

## LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2015 AT 8.00PM

---

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

#### Open Session

##### Report by District Cllr Lake

D.Cllr Lake reported that the state of the road signs around the village is a disgrace and in some cases downright dangerous. It only takes a little cleaning and cutting back of the vegetation to put things right. D.Cllr Lake was not impressed by KCC's offer of a ton bag of salt and sand for the winter as the sand makes such a mess, and it is SDC's responsibility to clear the sand away from the roads. Residents are concerned about speeding traffic through Leigh and D.Cllr Lake hopes that KCC can come to the rescue with innovative traffic calming measures as they have very successfully elsewhere in Kent. D.Cllr Lake reported that he attended the meeting of the High Weald Councils Aviation Action Group last week, and said that he is hugely impressed with the efforts being made on our behalf to reduce both noise and air pollution by planes flying over us on the westerly approach to Gatwick. At meetings of SDC, D.Cllr Lake has heard that broadband plans are on track to provide superfast broadband access to 91% of homes by the end of this year. They are forgetting that 9% have little or no broadband access at all especially in the north of the ward. He has attended lectures on counter-terrorism and the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. This is designed to stop individuals or groups committing anti-social behaviour in a public space. Restrictions and requirements can be set by SDC after consultation with the Police, and a breach is a criminal offence. Finally, D.Cllr Lake raised the correspondence from Paul Dadswell, a planning officer at SDC, about the installation of a flue at Elvanin in Lower Green. D.Cllr Lake said that he felt that the argument in favour was very difficult to demolish so he gave his support against the wishes of the Parish Council and he has apologised to members for doing so.

##### Questions from Members of the Public

1. Mr Chris Rowley asked that the Parish Council inform KCC Highways that lines need to be re-painted on the road at the junction of Rings Hill and the triangle leading to Leigh on the Hildenborough Road. Clerk to report. Cllr Doherty said that there has already been an accident there.
2. Mr Rowley was concerned that the Parish Council may be considering work to the veteran oak tree on The Green which may not be absolutely necessary. The crack in the tree is the same as it's always been. Mr Rowley said that he hopes that the Parish Council will not prevent car parking on the road in front of Barden Cottages.
3. Mr Rowley reported that there is an old tree stump at the corner of The Green Lane and The Green which, if removed, would widen the footpath and allow easier pedestrian access. Clerk and Cllr Stratton-Brown to have a look.
4. Mr Rowley asked whether the Parish Council has had an opportunity to consider his request to repair the path between The Green and the joint front gate of No.2 and No.3 Barden Cottages. It is approximately 1 yard wide and 6 yards long and made of very old black asphalt. Mr Rowley said that the path was not done properly when it was originally installed and now looks shabby and potentially dangerous. Mr Rowley said that he and Tigger Boyne are happy to undertake the work and cover all costs required, but requested the Parish Council's approval. Members agreed but asked that Mr Rowley discuss the details with Cllr Marchant so that the work is in keeping with the area.

## **Closed Session**

77. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Marchant, Cllr Smith and Cllr Swallow and members accepted their reasons for absence. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr Pearman.
78. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**  
None.
79. **The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Stratton-Brown, seconded by Cllr Provan, and all were in favour.

Cllr Stratton-Brown asked members to discuss the following item next as it is of interest to members of the public present. Members agreed.

### **81. Highways & Environment**

- vii. To consider request for traffic calming measures in the High Street, Leigh  
Cllr Doherty reported that two residents have written to the Parish Council asking for members to consider traffic calming measures in the High Street. Cllr Doherty felt that this is important as the village is particularly busy at school drop-off and pick-up times and the speed of vehicles and behaviour of drivers at that time is worrying. Cars are left parked on the pavements, which creates a safety hazard for pedestrians. Clerk to investigate costs and timescale of an independent traffic survey. Cllr Doherty also asked that the Parish Council press KCC for the permissive path at Paul's Hill, and offered to help push this forward. Cllr Stratton-Brown agreed, and said that residents should phone the Police if they witness people parking on the pavements, or and also suggested that SDC be asked to allow refuse sacks to be picked up just inside residents' gardens, so that they don't have to be left on the pavement, thus narrowing pedestrian access. Cllr Stratton-Brown said that speed bumps were considered before but were felt to create too much noise for residents and he said that he would be interested to hear reports from residents who live near speed bumps in other areas. Cllr Doherty asked that a request be made to KCC to reduce the speed from 30mph to 20mph around The Green and in the High Street, particularly near the school. Cllr Johnston was concerned about lack of enforcement. It was agreed to discuss this further with the Police and KCC and, in the meantime, to seek a quote from an independent traffic surveyor. Clerk to mention in the parish magazine and seek comments from residents.

### **80. Planning**

- i. To consider applications received
- i. SE/15/02580/LDCEX: The Granary, Moorden Farm, Moorden Lane, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JD: change of use of building and ancillary land to a single dwelling. Members had no comment to make on this application as SDC will be able to make the decision on the legality of this application.
- ii. SE/15/02951/HOUSE: 1 Home Farm Close, Leigh TN11 8SB: single storey infill to rear, installation of rooflight. Members supported this application.
- iii. SE/15/02920/HOUSE: 1 Hollow Trees Close, Leigh TN11 8Q: erection of single storey side extension. Cllr Doherty read the applicant's letter to members. It was agreed to support this application subject to SDC's tree officer being satisfied that the trees at the site will not be adversely affected.
- ii. SE/15/02762/LDCPR: Lanterncroft, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh, Kent TN11 8QE: loft conversion to habitable space with new side facing dormer, installation of rooflights and Juliet balcony to front elevation. Cllr Kaye was concerned that work had commenced on this property despite the status on SDC's website being pending consideration.

- iii. To hear update regarding a S.125 notice on land at Lower Green, Leigh  
Cllr Doherty and Cllr Stratton-Brown both reported that the cars have now been removed from the site. Members agreed that this will improve the tidiness of the site and were grateful to SDC for their action.
- iv. To discuss the removal of trees on the boundary between the Tennis Courts and Hollow Trees Close  
The Clerk reported that she asked for details from SDC, but the tree report only included trees adjacent to Powder Mills Lane and Hollow Trees Drive. The Clerk has asked the planning officer again, but as yet has not received anything further. The planning approval says that: "If within a period of five years from the completion of the development, any of the trees or plants that form part of the approved details of soft landscaping die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, then they shall be replaced in the next planning season with others of similar size and species." Also "... and should as far as is reasonably practicable, show the retention and management of the hedge to the southern boundary of the site." The Clerk reported that she has spoken today to the resident who stopped the work. No further work has been carried out, but Clerk to contact Enforcement at SDC to discuss further.
- v. To consider request to use Valle Gardens as a road name on the Old Powder Mills development  
The Clerk reported that she has received an email from Bellway Homes, who wishes to propose Valle Gardens as the alternative to street name Ramhurst Gardens in the new development. Members supported this request.
- vi. Notification of planning decisions
  - SE/15/02179/FUL: Old Powder Mills, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh: erection of a single storey sales and marketing building for a temporary period of 3 years. Application approved.
  - SE/15/02306/HOUSE: Elvanin, Lower Green, Leigh - flue protruding 11cm to front elevation which serves the new gas boiler recently installed. Application approved.
  - SE/15/02382/HOUSE: Old Farm Cottage, Lealands Avenue, Leigh: demolition of conservatory and replace with a single storey extension. Application approved.

## 81. Highways & Environment

- i. to discuss drainage and flood related issues  
Lealands Avenue: Nothing to report.
- ii. To hear update regarding the request for a permissive path at Paul's Hill Cottage  
Cllr Stratton-Brown undertook to chase. Cllr Doherty offered to help.
- iii. To hear update regarding the request for a new SID on B2027 Hildenborough Road  
Cllr Stratton-Brown reported that he is endeavouring to arrange a meeting with one of KCC's Intelligent Traffic System officers.
- iv. To hear update regarding the maintenance of the pond at Crandalls  
The Clerk reported that she has chased David Boorman at SDC but does not yet have an update. Cllr Croft reported that the condition of the pond is worsening.
- v. To hear update regarding safety measures on Ensfield Road  
The Clerk reported that the following items were requested, but as yet have not been implemented: SLOW painted on the road in both directions, a triangular cycle warning sign in both directions and the reinstatement of the barrier/fence along the cycle way adjacent to Penshurst Place's land. Clerk to chase.
- vi. To hear update regarding the trees on The Green Lane  
The Clerk reported she has now received a response from Mr Hale of The Hollies. Mr Hale requests a meeting in order to agree the boundary line and then he may be prepared to accept that the land, together with the oak tree referred to, belongs to his property. If this is the case, Mr Hale will undertake the work to ensure that the tree is maintained and safe. Mr Hale says: "I also wish to discuss with the Parish Council, once the boundary has been determined, what action may need to be taken to stop cars parking along the edge of The Green Lane on what, it now seems, is land belonging to our property." Mr Silk also asks that vehicles are prevented from parking on that section of The Green Lane. Clerk and Cllr Stratton-Brown to arrange a meeting.

- vii. To consider request for traffic calming measures in the High Street, Leigh  
This item was considered earlier in the meeting (see above)
- viii. To hear update regarding the footbridge over the A21  
The Clerk reported that The Highways Agency bridge that carried the public footpath SR430 over the A21 was damaged by a vehicle in October 2013 and was declared by their bridge inspector to be unsafe hence the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order closing the footpath which was extended for another 12 months. Kent County Council have no powers to make the Highways Agency replace the bridge any quicker. The Clerk added that she previously contacted the Highways Agency who said that they are re-designing the bridge, funds have been earmarked and it is hoped that the bridge will be re-built before the end of March 2016. Cllr Kaye said that he believed that the work was scheduled for January 2016.
- ix. To consider request for trees to be cut back on the path from Well Close to Kiln Lane  
The Clerk reported that, following a second letter, she has had a conversation with Mrs Verduo who confirmed that she is part owner of the Kiln Lane Association. She reiterated that she is not in a financial position to carry out the tree works and also her house is on the market so she will sell her share in the association to the new owner. She said that she doubts that the trees will fall before she moves, so she will not be carrying out the work. She believes that Sandy Marchant, the other owner, retained his share in the association rather than sell it onto the new owner when he sold his house. Clerk to contact Mr Marchant, but members were concerned that Mrs Verduo was unwilling to take this matter further at the current time as she retains the liability whilst she is part-owner of the association.
- x. to consider applications for tree works  
None.

## 82. The Green

- i. To consider the consultant's report on the Veteran Oak  
Recommendations:
  1. Reduce crown in height by approximately 1.5-2m and lateral spread to the north, east and south also by approximately 1.5-2m using drop crotching back to suitable secondary growth points.
  2. Reduce lateral spread of crown to the west by between 2-3m to maintain balance using drop crotching back to suitable secondary growth points.
  3. Remove deadwood from crown
  4. During reduction works, inspect the installed cabling, report any defectiveness and make necessary adjustments.
  5. Install a guying system
  6. Access beneath the tree should be discouraged:
    - i. Remove all furniture, such as benches and bins located within 15m of tree
    - ii. Install a fence or lay arisings from the crown reduction works at the boundary of The Green and the road and, in addition, plant a hedge of specimens with sharp foliage amongst fence or arisings.
    - iii. Lay arisings from crown reduction work to form a crescent on The Green with a diameter of approximately 15m and plant a hedge of specimens with sharp foliage amongst fence or arisings.
    - iv. Prevent parking of cars beneath crown of tree.
  7. Carry out these works within 3 months.
  8. The tree will require annual inspections during late summer to re-assess risk and monitor health and condition.

Members agreed to seek quotes from three companies for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6(ii and iii: arisings not fence). Members requested more details about the guying system specified in item 5. Members agreed that car parking should not be allowed on The Green but parking would be allowed in front of Barden Cottages, item 6(iv).

Bartletts Consulting also recommended the following treatments:

1. Take soil samples in the root zone and carry out laboratory testing to establish macro and micro-nutrient levels.

2. Soil amelioration, including biochar to the root-zone out to the drip-line to balance the nutrient levels in order to improve conditions for the tree to thrive.
3. Apply phosphites to the soil to promote strong root growth to counteract the effect of the decay pathogen.
4. Install a mulch crescent 50-100mm thick out to the drip-line of the reduced crown, to retain moisture, reduce competition and to in time promote de-compaction of the underlying soil.

Members agreed to seek quotes from three companies for item 1 above. Regarding item 4, members asked whether the arisings would be sufficient or would mulch be required as well.

Cllr Provan asked if there was any mention in the report about potential damage if children climb inside the tree and, whilst she did not wish to curtail the children's enjoyment of the tree, she was concerned that this could give additional stress to the tree and damage it further. Members agreed that their responsibility was to protect residents and, therefore, agreed that Cllr Croft should block the hole at the base of the tree from the inside to stop children accessing the inside of the tree. Members agreed that Cllr Croft should also move the bench and litter bin from under the canopy of the tree.

Members asked the Clerk to obtain quotes, and obtain the necessary permissions from SDC, for raising the crowns of the other oak trees on The Green, also the oak tree in Charcott.

ii. To consider action required relating to the increase in parking on The Green

The Clerk reported that she has investigated byelaws. They should only be used if there is no relevant statutory legislation in place, also they should only be used if the police agree to enforce them. The Parish Council should carefully consider how they will secure evidence of a breach of the byelaw. NALC say that the police are often reluctant to prosecute the breach of a byelaw, due to the difficulty in securing evidence, the Parish Council would require witnesses who would be prepared to give evidence in court. The byelaw would require approval by the Department of Communities and Local Government, and the intention to apply for the byelaw must be advertised in one or more local newspapers. There could be a public inquiry before the byelaw is confirmed by the Secretary of State. Cllr Stratton-Brown said that the law allows cars to be parked on a Village Green for recreational purposes up to 15 yards from the edge, unless there is a byelaw in place to the contrary. Drivers who cause damage by vehicles to Village Greens can be prosecuted. Members agreed that this matter should be raised with the Football Club and the Cricket Club and both clubs should dissuade parking on The Green. Clerk to discuss with Cllr Swallow. In addition, polite signs could be erected asking people not to park on The Green and notices could be left on vehicles that are parked on The Green. Cllr Johnston did not support more signs on The Green. The Clerk advised that if a byelaw is enacted, then that would require signs to be placed around The Green. Members were not supportive of posts to prevent access onto The Green. Members agreed to consider further next month.

**83. Leigh Flood Warning Area**

i. To consider whether it is necessary to appoint a Flood Warden

Members did not wish to appoint a Flood Warden.

ii. To consider how the Parish Council and community are notified in the event of a significant flood event

Members agreed that an email should be sent to the Clerk and all members of the Parish Council in the event of a significant flood event, which would allow the notification to be widely circulated.

**84. Aviation**

i. To hear report of the High Weald Councils Aviation Action Group

The Clerk reported that a leaflet has been circulated with the October parish magazine to encourage residents to continue to complain about aviation noise. The Clerk added that HWCAAG and GON are both making advances in the campaign as meetings have been held with senior members of the CAA, NATS, DfT and Gatwick Airport Ltd.

NATS has offered to consider how respite routes could be introduced over this area, as opposed to one concentrated route, and GAL has offered to pay for half of this investigative work. Both NATS and GAL are keen to work with the parishes in order to find a solution. Cllr Doherty thanked Cllr Stratton-Brown, Cllr Smith and Mr Ian Harris for all their hard work on aviation issues for Leigh parish.

**85. To consider affordable housing provision in the parish**

Members agreed to defer this item until the December Parish Council meeting.

**86. To consider details for event on the Penshurst Airfield with 653 Squadron on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

The Clerk reported that she received an email from Nathan Torbett: "The main details so far are that it will hopefully be on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> of January, we would be looking at bringing at least one aircraft to land on the site of the old airfield. We would also look to come down and check out the site before we finish for Christmas. Once we have the field owner, we can work up the documents to allow us to land there and all other associated planning." The Clerk has suggested that Nathan contacts The Redleaf Trust, c/o Lambert & Foster.

**87. Village Halls update**

None.

**88. Aged Persons Dwellings: to discuss and approve quote for repair to gutters and paths**

The Clerk reported that Brisk Builders have quoted £480 to overhaul the gutters and downpipes on the two bungalows, to break out and fill where necessary with concrete the cracks in the two bungalow paths. Members felt that this was rather expensive, but Cllr Stratton-Brown was keen to get the work done before the winter. Cllr Stratton-Brown proposed that the quote be accepted and the work carried out as soon as possible, this was seconded by Cllr Doherty and all were in favour.

**89. To hear update regarding discussions with Leigh Primary School's Governing Body**

None.

**90. To hear update regarding the verge cutting contract for 2015**

The third and final cut this year will be done in mid-October.

**91. To hear report of the Summer Family Fun Play Event on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> August**

The Clerk reported that the event statistics have now been received and 97 children registered on the day at Leigh and 60 adults, totalling 157. One event at Sevenoaks and one event at Edenbridge topped this total, but otherwise Leigh had the third highest attendance level across all the fun days. Members were delighted with this level of attendance.

**92. To report on correspondence received**

The Clerk reported that lists of correspondence received have been circulated, and drew members' attention to the following:

- i. Item 3: SDC News Release: SDC is set to issue Penalty Charge Notices to drivers who park across dropped kerbs outside residents' homes. The Council already carries out enforcement action against drivers who park across dropped kerbs at junctions that are intended to make it easier for parents with pushchairs, mobility scooters and wheelchair users to cross the road. SDC is now extending this enforcement to include residential dropped kerbs.
- ii. Item 4: Email from Julian Cooke, KCC: "KCC are again offering Parishes the chance to have a 1 ton salt/salt Bag to be delivered for the winter. There is no charge for this service." Members did not want to order a bag this year.
- iii. Item 5: KALC: (i) Chairmanship: a workshop and training module afternoon. Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1pm to 4pm. Two ninety minute training modules and workshops that will cover Chaining a Meeting and Professional Conduct. Price £72.00 inc VAT (ii) Finance Conference: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 9.30am to 4.30pm at Kings Hill Community Centre, 70 Gibson Drive, Kings Hill ME19 4LG. Cost £72.00 inc. VAT.

- (iii) Councillors Information Day: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 9.30am to 4.30pm at Teynham Village Hall, Belle Friday close, Teynham, Sittingbourne. ME9 9TU. Price £72.00 inc VAT
- iv. Item 6: Details of grant opportunity: The Power to Change – this is a new, independent charitable trust, set up with a £150 million endowment from the Big Lottery Fund. Grants of between £50,000 and £500,000 are available to help existing community businesses that are in a position to significantly improve their long term sustainability within the next six months.
- v. Item 7: Kent Police – Police Control Strategy.
- vi. Item 8: Clive Pearman re: Kent County Council Review: “KCC has been informed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England’s of a decision at their recent meeting to carry out a further round of limited consultation in Sevenoaks. The Commission have made their decision for the other 11 districts and will consider the outcome of the further consultation in Sevenoaks at their December meeting and the final recommendations for Kent will now be published in January 2016.”
- vii. Item 9: SDC: Call for Sites: “Further to the adoption of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) earlier this year, SDC has begun work on preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2015-35. An important part of the evidence base is to establish the amount of land in the District that is available and suitable for new housing to meet all accommodation needs, employment and retail uses, beginning with a call for sites. Local residents, landowners, developers, businesses and other interested parties are invited to put forward to the District Council sites for development within Sevenoaks District that may be suitable for future development and inclusion in the new Local Plan. The call for sites does not determine if a site should be allocated for development. It is a technical exercise aimed at identifying potential sites for development. All submitted sites will be assessed in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the Economic Land Availability Assessment (ELAA), and these documents will be used to inform the selection of suitable sites to be taken forward in the Local Plan.”
- viii. Item 13: SDC News Release: “SDC is set to take a major step to becoming the first local authority in the country to become financially self-sufficient by no longer relying on government to fund its services.”
- ix. Item 18: Email from Ian Finch, Head of Direct Services at SDC, advising that they will reinstate the pavement where the light bollard was positioned between Powder Mills and Hunter Seal.
- x. Item 19: Email from David Sellicks to say that he has received an email from Talk Talk to say that they do not object to David and his neighbours carrying out the work to the tree, providing that KCC do not object.
- xi. Item 20: Clive Pearman – monthly report for August and September. Copied to all members.

**93. Finance:**

- i. To approve membership renewal to GACC: £10  
Members approved this expenditure.
- ii. To approve payment of cheques  
Cllr Johnston proposed that the list of cheques be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Doherty and all were in favour.

**94. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda**

Cllr Stratton-Brown suggested that an SDC planning officer be invited to the December Parish Council meeting in order to give a planning briefing on procedures, what are valid planning issues and what are not, what are the effects of and limitations of the Green Belt, the conservation area and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and what are the limitations of listing including the effect on the curtilage of listing buildings. Clerk to speak to SDC. Meeting to commence early if necessary.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

**LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL  
LIST OF CHEQUES  
5<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Cheque</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Detail of payment</b>	<b>Amount Inc. VAT</b>	<b>VAT</b>
05.10.15	1630	Clerk	Salary	£578.60	
05.10.15	1631	HMRC	PAYE	£161.50	
05.10.15	1632	Clerk	Mileage, petty cash & office expenses	£99.66	£4.25
05.10.15	1633	KCC	Pension contribution	£215.42	
05.10.15	1634	The F.A.Bartlett Tree Expert Co Ltd	Consultants report of Veteran Oak	£564.00	£84.00
05.10.15	1635	SDC	Emptying dog bins July-September	£418.08	£69.68
05.10.15	1636	SDC	Share cost Code Conduct event	£15.00	
05.10.15	1637	GACC	Membership renewal	£10.00	
05.10.15	1638	British Gas Services Ltd	Install carbon monoxide detector in No.1	£29.99	£5.00
05.10.15	1639	Peter Croft Garden Services	Mowing	£220.00	
				<b><u>£2,312.25</u></b>	<b><u>£162.93</u></b>