are held in Alfrick Village Hall. The meetings are not technical and are intended to be social, as well as informative and entertaining. Meetings usually start at 7:30 with a cash bar and time to catch up with friends. This is followed by a talk on a wide range of broadly garden related topics. The meetings finish with tea/coffee and more time to socialise.

Chair: Steven Kent