

**MINUTES OF THE LEIGH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL HALL,  
HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2017 AT 8.00PM**

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**PRESENT:** Cllr. C. Stratton-Brown (Chairman), Cllr R. Britain, Cllr P. Croft, Cllr J. Kaye, Cllr L. Provan and Cllr S. Smith  
**APOLOGIES:** Cllr A. Johnston, Cllr R. Lake and Cllr G. Marchant  
**IN ATTENDANCE:** County Cllr C. Pearman, District Cllr P. Lake, PCSO Laura Morris, Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk) and members of the public

Cllr Stratton-Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Leigh Ladies Choir

Cllr Stratton-Brown welcomed Tamsin Anderson and the Leigh Ladies Choir. Tamsin said that the choir has been going since September 2016, and comprises local ladies of different generations. It is very friendly and the rehearsals and get-togethers are a lot of fun. The choir then sang a few songs much to the delight of the audience!

Report by PCSO Laura Morris

Cllr Stratton-Brown welcomed PCSO Laura Morris, and said that she is a wonderful support to Leigh and the parish is extremely lucky to have her as their PCSO. Laura said "I cover quite a big area in addition to Leigh including Chiddingstone, Bough Beech, Hever, Cowden, Four Elms, Penshurst, Fordcombe and all the bits in between. I have been here about a year and a half now I try my hardest to get to every village throughout the shift dependent on what calls there are and what visits I have for the day. There is now only 3 of us at Edenbridge, working different shifts so the areas we get sent to are now huge- we have to go where the demand is. I feel I am getting to know the area well now. I spend a lot of time on high visibility patrol, attending calls in the area such as obstructions, RTCs, concern for welfare calls etc. as well as visiting victims of crime, providing crime prevention tips and getting to know the community in general listening to any concerns that people have. In between attending such calls, I try and get the speed camera out when I can in various areas. The last check was on Thursday outside Donkey Field which is my favourite spot, especially around school run time. I have also done a couple of checks down by the station, checking vehicles coming from Ensfield Road into the village. I will continue to do these whenever I can fit some in. I have tried to patrol most of the area throughout a shift, and feel I've made good links with key local people to try and work together as best as possible. If anyone has any particular issues or concerns, feel free to raise it or if anyone would like me to attend any events of group meetings, please make contact and I will do my best to pop along. The majority of crimes in the past year in the rural area have been mainly breaks to sheds and garages, with these traditionally peaking with the lighter evenings and people out in their gardens a lot more. Reports of suspicious vehicles are a huge help to us and if any are hanging around and look out of place, grab the registration number and let us know. We can then run checks, put intelligence reports in and stop check them when we see them in the area. We have had a couple of these reports around the area and I do bug the unmarked team every so often to come out this way when they can with any intel I give them to give me that little extra helping hand with deterring criminal activity. There have been a few instances of Anti-Social Behaviour in the village- one of which was the outdoor area where the school do their activities near the tennis courts. A few names were given as possibilities and these people were dealt with robustly with a little home visit with an ASB officer from Sevenoaks Council. This gave a clear message to them and their friends of our zero tolerance approach. If anyone witnesses ASB and even better have names, call us on 101 and we will deal as this behaviour can be intimidating to some. Many people do not call in a lot of incidents that may happen in their area as they either don't think it will go anywhere or they think they are causing a nuisance and wasting our time. Such information is not useless and even though offenders may not always be found, it is a record of what has happened and can be valuable in providing links to other offences. You all live in a very safe area. Unfortunately crime happens everywhere. It is just about protecting yourselves as much as you can and making it harder for criminals to target certain properties. There are 26 policing wards in the Sevenoaks District. The ward Leigh & Chiddingstone Causeway is one of the lowest in the district along with Eynsford which is similar in size also.

This is something to be very proud of and you live in one of the safest areas in the district. 101 is the non-emergency number. If you see anything suspicious such as vehicles or people hanging around, or nuisance youths or bikes riding around, call 101 and let us know. It may be nothing, but it is better to be safe than sorry. Of course, if a crime is in progress or life is in danger call 999. As always, if you need anything feel free to chat to me, or ring 101. This is a friendly area and I would like to thank everyone who has made me feel welcome in the past year. Stay Safe!"

Cllr Stratton-Brown thanked PCSO Laura Morris very much for sparing the time to attend the meeting.

#### Talk by Charles Lloyd

Cllr Stratton-Brown introduced Charles Lloyd, who is coordinating the eight community groups around Gatwick who sit on the Noise Management Board.

Charles said that in 2015, Gatwick Airport Ltd (GAL) received so many complaints that it launched the Arrivals Review, chaired by Bo Redeborn. One recommendation arising from the Arrivals Review was the formation of an independent noise management board, which would be a forum comprising of representatives from GAL, NATS, the CAA, DfT, the industry and the community groups. The first meeting was held in June 2016 and the board meets quarterly. The next meeting will be in June 2017. There were 25 recommendations arising from the Arrivals Review, some of which are detailed below:

1. A320 series of aircraft whine. This is caused by a pressure valve on the wing and when air travels over it, it creates a whine. GAL is working with the airlines, in particular British Airways, Easyjet and Monarch, to ensure that a modification is fitted to the aircraft which has this fault. 80% of these airlines' fleet has been retro-fitted with the modification and there is a target that 100% will be done by the end of 2017. There will be a penalty imposed on airlines coming into Gatwick Airport which do not have the modification fitted.
2. Dispersal of aircraft so that communities share the impact of aircraft noise. Prior to 2013, there was a wide arrivals swathe into the airport. This was narrowed in 2015 to 10-12 nautical miles wide and the majority of aircraft now use the route over Leigh. It is hoped that the swathe will be re-widened but this will depend upon the co-operation of Air Traffic Control. Between 2013 and 2015 there was a concentration of arrivals aircraft at 12 nautical miles from the airport, this has now eased. The Noise Management Board is trying to widen the swathe to the south.
3. Continual descent approach (CDA). This should mean that planes glide in on a 3 degree gradient. GAL claims that they achieve 90% compliance. There was a workshop at Gatwick to look at the definition but it was agreed that a better definition is required. GAL has only carried out limited work on this and the response is disappointing.
4. Capacity at Gatwick. There was a 5% increase in capacity in 2016 from 2015, and this has increased in 2017. The NMB has to give consent for an increase in capacity and this will only be given if there is a proven reduction in noise.
5. Night flights. There is a debate on the charging of additional costs for night flights.
6. Complaints. The complaints system is poor and the NMB is trying to get GAL to change their system to make it more user friendly.
7. Departures. There will be a new focus on departure routes soon.
8. Runway in use protocol. This is whether aircraft should arrive from the west or the east in nil or low wind conditions, and was discussed at the last NMB meeting. The proposal was turned down as communities to the west of the airport were not supportive of sharing the burden, and it's off the table for the time being. The protocol would only have been used on 10-15 days of the year anyway.
9. Airspace issues nationally including the CAA airspace policy currently under consultation.
10. Additional runway capacity in the South-East. The consultation regarding the third runway at Heathrow is currently out and Charles suggested that people respond to say that they do not want a second runway at Gatwick.
11. Precision Based Navigation (PRNAV). In the next ten years, navigation will change to PRNAV. Routes will be redesigned and some people will be severely impacted and some will see an improvement. This is because aircraft will be able to be directed on a very narrow flight path under PRNAV. It won't happen for five years or so.

Cllr Stratton-Brown asked whether there were any questions for Charles.

1. "Are the variations in height due to pilot choice or Air Traffic Control?" Charles said that the ideal CDA is 3 degrees. The average recorded CDA is currently 1.7 degrees, so aircraft are flying far lower than they should. Pilot training is very important and will help with the understanding of the issues. ATC behaviour also needs to be improved. Currently there are no incentives to airlines for quieter aircraft as there is concern in the industry that this could jeopardise safety.

2. "Is Gatwick at full capacity?" Charles said that no Gatwick is not yet at full capacity. During peak summer months, there are 900 air traffic movements per day, this is reduced to 650 in the winter months. It is possible that capacity could be increased by 30%.

3. "How are night flights regulated and how is the night quota calculated?" Charles said that the DfT control night noise quotas and, although there was a recent recommendation that the night quota is reduced at Gatwick, the movement limit has been frozen. Unless penalties are imposed on airlines the quota is unlikely to be reduced. Charles suggested that residents write to their MP on this issue.

4. "Is there an integrated transport policy? Is it cheaper to fly than go by train for example?" Charles said that there is no fuel duty on aircraft movements, and no VAT, which allows airlines to keep costs down.

Cllr Stratton-Brown thanked Charles very much for sparing the time to attend the meeting. He added that NATS is responsible for routes outside the ATC area, which is the area close to the airport. It should be the Government's responsibility to decide capacity and issues such as fair and equitable dispersal.

#### Leigh Village Halls Management Committee

Cllr Stratton-Brown welcomed Helen Everett, who has stepped down as Chairman of the Management Committee. Helen said that the committee is trying to improve the halls with modern equipment, such as a hearing loop and a projector screen. The heating system in the large hall has been reviewed and it is hoped that this will be updated next year. The committee is considering alternatives to a hearing loop, such as a travelling microphone, and is looking at the general maintenance of the halls, drain clearance and electrics. It is hoped to redecorate both halls next year, and re-varnish both floors. There are 15 trustees on the management committee and contact details are on the website.

#### Presentation of the Leigh Community Award

Cllr Stratton-Brown said that he was delighted to present the award this year to Mrs Helen Everett for her untiring commitment as Chairman of the Leigh Village Halls Management Committee. Helen has overseen the complete refurbishment of both halls which are the focal point of this vibrant village. Helen collected her award and a bouquet of flowers as a thank you from the Parish Council.

#### Proposal for Leigh to twin with Lavergne

David and Kelly Evans attended the meeting in order to discuss this proposal. David reported that Leigh was approached by Lavergne in the Lot Department in France. Residents of the parish have been widely consulted on their thoughts on this proposal. The response has been disappointing. There were 19 responses, all in support of the proposal but this represents just 3% of the number of residents. There were 5 offers to host a French visitor and 11 offers to help with the organisation. Some others were interested but not necessarily willing to help. Leigh school is happy to make contact with the school in Lavergne. Fundraising would be required locally to cover the costs associated with the project if it is agreed to proceed. Kelly said that they believe that there are five options:

- i. decline to proposal to twin with Lavergne
- ii. postpone the decision until the link with the school is established
- iii. continue to look into the proposal and prepare more concrete links with the village
- iv. agree to formalize the twinning with the understanding that we could withdraw if there is not enough interest at grass root level
- v. twin with another community, one that is possibly closer in distance.

Kelly said that Lavergne is 630 miles from Leigh and it would take 11.5 hours to drive, not including the crossing, it is 8 hours from Calais. David said that Edenbridge has a thriving twinning committee and the town gets a lot from their twin, although they agree that it is hard work, which falls to a few people. The Town Council gives the twinning committee an annual grant.

Cllr Stratton-Brown thanked David and Kelly for all their hard work and said that the Parish Council will discuss the proposal and make a decision at their next meeting.

To approve Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting were approved as a correct record, and duly signed.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

The following were handed out at the meeting:

**Chairman's Annual Report to the Parish of Leigh for 2016-17**

- 1 Membership** – During the year we were sorry to lose Councillors Beverley Doherty and Rob Swallow. Both had been very active as Council members. Beverley, as Chairman of the Planning committee, led the drive to convince Sevenoaks District Council that, with the poor access, the Old Powder Mills site should be restricted to 75 houses rather than the 150 required by Government guidelines. She was also the leading light behind the very successful celebrations of Prince William's wedding. Rob's legacy is the major work involved in securing the Sport England grant and masterminding the contract to improve the drainage of the soccer pitch on the Green. We were pleased to have several applications to join the Parish Council in their place and Richard Britain and Richard Lake were appointed.
- 2 Work during the year** – Rather than detailed comments on all of the Parish Council's activities, the following list gives very brief details of the issues pursued by the Parish Council. Please ask me or any of our Councillors for more details on any issue which is of concern to you.
  - Planning – The Parish Council considered fifty nine applications, of which they supported thirty seven, opposed three, commented on nine and made no comment on ten. This was fifteen more applications than last year.
  - Correspondence - The Parish Council has dealt with about two hundred and sixty items of correspondence.
  - APDs – They are in a sound condition and minor repairs have been made.
  - Affordable Housing –a survey was carried out which showed there was a need for fifteen rented properties and four shared ownership. The next stage is to find a site.
  - Manor Buildings – The Parish Council were not in favour of permission being given to sell cars from one of the Manor Buildings. SDC did not seem to be making any progress with this application and we are very grateful to District Councillor Peter Lake for taking this up with the District Council. Sadly there is still no progress.
  - Powdermill site Traffic – The Parish Council is pressing for Bellway to be made to keep to the agreed transport plan, observe speed limits and not do further damage to the edges of Powdermill Lane. Our SDC Councillor, Peter Lake, has again been strongly supportive for us with SDC.
  - Traffic calming measures - The Hildenborough road gateway outside Upper Kennards was installed by KCC and Police have checked the speed of traffic. Efforts have been made to persuade KCC to introduce a 40mph speed limit from the village to Home Farm Close. KCC said that there were no funds for this and similar projects so we have got nowhere. In response to a complaint, our PCSO was asked to carry out speed checks on Lower Green. Laura has been a great help and has been carrying out speed checks on the traffic on Hildenborough Road, Powdermill Lane, the High Street and Penshurst Road.
  - Swathe and Visibility cutting of Verges - Our Parish Council has joined with three other parishes to take over responsibility for cutting the verges.
  - Trees – The Parish Council has reviewed several tree applications. We strongly objected to the application to fell two very large oaks in the grounds of Pippen Cottage and were relieved when this was refused. The veteran oak tree on The Green was surveyed and the Parish Council arranged for contractors to carry out the recommended works. This is ongoing.

- The Green – The Parish Council is planning for work to improve the edge of The Green which has been damaged by vehicles.
- The Green – The Parish Council has agreed with the Cricket Club that The Green is available for the Horticultural Society's summer event and for Super Stars.
- Charcott – The provision of a bus shelter is being investigated.
- Charcott Green – The Parish Council arranged for the edge of Charcott Green to be improved. Relay kerbs were installed backed by half a meter of grasscrete. This has proved insufficient and residents are being consulted.
- French Link - The Chairman was approached by a resident from the village of Lavergne, in the South of France, who would like to twin with Leigh. The Parish Council appealed for parishioners who would like to take this on. We are very grateful for David and Kelly Evans for volunteering.
- Crandalls' Pond – The Parish Council is trying to arrange for the pond to be cleaned.
- Charcott – The Parish Council has agreed to adopt the heritage phone box and to the purchase of a defibrillator.
- Provision of a heritage phone box for the bottom of Church Hill – This was considered but was felt to be too expensive at this time.
- Rights of Way Committee – This has been set up and has got off to a good start thanks to Councillor Joe Kaye.
- Garden Cottages – The Parish Council is monitoring this development and assisting with rehousing of the tenants.
- Drainage Works to The Green – In recent years the soccer pitch on The Green has been out of action for a significant part of the soccer season. Thanks to a grant from Sport England a drainage system is being installed. The last part, the installation of sand drains, is due to be carried out on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> April. So The Green should be available for cricket early in May
- Recovery vehicle parking in Powdermill Lane – The Parish Council requested police help.
- Risk Assessment – Parish Councillor Richard Lake has kindly drawn up an updated risk assessment for the Parish Council and this is being reviewed by Councillors.
- Drainage and Flood related issues – Discussions included the raising the height of the barrier.
- Parking – The Parish Council requested double yellow lines around the corner by the War Memorial and adjacent to the Hairdressing shop but, owing to the lack of funds, this was refused by KCC.
- The Fleur de Lis – licencing issues.
- The Green – the maintenance contract was agreed.
- Litter Picking – Councillor Joe Kaye has successfully organised two litter picking rounds.
- Dog bins – Two additional dog bins have been purchased.

**3 Gatwick** – A major concern continues to be aircraft noise. We are extremely grateful for the enormous amount of time and effort put in by Richard Streatfeild who has been Chairman of the High Weald Councils Aviation Action Group since its inception. Luckily he continues to be heavily involved. He researches and writes papers. We are enormously grateful to Louise, our Parish Clerk, who is also Clerk to the Group. This comprises twenty six Parish and Town Councils representing about 97,000 people from across the area to the East and South-East of Gatwick. The aims of the Group remain that there should be no increase in noise in the High Weald from aircraft arriving or departing from Gatwick Airport and no night flights between midnight and six am. Major issues facing us are trying to agree what 'Fair and Equitable Dispersal (of aircraft noise) means, the effectiveness or otherwise of the Noise Management Board and reaching agreements for the benefit of all within the ten community groups surrounding Gatwick. Without the latter, there are no effective controls over Gatwick Airport and the National Air Traffic organisation. We are still ready to go to battle over any proposal for an additional runway at Gatwick, and are monitoring the situation closely.

**4 Finance** – The year to 31<sup>st</sup> March is not yet complete so there can be no full report. However it is developing slightly better than budget. Councillors decided to increase the parish precept to cover the Parish's share of The Green project. Although this amounted to a 15% increase over 2015/16, the precept for Leigh Parish is still the lowest of all the parishes in the Sevenoaks district.

**5 Concluding Remarks** – Once again I must thank all Councillors, Alan Johnston, Graham Marchant, Sue Smith, Joe Kaye, Peter Croft, Lesley Provan, Richard Britain and Richard Lake. We really do work as a team. Very many thanks to Councillor Peter Lake 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 major contribution to the smooth running of the Parish Council and, I am sure, working many more hours than her agreement. As always, all of us on the Parish Council are very appreciative of her efficiency, hard work and her extensive professional knowledge.

Colin Stratton-Brown

24<sup>th</sup> April 2017

### **County Councillor Clive Pearman report 2016/17**

Perhaps the heading above sums up every year, and for everyone, not just for your County Councillor. In so far as the 'good' aspect is concerned, I must take my hat off to all of the good and very hardworking officers at County hall with whom I have had dealings over this last year, many of whom went far beyond the 'extra mile' to help me with a number of strategies and projects – the Transport Strategy, the Environment Strategy, the Active Travel Strategy, the Waste and Recycling Strategy, the Country Parks Strategy, and the Highways Asset Management Strategy, – to name but six of the ten which I was asked to develop and progress, some of them 'from scratch'. At a more local and specific level, it was also extremely rewarding to use my annual grant pot of £25k to help fund and support a number of specific projects for young people in Edenbridge and the surrounding parishes. It was also extremely humbling to support and successfully represent a number of local families appealing against school allocation and school transport funding decisions, and extremely disappointing when a number of appeals made on valid grounds were not upheld. Such disappointments have been few, but one absolute frustration remains – to penetrate the mass of inertia in the Highways lighting section at KCC which is preventing me from getting the two lantern lights on the east side of the Great Stone Bridge replaced and illuminated! On this I will not give up!! But now for a bit more detail on some of the above.

Firstly, of course, as in the designation of my role as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, the title enabled me to focus on one of my passions, namely the 'natural world' and all that it entails. My visits to all of the Country Parks in Kent in support of the managers, the Rangers and the volunteers were, I found out later, highly valued but truly unusual – no elected Member had previously undertaken such visits! My incursions into this 'unloved' side of the Directorate were triggered not only by my passion for the countryside, but also coincided with the need to support staff members and volunteers who were faced with illegal trespass by groups of travellers and their appalling behaviour and language, as well as helping to restore morale as a consequence of an abortive attempt by Property Services at KCC to 'sell off' this asset in an attempt to reduce unnecessary costs. Fortunately, so unprofessional was this attempt by Property Services to sell this asset that it was relatively easy to reverse that decision and to keep the Country Parks 'in house' at KCC, and to continue the development of those parks for the benefit of all who use them throughout the year.

Secondly, on the transport front, I have been both able and required to pursue a number of threads. The ongoing need to confront a 'cluster of resistance' in the form of Gatwick Airport, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Department for Transport, to name the most obvious guilty organisations, in an attempt to prevent that level of aviation noise which damages our health and, in general, intrudes upon any form of peace and tranquility which we might value in this part of Kent. This is a crucially important piece of work where business principles and the funding from and to overseas investors has been allowed to determine levels of aircraft noise, with no 'balancing of the equation' by taking into account the impact on local communities of such noise regimes.

My designation as the Deputy Cabinet Member (DCM) coincided with the need to develop those and other strategies mentioned in the first paragraph of this report, a responsibility which required working in a joint enterprise with members of the various political parties at County Hall, and with a range of professional officers from across the directorate, in designations such as 'task and finish groups' or 'informal members groups' and 'working groups'. The willingness of everyone to work together in a team effort, whether an elected member or an officer of the council, was outstanding, and 'proved the lie' to many of my more experienced colleagues who refused to accept that any such thing was possible, either in principle or practice, and who just could not wait for it all to fail and to 'fall apart'. They are still waiting, and the world really has 'passed them by'.

Thirdly, the office of Deputy Cabinet Member required me to attend other committees and bodies, both inside KCC and beyond, some of which followed on with me after my appointment as the DCM. So, for example, I have been a member of the Children and Young Persons Cabinet with its two sub-committees addressing standards and infrastructure in the field of education in Kent; membership of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee which is becoming ever more important as the County Council develops its health provision responsibilities in concert with the NHS; chairing the multi-agency planning group providing the alternative solution to Operation Stack, now held in abeyance pending the outcome of a Judicial Review; membership of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee, and membership board of the Kent and Medway Road Casualty Reduction Partnership. These have been accompanied by membership of a range of South-East region and Kent-wide organisations addressing environmental and transport issues at that level. All of these opportunities have enabled me to 'bring to the table' all aspects of life here, in Edenbridge and West Kent, a part of the county of which it became very apparent at an early stage that colleague councillors and officers were totally unaware; they are much more informed now!

Finally, as this is the last of the 4 annual reports which I will have presented before the next set of County Council elections in May, I have, over the past few weeks and months asked myself "has it all been worthwhile?", and "have I made any difference at all which is worthy of that claim?". The answer is, I believe, "yes" to both, and with a degree of modesty and humility. The £25k which I have allocated to the area of the Sevenoaks South electoral division has been distributed on a pro-rata population basis, meaning that each year two-thirds of the annual sum came to the Edenbridge area, with the remaining third allocated amongst the other villages and hamlets of the division. That money was allocated to a variety of causes and, in particular, those by virtue of which children and young people have directly benefitted. In terms of serving the population of the division, the unqualified success, if that is the correct description was, within 3 months of having been elected, to get the County Council's policy of supporting the second runway at Gatwick overturned. That policy change then enabled me, as the elected representative, to bring the six town and parish councils of the division together in forming what has become the High Weald Councils Aviation Action Group (HWCAAG), the first time that the collective views of the elected representatives in West Kent were brought together and expressed their opposition to night flights at Gatwick Airport, and of the proposed second runway. That collective voice, with the unstinting support of Sir John Stanley, our former MP, was, I have no hesitation in claiming, a key feature in supporting the Aviation Commission and its identification of Heathrow as the location for the increased runway capacity.

And I will end where I began, with our local community. There have been many disappointments which I have had to come to terms with and, in particular, the failure to achieve a 100% success rate in the school allocation and transport appeals which I have dealt with. The number of appeals have increased over the 4 years, the number being 15 this last year, of which only 3 were upheld, against the success rate of around 50% for all of the 137 Kent-wide appeals for this last year. That limited, local success rate was, I believe, the consequence of 'moving the goalposts' so as to designate Oxted School as the 'nearest appropriate school' for our area, rather than a senior school within Kent to which virtually all of our families would much prefer to send their children. As a Kent taxpayer, why would any parent want to send their children to a senior school outside of the county boundary? Although I have declined to support many such appeals owing to particular family circumstances, it has been truly humbling to learn of the absolutely devastating circumstances under which a few families in our community somehow manage to 'get by', yet how committed they all are in the face of such adversity to get the best possible education for their children. For these people, I have not been able to help ease their burden, and the County Council, clearly, has not 'heard' their pleas.

In contrast, many children going on to senior school have passed the Kent test and have gained access to a grammar education, when chosen, or to remain in non-grammar education. All of these young people, of which there are many, will clearly go on to university and do extremely well. They are a credit to their families, and to our community.

Likewise, although I have yet to find or hear of within Kent a community which is as well-connected as we have here, in Edenbridge, we still have much work to do to develop these support mechanisms. We know most about our neighbours to the extent to which they want us to know about them, but there is much that personal modesty or perceived embarrassment hides away until the need for that support might be too late coming to the surface. But it is this networking which has made it so relatively easy for me, as the County Councillor, to help wherever I can and, in that respect, the community really has been able to help me carry out the responsibilities of the County Councillor.

Will I miss it all after the elections in May? "Yes", in some respects, and chief amongst these will be knowing that I have been able to help, or assist, in many genuine cases. But "no" in some other instances and, in particular, where I, as the County Councillor, am expected to resolve parking problems by painting double yellow lines around all of the rural country roads in the proximity of Cowden Rail Station, in particular, or to stop vehicles travelling at speeds in excess of 20 mph through some of our hamlets, or to stop the rain from falling so heavily that it 'floods everywhere'! 'Playing God' is not one of the requirements or entitlements of a County Councillor. But at roughly at least 50 hours each and every week, and around 1,000 miles each and every month, all spent on County Council work and my responsibilities, the break will be a refreshing welcome, enabling me to get back to the natural world, for a while, at least .....!

I hope that I have met the expectations which you might have had when you voted me in nearly 4 years ago. I tried my best, and many thanks for your support.

Clive Pearman  
Kent County Councillor

27<sup>th</sup> March 2017

### **District Cllr Peter Lake report 2016-17**

It is very satisfactory to note that Sevenoaks District Council has been selected as the Local Government Council of the Year. Across the vast majority of our services Sevenoaks is meeting or exceeding targets, and resident and staff satisfaction levels remain high, even as resources shrink and responsibilities increase.

It is very easy to be complacent but we are determined to continue to provide value for money to keep the District safe, to collect rubbish more effectively and efficiently, to protect the Green Belt and to support and develop the local economy.

In this report let me concentrate on planning issues. Over the past twelve months we have seen an explosion in the number of planning applications across the whole district and Leigh is no exception. Our officers are under enormous pressure and sometimes to my dismay, the delay in the decision making process reflects badly on our ability to grant or refuse planning permission. Householders have had to resort to the appeals process but this is often long and cumbersome.

Residents in Powder Mill Lane continue to suffer from excessive vehicle movement going to and from the Bellway development out of hours. SDC officers have read the riot act to the developers in the form of a Breach Of Condition Order. Sadly the horse appears to have bolted and all we can now do is to insist that any damage to property is rectified. I have told the directors of Bellway to accept that they have a duty of care to us all here in Leigh.



Last year I said that we all faced a difficult time as a result of the Referendum. Well, I don't think things have changed with a General Election now in prospect. However, I assure you all that SDC will continue to offer real value for money which we can contribute as a result of our council tax.

Once again I would like to thank Leigh Parish Council members and our clerk, Louise, for their patience and for their work on behalf of us all.

Chairman, your own hard work is much appreciated by us all.  
Peter Lake



### **Leigh Primary School report 2016-17**

It has been another fantastic year for Leigh Primary School. Pupils, staff, governors, parents and friends have all been involved in this success and, without doubt, the school continues to flourish. There is much to think about as we face some important decisions over the next 12 months but I feel confident that we are in a very strong position to do this and move the school forward in the correct way.

As ever the children continue to be the focus of all we do here. We have worked hard to continually develop the school site and have recently seen the opening of our new Music and Creative Arts Facility. This is the culmination of three years hard work by all the members of the school community and the two rooms are located at the end of Jessica's Hall where the old public toilets used to be. These two spaces are an incredibly valuable addition to the school site and show our commitment to the children of this school receiving a rounded, holistic education. Furthermore we are encouraging members of the local community to use this facility and, if you are interested or know someone that might be, please do contact the school office for further details. I would like to thank the Parish Council for your generous support of this project and it was lovely to see so many of you there at the end of last term when we officially opened the rooms.

Academic results continue to be high and despite new reporting and assessment arrangements and a new National Curriculum, I am delighted that our children continue to perform very well against national and local averages. Strong numbers of our children have been awarded their first or second choice Secondary School with many progressing to the Grammar Schools based in Tonbridge or Tunbridge Wells.

We still have 6 classes with most being split age. Staffing is stable although we have said goodbye to Mrs Harris who was our Office Manager and Mrs Nevard who worked as a Teaching Assistant in Key Stage 2. Both have made wonderful contributions to the life of the school over many years and we obviously wish them well as they embark on the next stage of their lives.

Last Tuesday was the national 'Offer Day' for children entering the school next September. As in the past couple of years we have experienced a very high number of applications which shows the popularity of the school in the local area.

The extra-curricular life of the school continues to flourish. Clubs currently on offer for children include: Netball, WizzyTech, Maths, Mosaic Making, Cross County, Cricket, Drama, Science, Beekeeping, Choir, Karate, Chess, Orchestra, Board Game, Yoga, Baking and Football. For the past couple of years we have taken over the E M Forster Theatre at Tonbridge School for our whole school production and we are planning to do the same this year on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July; please do come along and support us! Our status as a Forest School continues to provide the children with wonderful opportunities for outdoor learning and the wildlife area is a much cherished and used resource.

We are also extremely fortunate to benefit from weekly tennis lessons throughout the year at Leigh Tennis Club. As there are six classes at the school, each class receives half a term's tuition (about 6-7 weeks) during which time they work with Adam on ball skills, racket control, appreciation of the rules of tennis and, most

importantly, developing a love of the game. The sessions they receive are always extremely well delivered, well structured and build on skills previously taught. They are also very well differentiated and cater for children of all abilities. Adam has a wonderful relationship with the children and they thoroughly enjoy these excellent sessions. The children are extremely fortunate to receive such quality tennis coaching in the village and we are grateful to the Parish Council, Leigh United Charities and the Tennis Club for making this possible. We realise this is a significant financial commitment and we are very mindful of ensuring that the children get as much out of these sessions as possible. We would, of course, like to encourage as many children as possible to join the Tennis Club as members and will be happy to anything we can do to support this.

We continue to have an extremely effective governing body despite having lost our wonderful Chair of Governors, John Henderson. John has dedicated many years of his life to the school and I'm extremely grateful to him and Jacqui Wordsworth for all their years of exemplary service. Both have been incredibly effective governors for many years and the school owes them a huge debt of gratitude. In September we welcomed Ali Newman as our new Chair of Governors and Fiona Lake as our new Vice-Chair. Both have been on the governing body for a long period of time and we are extremely fortunate to have them leading our highly effective Governing Body.

The PTA continue to be an extremely successful organisation, raising huge amounts of money for the school. This year money has been raised to equip the school with new ICT equipment and for our school library. The Friends of Leigh Primary School continue to be involved in the school through the work of David James and the annual lunch, hosted by Janet Court, is always a highlight! We are blessed with extremely high numbers of volunteers who listen to children read, take clubs, accompany us on trips or are just generally supportive in so many other ways. Lionel, David and Cherry are regular visitors and take assembly every Tuesday morning; we are extremely grateful to them for their involvement in the school.

Leigh Primary School is a school in the heart of its community. We are extremely grateful to all the organisations who have contributed to a very successful year for the school and to all the support shown by the residents of the village. If it's been a while since you came and saw us then do pop in; I'd be delighted to see you and show you around our wonderful school.

Daniel Eaton  
Headteacher Leigh Primary School

### **Sharing, Caring and Learning Together**

*We believe that there is no limit to what our pupils can achieve and it is our privilege at Leigh Primary School to nurture the potential talents of all our pupils and to provide them with an effective springboard for their future.*

*We will further our ambitions for our pupils by providing them with an outstanding and safe learning environment which encourages all learners to attempt new challenges and take risks with confidence.*

*In close partnership with our community, we will ensure all our pupils leave us ready to make a valued contribution to society. We take immense pride in our high standards and our reputation as the village school on the green which knows no limits. We aim to be the school that is truly 'Sharing, Caring and Learning Together'.*

### **Leigh United Charities report 2016-17**

This is a local charity working within the parish of Leigh and incorporating Charcott and a portion of Hildenborough and gives funds for the relief of those in need within the parish in accordance with the agreement of the Trustees. Our primary relief is for those on other benefits and the funds are generally given directly to the applicant's energy accounts on a quarterly basis. Last year we gave to 58 beneficiaries and an additional funds to 7 applicants as one off payments to assist with their personal circumstances. The Chairman and Trustees would give consideration to any new applicants as funds received from rental of the 2 cottages and the ground rent for Saxby Wood are to be distributed to those within this parish.

## Finance Report for Year 2016-2017

The Parish Council's financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April until 31<sup>st</sup> March. The precept for the year 2016-17 was £27,000. This sum, which is generated from residents' Council Tax, is paid to the Parish Council by Sevenoaks District Council. The precept for 2017-18 has been increased to £31,500. This increase is to finance the Parish Council's share of project costs for improvements to drainage on The Green. Leigh's precept remains the lowest precept in the whole district. 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.

Annual memberships have been renewed to the following:

Kent Association of Local Councils	£533.08
Action with Communities in Rural Kent	£50.00
CPRE	£36.00
Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign	£10.00
Parish Council Legal Update publication	£75.00
Kent Playing Fields Association	£20.00
Aviation Environment Federation	£36.00
Society of Local Council Clerks	£93.50

Grants have been awarded as follows:

Leigh PCC – contribution towards The Leigh Directory	£300.00
Leigh Primary School - contribution towards boundary nets	£700.00
Leigh Football Club – contribution towards match fees due to inability to use The Green because of poor surface condition	£300.00
Leigh Scouts – contribution towards the Superstars event	£250.00
Leigh Tennis Club - contribution towards coaching school pupils	£850.00
Leigh Ladies Choir – contribution towards start up costs	£400.00

Below is a summary of the Parish Council's Income and Expenditure for the year 2016-17:

<b>INCOME</b>	£	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	£
Precept	27,000.00	Salaries	8,028.33
Grant – Sport England	57,026.98	PAYE	2,895.48
APD rental	10,900.00	Pension contribution	3,182.40
Income received: hire of assets	400.00	Mileage and petty cash	819.00
Wayleave	13.45	Stationery	99.19
Interest on Investments	53.58	Telephone/Broadband	327.97
		Office Expenses	766.84
		Website	145.00
		Insurance	1,143.96
		Audit/Accountancy	230.00
		Chairman's Expenses	70.73
		Subscriptions	881.58
		Hall Hire	140.00
		Repairs & Maintenance	811.40
		Village Green	57,131.45
		Litter / dog bins	1,895.09
		Grants	3,600.00
		APD	2,011.97
		Family Fun Play Scheme	512.21
		Advertising & Publicity	50.00
		Aviation	384.20
		Public Events	1,156.10
		Sundry	7.50
		Verges	0.00
	<b>95,394.01</b>		<b>86,290.40</b>

<b>Surplus of Income / Expenditure</b>	<b>9,103.61</b>
Transfers to reserves: APD:	2,000.00
Election expenses:	300.00
Planning contingency:	500.00
General contingency:	500.00
<b>Surplus after transfers to reserves</b>	<b>5,803.61</b>

**Louise Kleinschmidt**

Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer