MINUTES OF THE LEIGH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 25TH APRIL 2022 AT 8.00PM IN THE SMALL HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye, (Chairman), Cllr R. Britain, Cllr A. Holt, Cllr G. Marchant,

Cllr S. Satterley and Cllr S. Smith

APOLOGIES: CIIr P. Croft, CIIr G. Rogers and CIIr B. Williams

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk), District Cllr J. Osborne-Jackson, Mrs J. Halfhide (Head

of Leigh School), Mr T. Connell (Environment Agency Operations Manager) and

members of the public

Cllr Kaye welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. To approve Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 12th April 2021

Cllr Satterley proposed that the minutes be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Britain and all were in favour.

2. To welcome Tim Connell from the Environment Agency

Tim Connell reported as follows:

The Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme has been at the planning stage for some while. It was prompted by flooding in 2013 in Tonbridge and villages further downstream. The Leigh Flood Barrier was built in 1980 in response to an early flood event in 1968, and currently holds 5,500,000 cubic metres of flood water and is working well. The current scheme will increase the height of the flood barrier by 0.5m, which will give an increase in capacity of 25%. It will regulate flow and protect communities. Planning approval was required and was granted for the scheme. The Secretary of State's approval was also required and this application was submitted late in 2020. A number of objections were received, including some from Penshurst residents. A public inquiry was then held in the spring of 2021 and approval was granted in September 2021 following the inspector's report. Analysis has shown that there will not be increased flooding upstream in Penshurst and other areas. The contract has been awarded to Vulca7 and it is anticipated that work will commence in spring 2023. This will include raising the cattle arch and works to the pumping station to protect Leigh residents. It is anticipated that work in Leigh will be completed during 2023. The control structure will be built during the summer. All three gates will need to be modified, one each summer in the years 2023, 2024 and 2025, completing in the autumn 2025. The likely impact for Leigh residents will be some construction traffic such as plant movements and deliveries. There will be some access through Greenview Avenue. Two pumping stations off Lower Green will pump surface water from Leigh village to the flood storage area.

Q1: Is the current work on the embankment to do with the scheme?

A: The downstream face of the barrier is being strengthened in order to prevent a catastrophic failure.

Q2: What is the new fencing at the barrier?

A: This is the site compound for the main works.

Q3: Why is the capacity only going to be increased by 25%?

A: The railway embankment would be affected, and also cost. To increase the capacity further would increase the cost substantially. The current scheme will have the desired effect and the cost is acceptable.

Cllr Kaye thanked Tim very much for attending the meeting and for giving such an interesting talk.

3. To welcome Jenna Halfhide, Chair of Leigh School

Jenna Halfhide reported as follows:

Thank you for inviting me to speak and provide a short report as the new head of Leigh Primary School. Many of you will know much about the school already by knowing our families or even having been there yourselves. Much about the school is remaining the same and will sound familiar but more is changing very rapidly in response to changing society, recent nationwide challenges, our demographics and indeed our Ofsted Report.

Our school ethos is caring, sharing and learning together as a school community. We are a small split class, village community school which is passionate about delivering the best for our children academically as well as providing nurture and personal development. We pride ourselves on seeing the whole child and supporting children to feel ready to leave Leigh Primary as happy, responsible citizens, who are confident, understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy and are ready for the next stage of their education - not to mention enthusiastic learners. As we strive to support children to reach the highest of standards, within a grammar system, we do so with the knowledge that it is about more than academic data.

School development: 12 days after returning from the summer holidays in 2021, after attempting to emerge from the COVID pandemic, the school received an Ofsted Inspection which has identified areas for development which had suffered over recent unprecedented circumstances. Up until this time, the school focus had shifted to remote learning, operational management of staff absence and well-being of our pupils. The areas of focus are:

- Provision for Special Education Needs
- Early reading
- Progression in the wider curriculum

The school has worked tirelessly over the last 2 terms to make significant and rapid changes in these areas.

Implementing an SSP: SSP stands for Systematic Synthetic Phonics. It is a structured programme which teaches children the different sounds letters make and the different letters that can make a sound. This scheme is designed to teach every child to read by the end of Year 1. It has reading books designed around each stage of the teaching scheme that children read in school three times a week and at home. The scheme also supports spelling and writing development. Our KS1 and EYFS team of teachers and learning assistants have been visited by Local Authority English Advisors who have commended their cohesive implementation of the scheme and the standards attained in such a short period of time. Kingsnorth English Hub who provided some funding to support the school with the cost of the scheme has invited us to be a partner school. This means we will have a 2-year relationship working with literacy specialists to develop and embed the great strides we have made. As part of our early reading development we have refurbished and invested in sharing books for children to share with adults at home outside of our reading scheme. This was a significant investment and we are grateful for donations of funds that led to us being able to enhance reading engagement in this way.

Writing: Writing is an area the majority of schools have seen a decline in as it was a more difficult subject to teach remotely without being able to model and provide feedback to students in the same way. Our Senior Management Team are developing progression documents for writing and have Local Authority training in place to develop our curriculum further over the Summer term. This will work alongside development in the teaching of KS2 reading centred upon a core text. Wider Curriculum History, geography, computing and RE have had new schemes purchased. Our PTA funded our Ark Curriculum scheme for history and geography that has begun to be implemented this term. Purple Mash scheme of learning for computing has also been introduced and our second session of training will be this term. A Religious Education scheme has also been purchased and leaders are working on sequencing and mapping the knowledge, vocabulary and skills in this curriculum ready for use in September. The school will be teaching Science, History, Geography and Religious Education in curriculum days next year in pure cohorts. The school is working with specialists to enhance particular areas of the curriculum. Mr Thacker our PE coach has been working with leaders to develop 'learning ladders' to enhance skills teaching in physical education and secure progression through a new system for formative assessment of pupils' physical development in games. In dance we have had Cascade Dance conduct training in teaching of dance and teach sequences of lessons to our students. For PPA (planning, preparation and assessment time for teachers outside of the classroom) we have a specialist linguist teacher Madame Johnson and a musician Mrs McKenzie Jones teaching classes our schemes of work for French and Music. This has eased the workload for our teachers and pressure of having to be experts in these specialist areas. It has also provided children with an enriched curriculum to prepare them for secondary transition to the language curriculum.

Behaviour: The school implemented a new behaviour policy this year and has enhanced its approach to anti-bullying and has had West Kent services in conducting workshops to support children in their skills to build effective relationships with others. This is due to be enhanced further as one of our teaching staff is investigating a school wide approach called the 'Zones of Regulation' which help children to use tools and develop strategies for mindfulness, sensory integration, movement, thinking strategies, wellness, and healthy connection with others. The Zones of Regulation provides a common language and compassionate framework to support positive mental health and skill development for all, while serving as an inclusion strategy for diverse learners, those who have experienced trauma, and/or have specific needs in terms of social, emotional, and behavioural development.

Training: The school has invested in training across the school via the National College, Little Wandle SSP, Purple Mash, Paediatric Emergency First Aid, Specific training for Senior Leadership, Supporting SEN learners with phonics, training in assessment and delivering some of our statutory assessments and a member of our team will be completing her initial teacher training with us in June. Our Senior leaders have engaged in a plethora of training from Maths and English specialists. We are looking forward to further training in computing and coding this term, dyslexia friendly classrooms enhancement training as well as accelerating progress in writing. In September we will be launching our National Online Safety Training platform for teachers, children and importantly families and parents to help keep our children safe online. We are also due to have training to support integration of potential Ukrainian admissions. This is extensive development over 4 terms but has not been without challenge and could not have been done without the amazing team I am proud to work with at Leigh Primary, and indeed community and family support. I refer to challenge and wanted to share a little bit of the school context which is everchanging and is placing increased strain on the school as we strive to deliver a meaningful, challenging and engaging curriculum for our students.

Challenges: Covid did not vanish in September and this was still a very strong and unwelcome visitor in our school. Since September we are approaching nearly 300 days of staff absence this year which has a significant impact on school finances as well as school development. We have only been in school 133 days. In the face of this adversity, this makes the strides in school development even more significant. We have been operating in bubbles for a large part of the year, particularly in autumn, and this restricted clubs and enrichment activities as well as celebrations and PTA events. Pressures of additional funding for SEN and classroom support. Leigh is very passionate about striving to provide the best for our SEN pupils which resulted in 100% of parents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the schools gives their children the support they need to succeed. Something all staff are very proud of. However our proportions of SEN are placing increasing strain on the school resources which are not limitless and in fact are restricted. Leigh Primary School is significantly above in our percentage of children with Educational Health Care Plans and SEN with support when compared to the Kent average. The school building in in desperate need of renovation and repair, particularly with regard to its infrastructure in terms of central heating, hot water and electrics. The windows are nearing life cycle and require improvements to increase ventilation. This has been emphasised to the local authority and the projects team has been classified as urgent. The school is often asked if we receive any additional funding in relation to the age of our building. Unfortunately there is no allocation for this aside from appeals directly from schools for support. Our school is not unique in many aspects. Specifically, that all of these challenges are being faced in the context of COVID academic recovery.

Community: Community is part of our school's identity. The school is a community school and the community contribute much to the schools running, development and ethos – because frankly we work together. The community has raised funds towards projects ranging from erecting buildings such as Jessica's Hall and the music rooms – to purchasing suites of Chrome books and laptops funded by our PTA. The school receives donations from the community and the PTA has renovated two classrooms already this year. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the council for supporting the school with funding for book corners and CCTV. The latter, is set to be installed over the Summer Term to provide an additional layer of protection to all of our students. Not only funding but we appreciate the access we are provided to the church, all of the volunteers who support in school as well as the expertise within the community who support projects and have taken a role within our governing body.

Finally, although the school, like many schools, has and is experiencing great challenge, the development this year across 4 terms has been noteworthy and extraordinary. This is down to the commitment and dedication of staff, children who are working hard and community support and positivity. After our Ofsted, we did not lose students and we are currently predicted to have a full pan of 23 children. This is testament to the word of mouth and how highly the school is thought of by those who know it. In this regard our community has held the school up.

Thank you for listening and I hope this report serves to help the community understand more about school development and the context of our village school.

Q1: Why is the SEN higher at Leigh than other schools?

A: Leigh has been recommended by word of mouth, and is seen as a nurturing environment for SEN. Smaller schools are a better environment for SEN too.

Cllr Holt said that it is astonishing what the team at Leigh School do, the children are very happy and love school including playing on The Green. Thank you. Cllr Kaye thanked Jenna very much for attending the meeting and for giving such an interesting and detailed update on the school.

4. Chairman's Report of Activities in 2021/22, plus question time

Cllr Kaye reported as follows:

2021 saw Parish Council meetings return to our normal meetings here in the village hall from June, having had two years of meetings entirely on zoom. These meetings are open for everyone to attend, and attendees are always welcome. So, please, if you have any concerns please do come to a meeting - first Monday of the month at 8pm. This note summarises a few issues that have taken up time or been causes for concern. If you would like any further details on Parish Council matters please speak to any councillor, or have a look at the comprehensive minutes on the website or on the notice boards.

Planning

This remains one of the key areas of activity, the PC of course only has an advisory role but with the help of our District Councillor James Osborne-Jackson we are able to influence planning decisions. Our Chairman of the Planning Committee continues to be Cllr Graham Marchant. Please remember neighbour comments are taken very seriously by the SDC committee. The Parish Council considered 64 applications, of which they supported 15, opposed 13, had no objection to 12 and submitted a no comment response on 24.

There are a number of applications that cause concern, we were disappointed that SDC approved the application for a horse cremation facility at Sevton Farm, Powder Mills. More recently we have been disappointed that a small garage has been converted to a house, now known as 21 Green Lane, however SDC has felt unable to stop the development as each change is ingeniously calibrated to be within the regulations.

We are well aware of the interest a local developer, Whitehall Homes, is showing in building 40 houses on the field at the end of Greenview Avenue, and we are very unhappy that they even have the proposal on their website described as "40 new build dwellings, in an affluent *villaege* (sic) near Tonbridge, Kent". (Note that the announcement date is spring 2021 so not a well maintained website.) Please rest assured that we are keeping a close eye on what is going on there and I must stress that until a planning application is submitted there is nothing for any authority to react to. Also please be aware that the PC cannot take a position on any application before it is made to avoid the risk of being seen to be acting with a closed mind – ie pre-determination of an application.

People have also drawn our attention to rumours about what they understand to be proposed planning applications. Let's be clear – if there is nothing on the SDC website then there is not an application, and there is nothing to talk about in this forum.

Roads and footpaths

Wild swimming at Ensfield Bridge continues to be an issue. We did seek to divert the footpath away from the river to follow the route of the cycle track. This was rejected as it was interpreted as a request to close a public footpath something that will only be supported if the footpath is clearly no longer used.

Our attention is frequently drawn to the speed of the roads around Leigh. We don't like it either however KCC insists that the roads leading into Leigh are not deemed to require limits because there is no history of accidents or fatalities.

We have carried out two litter picks during the last year and there are also numerous people in the village who regularly put on a high visibility jacket and go and collect litter. Thank you to all of you, it is really appreciated.

Swathe and Visibility cutting of Verges

Our Parish Council has decided, along with the other Parish Councils in our cluster, to hand the contract for verge cutting back to Kent County Council. We have found that the dates specified for cutting the verges this year is unworkable and takes no account of seasonal growth. However, we are pleased that KCC has committed to carry out two full verge cuts and one visibility cut, so hopefully the verges will be kept well maintained. We will take the function back on again in future years if we are not satisfied with KCC's performance.

Leigh Green and Charcott Green

We go to considerable expense to maintain the green and are grateful to those who put in the effort to keep it that way. In the past year it has been cut 21 times, spiked 3 times, rolled and verti-drained and most recently it has been reseeded. We very much hope for conditions to ensure best possible germination.

With all this in mind we are not having Shayler's funfair visit Leigh this year as we feel that the green is best used by the school and for sport activities and do not want to risk damage especially to newly seeded grass. We have been roundly condemned by a very small handful of people for this decision – I will refer back to this later.

There are some 15 benches on the green, almost all are memorial benches. We do plan to have them lightly sanded down and treated with clear Danish oil, or similar, on a rolling basis in order to preserve them.

We installed grasscrete on the corner by Jessica's Hall to try and prevent damage to the verge, which we feel the best way to protect the green.

APDs

We refurbished No 2 The Bungalows last year, which cost close to £20,000. We continue to build and hold reserves in order to maintain these two bungalows and to ensure that we keep these dwellings occupied by eligible village residents.

Affordable Housing

The Rural Housing Enabler conducted a second stage Housing Needs Survey for us which reported in January 2022. 789 forms were distributed, only those with a housing need were asked to respond. A need for 16 affordable houses was identified.

We still seek sites for affordable housing, though no new suitable sites have been identified. We are reengaging with the landowners of previously identified sites to see if any can be progressed.

Trees

The PC owns some 40 trees and has them all surveyed every year – generally they are in good condition. We are also planning to plant a tree at the junction of Well Close with Ensfield Road as part of the jubilee celebrations.

We will shortly be trimming the trees in the old burial ground and generally tidying it up so as to make this lovely quiet spot a more appealing place to visit.

Gatwick

The PC responded to the Gatwick consultation process regarding its expansion proposals. It is frustrating that Gatwick now refers to its emergency runway as the "Northern Runway" in an attempt to turn this emergency runway into a routine use runway. Please do keep an eye on this subject and be aware that Gatwick's proposals include moving the emergency runway.

This would create 18,500 car parking spaces, re-aligning roads to achieve a 70% increase in passenger numbers would be the throughput of Heathrow in 2019.

The Parish Council continues to be a member of GACC Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign, and I'd encourage everyone to join and to refer to their informative website. We are also members of the Aviation Environment Federation.

Coffee Caravan

Action with Communities in Rural Kent are sending their Coffee Caravan and Information Hub to Leigh again this summer. They will be on The Green for 2 hours one Friday a month between now and October, the dates are on your chairs. Do go and have a cup of coffee or tea and a slice of cake. This really is an excellent resource for rural areas.

Finance

The year to 31st March is now complete and a finance report is circulated tonight. The accounts were on the whole to budget. Councillors decided to increase the parish precept for 2022/23 to £50,500 to cover the ongoing needs of the Parish. This amounted to a 2.98% increase over 2021/22. The precept for Leigh Parish remains one of the lowest of all the parishes in the Sevenoaks district. A band D property's council tax in Leigh is £52.26, up from £50.75 per annum, and the average for the district is £96.61

Concluding Remarks

Two councillors quit this year, Richard Lake and Brett Skipper. Thank you to both of them for their valuable contribution. They are replaced by Amy Holt and Bruce Williams, thank you both for volunteering your time.

My thanks to all the other councillors, Graham Marchant, Sue Smith, Peter Croft, Sean Satterley, Richard Britain and Glynis Rogers.

Can I take a moment to stress that all our councillors are volunteers and give their time freely and energetically. It is very wearing to hear forceful comments from people who take no interest in the activities of this council but suddenly become enormously vocal when some issue that is to their dislike comes up. We do listen, but it is easier to listen if some positive proposals could come too – and in particular talk to us. In particular messages that are couched in terms of "we should have been consulted are utterly invalid – all matters are published in an agenda made publicly available before they are discussed and as that is the consultation process. Please make the time to come to meetings if you have a concern. [And please don't try to pull rank by saying I have lived in this village for xxx years – it's irrelevant -and anyway most people cannot compete with the 58 years of my wife's family.]

Thank you to Councillor Margot McArthur, our County Council representative, for her representation for our parish.

Thank you to James Osborne-Jackson, our District Councillor, for all his energetic work and continuous engagement with our community. I think a lot of people know James – your upbeat manner and energy are really appreciated.

And thank you very importantly to Louise, our Parish Clerk. You do a great job covering so many areas of village life. We value your work and guidance greatly and we all really appreciate all that you do and how you deal with so much on a regular basis.

Cllr Britain thanked Cllr Kaye very much for all his hard work and commitment as Chair of the Parish Council.

Q1: What is happening with the Leigh Doctor's Surgery.

A: The Tonbridge & Hildenborough Medical Group has advising that they cannot re-open yet due to ongoing Covid restrictions.

5. To present the Leigh Community Award 2022

Cllr Kaye announced that the winner of this year's Community Award is Jane Steare for her huge amount of hard work in setting up and organising Leigh in Bloom, for implementing planting projects in Leigh as part of the Love where you Live initiative. Thank you

6. Report by District Cllr James Osborne-Jackson

District Cllr Osborne-Jackson reported as follows:

I am very proud of the community spirit shown in Leigh. I am in my fourth year in office at SDC and elections will be held in May 2023. I sit on 5 committees at SDC including the Development Control Committee, and I am the Chair of the Covid 19 Response Scrutiny Working Group. The report from that working group looks favourable and will be presented to the Annual District Council meeting. I am also taking on emergency casework and planning issues for my neighbouring ward Penshurst, Fordcombe & Chiddingstone whilst there is a ward member vacancy. I have been a Governor at Leigh School since July. Jenna is a fantastic Head and the school is working very well. I am covering a lot of casework in Leigh as residents approach me in confidence for help. I attended the LGA Conference recently. I have regular meetings with Kent Police, WKHA, Southern Rail, the Leader, Chief Executive and Chief Officers of SDC. The council remains self-sufficient financially and weekly in-house waste collections continue. I work with Tom Tugendhat on some issues and County Cllr Margot McArthur on others. Many thanks to the Parish Councillors and Clerk at Leigh Parish Council, and it has been an honour to serve you as your district representative.

7. <u>Matters for reporting and diary dates</u> Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacon Lighting – Thursday 2nd June on The Green

Cllr Kaye thanked everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

The following were circulated as a hand-out: Report by County Cllr McArthur and Leigh Finance Report.

Report by County Cllr McArthur Leigh Annual Parish Meeting 25 April 2022

Thank you for inviting me to the meeting and I am sorry that I can't be there tonight. The Chair has given me the opportunity to send in a few words. If there are any questions for me, my email address is below.

I thought it might be helpful to say a little about the work I do in my role as a Kent County Councillor. Whenever possible I attend and support Parish and Town Council meetings within my division of Sevenoaks Rural South and represent their views at County Council.

These are:

- Chiddingstone Parish Council
- Cowden Parish Council
- Edenbridge Town Council
- Hever Parish Council
- Leigh Parish Council
- Penshurst & Fordcombe Parish Council
- Weald Parish Council

Also, I respond to residents' concerns about any County services, and help to get resolution. The most common concerns are around highways issues such as speeding, pot holes, parking, drainage, road closures, vegetation, footpaths and around school admissions and transport.

As directed by the Leader of the County Council I am active on these committees:

- County Council
- Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Kent Flood Risk Management Committee
- Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board

although I attend others out of interest and for my own education.

Shortly after my election last year, I was very honoured to be appointed to the post of Deputy Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services. This encompasses services such as:

- Early Years and Childcare Service
- 0-25 Early Help Services (including Children's Centres, Youth Hubs and Troubled Families)
- Disabled Children and Young People Teams (including Special Educational Needs)
- County Youth Justice
- District Children's Social Worker Teams
- Adolescent Support Teams
- · Corporate Parenting all County Councillors are Corporate Parents to those children who are in the
 - Children in Care Service (including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children)
 - Fostering Service
 - Adoption Service
 - Care Leavers 18+ Service (including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children)

As part of being Deputy Cabinet Member I am also

- Chair of the Sevenoaks Local Children's' Partnership Group
- · Member of the Children's Assurance Board
- · Member of the County Youth Justice Board
- Member of the Kent Safeguarding Board

And lastly, but not least, as my Division is the closest to Gatwick and under the final approach path, I also represent Kent County Council on several different Gatwick committees and consultative groups.

Margot McArthur

April 2022

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL: FINANCE REPORT FOR YEAR 2021-2022

The Parish Council's financial year runs from 1st April until 31st March. The precept for the year 2021-22 was £48,000. This sum, which is generated from residents' Council Tax, is paid to the Parish Council by Sevenoaks District Council. The precept for 2022-23 has been increased to £50,500. 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	£734.90
Action with Communities in Rural Kent	£80.00
CPRE £36.00	
Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign	£10.00
Kent Playing Fields Association	£20.00
Society of Local Council Clerks	£117.00
Aviation Environment Federation	£36.00
Grants have been awarded as follows:	
Leigh Ladies Choir	£500.00
Leigh Historical Society	£500.00
Action with Communities in Rural Kent – Coffee Caravan	£150.00
Leigh PCC – contribution towards the Directory	£300.00
Leigh School – grant towards literacy corner	£1,920.00
Leigh in Bloom – grant towards new gravel area (pledge)	£417.00
Leigh in Bloom – grant towards new planter	£160.22
Leigh in Bloom – plant	£48.75
Leigh School – grant towards CCTV	£1,074.71
Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign	£500.00

Below is a summary of the Parish Council's Income and Expenditure for the year 2021-22:

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Precept	48,000.00	Salaries	11,500.99
Contribution towards tree work	192.00	PAYE	4,928.39
APD rental	13,458.00	Pension contribution	6,041.85
Sale of garden waste bags	88.10	Mileage and petty cash	1,051.65
Wayleave	7.30	Stationery	34.88
		Telephone/Broadband	217.05
		Office Expenses	1,141.43
		Website	870.00
		Grasscrete around The Green	10,650
		Insurance	1,382.59
		Audit/Accountancy	300.00
		Chair's Expenses	207.60
		Subscriptions	1,033.90
		Hall Hire	149.00
		Courses/training	50.00
		Village Green & trees	6,299.02
		Christmas tree & stand	167.50
		Litter / dog bins	2,554.79
		Grants	5,153.68
		APD	17,442.56
		Play event	305.00
		Repairs & maintenance	414.30
		Verges	925.70
	04 = 45 +0	War Memorial refurbishment	1,225.00
	61,745.40		74,046.88