

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 3RD JULY 2023 AT 8.00PM

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr A. Backlog, Cllr G. Marchant, Cllr A. Holt, Cllr G. Rogers and Cllr S. Satterley

APOLOGIES: Cllr R. Britain, Cllr S. Smith, Cllr B. Williams and County Cllr M. McArthur

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). District Cllr M. Silander and 5 members of the public attended part of the meeting.

Open Session

Report by District Cllr Silander

District Cllr Silander reported that the new SDC councillors are settling in after the election. He stands on two committees, the Finance Committee and the Development Management Committee. Approval for 950 new dwellings has been given in the quarry at the Bat & Ball in Sevenoaks. On finance at SDC, there will be a predicted shortfall of £1m in the £18.5m budget this year. There will need to be some difficult decisions regarding services. D.Cllr Silander said that he has obtained details of parish populations and the number of new dwellings built in the last 15 years and Leigh is in a healthy position having had the fourth highest number of new dwellings in the district behind Dunton Green, Edenbridge and Sevenoaks, and the highest number for a village. SDC will be preparing a 15 year building plan from 2025 to 2040 for the top-tier settlements, and Leigh is not a top-tier settlement. In the autumn this year, there will be a consultation on policies and development areas. Currently only affordable housing with an element of open market housing can be built on Green Belt land as an exception site. Cllr Marchant asked whether the application for 70 new homes on Green Belt land south of Brittain's Lane has been approved, as this may set a precedent. This application was refused in April 2022 and is currently subject to appeal. D.Cllr Silander reported that the protection of the Green Belt is a priority at SDC.

Questions from members of the public

1. Ian Bishop and Noah Zuberi attended the meeting in order to discuss the email sent by the Parish Council to the Cricket Club. Cllr Kaye said that he has since discussed this with Ian and has apologised to sending the email when a more informal chat about the issues would have been preferable. With regards to the points raised:
 - i. Wicket size: Ian said that a document was submitted to the Parish Council in October 2020. The posts around the cricket square needed to be replaced and it made sense to take one side in and move one side out. The cricket square will have changed shape a lot of times in the 320 years that the Cricket Club has been in existence.
 - ii. 'A' boards around The Green: Ian said that the Cricket Club erect 'A' boards around The Green to warn people that their cars may be hit during a match. This is a Cricket Club matter and is managed. Cllr Rogers said that the Kent Cricket Association recommended that vehicles approaching the village should be made aware that a match is in play. It is noted that the Cricket Club do not think it is necessary to put them on Powdermill Lane or the High Street.
 - iii. Spectators parking on The Green: Ian said that an elderly gentleman parks on The Green to watch the cricket and has done so for many years. The Cricket Club do ask spectators to drive carefully and act responsibly. If the Parish Council don't want him parking where he does, they can ask him to park elsewhere. The Clerk said that this was raised because a child was playing on The Green and the parents were concerned that when the vehicle moved off it put the child in danger. Members agreed that cars should park on The Green on the opposite end to the school as families often use the school end.
 - iv. Grass cuttings: Ian said that the Cricket Club will consider getting a green bin for the grass cuttings. He does not put grass cuttings in the ditch.
 - v. Pavilion: Ian said that the pavilion belongs to the Cricket Club and it is the club's decision as and when it is refurbished. The club does open up the pavilion for village events.

Cllr Kaye said that there are residents who are happy to help repair and paint the pavilion. Ian said that he will openly embrace the offers of help, but it must be done in the right way.
Cllr Kaye thanked Ian Bishop and Noah Zuberi for attending the meeting, and thanked the Cricket Club for making great strides with the junior cricket on Sundays.

Two members of the public left the meeting at 8.35pm.

2. Graham Southwell attended the meeting to discuss the amendments submitted by the applicant to SDC on the application on land south of Greenview Avenue. Two highway consultants have shown interest in working with the Parish Council and local residents, and Charles & Associates Consulting Engineers Ltd is the preferred option. Members will discuss this under the Finance item later in the meeting. Graham said that the company can provide a technical note on the amendments. He said that there is some money in the fundraising account which could possibly be contributed if necessary. Members agreed that the Clerk should work with Graham and the highways consultant.
3. Rodney Tapp attended the meeting in order to advise that the application on land to the south of Greenview Avenue states that HGV have been accessing the land for working on the railway track. This is untrue.

District Cllr Silander and one member of the public left the meeting at 9pm.

Closed Session

38. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Britain, Cllr Smith and Cllr Williams and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur.
39. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
Cllr Backlog declared a DPI as she is a member of the Greenview Avenue Members Group.
Cllr Rogers declared an NPI in item 49(ii) as she is a Governor of Leigh Primary School.
40. **The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 5th June 2023** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Backlog, and all were in favour.
41. **Planning**
 - i. To consider applications received
 - i. SE/23/01188/LBCALT: The Coach House, Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 9AS - repair/replacement of windows. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - ii. SE/22/02495/OUT: Land South of Greenview Avenue, Leigh, Kent - outline application for the erection of up to 39 dwellings with access and layout and some matters reserved. Amended application - additional information submitted:
 - Construction Traffic Management Plan
 - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report and BNG Matrix
 - Signed District Level Licence Certificate
 - Revised Design and Access Statement (note revised housing mix proposed)The Planning Committee will draft a response to the latest amendments.
 - The Clerk reported that since the last meeting, the Planning Committee considered the following applications.
 - iii. SE/23/01519/HOUSE: 6 Barnetts Road, Leigh TN11 8QH - proposed porch to the front of the property and new veranda to the rear. Alterations to fenestration. New flue. Members objected to the proposal to add a new veranda at this property. It is described as a timber veranda but on the Proposed Ground Floor Plan, one side is shown as a full height rendered wall. This proposed wall is on the boundary with the neighbours and the Parish Council feel that this is inappropriate and unneighbourly. The plans do not specify whether the other boundaries of the proposed veranda are also rendered walls but the roofing material is specified as plain clay tiles, so we presume that they are walls.

- This does not constitute a veranda but an extension in our opinion. The Parish Council has no objection to the proposed front porch.
- iv. SE/23/01520/FUL: 6 Barnetts Road, Leigh TN11 8QH - placement of a pre-fabricated outbuilding to create a single holiday let. Members strongly objected to this application which constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposed materials being powder-coated steel sheets and a rubber roof are out of keeping and unsympathetic to neighbouring properties and are not in accordance with the Leigh Village Design Statement. The Parish Council believe that this proposal would have a negative impact on neighbouring properties.
 - v. SE/23/01574/MMA: 21 The Green Lane, Leigh TN11 8QX - amendment to 21/03994/HOUSE for installation of domestic foul treatment plant. Members objected to this application, reiterating previous response, adding that porosity tests must be carried out in normal winter conditions to ensure that there is no future pollution to the surrounding area which can be exceptionally wet.
- ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:
 - SE/23/01039/HOUSE: 31A Well Close, Leigh - single storey side and rear extension, rooflights, patio with associated landscaping. Application approved.
 - SE/23/01234/LBCALT: Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh - remedial works to north-west elevation. Application approved.
 - SE/23/00738/FUL: Land West of Oakfield Farm, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh - subdivision of land for the erection of a detached four bedroom dwelling, together with access and landscaping including a pond. Application refused. Reason: The land lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where strict policies of restraint apply. The proposed building represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt, due to its scale, height, bulk and mass that seriously erodes the openness of the Green Belt, both in spatial and visual terms. No very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the substantial harm to the identified to the Green Belt and contrary to one of the purposes of its designation by safeguarding it from encroachment of development. This development conflicts with Policy LO8 of the Core Strategy, guidance as set out in Section 3 the adopted Development in the Green Belt SPD and the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 - SE/23/01266/HOUSE: Waterworks House, Kiln Lane, Leigh - 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. Application approved.
 - SE/23/01190/HOUSE: North Lodge, Redleaf, Penshurst Road - one/two storey rear extension, with alterations to fenestration and rooflights. Application approved.
 - iii. To discuss the review of the Leigh Village Design Statement
Members agreed to defer this until the SDC Local Plan has been adopted.

42. The Green

- i. To hear update regarding the proposal to increase the bracing on the Veteran Oak Tree
The Clerk reported that the tree surgeon and his bracing expert carried out a visual inspection of the existing bracing and agreed what would be required. Cllr Kaye undertook to speak to the resident concerned about this matter.
- ii. To discuss the maintenance of the area beneath the canopy of the Veteran Oak Tree
The Clerk reported that the area is overgrown with small oak saplings growing. The advice was for the area to be kept clear and mulch added regularly. Clerk to arrange for the area to be strimmed and some more mulch added.

A member of the public joined the meeting at 9.15pm.

- iii. To discuss work required on The Green adjacent to Barden Cottages
Members agreed for the roots and the old metal fence to be dug out and the area re-seeded. Cllr Marchant said that he would be able to dig out the roots and metal fence. This cost would be covered by the Parish Council.

- iv. To consider requests by Leigh Primary School to use The Green on 11th July for a barbeque after their Sports Day, and on 19th July for their Year 6 leaving event
Members agreed this request.
- v. To discuss Leigh Football Club's application for funding from PitchPower and related requirements
The Clerk reported that PitchPower offer a 6 year grant programme for grass football pitches. The Clerk has been in discussion with the Football Club and it has been agreed to work together on the application but for it to be submitted in the Parish Council's name.
- vi. To discuss the litter bins on The Green
The Clerk reported that a resident has said that the litter bins get full of pizza boxes when the pizza van visits. Clerk to remind the pizza van to provide a bin for empty pizza boxes.
- vii. Cllr Kaye reported that a letter has been received from Sue Smith requesting permission to lay grasscrete on a small area of The Green adjacent to her driveway. Members agreed.

A member of the public left the meeting at 9.30pm.

43. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To discuss quote for a new sign in Charcott to be located on Charcott Green
Clerk to request permission from the Redleaf Trust to locate one sign on the area of grass on the southern entrance to the village and if approved Clerk to order two signs at £244 + VAT each. The other sign would be placed on Charcott Green.
- ii. To discuss Rural Swathe & Visibility Cutting
The Clerk reported that she is waiting to hear back from the other Parish Councils in the cluster to see if they would be interested in opening discussions to take the contract back again from KCC next year.
- iii. The Clerk drew members' attention to the National Highways and Transport Survey. <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/national-highways-and-transport-2023-24>.
- iv. KCC Public Transport: Bus services in the UK operate in a de-regulated (privatised) environment outside of the control of KCC who do not license or contract operators or their services. Bus operators are able to change or cancel any service by giving 70 days' notice to the Department for Transport. Operators will make decisions on what services to run, their routes and their frequencies based on commercial and operational considerations notably that the use of the service will cover the costs of operation. The bus industry in the UK is facing a very challenging period of increased fuel and driver costs, reduced levels of use and a shortage of drivers and this is leading to high volumes of service reductions and cancellations. Although operators can make these changes without the permission of KCC who cannot therefore resist them and cannot commit to securing replacement services, KCC is keen to ensure that bus users and other stakeholders are aware of pending changes. This summary identifies any change to a bus service that has been registered by an operator to take place in May, June, July, August 2023. It includes all changes from minor timetable changes to whole service cancellations (none for Leigh parish). Children who have a legal entitlement to free transport to school will be provided with alternative transport solutions but for other passengers it is likely that no alternative transport will be available. Parents are encouraged to use the summary to understand if they are affected by service changes before applying and paying for a KCC Travel Saver. Should a pass have been purchased and then can no longer be used owing to a change to service then KCC will make refunds available either in full or on a pro-rata basis dependent on whether use of the pass has been made before a request for a refund.
- v. The Clerk reported that someone has fly-tipped a large quantity of hedge cuttings to rear of the yew tree at recycling bins. The area belongs to SDC, Clerk to report.
- vi. Cllr Kaye reported that a lot of litter and some human excrement has been found on the footpath running from Powdermill Lane towards the A21.

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

The Clerk reported that the last event held on 2nd June was well attended. Next dates, all 10.30am to 12.pm: Friday 14th July, Friday 18th August, Friday 15th September (Leigh Performing Arts offered to help), Friday 20th October, Friday 17th November and Friday 8th December.

45. Affordable Housing

The Clerk reported that a new Rural and Community-Led Housing Service for Kent has been set up. This is RACE (Rural and Community (housing) Enabling). This new service is managed by Tessa O'Sullivan who will be continuing and building upon her work with ACRK. Tessa is assisted by Kirsty McHattie. They are employed by the Kent Housing Group and hosted by Ashford Borough Council. Also, 3rd to 7th July is Rural Housing Week.

46. Aged Persons Dwellings

None.

47. The Old Burial Ground

i. To discuss quote for strimming in the Old Burial Ground

Members agreed to accept the quote to trim the area and remove cuttings of £338 + VAT. Regular strims once a month during the growing season of £68 + VAT was also accepted and this to be reviewed.

ii. To discuss quote for tree work and to reduce the height and width of the laurel hedge

The Clerk reported that RWE have supplied the following quote: Field Maple cut back off neighbouring property to give 1.5m clearance. Laurel plus Holly hedge reduce to match adjacent hedge and trim back face. £220 + VAT. Members accepted this quote, permission is required from SDC. Clerk to also ask RWE for a quote to remove the low-hanging fir branch.

iii. To discuss quote for a noticeboard

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council has received a grant of £500 from the mobilization fund. Members agreed to defer the purchase of a noticeboard until the area has been cleared.

48. 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 4: Email from Phil Wynn Owen in response to the Parish Council's email to Leigh Cricket Club.
- ii. Item 5: Email from residents regarding the reduction in the hedge near Barden Cottages.
- iii. Item 6: SDC: change in Kent Policing from 7th June 2023. PC Mike Sexton will cover Edenbridge, Chiddingstone, Leigh, Penshurst, Cowden and Hever.
- iv. Item 7: Kent Police: A21 Tonbridge by-pass, Leigh - between 21:00 on Saturday 3rd June and 12:49 on Sunday 4th June, somebody stole a red Audi S3, PY08***, from a layby in the road. Crime Report No. 46/102372/23
- v. Item 9 – notification that the 2023 Tonbridge Half Marathon is set to take place on Sunday 1st October 2023 starting and finishing at Judd School. The race start time will be 9:00am and the event will finish by 12:30pm.
- vi. Item 14: Email from Cllr Smith: "I went to the Hildenborough & Tonbridge Medical Group's PPG meeting on June 24th. It is new to everyone still and needs to find its feet but I think it is going to be useful and important to keep in touch. There was a representative from Weald Parish Council too who has similar concerns to us and together we suggested HTMG comes up with some information we could put in our Parish magazines to explain the changes. HTMG encourages anyone with complaints to email them - they are trying to improve their IT and have had problems."

49. Finance:

i. To hear update regarding a contribution towards a highway consultant's costs relating to the outline application on land south of Greenvie Avenue

The Clerk reported that a quote of £950 + VAT + disbursements has been received from Charles & Associates Consulting Engineers Ltd for a highways technical report. Members accepted this quote but asked for the disbursement costs to be approved separately.

ii. To discuss application for grant made by Leigh Primary School

The Clerk reported that Leigh Primary School has applied for a grant towards sports equipment and items for their new outside space. Members were keen to support this application and agreed that the Finance Committee would decide the level of grant.

iii. To approve list of payments

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

50. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

None.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 4th September 2023 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

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

Payment				Amount		
Date	Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Inc. VAT	VAT	
03.07.23	525	Clerk	Salary	£1,134.76		
03.07.23	526	HMRC	PAYE	£480.48		
03.07.23	527	Clerk	Mileage, petty cash & electricity contribution	£87.65		
03.07.23	528	KCC	Pension contribution	£648.13		
03.07.23	529	Leigh Scouts	Hall hire	£20.00		
03.07.23	530	AEF	Membership renewal	£36.00		
03.07.23	531	Original Tree Surgeons	Fell dead chestnut tree and grind stump	£654.00	£109.00	
03.07.23	532	Original Tree Surgeons	Reducing Ash tree by Chestnuts, Crandalls	£420.00	£70.00	
				<u>£3,481.02</u>	<u>£179.00</u>	

Signed

Date