

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM MONDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2021 AT 8.00PM

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr R. Britain, Cllr P. Croft, Cllr R. Lake, Cllr G. Marchant, Cllr G. Rogers, Cllr S. Satterley, Cllr B. Skipper and Cllr S. Smith

APOLOGIES: District Cllr Osborne-Jackson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). County Cllr Lake attended the meeting for the Open Session only, and members of the public attended for part of the meeting

As previously agreed, the meeting was recorded.

Open Session

Report by County Cllr Lake

County Cllr Lake reported as follows:

1. KCC will discuss the 2021/22 budget next Thursday, and he is determined to ensure that the increase is not higher than 5%, which represents a 3% increase in council budget plus a 2% increase for social care. The view of KCC members is that central government should decide how the elderly are cared for rather than ask the county councils to pay for adult services.
2. The speed of vehicles through all the villages in the area is a concern. Large lorries travel very fast on rural roads which causes safety issues. KCC has a new road strategy called Vision Zero, which aims for zero, or as close as possible, fatalities on Kent's roads each year by 2050. To achieve Vision Zero, KCC propose adopting the 'Safe Systems' approach, which is rooted in the belief that every traffic death reflects a failure in the system, and that none are acceptable. The first part of the strategy runs to 2026 and C.Cllr Lake said that he thinks that speed limits should be the first step. Michael Payne, the Cabinet member for Highways and Transportation, has recently responded to a Leigh resident about the speed of traffic on the B2027 and suggested that the resident contact the Parish Council for them to consider putting this on the Highways Improvement Plan. Weald Parish Council has arranged for speed and traffic surveys on some of their roads and have pledged £30,000 towards costs associated with a speed reduction. Cllr Kaye thanked C.Cllr Lake for all his help and support with regards to the speed of vehicles on the B2027 and said that the Parish Council will continue to encourage people to email Michael Payne if they feel that the speed limit is too high. Cllr Lake said that Charcott residents are concerned about speeding on Camp Hill, which will be discussed later in the meeting.
3. KCC has had many more drainage enquiries than normal and enquiries are therefore taking longer to be investigated. There appears to be some improvement in the drainage in the High Street but there is a lot of surface water on Penshurst Road. The Clerk reported that she has reported the Penshurst Road issues.

The Clerk advised that KCC has refused to supply and erect deer warning signs in the parish, which they believe are not safety critical, but they said that if the Parish Council would be able to fund the signs, then this could be added to the Leigh Highways Improvement Plan. C.Cllr Lake said that he did not feel that the Parish Council should have to pay for these signs and he said he would see if Mike Paynton can fund them.

County Cllr Lake left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Report by District Cllr Osborne-Jackson

None as District Cllr Osborne-Jackson is on compassionate leave.

Questions from members of the public

A resident reported that the work undertaken by KCC to the drainage on Coppings Road has improved the situation. There was flooding this weekend at the Wickhurst end, but the surface water receded quickly so the situation is much improved. He also reported that people were swimming in the river at the Ensfield Road bridge yesterday.

Closed Session

132. Apologies for absence

District Cllr Osborne-Jackson had apologised for absence, as he is on compassionate leave.

133. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed

Cllr Croft declared a DPI on item 136(iii) as he has provided the quote for the bench repair, and a DPI on item 143(vi) as he has a payment to be approved.

134. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 4th January 2021 were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Skipper, seconded by Cllr Satterley, and all were in favour.

135. Planning

i. To consider applications received

i. SE/20/03760/LBCALT: The Coach House, Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 9AS - upgrade and replace old fittings to main bedroom and en-suite bathroom. No structural alterations. Members had no comment to make on this application.

The Clerk reported that the Planning Committee submitted the following comments to applications since the last Parish Council meeting:

ii. SE/20/03665/LDCPR: 1 Burton Avenue, Leigh TN11 9FB - loft conversion. Members had no objection to this application.

iii. SE/20/03722/LBCALT: The Old Lodge, Hall Place, High Street, Leigh TN11 8RP - internal and external alterations to enlarge ground floor kitchen area and reposition bathroom. Members had no objection to this application, providing the Conservation Officer is in agreement.

ii. To report SDC planning application decisions

- SE/20/02463/FUL: Leigh Flood Storage Area, River Medway - proposed flood mitigation improvements to facilitate the Leigh Flood Storage Area expansion scheme. Improvements to Leigh and Cattle Arch embankments to include: partial raising of embankments; installation of 300mm high wave return wall; creation of pumping station platform area; erection of new fencing and gates and other associated works that include culvert, eel pass, temporary access and compound areas. Application approved.

- SE/20/03425/MMA and SE/20/03426/MMA: 14 Home Farm Close, Leigh: minor material amendment to 20/02078/HOUSE and SE/20/02079/LBCALT - to increase the width of the extension by 250mm to become a party wall with the neighbouring site no.12 Home Farm Close Applications approved.

136. The Green

i. To discuss the proposal to erect a fence or spaced posts around The Green in order to prevent unauthorised encampments

Cllr Kaye reported that he has prepared a paper setting out all the facts relating to unauthorised incursions which the Clerk sent to all members. There is also a spreadsheet showing all the comments received from residents. There were 29 in favour of a proposal to erect a fence or spaced posts around The Green, 36 against this proposal and 2 who gave comments but were neither in favour nor against the proposal. This represents less than 10% of the number of households in the parish. Many thanks to all the residents who took the time to respond, there were some thoughtful comments and interesting points raised both in favour and against the proposal. The Green was gifted to the Parish Council on Christmas Eve in 1947 by the Hope Morley family. The other area of The Green, in front of Porcupine House, was gifted in the 1970's again by the Hope Morley family. The land is registered Village Green and is protected by statutes; it is a public nuisance to fence a registered village green and vehicles are not allowed to park on or be driven over it. The land is owned by the Parish Council and responsibilities and financial liabilities are therefore the Parish Council's, not SDC's as some residents were led to believe. The Home Secretary is hoping to increase the strength of the Police to enable the eviction of travellers from private or public land, which would be a benefit to Town and Parish Councils.

Emails from three Town and Parish Councils have been received, and these are set out on the paper. It is clear that the experience of unauthorised encampments is unpleasant.

Cllr Kaye suggested that the Parish Council do not build a fence or erect spaced posts at this time but build a reserve in order to fund any costs associated with unauthorised encampments that may occur in future. The Finance Committee recommended that £4,500 is placed in a reserve in this financial year, and the reserve to be built up in the coming years. The Parish Council should also prepare an action plan in the event of an incursion and also investigate legislation relating to registered village greens. The developments around the possible new Police powers will be closely followed. A note should be put in the parish magazine thanking residents for their comments and setting out what the Parish Council intends to do.

Cllr Skipper thanked Cllr Kaye for preparing such a useful paper and supported Cllr Kaye's recommendations. He felt that a bigger response from the public should be received before the Parish Council undertakes a proposal such as fencing or erecting posts around The Green. These comments were reiterated by Cllr Satterley who supported the creation of a new earmarked reserve to fund any costs caused by an incursion. Cllr Smith agreed that the paper was very well put together and the Parish Council should not make a hasty decision to erect a fence or spaced posts around The Green. Cllr Lake said that he felt that a fence would take away the beauty of the open space and agreed that money should be put in a reserve. Cllr Britain said that the legislation stating that it is a public nuisance relates to a fence on a registered village green, not spaced posts.

Members were unanimously in favour not to erect a fence or spaced posts around The Green at this time but to build a reserve to fund any costs associated with an unauthorised incursion.

Members of the public left the meeting at 8.55pm.

- ii. To discuss future maintenance of The Green
It was agreed that the Clerk would talk to Landscape Services and see if a zoom meeting could be arranged with Landscape Services and Ian Bishop to push this forward.
- iii. To discuss quote for the repair of the bench on The Green in front of Porcupine House
The Clerk reported that Peter Croft has quoted £340 to replace the slats in hardwood. Members approved the quote. Cllr Kaye said that a memorial bench on The Green needs repairing too. Peter Croft undertook to look at that bench and prepare a price for repair.
- iv. To discuss request to use The Green as the starting point for Nordic walks and training
The Clerk reported that a lady who lives in Bidborough has asked if she can use The Green to meet people who she will take off on a Nordic style walk, after some stretching exercises, then back to The Green for cooling down. The use would be once or twice a week from March. Members were concerned about the lack of parking around The Green. It was agreed that there could be a trial period to see how the proposal works at times that avoid school drop off and pick up times.
- v. Leigh in Bloom
The Clerk reported that the Leigh in Bloom team has asked for the Parish Council's permission to attach an acrylic covered copy of the Village in Bloom silver gilt certificate to the post of the village sign. Members agreed.

137. Highways

- i. To discuss a Leigh Highways Improvement Plan
Members agreed to put the deer warning signs and the speed reduction on the B2027 on the Leigh Highways Improvement Plan.
- ii. To hear update regarding the speed of vehicles along the B2027
Members agreed that this should be added to the Leigh Highways Improvement Plan, with the understanding that the Parish Council may have to contribute funding.
- iii. Highway faults
 - i. The Clerk advised that she has reported the drainage issues on both Penshurst Road and the Compasses.

- ii. Cllr Marchant said that the manhole covers are becoming dangerous on Penshurst Road.
- ii. Cllr Marchant reported that privately owned gullies at Garden Cottages and Hollow Trees Drive are blocked and KCC needs to ensure that these are unblocked by the landowner.
- iii. Cllr Britain reported that the flooding issues at the railway bridge on Ensfield Road are much improved.
- iv. Cllr Lake reported that both the junctions to Charcott from Camp Hill badly flood. Clerk to report again.

138. To hear update regarding the Leigh Volunteers and the Leigh Legacy project

Cllr Rogers reported that the volunteers are quietly working, they each have their own network of people in need and people to help. Castle Cars are willing to transport people to Tonbridge for their vaccinations, and due to grant funding they are currently not charging people for this service. The food bank in the church porch continues to collect food donations for local people. Residents have been very responsive to requests for help. Cllr Rogers said that the Leigh Legacy project is currently on hold due to lockdown restrictions but the website will be live in due course.

139. Rights of Way

- i. To hear update regarding the application to divert SR427 to join SR426 between Killick's Bank Cottage and Ensfield Road
The Clerk reported that she is still waiting for the required information from the Penshurst Estate.
- ii. To discuss ROW notices erected in the parish
Cllr Kaye reported that a Notice of Landowner Deposit Statement under s.31(6) of the Highways Act 1980 and/or s. 15A(1) of the Commons Act 2006 has been erected on the footpath by the water meadows. This allows landowners to protect their land against the establishment of any further public rights of way and/or the registration of the land as a village green. It was agreed that this is a national issue triggered by lockdown and many more walkers are using the public rights of way network. Unfortunately walkers are not always sticking to the paths, which are getting very muddy, and crops are being ruined.

140. Charcott

- i. To discuss the possible erection of a bus shelter on Camp Hill and associated costs
Cllr Lake reported that feedback from the Charcott facebook group is that the bus stop is used but would be used more if there were speed restrictions on Camp Hill. Clerk to ask the bus company for details of usage and it was agreed to wait and see if the KCC grant funding scheme for bus shelters will run in the next financial year.
- ii. Request for speed reduction on Camp Hill
Cllr Lake reported that residents are seeking a speed reduction on Camp Hill. The Clerk advised that Camp Hill is partly Leigh parish and partly Chiddingstone parish. Chiddingstone Parish Council is currently working with KCC to reduce the speed through Chiddingstone Causeway. If successful, a speed reduction could be sought on Camp Hill. Members agreed and were happy to work with Chiddingstone Parish Council on this issue.

141. To discuss correspondence received

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

- i. Item 2: GACC: The next meeting of Gatwick's Consultative Committee, GATCOM, was held on 21st January. GACC raised the following issues:
 1. Night Flights - there is no reason to roll over the current night flight restrictions for a further two years and night flights at Gatwick should be banned.
 2. Noise Action Plan - following the review of Gatwick's slow progress in delivering its Noise Action Plan commitments GACC sought to agree a deadline by which Noise Action Plan activity should be brought up to date or the deficiencies referred to government for regulatory action.
 3. Gatwick should build back better and this should be properly addressed by GATCOM.

4. The new Noise Management Board's progress to date has been excessively slow and its draft work programme largely fails to accommodate the views of community, environmental groups and councils.
- ii. Item 3: KALC events:
- Using Facebook to Enhance your Councils Communications, 11th February at 10am
 - The Dynamic Councillor, 23rd February at 10am
 - Delivering the Green Agenda for Local Councils, 2nd March at 10am
 - Beyond Facebook – Making the most of the other Social Media Platforms, 11th March at 2pm
- iii. Item 4: GACC: Parish Councils' briefing on Gatwick Issues: "The skies around Gatwick and nationally are still quiet, but traffic levels are expected to start to increase rapidly as quarantine arrangements ease and the vaccine programme gets underway. GACC has been exceptionally busy on a range of local and national aviation issues over the summer, autumn and so far through winter. These include liaising with government on Gatwick's growth proposals, contributing to national campaigns on night flights and climate change, engaging with GATCOM, the airport's statutory consultative committee, on ways to build Gatwick back better and inputting to the Noise Management Board's work plan. Local Council input and support is essential if we are to have the best chance of protecting our communities from the adverse environmental impacts of Gatwick's operations. We must also consider promoting the need for investment which increases the diversity and resilience of the region's economy and helps create jobs that are genuinely sustainable." A briefing for local councils on key initiatives, particularly night flights and the airport's growth plans, was held on 28th January. Cllr Kaye and the Clerk attended. GACC will prepare a draft response to object to the extension of the current night flight restrictions for a further two years. Members agreed to object to this proposal and follow the lead of GACC.
- iv. Item 5: SDC re: A Kent Guide to Developing Homes in Rural Communities "We know there are not enough affordable homes to help all local people in housing need. This is especially true in our rural areas. I am therefore pleased to advise a new resource is available, which should help us deliver new affordable homes. *A Kent Guide to Developing Homes in Rural Communities – The New Rural Housing Protocol*, is being launched on Friday 19th February. Our 5 year rolling programme of surveys across all 31 Parish/Town Council areas in the District has begun and will provide the crucial evidence base to kick start the delivery of new affordable homes for local people. Sevenoaks Weald was the first Parish to be surveyed. I am delighted to report that as a result, 2 new WKHA homes were provided to meet local needs. The homes have very recently been let to Housing Register applicants from the Parish." Cllr Marchant, Cllr Britain and the Clerk to attend.
- v. Item 8: Email from District Cllr Margot McArthur: "Thank you so much for passing on Leigh Parish Council's thanks for the collection and cleansing teams and their service. It makes a real difference to hear appreciation."
- vi. Item 9: Email from the Development Agreement Project Manager at KCC to Peter Clifton at Bellway seeking a response regarding the various outstanding issues at Old Powder Mills.
- vii. Item 10: Kent Police: Egg Pie Lane, Leigh - on Saturday 23rd January around 12:00am, somebody broke into a commercial property and stole £1500 worth of copper parts.
- viii. Item 12: Kent Rail Strategy Consultation report: "The consultation on the draft Kent Rail Strategy 2021 was undertaken to provide the opportunity for a wide range of people to comment on its proposals. The background to the preparation of the strategy was the status of the current train service operator in Kent, Southeastern, and the expected imminent process to be launched by the Department for Transport for a new South Eastern concession. The draft rail strategy was prepared to provide Kent with a comprehensive, fully consulted set of proposals for rail service levels, rolling-stock and infrastructure enhancements, for this new concession, which, once an operator is appointed, is expected to serve Kent for at least the next decade. If adopted, KCC will publish the final strategy on its website." Cllr Britain reported that there is an online meeting of the Tonbridge/Redhill Steering Group tomorrow, and he suggested that he ask whether it is possible for some planters to be placed at Leigh Station, maybe maintained by Leigh in Bloom. Members agreed.
- ix. Item 13: KALC: KCC has launched a consultation on Vision Zero: The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2020/26 (see Open Session above). The consultation closes at 23:59 on 15th March 2021. See <https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/visionzero/consultationHome>.

KCC has organised two free virtual workshops provide an opportunity for Parish and Town Councils to discuss the detail of the Vision Zero Strategy. These are taking place on Zoom on:

- Wednesday 24 February – registration from 1340 and start at 1400
- Wednesday 3 March - registration from 1340 and start at 1400. The Clerk is attending this event.

- x. Item 14: Email from Leigh Ladies Choir with grant request, which will be discussed at the March Parish Council meeting.

142. To discuss nominations for the KALC Community Award Scheme 2021

Members discussed the nominations and agreed who the successful recipient will be this year. It was agreed to give flowers to the two runners-up.

143. Finance:

- i. To hear report of Finance Committee meeting held on 18th January 2021
Cllr Kaye reported that the Finance Committee met on 18th January via zoom, which was a useful meeting.
- ii. To discuss the 2020/21 Actual vs Budget and Earmarked Reserves, and the 2021/22 Budget
 - i. The Clerk reported that the Finance Committee went over the 2021/22 actual and year-end forecast accounts versus budget. The committee agreed that the accounts are on track. There is still £1,900 in the budget for grants, and applications for grants will be discussed at the March Parish Council meeting.
 - ii. The Finance Committee recommended that the draft 2021/22 draft budget be approved. Members approved the budget for 2021/22.
 - iii. Members agreed to transfer £4,500 to the General Contingency Earmarked Reserve and to rename this General Contingency including The Green. This will make this reserve £9,000 at year end. This reserve to be used for any traveller related costs on The Green.
- iii. To set the level of the 2021/22 Precept
The Clerk reported that the 2020/21 precept is £46,000. Cllr Kaye advised that Town and Parish Council precepts are currently not capped. Leigh's precept was at a very low level for a number of years and was the cheapest the district. Members agreed that it is important to continue to raise the precept as there are certain exposures that need to be addressed. The precept has a purely local benefit. Upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Cllr Skipper proposed that the precept for 2021/22 precept be increased to £48,000, this is a 6.1% increase. This was seconded by Cllr Satterley. At vote, members were unanimously in favour. Motion carried.
- iv. To discuss the repair of the John Knock and Brenda Lewis memorial bench at Leigh Village Halls
Members agreed that the bench needs replacing, Clerk to discuss with the Village Halls Management Committee. Item to be considered at the March Parish Council meeting.
- v. To approve costs to upgrade website through Vision ICT
Cllr Satterley said that the current website needs upgrading and he was satisfied that Vision ICT provide a good service. The cost of upgrade is between £1400-£1500. Members approved, Clerk to instigate upgrade as soon as possible.
- vi. To approve list of payments
Cllr Satterley proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Rogers and all were in favour. Cllr Kaye and Cllr Britain to authorise the online payments.

144. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. Cllr Marchant reported that he has discussed the proposal for a new path on The Green in front of Porcupine House. Cllr Kaye advised said he and the Clerk had brief discussion with the architect. Item to be discussed in more detail at the next Parish Council meeting.
- ii. The Clerk reported that she and Cllr Kaye went through all the items in the safe in the Large Village Hall. The Clerk has asked if the documents in the safe could be put in the Historical Society cupboard in the village hall, which is approved. Consideration to be given to scanning important documents or to purchase a fireproof box.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm

Signed

Date

**LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL
LIST OF PAYMENTS
February 2021**

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
01.02.21	314	Clerk	Salary	£860.12	
01.02.21	315	HMRC	PAYE	£346.05	
01.02.21	316	Clerk	Mileage & work from home allowance	£88.10	
01.02.21	317	KCC	Pension contribution	£458.07	
01.02.21	318	Vision ICT Ltd	parishcouncil email address hosting	£21.60	£3.60
01.02.21	319	Helen Breeze	Tenancy renewal no.1 The Bungalows	£120.00	£20.00
01.02.21	320	Leigh Tennis Club	Grant towards coaching (approved 04.01.21)	£635.00	
01.02.21	321	Peter Croft	Repayment of December payment (returned)	£211.00	
				<u>£2,739.94</u>	<u>£23.60</u>