

**MINUTES OF THE LEIGH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL HALL,
HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 23RD APRIL 2018 AT 8.00PM**

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye, (Chairman), Cllr P. Croft, Cllr S. Satterley, Cllr B. Skipper, Cllr S. Smith and Cllr. C. Stratton-Brown

APOLOGIES: Cllr R. Britain, Cllr A. Johnston and Cllr G. Marchant

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk), County and District Cllr P. Lake, Inspector Nick Finnis, PCSO Simon Humphreys and PCSO Adam Pennington (Kent Police), Sam Coomber and Neil Bernard (South East Coast Ambulance Service) and members of the public

Cllr Kaye welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. To approve Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2017
Cllr Stratton-Brown proposed that the minutes be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Smith and all were in favour.
2. Report by Kent Police
Inspector Finnis said that he is the inspector for Swanley, Sevenoaks and Edenbridge. Leigh is one of the safest parishes in the county. 49 crimes were reported last year, and this year is likely to be the same. There have been a couple of house burglaries reported where the houses were under renovation or being built, and tools and/or appliances were taken. Two arrests have been made. It is important to let your neighbours know if you are going away or if the house will be empty for renovation. PCSO Simon Humphreys said that he has been one of the PCSOs for the Edenbridge area for twelve years and is about to move to work from Cranbrook Police Station. Amy Hardy will be the PCSO responsible for the Edenbridge area from 7th July, and PCSO Adam Pennington has just started. There are four PCSOs based at Edenbridge Police Station and police officers are based at Swanley. To report anybody acting suspiciously, or any suspicious vehicles, please ring 101 which is the non-emergency police number. If a crime is in process or if there is an emergency, please ring 999. Reports can now be made online on the Kent Police website. There is a daily early morning meeting at SDC offices when reported crimes are discussed and follow up action agreed. Residents are asked to continue to report anything suspicious so that they can be logged onto the system, giving the police a better picture of crime in the district. A useful website is www.securedbydesign.com, which is a police organisation working with police forces to deliver a range of crime prevention and crime reduction initiatives. Simon said that he has helped PCSO Laura Morris carry out speed tests in Leigh and they will be doing this more in the future. Speedwatch is a very useful tool locally but volunteers are needed to work the equipment, if you are interested please get in touch.
3. To present the Leigh Community Award 2018
Cllr Kaye announced that the winner of this year's Community Award is Arthur Lewis for his commitment to the Scouts for over forty five years, the allotments and Royal British Legion. He is a keen bell ringer, maintains the bells and winds the Church clock. Cllr Kaye thanked Arthur for all he does in the village and presented him with his award.
4. To welcome The Baritones, Leigh Men's Choir
The Baritones entertained everyone and this was much enjoyed and appreciated.
5. Talk by Secamb on how to spot the symptoms of a stroke and a heart attack, what to do and how to use a defibrillator, plus question time
A very interesting talk and demonstration on how to use a defibrillator and give CPR was given. As a reminder, defibrillators are located outside no.15 The Forstall, on the large village hall and in the phone box in Charcott. The team also described the symptoms of a stroke and what to do if you are with someone who appears to be having a stroke.

6. Chairman's Report of Activities in 2017/18, plus question time

Cllr Kaye reported as follows:

Membership: During 2017 our valued Chairman, Colin Stratton-Brown stepped down following an accident, however we are delighted that he is remaining on the council thus ensuring his wide knowledge and energy remains with us. Colin, thank you for all your past work – we are pleased to offer you this small token of our appreciation – given, mind you, in the expectation that we will continue to have your input for some time yet. I took over from Colin mid last year and was appointed chairman in January. By way of introduction, my name is Joe Kaye, and I have lived in Leigh since 2004, having married Jill in St Mary's, Leigh in 1989 – her family having lived here since 1964. During the year two active council members Richard Lake and Lesley Provan stood down as councillors, both due to work commitments. Richard, who lives in Charcott brought us a valuable perspective and contribution from Charcott leading to some useful activity in that area which I shall detail shortly, and Lesley was an active member of our planning committee. As a result of these departures we had two processes whereby we co-opted new members to the council. We were very pleased that so many people put their names forward to join the council and are grateful for those who came forward but were not selected. Our two new co-opted members are Sean Satterley of Meadow Bank and Brett Skipper from the new Powder Mills development. We feel it is important that we have representation from as many different areas of the village as possible – so thank you both for taking on the role and for your contributions already.

What has the council done this year?: I will summarise the key activities covered during the year. If you'd like any further details please do ask Louise or any councillor, or have a look at the minutes on the website. And of course anyone is always welcome to attend the monthly meeting on the first Monday of the month here in the Small Hall at 8pm.

Planning: This is one of the key areas of activity, the Parish Council of course only has an advisory role but with the help of our District Councillor Peter Lake we are able to influence planning decisions. Our Chairman of the Planning Committee is now Cllr Graham Marchant. Please remember neighbour comments are taken very seriously by the SDC committee. The Parish Council considered 49 applications, of which they supported 23, opposed 14, had no objection to 6 and made no comment on 6. This was 10 less applications than last year.

A number of applications caused particular concern:

- Two separate applications were made attempting to open a retail car sales unit at Manor Buildings which were strongly resisted. We are glad to say that they have been rejected.
- The Powder Mills development, which is now within 3 months of completion has caused traffic issues on Powder Mill Lane and caused serious damage to the road and verges. The developer, Bellway, is committed to making good before it leaves the site and we will be following this closely.
- Garden Cottages – there have been a number of applications this year for new extensions on these properties, plus two new dwellings attached to existing properties.
- Five members of the Parish Council will be attending a planning course laid on by KALC next month – which will aid our review of the many applications that we receive

Community Infrastructure Levy (or CIL) money: As a result of the Powder Mill development we have so far received some £25k which is the Parish Council's share of this money paid by the developer to SDC. We are entitled to spend this on community infrastructure which has become necessary due to development in the parish and would like to ensure that these funds were applied to a project that makes a real difference to the parish.

The Green:

- I hope that you will agree with me that the football pitch on The Green looks quite fantastic, after the new drainage system installation and the levelling of the area. The area was back in use in May of 2017 and we are very glad that the football club no longer has to play elsewhere, as in the past, due to the water-logged pitch. Many thanks to all those who worked so hard to obtain the necessary grants and funding to make this project happen.
- We have installed new curbs outside Elizabeth Cottage, where the verge suffers due to parking.
- At our meeting on 9th April we agreed to repair the curbs and install grasscrete along the side of The Green by the school and the eastern section from Old Chimneys leading to Powdermill Lane. Both of these areas are badly damaged by traffic mounting the curb to get past parked cars. This method of providing additional hard surface will protect The Green without increasing road speeds or encouraging additional parking.

- We do not encourage parking on The Green as it does compact the ground and sometimes causes damage. It is an offence to park on a registered Village Green without permission, but the Parish Council does give their permission for events like the fun fair in June.

Roads

- Potholes are a nightmare and we do exert maximum pressure on KCC to repair potholes. However it is a very live issue and please do report potholes on the Kent website – a very good website <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>. The more reported locations the more likely something is to be done. They are particularly bad at the moment because 31st March is Kent County Council's financial year end and they simply run out of funding at the end of their financial year. Happily activity has picked up on Hildenborough Road at least.
- We have had two organised litter picks over the entire road network of Leigh. Thank you everyone who helps with this. Hildenborough Road is regularly kept clear by three residents – you know who you are – thanks –and it makes a real difference. Others keep their favourite areas clear, and it is noticeable – if everyone could look after that little area of road, public property near their house how good would that be?!
- Double yellow lines are being marked on the High Street opposite the school and on the corner as you leave Leigh towards Hildenborough past Forge Square. Also on both sides of the road at the end of Crandalls. Parking in these areas has been very dangerous so we hope this will help.
- We did have the opportunity to buy a speed camera, but understandably (in our view) no volunteers came forward to man such a device. A request for 20 mph in the High Street is being pursued by our District Councillor, though KCC and the Police have said that there is not enough evidence of speeding traffic to warrant the expenditure. We have asked our PCSO to carry out random speed checks when he has the time.
- Speed restriction at Knotley Hall – we are working with our Kent County Cllr, Peter Lake, in trying to get a speed reduction on the brow of the hill from Knotley Hall into Chiddingstone Causeway. Speed has been measured and we are waiting to see if a speed reduction is possible. This is to improve pedestrian safety in this area as people cross the road to use the permissive path which runs inside the hedge line. Many of these pedestrians are children who have to walk into Chiddingstone Causeway in order to catch a bus or train to school.
- Swathe and Visibility cutting of Verges - our Parish Council continues to co-operate with three other parishes to take over responsibility for cutting the verges. We receive funding from KCC for this function, who retain the responsibility and liability. KCC only used to carry out one – rather poor – cut a year and the Parish Council think that it is very worthwhile spending a little more in order to achieve three cuts. This vastly improves road safety for all road users.

Correspondence: The Parish Council has dealt with about 193 items of correspondence during the year. All issues are discussed and are followed up wherever there is something that can be done. So do please get in touch when you have concerns.

Aged Persons Dwellings: They are in a sound condition and minor repairs have been made.

Gatwick: The High Weald Councils Aviation Action Group continue to meet and is working with other community groups around the airport to push for fair and equitable dispersal, a reduction in night flights and for aircraft to approach the airport at a higher level. One success of the group is that all new A320 series of aircraft are being fitted with the modification to prevent that high-pitched whine, and the existing fleet has a sunset date for retrospective fitting. This has reduced aircraft noise for our communities.

Affordable Housing: A survey was carried out which showed there was a need for fifteen rented properties and four shared ownership. A number of possible sites have been put forward to SDC who are to revert with any that may be a realistic site for such a development.

Trees

- The Parish Council has reviewed several tree applications.
- The Parish Council has had tree works carried out on the veteran oak with crown reduced by 25% and the ground around it covered with mulch to prevent compaction and protect the roots
- The trees on The Green have also been reduced.
- A number of trees in the old burial ground have also been reduced.
- There was a little disaster in the Well Close area with KCC cutting a row of conifers back so hard in order to be clear of the road that they will never recover.

We are in discussion with KCC to (i) get them to acknowledge that these trees are on its land and (ii) that as it cut them back it needs to make good the damage. A major job.

Charcott

- The Parish Council arranged for the edge of Charcott Green to be improved. Kerbs were installed backed by half a meter of grasscrete. This was followed up with substantial oak posts to prevent further ingress onto the green and has been a great success
- The telephone box, the traditional red one over there, has been adopted by the Council. In effect BT gave it to us, and left an electricity supply. A defibrillator has been installed in it. Louise is in the process of arranging some defibrillator training for Charcott residents. (We are aware that a number of people wanted to do the same in Leigh at the bottom of church hill. Sadly however we would have to buy a phone box, transport it and install it which would be fairly costly – we feel that there are more pressing uses for the funds).

French Link: We had an approach from a resident from the village of Lavergne, in the South of France, who wanted to twin with Leigh. After thorough investigation by David and Kelly Evans we turned this offer down

Crandalls' Pond: This has been cleared – a useful improvement

Rights of Way:

- We now have 4 Countryside Access Wardens in Leigh & Charcott who are in effect the volunteer eyes and ears of KCC for keeping footpaths in good condition. If there is any footpath that needs attention please contact any of the CAWs, who are Joe Staffurth, Jonathan Cook, Rachel Valentine and me.
- You may not be aware of the problems that have been experienced at the layby on the A21 and people trespassing in the woods there, and the unpleasant activity that has gone on there. We are very pleased to report that after great pressure from the landowner and the Parish Council, the police and the Highways Agency got together and have now fenced this layby in with 895m of secure metal fencing to prevent access. We hope this puts an end to this unpleasant situation.

The Fleur de Lis: There have been licencing issues at the Fleur; however we believe that the landlord has agreed to take remedial action.

Other items

- There are instances of antisocial behaviour in the village. Please do dial 101 to report this sort of thing.
- During the year the Parish Council contributed to the purchase of a PA system, and has also committed a share of the funds to the purchase of a projector and screen which will be kept in the legion for use in the large village hall.

Finance: Councillors decided to increase the parish precept for 2018/19 to £35,000 to cover the ongoing needs of the Parish. This amounted to a 3.7% increase over 2017/18, though the precept for Leigh Parish is still the lowest of all the parishes in the Sevenoaks district. A band D property's council tax in Leigh is £38.89 per annum, and the average for Kent is £64.05.

General Data Protection Regulations: New regulations come in on 25th May which means that the Parish Council cannot hold email addresses and other personal information on people without their permission. We are looking into the regulations and taking the appropriate steps to ensure we comply.

Concluding Remarks: My thanks to all Councillors, Colin Stratton-Brown, Alan Johnston, Graham Marchant, Sue Smith, Peter Croft, Sean Satterley, Richard Britain and Brett Skipper. It is a good team with a wide range of expertise and experience; we do not always agree on all matters so there is healthy debate. Very many thanks to Councillor Peter Lake, our District and County Council representative, for his untiring efforts on behalf of the parish and his remarkable attendance record at our meetings and frequent other meetings in the parish. And finally, our key player is Louise who plays such a tireless role ensuring the smooth running of the Parish Council, working many more hours than her agreement provides for and relentlessly pursuing issues on behalf of us all. Thank you Louise, we all appreciate your hard work and extensive professional knowledge.

7. Report by County and District Cllr Peter Lake

County and District Cllr Lake reported as follows:

"We have all received an illustrative handout with our Council tax demand from Sevenoaks District Council showing how every £1 we pay is shared with our local authorities, Kent Police and our Kent Fire and Rescue service.

70p in the £1 goes to Kent County Council, to be spent on roads and pavements, schools, social services, libraries and public transport. In my view this list hardly scratches the surface and tells so little about what KCC really gets up to on our behalf, so let's look at the real headings.

- Under the Schools heading let's include children with specialist services, covering children's centres, parenting skills and health. KCC provides Primary, Secondary, College and sixth form education. It's a massive undertaking and just to illustrate 20,731 applications were received this year for secondary schools alone. The range of services includes Special Schools, free school meals and transport to school.
- Under Roads and Pavements, Kent Highway Services is responsible for all our roads and bridges in Kent with the exception of our motorways and the A21 which come under Highways England. Trying to keep our roads in good order is an almost impossible task, with a limited budget, especially at this time of year. KCC is also responsible for road safety, issuing blue badges and for disabled parking. It has been calculated that we need nearly £ 600m to bring our roads up to a satisfactory standard.
- Under Social Services we include Public Health, fostering and adoption, young asylum seekers (1400 in our care in Kent). In Adult Services we provide for specialist housing and care homes. Working closely with the NHS we offer integrated care to get the elderly out of hospital and then to care for them in their own homes.
- Under libraries there is so much more in the Leisure and Community portfolio but obviously libraries play a vital role for the Community. In this section the list includes Broadband, Country Parks, Kent's History and Heritage, grants to the community, volunteering, Trading Standards and consumer protection. We also list Births and Deaths, Weddings and Civil Partnerships and Citizenship Ceremonies.
- Under Public Transport we provide subsidised bus services to care for isolated communities. More than £40m of bus-related business is commissioned by Kent County Council. We have a duty to maintain services, to improve rural access, but also to deliver at a lower cost. I understand that we are shortly to consult with Parish Councils, commercial and community transport providers and technology providers to explore new ways to replace our conventional subsidised bus services but to offer greater access for rural residents.

There is so much more to tell you, but I will finish for now. I just want to thank the members of Leigh Parish Council for all their efforts of our behalf. I also want to thank Louise, our Parish clerk, who puts in so much time looking after our parish.”

8. Report by Leigh Football Club

David Furneaux reported that Leigh Football Club has now joined the Sevenoaks district league. The club used to belong to the Tonbridge league which had to close as it became unviable. The club is in division one, at second position now, and has played 30 games this year. The club is in a fragile position and it is at times a struggle to get a team together. New players are sought. The football pitch is fantastic now after the drainage works and all the home games this year were played on The Green, which is great as previously home games had to be played in Edenbridge.

9. Matters for reporting and diary dates

None.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm.

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Leigh Parish Council Finance Report for year 2017-2018

The Parish Council's financial year runs from 1st April until 31st March. The precept for the year 2017-18 was £31,500. This sum, which is generated from residents' Council Tax, is paid to the Parish Council by Sevenoaks District Council. The precept for 2018-19 has been increased to £35,000. 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	£561.70
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	£88.50
Information Commissioner's Office	£35.00

Grants have been awarded as follows:

Leigh PCC – contribution towards The Leigh Directory	£300.00
Leigh Primary School – book tokens as competition prize	£30.00
Leigh Primary School – contribution towards ipads	£1,000.00
Leigh Scouts – purchase of a portable PA system	£525.00
Leigh Tennis Club - contribution towards coaching school pupils	£875.00

Below is a summary of the Parish Council's Income and Expenditure for the year 2017-18:

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Precept	31,500.00	Salaries	8,626.93
SDC: Community Infrastructure Levy	23,562.50	PAYE	3,316.09
APD rental	10,730.00	Pension contribution	3,458.98
Wayleave	7.30	Mileage and petty cash	921.15
Interest on Investments	63.41	Stationery	43.96
		Telephone/Broadband	302.14
		Office Expenses	954.52
		Website	145.00
		Insurance	1,192.27
		Audit/Accountancy	300.00
		Chairman's Expenses	83.48
		Subscriptions	912.20
		Hall Hire	140.00
		Repairs & Maintenance	584.30
		Village Green	35,807.12
		Litter / dog bins	2,017.61
		Grants	2,730.00
		APD	469.70
		Family Fun Play Scheme	512.21
		Aviation	69.75
		Defibrillators	1,448.48
		Verges	816.97
		Courses	540.00
	65,863.21		65,392.86
		Surplus of Income / Expenditure	470.35
		Transfers to reserves: APD:	2,000.00
		Election expenses:	300.00
		Planning contingency:	500.00
		General contingency:	500.00
		Community Infrastructure Levy:	23,562.50
		Surplus after transfers to reserves	-26,392.15
		Balance at year-end	<u>51,161.58</u>