

**MINUTES OF THE LEIGH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL HALL,
HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 14TH APRIL 2014 AT 8.00PM**

PRESENT: Cllr. C. Stratton-Brown (Chairman), Cllr D. Bennie, Cllr B. Doherty, Cllr J. Knock, Cllr G. Marchant, Cllr S. Smith and Cllr R. Swallow
APOLOGIES: Cllr P. Croft, District Cllr A. Cook, County Cllr C. Pearman, Mr & Mrs Hammer
ABSENT: Cllr A. Johnston
IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk) and members of the public

Cllr Stratton-Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Report by Kent Police

PCSO Peter Jones from Swanley Police Station attended the meeting in order to give crime figures and answer questions on behalf of the parish's PCSO, Dave O'Neil, who is away on sick leave. Reported crimes for the Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway ward are as follows:

<u>Crime category</u>	<u>+/-= last year</u>	<u>Total number</u>
Burglary Dwelling	+ 2	5
Burglary Other	+ 9	18
Vehicle Crime	+ 4	15
Theft of Motor	+ 1	4
Theft from Motor	+ 3	11
Violent Crime	+ 11	16
Violence against Person	+ 7	11
Sexual Offences	+ 4	5
Robbery	=	0
Criminal Damage	+ 2	11
Theft & Handling	- 3	8
Shop Lifting	=	0
Theft Offences	- 4	7
Theft Pedal Cycle	+ 1	1

Crimes are, therefore, up slightly on last year by 37 crimes, with a total of 112 overall. The increase in numbers may be because more crimes are actually being reported.

Mr Jonathan Cook asked about the old vehicles on the land near the railway bridge in Lower Green. These have now been broken into. Cllr Stratton-Brown said that these vehicles are on private land and therefore the Police and KCC cannot remove them.

Cllr Stratton-Brown thanked PCSO Jones for sparing the time to attend the meeting.

2. Ash Capel – South East Ambulance Service

Ash Capel attended the meeting to report that two defibrillators have been donated to Leigh in memory of Victor Charlesworth – one has now been fitted at 15 The Forstall and the second one will be fitted in the centre of the village in due course. Use of the defibrillator is self-explanatory and a recording talks through the process. There is already a trained Community First Responder in the village, and a second is about to be trained. Ash said that the Ambulance Service will arrange for locally trained people to come to Leigh and show residents how the defibrillators work. Clerk to contact Ash with suggested dates and times. In an emergency, one should ring 999 and the operator will advise where the nearest defibrillator is. There must be 24 hour access to the defibrillator, which is in an unlocked steel cabinet. The cabinet is unlocked as it is important that there is no delay if the equipment is required, but an alarm will sound if the equipment is taken out of the cabinet. Mrs Charlesworth said that, sadly, her son died a year ago and a defibrillator may have helped him. There are two plaques in memory of Victor, and these will be placed above the two defibrillators.

Cllr Stratton-Brown thanked Ash for attending the meeting, and also thanked the Charlesworth family for arranging for the defibrillators to be donated to Leigh and, although it has been due to very sad circumstances, hopefully some good will come out of it.

3. Presentation by Mr John Byng, Vice-Chairman of Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign

Cllr Stratton-Brown welcomed John to the meeting. John said that GACC has been going for over 40 years, and he serves on the Gatwick Consultative Committee (GATCOM) and its steering group. He also serves on the Noise & Track Monitoring Advisory Group (NATMAG), and is the only environmental campaigner on these groups, so it is hard sometimes getting his voice heard. There are approximately 100 Parish Council and amenity/environmental groups in the GACC membership, but only a handful of individuals, and GACC would like to see this grow. It costs just £4 per annum for individual membership.

John showed maps of the area around Gatwick Airport identifying the flight paths for both departing and approaching aircraft. If aircraft are departing over Leigh, they are generally high and there is little disturbance. However, if aircraft are approaching Gatwick over Leigh, they approach either from the south or east and are gradually descending at a 3 degree angle. In recent years, the approach path has extended as Air Traffic Control like to have all the aircraft in a line ready for landing. Gatwick Airport is surrounded by AONBs and there is also the South Downs National Park to the south, so it is impossible for aircraft to avoid these areas.

John said that NATS (National Air Traffic Service) and GAL (Gatwick Airport Ltd) carried out a consultation on the London Airspace. Leigh Parish Council took it seriously and responded. The proposal was to replace the broad flight path swathes with one or possibly two narrow flight paths. For people who live under the narrow flight path, there will be a large number of aircraft overhead. There is no evidence that narrow flight paths are better than broad swathes. Noise is not perceived in the same way in noisy (urban) areas and quiet (rural) areas as there is no background noise in quiet areas so the noise – even if it is at the same level – is much more intrusive.

GACC defeated various proposals for a second runway at Gatwick Airport in 1970, 1995 and in 2002. In 2010, the owners of Gatwick ruled out a new runway in the foreseeable future. However, now that Heathrow is full, and Gatwick is running at 80% capacity, Gatwick is taking the overspill passengers from Heathrow and the new owners of the airport see a future of the current 80% usage increasing to a full 100% usage. Gatwick is concerned that if Heathrow gets an additional runway, this will take away business from Gatwick including the vital overspill business. Therefore, they have submitted proposals themselves for a second runway. The airlines like to concentrate their business at Heathrow as it costs more to have hubs at different airports, and they would like to reduce costs by using just one airport and therefore increase profits. Increased aircraft means increased pollution, both from the aircraft themselves and from increased road traffic. At present, Gatwick handles 35 million passengers a year, with a capacity of 40 million. If there is a new runway, that could mean a capacity of 80 million passengers a year.

Although aircraft are generally quieter than they used to be, there is a recognised noise problem associated with the Airbus 320 series. It is possible for airlines to retrospectively fit a modification to these aircraft to solve the problem, but currently airlines are reluctant to do so on cost grounds. All new aircraft in the Airbus 320 series are made with the modification so it is just the older aircraft that have the problem.

As far as night flights are concerned, the Government has said that they will try to reduce the number of night flights. A quota was imposed on the number of flights and a quota on the amount of noise. The Government looks at these quotas regularly and usually reduce them, which is easy on the noise quota as aircraft are generally quieter now, but they have refused to consider a reduction in the number of aircraft recently as there is a possibility of a second runway.

Cllr Stratton-Brown thanked John very much for sparing the time to come along and talk to the Parish Council and residents, and his talk was most interesting.

4. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th April 2013 were approved.

5. Chairman's Report of Activities in 2013/14

Cllr Stratton-Brown gave the following report:

- 1 The Council – There have been no changes in the membership of the Council during the year. Councillors were David Bennie, Peter Croft, Beverley Doherty, Alan Johnston, John Knock, Graham Marchant, Sue Smith, Rob Swallow and myself. Louise Kleinschmidt continued as our Clerk.
- 2 Planning –
 1. The major issue during the year was attending to the proposed development on the former Glaxo Smith Kline site in the Powder Mills. We much appreciated that the developer, Ashill Developments, contacted the local residents, held open meetings and attended meetings with the Parish Council. More importantly, they took note of the comments of Councillors and local residents and incorporated several of the points made into their plans. As a result, the Council was able to support their application for planning permission for 73 dwellings and outline permission for a building for office or other use to enable some employment on the site. Because of its importance to the Parish I quote our response to Sevenoaks District Council which was as follows:- Leigh Parish Council supports this application, subject to the following considerations:
 1. that there is no street lighting on the development, or only low-level lighting
 2. that an additional six car parking spaces are provided near the children's play area
 3. that additional visitor car parking spaces are provided around the development
 4. that the B1(a) and B1(b) building be small enterprise units. Owing to the poor transport links, the site is more suitable for enterprise units than office accommodation, and the Parish Council believes that there would be a significant benefit from the reduced traffic flow generated by enterprise units compared with office accommodation. The Parish Council would like to see the following conditions imposed on any planning approval:
 1. that restrictions are imposed as per item 7.2 (page 27) of the Construction Management Plan of the Transport Assessment dated February 2014, namely Vehicular Access, Routeing Strategy, Delivery Strategy and Hours of Operation - the only change the Parish Council request is that there are no HGV movements between 08.00 and 09.30 and between 14.30 and 17.00 in order to reduce congestion for travel to/from primary and secondary schools.
 2. that the eight affordable housing units are allocated to Leigh parishioners in the first instance.
 3. that the proposed play area and woodland equipment on the site are maintained in perpetuity.
 - Developer's Contribution:
 1. The Parish Council feel very strongly that a large proportion of the developer's contribution is given towards the provision of a new classroom at Leigh Primary School, subject to the approval of the School Governors.
 2. The proposed development will have a detrimental impact on the local road infrastructure, and the Parish Council is seriously concerned about the impact of the development's traffic on the surrounding roads. The road being diverted through the new development is welcomed as some traffic will therefore avoid the narrow stretch near The Plough Inn. The Parish Council would like to see a proportion of this contribution being used to improve road safety and traffic flow on Leigh Road, between the Powder Mills' eastern entrance and the railway bridge. This lane is very narrow without pavements and two way traffic is much restricted in places.
 3. The Parish Council would like a proportion of the contribution to be used to upgrade the footpath to a cycle route from Powder Mills to Tonbridge, and for the vegetation on this route to be cut at least twice a year.
 4. The Parish Council supports the request by local residents that a contribution is given towards improved broadband for the residents of Powder Mills as well as for the proposed development.

5. The Parish Council appreciates that a proportion of the developer's contribution must be given to support health and medical provision but, in our opinion, items (1) and (2) should be treated as the most important and receive a larger proportion.
2. Another application received during the year that was of major concern to the Council was the application to build two houses on the site of Oak Tree Cottage, Powdermill Lane. It was felt that jamming in two large houses on this site would be overbearing, not in keeping with the other houses in the area and contrary to the Village Design Statement. District Councillor Alison Cook and Parish Councillor Beverley Doherty kindly spoke at Sevenoaks District Council's Development Control Committee Meeting and we congratulate them on persuading the District Council to refuse planning permission.
3. The Redevelopment of the Cricket Club – A proposal was made by the Cricket Club and, after consideration by the Council, it was modified. Unfortunately the Cricket Club is suffering from lack of members so it was not taken further.
4. Hollow Trees development – the Parish Council took up issues including drainage and mud on Powder Mill Lane.
5. Sevenoaks Boxing Club, Gaza Barracks – the Parish Council had strongly objected to the grant of permission to extend the hours owing to the noise which was disturbing the neighbours.

24 other planning applications were received of which the Parish Council supported 19, objected to 3 and made comments on 2. Including the GSK site and Oak Tree Cottage, that makes a total of 26 applications, the same as last year.

- 3 Restricted Right of Way at the Bat and Ball – Councillors were disappointed that no agreement could be reached with the owners of the former public house to reduce the area fenced in at the front. It was felt that the Parish Council had a strong case but it was decided not to go to court in view of the likely cost.
- 4 Roadside Verge Cutting – A cluster of Leigh, Chiddingstone, Hever and Penshurst parishes was set up to take over the cutting of the verges from Kent County Council. The objective is for the parishes to be able to take control of the cutting and improve this service. It is generally agreed this has been achieved. We are currently waiting to hear from Kent County Council whether this scheme can continue for 2014/15.
- 5 Gatwick Airport – To strengthen the effect of responses from individual parishes, a group has been set up whose members are Chiddingstone, Penshurst, Hever, Weald, Speldhurst and Leigh Parish Councils. This group has been called The High Weald Parish Councils Aviation Action Group. Our Kent County Councillor, Clive Pearman, has linked this to Edenbridge Town Council. One of the benefits is that amongst the members there is considerable expertise which is tapped. Four meetings have been held and coordinated responses have been submitted on night flying, London airspace (overflying routes), an additional runway in the South East and aircraft noise. Later this month a response will be prepared on Gatwick's case for a second runway. We were all horrified by KCC's attitude which was to support a second runway at Gatwick. We are very grateful for the successful effort of Clive Pearman in having this reversed.
- 6 Rural Broadband – It is believed that a fibre optic cable will be laid to the village by the summer. This would dramatically improve the broadband speeds for residents in the village. Our thanks go to Councillor Rob Swallow for all his efforts in pushing this. The Parish Council is still pursuing improvement to broadband speeds in other parts of the parish, and it is hoped that this will be part of an initiative run by Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council, helped by funding from Defra. However, if this scheme is unsuccessful, the Parish Council will pursue other opportunities locally so that broadband speeds in outlying areas are also improved.
- 7 Other Subjects Considered – Your Council also attended to the following during the year:-
 - The maintenance of the Aged Persons Dwellings on The Green.
 - The water leak on the Hildenborough/Stocks Green Road
 - The clearance of ditches
 - The mowing of the Green adjacent to the War Memorial and other small areas

- The permissive path adjacent to Knotley Hall – after many years work, I am pleased that agreement was concluded between the land owner and Kent County Council and the path is now finished.
 - A free Summer Family Fun Play Day has been arranged for Friday 1st August at 2.30pm. There is also a free play session on The Green tomorrow, Tuesday 15th April, from 10am to 2pm which has been funded by Sevenoaks District Council and Voluntary Action West Kent.
 - Safety concerns of the junction of Lower Green and the High Street
 - The maintenance of the Village Green – Because of poor drainage, the Football Club had been unable to use the Green on many occasions. It was agreed that the football pitch and the area adjacent to the school should be drilled with 10” vertical holes and the holes filled with sand. This has been carried out. Maintenance of The Green will again be carried out this year by Landscape Services.
 - The Old Burial Ground (behind the Village Halls)
 - Noise Generated by the A21
 - Various tree applications including, sadly, the felling of an oak tree at Onival
 - The Trees on the Green including the felling of a horse chestnut which was dangerous
 - An interactive speed sign adjacent to Upper Kennards on the Hildenborough Road.
 - The setting up of a joint group of village sports clubs to consider amongst other things, the pavilion.
 - The Tonbridge Half Marathon – a few complaints had been received but Councillors felt that parishioners were generally supportive. The organisers agree to improve the marshalling to reduce the impact on the village.
 - Flooding and a continuing debate with KCC Highways as to who is responsible for the flooding on Coppins Road
 - The provision of the bulk refuse freighter
 - The effect on the school of the Powder Mill development
- 8 Finance – Grants were given as follows:-
- Village Halls – driveway resurfacing £1,250
 - Cricket nets – donation agreed but not handed over as project awaiting final financial support
 - Leigh Scouts Centenary event - £250
 - Leigh Tennis Club - £600 towards the cost of coaching of Leigh Primary School children
- 9 Concluding Remarks – Once again I must thank all our Councillors for their work and support during the year. I am privileged to chair a council who all work together for the benefit of the village.

Very many thanks to Councillor Alison Cook and Councillor Clive Pearman, our District and County Council representatives, for their untiring efforts on behalf of the parish and, when their other commitments permit, their attendance at our meetings.

I must also thank Louise for her untiring efforts for the Parish and, I suspect working many more hours than her agreement.

5. **Report by County Cllr Pearman**

The analogy of KCC and a supertanker holds good in so far as the County Council is concerned, but with one important caveat – the County Council is not quite ‘all at sea!’ As a large organisation, costing many millions of pounds to run, employing large numbers of staff, and providing a range of services virtually all the major ones – education, health, highways and social care – being the subject of legislation and legally-binding commitments, any change of course or the introduction of anything new takes time and patience. This was exactly the case when, in May of last year – 2013 – following the County Council elections, the political landscape of the 84 elected councillors changed significantly, creating a party political profile as follows – Conservatives 45, UKIP 17, Labour 13, Liberal Democrats 7, Green Party 1, and Swanscombe and Greenhithe Residents Association 1. The percentages reflected in the above party spread then had to be proportionately distributed over 12 major committees of the Council, 9 sub-committees, and County Council representation on a plethora of the committees

of other authorities, joint committees and partnership bodies. Given that this was the first time that UKIP councillors had been elected, it is no surprise to find that this allocation responsibility took the best part of 3 months to achieve. Then, of course, it was into the height of summer and the peak leave period, so it was not until September that elected members really found themselves involved in County Council work.

The conversation during these early months was of the County Council's requirement to contribute to Central Government's austerity programme which meant, of course and following straight on the heels of 3 years of the initial austerity programme, further savings were going to be essential, although their magnitude was, at this time, still unknown. That said, however, it was made clear to all of the councillors that savings and 'shavings at the margins' had already been maximised; there was now no other course of action than to fundamentally determine how the services which were then being provided could somehow be changed so as to achieve the next round of savings. With no increase in Council Tax, the savings which had been achieved over the previous 3 financial years stood at £269m and represented 28% of current net spend, savings which had been brought about by a need to meet the combination of reduced Central Government funding and additional spending demands.

As the budgetary figures became clearer, savings for this 2014-15 financial year are around £91m, a figure which is also likely to be broadly similar for each of the next 3 financial years. The September meeting of the full County Council was therefore presented with what is known as the Transformation Project by which it is intended that Kent County Council becomes a fully strategic commissioning body, contracting out the delivery of as many services as is possible to the private, public and community / voluntary sectors, and with a particular emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises. By placing a focus on small and local service provision it is intended that the best possible service will be delivered at the best possible price. In so doing, the County Council recognises that although it can contract out the responsibility for the actual delivery of services, the accountability for all aspects of that service delivery remains firmly with the Council. Balancing the equation of 'best possible service' at 'best possible price' places a greater emphasis on local knowledge and local involvement, although the mechanics of achieving this still have to be determined.

As we have moved into the new financial year, and in the weeks ahead, much of the detail of how this commissioning process will operate will become clearer. There will, however, be a new organisational re-alignment, which is gradually being introduced since the 1st April, with old and familiar names and designations being left behind as new ones are adopted. Confusion will, inevitably, exist for a while as this process unfolds, so patience and support will be required so as to begin to make the necessary changes and, therefore, the required savings, as soon as possible.

As one small cog in a wheel of 84, there is arguably little that one councillor can achieve. There have and will remain, however, avenues where each councillor can make a small difference locally. My contribution along these lines has been through the allocation of the Community Grant and Highways Fund, sums of money which each County Councillor has had at our disposal. In terms of the Parish of Leigh, I received two requests for financial support from my Community Grant Fund. One was from the Primary School and was for additional financial support to help transform the old and unused toilet block adjoining the school into music rooms, and the other was for a set of cricket nets for use by the Primary School pupils. In the event, this second application was withdrawn. The first application did, however proceed and, by some persuasive arguing with some of my fellow County Councillors in the Sevenoaks District, I was able to increase the amount of the original request for £1,000 to that of £5,000, the additional funding coming from a separate fund. In addition, grants were made to organisations which provided a range of services across Sevenoaks District and at which Leigh residents had the opportunity to participate. I received a number of requests from the other parishes which enabled me to allocate grants to a range of organisations throughout the Sevenoaks South Electoral Division and which was reported to all Parish Councils in my monthly up-date report of November / December of last year.

In terms of the Highways Fund, I have allocated money to projects throughout Sevenoaks South Division, and Leigh Parish is benefitting from this source of funding in proposals for creating improvements for pedestrians at the junction of the High Street and Lower Green, where no pavement exist at this junction by the Fleur de Lys public house. Working with the Parish Council and Kent Highways, options for creating improvements have been identified, but other than a re-positioning of the

white line markings at the mouth of the junction, no other options are deemed feasible on the basis that the turning circle required of commercial vehicles entering and leaving this junction is so wide that the width of the road at this point precludes the installation of a footway. Other solutions which might be technically feasible but deemed either inappropriate and / or too costly would be, for example, the introduction of a traffic light controlled movement of vehicles, with all vehicles entering the junction from Lower Green held back from the mouth of the junction pending the completion of the phased movements of vehicles entering Lower Green from the High Street. I have not, however, totally given up on possible options for this junction but, in the face of legal and technical imperatives, there is little scope for improvements at this time.

Towards the end of this last financial year I was able to allocate the remaining sum of money from my Highways Fund to help resolve the flooding issues in Cinder Hill Lane at the junction of the B2027, a location which was badly affected by the floods for weeks. Work on this project will take place once the more pressing demand of restoring the road surfaces which have been badly affected by the appalling weather has been completed.

These Members schemes of grants and funds mentioned above have been subject to the austerity savings regime. The two are to be amalgamated into one, entitled the Combined Member Grant, with the amount being reduced to £25K for each councillor. There will, as a consequence, be a greater emphasis on investing in projects which give a longer life cycle of benefit other than a single day's activity.

At a more strategic level I have been able to work with the Parish Council and the Education Department at KCC with regard to the anticipated increase in the number of young children who will soon be moving into the area as a consequence of the new housing development proposals at the old Powder Mills site. The potential increase in the number of young children whose parents would, quite naturally, want them educated at their local primary school, is expected to place an intolerable burden on the school if solutions are not identified and then introduced in a timely manner. A workable solution must and, I am sure, will be found in the very near future.

Finally, if there is one contribution which I can claim to have made, it is that of acting as a channel through to the County Council where local concerns regarding aviation matters could be both raised and demand to be heard. In this I have done nothing else than to have acted as the mouthpiece, taking forward the hard work which was undertaken by the Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk in processing the various consultation documents and opportunities presented by the Davies Aviation Commission and other organisations. Those concerns and aspirations have, I know, been heard, and Kent County Council's responses to a number of such opportunities now better reflects the concerns and aspirations of the local residential and business communities.

And that, and with my personal thanks to all of you for your continued support, and for distributing my monthly up-date reports, concludes my report for this past year.

6. **Report by District Cllr Alison Cook**

In this report I will touch only briefly on the issue of government funding which has been further reduced this year by a massive 24%, with further reductions being proposed for subsequent years. In theory changes in respect of the Business Rates should help financially but since the Sevenoaks District has a limited number of medium sized businesses and no major enterprises any associated funding will be limited for the foreseeable future. Monies can also accrue from the New Homes Fund but again there will be a limited benefit as so much of the District is covered by the Green Belt.

Government continues to devolve certain responsibilities down to Local Authorities in pursuit of its localism agenda but once again funding does not always follow. Even where it does, services are expected to be delivered at a lower cost. This was a matter of concern highlighted by a recent report from the Council of Europe, a concern which was not accepted by our UK ministers.

Turning to development control, there will be changes in the way that developers contribute to infrastructure, schools, affordable housing etc. moving from the old 106 agreements to the CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy. A portion of this levy can be used for local projects but all schemes will however need Council approval and be subject to close monitoring.

One of the key responsibilities devolved down to local authorities has been in respect of health and well-being as well as the transfer of public health scrutiny. Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) are funded by the government. There are two which serve this district – the Dartford Gravesham and Swanley HWB and the West Kent HWB. There are also two Clinical Commissioning Groups serving the same two areas. There is a plethora of bodies whose remit is to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities. Both members and officers attend many of these, the information being fed back to the Council's Health Liaison Board which I currently chair. Members of this committee monitor progress made against SDC's 'Mind the Gap' Health Inequalities Action Plan. The six headline priorities cover:- giving children the best start in life, enabling people to have control over their lives and to realise their potential, fair employment opportunities, a healthy standard of living for all, developing sustainable communities and ill health preventative measures.

Kent County Council has the responsibility for scrutinising health issues but the District Council has a major role to play in ensuring the provision of a high quality, diverse, housing stock which supports the needs of its residents. For older people this includes ensuring that the property is fit for their long term needs allowing them to live independent lives for as long as possible.

The District Council also has a duty to respond to relevant consultation documents and to look in more depth at specific issues. Two recent examples have been examining the changes being implemented in the provision of childrens' services and the support available for those people suffering from dementia together with their carers..

Over the year many changes have taken place both within the Council and externally – the development of the new Marks and Spencer store and plans for a decked car park in Sevenoaks, proposals for the centre in New Ash Green and opportunities for Swanley but perhaps the most significant has been the appointment of Dr Pav Ramerwal as Chief Executive following the retirement of Robin Hales. There has also been a restructuring and further partnership ventures with other councils. These initiatives have enabled the Council to keep within its overall ten year budget plan and make provision for future uncertainties.

7. Reports by the following representatives:

i. Leigh Primary School

John Henderson, Chairman of Governors, gave the following report:

Please keep up to date with the school by visiting our website at: www.leighprimaryschool.com

Changes: This year has seen many changes for Leigh Primary School. These are almost too many to number but have included:

- 2 new teaching staff and a new headteacher
- New creative curriculum
- New presentation and handwriting scheme
- Huge investment in practical maths resources and reading books
- New Open Classroom Afternoons and Grandparent event
- Plans for a new Music/Art room
- New maths scheme

Writing Inspiration: We have a particular focus on writing at the school at the moment and events throughout the year, such as author visits, are being held to inspire the children. During a workshop from the Bigfoot Drama company, Squirrel Class (Reception) danced, acted and retold the story of Jack Frost and returned to the classroom full of ideas for their writing project. A joint literacy project between Leigh and Weald saw the Giant from Jack and the Beanstalk visit the school in an extremely entertaining and interactive session. The children were able to quiz the Giant and were provided with plenty of inspiration for their writing assessments. World Book Day has also been another highlight and it was great to see the children and staff dress up as their favourite book characters.

'War Memories Afternoon': Key Stage 2 children are eagerly anticipating visiting Ypres in June to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I. As one of the events linked with this trip, we are holding a 'War Memories Afternoon' on Friday 6th June, the 70th anniversary of D-Day. We are inviting people who have been involved in war, either on active service or from those who experienced life at home whilst war was taking place, to come

and speak with the children about their memories. This should be a fascinating afternoon for the children and we hope that plenty of people will want to come in and speak with them. If you are interested in speaking at this event we would be delighted to hear from you. Please call the School Office on 01732 832660 for more information.

Visits and Events: At Leigh our teachers work hard to inspire a love of learning and use events and visits to enrich the curriculum. This month the whole school was treated to a visit from the Quantum Theatre. Their amusing play taught the children about different kinds of forces and how they are measured. The children listened beautifully throughout and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Parents and pupils enjoyed an assembly on 'Heroes and Villains' hosted by Wolves Class. This included information about the people they have been studying, drama and a dance.

Squirrel Class had a gastronomic and cultural day out at the Honeymoon Restaurant in Tonbridge to enhance their project work on the Chinese New Year. After a tasty lunch, sampling a variety of Chinese food and experimenting with chopsticks, they dressed up as a Chinese dragon and danced to some traditional Chinese music.

The children in Fox Class have been doing some fantastic watercolour artwork. Using 'wet in wet technique' they have produced some stunning paintings which will be framed and hung around the school for everyone to enjoy. As part of their topic on Flight, Fox class took part in a kite workshop. They learnt how to make kites from scratch and then attempted to fly these in some extremely blustery conditions!

Grandparents' Afternoon: Recently we held a grandparents afternoon and it was wonderful to see so many grandparents in school visiting their grandchildren and seeing their work. We plan to hold another of these next year.

Sporting Success: The Netball team proved themselves to be ruthless in goal in matches against Dunton Green Primary and Chevening. They stormed to victory, winning 14-3 against Dunton Green and 12-0 against Chevening. Waterlogged pitches have put a stop to football matches unfortunately, but the Football club have braved the elements and managed to hold a few training sessions on the Green. Our cross-country runners competed at an event at the Mascalls School and despite the atrocious conditions performed extremely well.

Forest School: We have received £8645 via the PE and Sports Grant to fund improvements to the provision of PE and sport, for the benefit of pupils aged 5-11 years old, so that all pupils develop healthy lifestyles. We identified that although as a school we provided a good range of sports provision we were not providing opportunities for other outdoor activities. We therefore have decided to use the funding to support Physical Exercise through Forest School. Forest School is run twice a week by a qualified professional who supports the children's physical development and engagement with healthy lifestyles by providing opportunities for the children to test their own boundaries and physical capabilities while developing new skills.

Activities to date have included:

Tree climbing, Shelter building, Using tools, Exploring pupil's place in nature

The ethos of Forest School allows each session to support individual children's needs which in turn gives them a sense of well being and belonging which has led to children being more confident in having a go in class. The element of risk taking afforded by Forest School has meant that children are making healthier behaviour choices in the playground.

Since Forest School sessions have been delivered the following outcomes have been noted: Increase in attendance, New skills being developed, Increase in self confidence of pupils, A interest and willingness in being outdoors engaging in physical activity, Greater capacity for team work within the class room.

ii. Leigh United Charities

Cllr Knock reported that income for the year up to 31st January 2013 was £48,611 and expenditure was as follows: £3,500 spent on property, £1,000 spent on administration, £2,500 given as a grant to Leigh Primary School, and £2,000 given as benefit to local residents in need. Cllr Knock asked that if anyone knows of any parishioner in need to please contact Rev'd Kevis, Mr Brian Ball or himself for more information.

iii. The Crandalls Charity

Colin Stratton-Brown reported that the charity was set up in accordance with the will of Richard Crandall who was living at Holmwood, Vine Court Road, Sevenoaks when he died on 11th April 1932. Under his will, after various bequests to relations, he left remainder of his estate in three equal parts, two parts to be invested in the names of the Trustees appointed by the Will and of the Rector for the time being of the Parish of Chiddingstone in the County of Kent and the remaining one part in the names of the Trustees and the Vicar for the time being of the Parish of Leigh in the County of Kent.

The following are extracts from the will relating to the Leigh part.

“And I direct that the income of the “Leigh Fund” shall be applied for the benefit of persons of whatever age who reside in the Parish of Leigh aforesaid and who by reason of illness age physical incapacity or infirmity are in want of assistance in such manner as the Leigh Committee hereinafter mentioned shall in their absolute discretion think fit”

He provided that the Leigh Committee should consist of the Trustees of the Leigh Fund and the Vicar of Leigh the Churchwardens of the Parish Church of Leigh and the Chairman of Leigh Parish Council. Since then the purposes have been widened to cover, more or less, any charitable objective.

Last year, 2013, the Local Committee received income from the Trustees of £2,500 and made grants of £600 to the school, £300 to the Tennis Club to help provide coaching for Leigh school children, £85 to the Cricket Club and £1,300 to the church as a contribution to the work of David Bennie, our Youth Worker.

8. Questions from Members of the Public

1. Mr Chris Rowley thanked the Parish Council for arranging for the vegetation to be cut back on the bend opposite the entrance to the church. This has improved visibility and you can see 40-45m to the right now, making it much safer to cross the road.
2. Mr Chris Rowley asked for an update on the proposal for a permissive path at Paul’s Hill. Cllr Stratton-Brown reported that the proposal has been considered but it will require steps and the Parish Council needs to ascertain from KCC PROW whether it is possible to have a permissive path with steps from a disability discrimination aspect.
3. Mr Chris Rowley asked for an update on the proposal to refurbish the cricket pavilion. Cllr Swallow reported that a Sports Association has been formed and two meetings have so far been held. There is a proposal to move the ownership of the pavilion from the Cricket Club to the Sports Association. There is also a proposal to produce a booklet to include details of all parish clubs so that residents can easily find out information and hopefully encourage more membership. The Parish Council has recently funded improvements to The Green, including verti-draining and laying sand to help with drainage.

Cllr Stratton-Brown thanked everyone very much for coming to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

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LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL: FINANCE REPORT FOR YEAR 2013-2014

The Parish Council's financial year runs from 1st April until 31st March. The precept for the year 2013-14 was £24,000. This sum, which is generated from residents' Council Tax, is paid to the Parish Council by Sevenoaks District Council. The precept for 2014-15 has been increased to £25,000.

Annual memberships have been renewed to the following:

Kent Association of Local Councils	£522.79
Action with Communities in Rural Kent	£35.00
CPRE £29.00	
Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign	£15.00
Parish Council Legal Update publication	£75.00
Kent Playing Fields Association	£20.00
Society of Local Council Clerks	£78.50

Grants have been awarded as follows:

Leigh PCC – contribution towards The Leigh Directory	£300.00
Leigh Village Halls Management Committee – contribution towards new driveway	£1,250.00
Leigh Scouts – contribution towards Centenary celebrations	£250.00
Leigh Tennis Club - contribution towards coaching school pupils	£600.00

Our grateful thanks go to Mr Roger Sykes for undertaking our internal audit, and the Audit Commission signed off our Annual Return confirming that the accounts were in good order.

Below is a summary of the Parish Council's Income and Expenditure for the year 2013-14:

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Precept	24,000.00	Salaries	6,338.91
SDC – council tax support funding	1,360.00	PAYE	2,233.70
APD rental	10,460.00	Pension contribution	2,245.36
Income received: hire of assets	450.00	Mileage	499.50
Wayleave	7.30	Stationery	52.86
Interest on Investments	31.16	Telephone/Email	218.97
		Office Expenses	679.40
		Website	145.00
		Insurance	1,085.34
		Audit/Accountancy	200.00
		Chairman's Expenses	70.74
		Training	34.50
		Subscriptions	796.92
		Hall Hire	140.00
		Repairs & Maintenance	0.00
		Village Green	9,361.75
		Litter / dog bins	1,148.10
		Grants	2,400.00
		APD	161.78
		Family Fun Play Scheme	490.00
		Advertising & Publicity	46.00
		Verges	301.52
	36,308.46		28,208.83
		Surplus of Income / Expenditure	8,099.63
		Transfers to reserves: APD:	2,000.00
		Election expenses:	275.00
		Planning contingency:	1,000.00
		General contingency:	500.00
		Withdrawal of support funding	1,360.00
		Surplus after transfers to reserves	2,964.63
