

## LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE LEIGH ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON TUESDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2023 AT 8.00PM

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**PRESENT:** Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr A. Backlog, Cllr G. Marchant, Cllr A. Holt, Cllr S. Satterley, Cllr S. Smith and Cllr B. Williams  
**APOLOGIES:** Cllr R. Britain, Cllr G. Rogers and County Cllr M. McArthur  
**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). District Cllr M. Silander attended the meeting from 9pm to 9.45pm. 3 members of the public attended the Open Session only.

#### Closed Session:

1. **a. Election of Chairman for year 2023/24**

Cllr Marchant proposed that Cllr Kaye be elected as Chairman for the year 2023/24. This was seconded by Cllr Williams and there were no other nominations. Members unanimously voted to accept the proposal. Cllr Kaye said that he was willing to stand and was duly elected.

**b. To receive Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

Cllr Kaye signed the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was counter-signed by the Clerk.

2. **Election of Vice-Chairman for year 2023/24**

Cllr Kaye proposed that Cllr Smith be elected as Vice-Chairman for the year 2023/24. This was seconded by Cllr Satterley. There were no other nominations. Members unanimously voted to accept the proposal. Cllr Smith said that she is willing to stand and was duly elected.

3. **To receive all members' Declarations of Acceptance of Office**

All members signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was counter-signed by the Clerk

4. **To receive all members' completed DPI and NPI Forms**

The Clerk received completed DPI and NPI forms which will be sent to the Monitoring Officer at SDC with a link from the Parish Council's website.

5. **To receive members' completed Dispensation Request Forms regarding setting precept**

All members completed their Dispensation Request Forms and handed to the Clerk.

#### **The Closed Session was suspended for the Open Session**

#### Open Session

##### Report by District Cllr Silander

In the absence of D.Cllr Silander, the Clerk read his report: "The first two weeks have been focused on the new SDC structure and formation of committees, which are yet to be confirmed. A key argument being made is that SDC needs to increase the decision-making abilities outside of the Cabinet, to better represent the various people elected onto SDC. The first SDC meeting is tonight and I have been granted a question on the urgent need for a Development Plan to be put in place."

##### Questions from members of the public

1. A resident said that he would not support the installation of grasscrete outside Barden Cottages as it would damage the rural feel of the area. The hedge has been cut back and the residents are parking closer to the hedgeline. The residents have undertaken to maintain this area by filling in the ruts and sowing grass seed.
2. A resident attended the meeting in order to discuss the application south of Greenview Avenue.

## **Closed Session**

6. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Britain and Cllr Rogers and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur and from District Cllr Silander for late arrival at the meeting.
7. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
- i. Cllr Backlog declared a DPI in item 22(ix) as she is a member of the Greenview Avenue Members Group.
  - ii. Cllr Smith declared an NPI in item 13(i)(v) as she is the applicant for this application.
8. **Appointment of Committees and representatives to other bodies**

<b>Finance Committee:</b>	Cllr Kaye (Chairman), Cllr Britain, Cllr Williams, Cllr Satterley
<b>Planning Committee:</b>	Cllr Williams (Chairman), Cllr Holt, Cllr Marchant, Cllr Smith, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Backlog
<b>ROW Committee:</b>	Cllr Kaye (Chairman), members of public
<b>Affordable Housing Committee:</b>	Cllr Kaye, (Chairman), Cllr Britain, Cllr Holt, Cllr Satterley, Cllr Smith
<b>Leigh United Charities:</b>	Mr Brian Ball
<b>Leigh Village Halls Management Committee:</b>	Cllr Satterley
<b>Internal Auditor:</b>	Mulberry & Co
<b>Tree Warden:</b>	Cllr Smith
<b>Pond Warden:</b>	Cllr Britain
<b>Countryside Access Wardens:</b>	Cllr Kaye, Joe Staffurth, Rachel Valentine
<b>CPRE:</b>	Cllr Smith

9. **To confirm that the Parish Council is eligible to use the General Power of Competence**
- The Clerk said that the General Power of Competence gives authorities the power to take the reasonable action they need 'for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'. Under the provision a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally have full legal capacity to do.
- To be eligible, the Parish Council has to confirm that:
- (a) the number of members of the council that have been declared to be elected, whether at ordinary elections or at a by-election, is equal to or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the council;
  - (b) the Clerk is qualified in the Certificate in Local Council Administration;
  - (c) the Clerk has completed the relevant training.
- There are some restrictions: to abide by statutory duties such as considering the likely effect of crime and disorder and conserving biodiversity, and to abide by legislation, such as employment law, health & safety, equality and data protection. Members agreed that the Parish Council is eligible and resolved to use this power.
10. **The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Satterley, and all were in favour.
11. **To hear report of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023**
- The Annual Parish Meeting was well attended, and reports were presented by Cllr Kaye, as Chairman of the Parish Council, County Cllr McArthur and District Cllr Fleming. The Leigh Community Award was awarded to Cherry O'Neill for her hard work and commitment as Editor of Leigh Church and Community News as well as the other important roles she plays in the parish.

**12. To hear report of the event to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and the parish Litter Pick held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023 as part of the Big Help Out initiative and approve costs**

The Clerk reported that, despite being a wet evening, a lot of people gathered on The Green on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May to celebrate the coronation. The Leigh Ladies Choir provided entertainment and the food vans were all in attendance. There was a coronation-themed laser show, at a cost of £1,200. Members formally approved this cost which was approved as an emergency decision by members since the last meeting. The litter pick held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May was well attended and a large amount of litter was collected, which SDC picked up on Tuesday. Some members of the public also cleaned the village signs as well. Cllr Kaye thanked Cllr Marchant for driving behind the litter pickers for safety reasons. Cllr Holt said that the school raised over £1,000 on their raffle.

**13. Planning**

**i. To consider applications received**

- i. SE/23/00893/HOUSE: Primrose House, Charcott TN11 8LJ - single storey rear extension with first floor extension to the rear and internal alterations, alterations to fenestration, alterations to roof and rooflight. Members objected to this application on the same grounds as to application ref SE/22/01451/HOUSE because the proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The property has previously been extended to over 50% of the original dwelling. Any further enlargement is unacceptable in the Green Belt.
- ii. SE/23/01018/HOUSE: 18 Powder Mills, Leigh TN11 9AR - two storey rear extension with alteration to roof and fenestration. Members had no objection to the proposed rear extension, but did object to the inclusion of full length doors at the rear and also the balcony which creates overlooking and loss of privacy.
- iii. SE/23/00854/LDCLBC: Pond Cottage, Egg Pie Lane, Sevenoaks Weald TN14 6NP - secondary window installation. This application has been approved.
- iv. SE/23/01039/HOUSE: 31A Well Close, Leigh .TN11 8RQ - single storey side and rear extension. Rooflights. Patio with associated landscaping. Alterations to roof. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- v. SE/23/01124/WTCA: Old Chimneys, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QL - cut back 1 Mulberry Tree. Decision No objection lodged.
- vi. SE/23/00858/LDCPR: Brookside Barn, Egg Pie Lane, Sevenoaks Weald TN14 6NP - use of the land for sitting a mobile home for use ancillary to the main dwelling. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- vii. SE/23/00931/FUL: Unit 7 & Unit 17, Gaza Trading Estate, Scabharbour Road, Hildenborough TN11 8PL - replacement of two existing timber framed buildings (Unit 7 and Unit 17) with steel framed buildings. Members supported this application.
- viii. SE/23/01234/LBCALT: Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 9AS - remedial works to north-west elevation. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- ix. SE/23/01266/HOUSE: Waterworks House, Kiln Lane, Leigh TN11 8RT - to erect a dwarf wall within the rear garden of the property. This will include 2 steps to allow access from the patio to the rest of the garden. To replace the current patio of concrete slabs with Indian sandstone paving. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- x. SE/23/01190/HOUSE: North Lodge, Redleaf, Penshurst Road, Penshurst - one/two storey rear extension, with alterations to fenestration and rooflights. Adjoining parish consultation. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- xi. SE/23/01292/NMA: 21 The Green Lane, Leigh TN11 8QX - Non material amendment to 21/03994/HOUSE. Alteration of clean water outlet from seasonal soakaway and ditch to drainage field. Planning Committee to consider this application and agree response.
- xii. SE/23/01315/HOUSE: 1 Bungalows, High Street, Leigh TN11 8RP - replace existing flat roof area with gable end pitched roof to form first floor bedroom with gable end window, west facing roof light and south facing roof light in existing roof. Planning Committee to consider this application and agree response.
- xiii. SE/23/01350/HOUSE: 1 Waterworks Cottages, Kiln Lane, Leigh TN11 8RT - proposed single storey side and rear extensions.

Addition of first floor extension to existing single storey rear extension and existing two storey semi-detached dwelling. Covered porch area. Removal of chimney. Internal alterations. Alterations to fenestration. Rooflights. Members undertook to carry out a site visit.

ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:

- SE/23/00286/HOUSE: 30 Well Close, Leigh - single storey rear extension. Removal of roof on existing outrigger. Application approved.
- SE/23/00377/LDCPR: Priory Farm Cottage, Scabharbour Road, Hildenborough - Lawful Development Certificate for change of use of two former agricultural barns to provide one detached single storey 1 bedroom dwelling and one detached 2/3 bedroom dwelling with mezzanine floor. Alterations to fenestration. Application approved.
- SE/23/00415/WTCA: Gardeners Cottage, Penshurst Road, Leigh - works to trees in a Conservation Area - section fell Sycamore to ground level. No objection Lodged.
- SE/23/00685/HOUSE: 13 Lealands Avenue, Leigh - single storey rear extension with rooflights. Application approved.
- SE/23/00707/HOUSE: 33 Penshurst Road, Leigh - front porch extension, loft conversion, rear roof dormer extension, addition of two velux windows, roof alterations. Application refused. Reason: The application site lies within the Green Belt where strict policies of restraint apply. The proposal would be inappropriate development harmful to the maintenance of the character of the Green Belt and to its openness as it will result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling for which there are no very special circumstances that exist. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policy GB1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, policy LO8 of the Core Strategy, Section 5 of the adopted Development in Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document and the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

iii. To discuss the review of the Leigh Village Design Statement

The Clerk reported that the review is underway.

## 14. The Green

i. To discuss the installation of posts and/or grasscrete around The Green

Cllr Marchant reported that one new large post has been collected for installation opposite the end of The Green Lane as previously agreed.

ii. To consider quotes for maintenance of the Parish Council owned land

i. Grass cutting areas: the Clerk reported that one quote has been received and she is waiting for two more quotes. To be discussed and approved by the Finance Committee.

ii. Fell chestnut tree on The Green: the Clerk reported that two quotes have been received.

Original Tree Surgeons: Fell to ground level £425 + VAT

Grind stump if needed £120 + VAT

RWE Rural Services: Fell to ground level and grind stump £320 + VAT

iii. To reduce the multi stemmed ash tree outside Chestnuts. the Clerk reported that two quotes have been received.

Original Tree Surgeons: £350 + VAT

RWE Rural Services: £550 + VAT

Members agreed that the price for the two jobs is very close, and Clerk to award the work to the company who can complete the work quickest. (Clerk's note: the two jobs were awarded to Original Tree Surgeons who will seek approval for the work from SDC and carry out the work on 7<sup>th</sup> June).

iv. Bracing on veteran oak tree: the Clerk reported that Original Tree Surgeons have reviewed the bracing on the Veteran Oak tree and recommend three more cables to be added to balance the weight distribution. The Clerk has requested more information. Item to be discussed at the June Parish Council meeting.

iii. To discuss the request to hold a family 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party on The Green on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August

Members approved this request providing the family ensure that they stay clear of the cricket field and that they ensure that appropriate inflatable insurance is provided by the company providing any inflatables.

iv. Request to refurbish bench

Cllr Marchant reported that a resident has asked whether he can refurbish a family memorial bench on The Green with new slats where required. Members agreed.

**15. Highways & Rights of Way**

i. Highway Reports

- Urgent Road Closure - Lower Green, Leigh - 20<sup>th</sup> May 2023 for up to 5 days at Kiln Mere. This is to enable burst water main repairs to be carried out by South East Water.
- Urgent Road Closure - Hildenborough Road, Leigh – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023 for up to 4 days between Rings Hill and Powder Mill Lane between 09:30 and 15:30 each day. This is to enable carriageway patching to be carried out by KCC.

ii. Rural Swathe cutting

Cllr Marchant reported that he thinks that the rural swathe has not been cut yet this year. The Clerk reported that KCC is following No Mow May and undertook to inform KCC that the rural swathe has not yet been cut.

**16. To hear report of the Coffee Corner project held in the Leigh Scout Hut**

The Clerk reported that the last event held on 12<sup>th</sup> May was well attended. The next dates are:

- Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 10.30am to 12.00pm
- Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July 10.30am to 12.00pm
- Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August 10.30am to 12.00pm
- Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September 10.30am to 12.00pm

Members agreed that the Clerk should ask the other village organisations to cover some of the dates.

**17. Charcott**

The Clerk reported that the refurbishment of phone box in Charcott will be carried out during the summer. Members agreed to buy all the necessary materials.

**18. Affordable Housing**

None.

**19. Aged Persons Dwellings**

None.

**20. The Old Burial Ground**

Cllr Holt said that it would be good to have one of the benches placed in the Old Burial Ground, and Cllr Kaye advised that there has been a request for a memorial bench to be placed there too.

**21. To discuss correspondence received**

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

- Item 2: KALC: Dynamic Councillor training for new and not-so-new Parish Councillors. Online events priced at £50 + VAT, venue based events priced at £60 + VAT.
- Item 3: Mulberry & Company (internal auditors): Training Programme for Councillors 2023. An in-person training session specifically developed for Councillors new to the role. Cost for clients: £80 + VAT per person and cost for non-clients: £120 + VAT.
- Item 4: Mulberry & Company (internal auditors): Training Programme for Councillors 2023. Remote Councillor Training: Roles Responsibilities & Working Relationships. Cost for clients: £45 + VAT per person and cost for non-clients: £65 + VAT.
- Item 5: Mulberry & Company (internal auditors): Training Programme for Chairs 2023. Cost for clients: £45 + VAT per person and cost for non-clients: £65 + VAT.
- Item 6: SDC: Parish Council Community Cost of Living Support Grant Criteria - the purpose is to deliver a Grant Scheme for Parish Councils in Kent that allows them to access funding to deliver local initiatives supporting people in financial hardship.

Funding has been ring-fenced for Parish Councils to use for a project that provides support to Kent residents in the Parish that are experiencing financial hardship as a result of the cost-of-living crises. KCC has received emergency grant funding from central government to be used to support efforts towards preventing or containing the spread of Covid-19 and /or helping those that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Members agreed that the Clerk should apply for the grant on behalf of Leigh United Charities.

- vi. Item 7: Kent Police:
  - A21 Tonbridge By-pass, Leigh - between 17:45 on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April and 05:45 on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April, somebody stole fuel from a vehicle parked in the road. Crime Report No. 46/63454/23
  - A21 Tonbridge By-pass, Leigh - on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May at around 13:55, two young people were throwing rocks onto the A21 carriageway from a bridge. A vehicle was hit but not damaged. Crime Report No. 46/79849/23
  - Hunter Seal, Leigh - on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May around 22:45, somebody threw eggs at a residential property and a car. Crime Report No. 46/89615/23
- vii. Item 8: Email from Chris Rowley, Leigh Historical Society: re: Moated Site, Powder Mill Lane: "I thought that the Parish Council should have a copy of the main archaeological report about the moated site beyond Great Barnetts. It has arrived a year late in spite of many reminders. The Historical Society was extremely grateful to the Parish Council for their grant for the project. However, we will not yet be paying the archaeologists because there is still a small section of the report to come."
- viii. Item 9. Hildenborough & Tonbridge Medical Group: "We hereby advise that the GP Partners have decided to place a formal request to the NHS to not re-open Leigh and Weald Satellite Surgeries."
- ix. Item 11: email regarding Weald Village Rail Tunnel Works.
- x. Item 12: Copy email from C.Cllr McArthur to a resident re: 235/230 bus services: "Whilst the individual arrangements with operators need to be formalised, a combination of bus funding that KCC has received from Government means that we hope to stabilise the school network for the next 12 months, certainly in respect of services that we "saved" last year. Our intention is to be in a position to say this more definitively to parents by the time we open for Travel Saver applications so an assurance can be provided to remove uncertainty about whether to apply which I know was an issue last year."
- xi. Item 13: GACC newsletter.
- xii. Item 14: SDC re: Code of Conduct training for Town and Parish Members on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023.
- xiii. Item 17: Correspondence with the owner of Hall Place regarding possible meeting with Cllr Kaye and Cllr Williams.

District Cllr Silander left the meeting at 9.45pm.

## 22. Finance:

- i. To approve 2022/23 Year End Accounts  
Members discussed and approved the Year End Accounts, proposed by Cllr Satterly, seconded by Cllr Kaye, and all in favour.
- ii. To review the effectiveness of the Parish Council's Internal Control Procedures  
Members reviewed the Internal Audit Procedures and agreed that they remain effective. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Backlog, and all were in favour.
- iii. Audit for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023
  - a. To consider and agree Annual Governance Statement 2022/23  
Cllr Kaye read the statements as set out on the Annual Governance Statement and members responded as appropriate. Proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Smith, and all were in favour.
  - b. To consider and approve Accounting Statements 2022/23  
Cllr Kaye proposed that the Statement of Accounts be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Satterly, and all were in favour.

iv. To discuss the Internal Audit report 2023

The Clerk reported that the Internal Audit was carried out by Mulberry & Co on 21<sup>st</sup> April and the report has been received and circulated. The report states “Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk. It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered system. It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Leigh Parish Council are well established and followed.”

There were the following recommendations:

1. All documents that accompany the agenda should now go on the website, not including the correspondence list, but if a report is prepared for consideration of members then this should go online with the agenda, unless it's confidential or relating to a contract, tender, or Clerk's salary.
2. All councillors must use their leighkent.org.uk email address. The auditor said he thinks in future this may even be a tick box on the annual audit return. Guidance is set out in The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioner's Guide (March 2023). This is to comply with GDPR legislation.
3. Quarterly bank reconciliations must be signed by a member, along with the corresponding bank statement. Bank reconciliations are currently carried out but are not signed.
4. The Parish Council benefits from the £85,000 protection limit offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), if the balance is likely to remain above £85,000, the Parish Council may wish to consider an additional account with an alternate provider to maximise the FSCS protection.

Members approved this recommendations and Clerk to implement.

v. To consider whether the Parish Council should open a second bank account

Members agreed to investigate alternative Parish Council bank accounts that pay interest. Cllr Satterley undertook to investigate appropriate options and Finance Committee to approve.

vi. To approve insurance policy renewal from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023

Agreed. Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Satterley and all were in favour.

vii. To approve membership renewal to Society of Local Council Clerks: £148

Agreed. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Backlog, and all were in favour.

viii. To approve membership renewal for Kent Association of Local Councils: £756.88

Agreed. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Smith, and all were in favour.

ix. To consider request for a contribution towards planning consultant's costs relating to the outline application on land south of Greenview Avenue

Clerk to ask the planning officer for details of where the application is in the planning process. Members agreed to some financial support and delegated the decision to the Planning Committee.

x. To approve list of payments

Cllr Marchant proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Backlog and all were in favour.

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

None.

**The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm**

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.

**LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL  
LIST OF PAYMENTS  
May 2023**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Payment Number</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Detail of payment</b>	<b>Amount Inc. VAT</b>	<b>VAT</b>
23.05.23	601	Fusion Event Services	Coronation Laser Show	£1,200.00	
23.05.23	602	Clerk	Salary	£1,134.76	
23.05.23	603	HMRC	PAYE	£480.48	
23.05.23	604	Clerk	Mileage, petty cash & electricity contribution	£305.16	£8.32
23.05.23	605	KCC	Pension contribution	£648.13	
23.05.23	606	Vision ICT Ltd	Back up service (net cost £60)	£120.00	£24.00
23.05.23	607	KALC	Membership Renewal	£908.26	£151.38
23.05.23	608	SLCC	Membership Renewal	£148.00	
23.05.23	609	Mulberry & Co	Internal Audit fee	£197.82	£17.82
23.05.23	610	Zurich Municipal	Insurance Policy Premium	£1,873.79	
23.05.23	611	Original Tree Surgeons	Tree work as per tree survey	£762.00	£127.00
23.05.23	612	OVO Energy	Gas/electricity No.1 APD 16.02.23-15.03.23	£222.81	
23.05.23	613	Knockout Print	Coronation advertising boards	£60.00	£10.00
23.05.23	614	Knockout Print	Annual Parish Meeting advertising boards	£60.00	£10.00
23.05.23	615	Leigh Scouts	Hire of Scout Hut	£20.00	
23.05.23	616	Wealden Oak Ltd	One large oak post	£295.20	
23.05.23	617	How Green Nursery	Grant to Leigh in Bloom (net cost £200)	£335.41	£55.90
23.05.23	618	Peter Croft	Mowing	£280.00	
23.05.23	619	Chiddingstone PC	Joint costs phone/printer charges 2022-23	£331.25	
				<b><u>£9,383.07</u></b>	<b><u>£348.52</u></b>

Signed .....

Date .....