

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2023 AT 8.00PM

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr G. Marchant, Cllr G. Rogers, Cllr S. Satterley and Cllr S. Smith
APOLOGIES: Cllr A. Backlog, Cllr R. Britain, Cllr A. Holt and Cllr B. Williams
IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). County Cllr M. McArthur and District Cllr M. Silander attended the Open Session only.

Open Session

Report by District Cllr Silander

District Cllr Silander reported as follows:

1. There is graffiti under the railway bridge on Lower Green. The Clerk advised that she has already reported this already to Network Rail.
2. The land to the rear of the houses along Penshurst Road now appears on an address search as Land West of the Allotments.
3. Regarding the proposed sale of land at The Forstall, D.Cllr Silander said that in August SDC notified the Parish Council of their proposal to sell this land. The Finance and Investment Committee recommended that the matter be taken to Cabinet for consideration and that any decision be subject to consultation with the Parish Council. The Cabinet decided to ignore this recommendation and resolved to sell the land to the highest bidder at auction. D.Cllr Silander said that a lot of mis-representation relating to the Finance & Investment Committee meeting was included in the minutes of the Cabinet meeting, and the Parish Council's opinion was ignored. The matter was referred to the Scrutiny Committee, which is a cross-party group that can question the decision making process but not the decision itself. The Scrutiny Committee decided that the correct decision had been taken and the land will be sold to the highest bidder.

County Cllr McArthur joined the meeting at 8.13pm.

The Clerk asked D.Cllr Silander whether it is possible for him to request a set of ten child sized litter pickers and high-visibility vests to be shared between Leigh and Chiddingstone to enable children to carry out litter picks. He undertook to find out if this is possible.

Report by County Cllr McArthur

County Cllr McArthur reported as follows:

1. There is a lot of media coverage about county councils across the country struggling financially and some going into special measures. KCC is not one of these struggling councils and, by being prudent and shaving budgets, the council is still financially sound.
2. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children arriving In the UK require specialist care as well as schooling, housing and care. It is essential that the rest of the country take some of these children in order to ease the burden on Kent. If not, KCC could be in a position where it cannot look after its own children in need.
3. There is good news for children with special educational needs. KCC has applied to the Government for the provision of two new free schools for children with profound and complex needs, and this has been approved.
4. Household support funding continues to be offered, this includes Kent Together, see <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/cost-of-living-support>.
5. The resurfacing request made last month of Hildenborough Road has been looked at, this is not yet on the work plan for the Joint Transportation Board.

Cllr Rogers asked whether SES Water could be asked to repair the water leaks on Hildenborough Road and Penshurst Road.

County Cllr McArthur and District Cllr Silander left the meeting at 8.30pm.

Closed Session

- 64. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Backlog, Cllr Britain, Cllr Holt and Cllr Williams and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council.
- 65. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
- 66. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 4th September 2023** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Satterley, and all were in favour.
- 67. To discuss the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy 6th June 2024**
Members agreed to light the beacon on Thursday 6th June 2024 at 9.15pm as per the Pageant Master's directive.
- 68. Planning**
- i. To consider applications received
- ii. SE/23/02665/LBCALT: The Coach House, Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 9AS - replace single glazed sashes with individual slimline double glazed sashes including narrower glazing bars. Repairs to window frames. Replace plywood cover strips to dormer with timber. Replace timber soffits. Replace plastic rainwater goods with cast iron rainwater goods. Members had no comment to make on this application and agreed to leave the decision to the Conservation Officer.
- iii. SE/23/02612/WTCA: Wildhatch, Greenview Avenue, Leigh TN11 8QT - reduce and reshape 2 Cherry trees and 1 Apple tree by 2m (20%). Members had no comment to make on this application and agreed to leave the decision to the Tree Officer.
- iv. SE/23/02604/HOUSE: 7 Valle Gardens, Leigh TN11 9FA - double storey side extension consisting of an attached garage and 4 new rooms, replacing existing car port. New doors added to snug. Members agreed to object to this application as there is the concern about the reduction in car parking provision if the attached garage is converted into part of the dwelling. Members also commented on the lack of a clear indication in the application as to the percentage increase in floor area and whether this is in excess of 50%.
- v. SE/23/02730/WTCA: Oak Cottage, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QL - repollard 6 Lime on side neighbouring boundary. Ash - fell to ground level self set in barn boundary hedge. Members had no comment to make on this application and agreed to leave the decision to the Tree Officer.
- vi. SE/23/02808/HOUSE and SE/23/02809/LBCALT: 1 Forge Square, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QR - off street parking bay and electric car charging point. Members strongly objected to this application on the following grounds (i) there would be a significant reduction in the number of car parking spaces on the road for the other dwellings. (ii) sight lines would be impacted from the proposed driveway due to the bend in the road and the parked cars adjacent to the proposed new driveway. (iii) cars would cross the pavement which would create safety hazards for pedestrians. (iv) the loss of hedgerow and green areas in the existing garden is a concern on environmental grounds. (v) there would be a negative visual impact on this area which is part of the Leigh Conservation Area.
- vii. SE/23/02829/WTCA: Elizabeth Cottage, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QW - various works to trees in the Conservation Area. Members had no comment to make on this application and agreed to leave the decision to the Tree Officer.
- The Clerk reported that since the last meeting, the Planning Committee considered the following applications.
- viii. SE/23/02520/FUL: Leigh Layabouts Rugby Football Club Playing Field, Tonbridge Road, Leigh TN11 8HT - change of use from Suis Generis (agricultural) to Class F2 (outdoor sports and recreation). Members had no comment to make on this application.

- viii. SE/02268/HOUSE and SE/23/02269/LBCALT: Waterworks House, Kiln Lane, Leigh TN11 8RT - internal and external alterations to layout and fenestrations. New replacement roof windows. Amended to show:
1. Ground Floor/North elevation: Three-panelled aluminium bi-fold doors accessing the garden from the kitchen to replace the original french doors,
 2. Ground Floor/North Elevation: Brick Arch door head to the new back door.
 3. South/Well Tower: Removed the third proposed roof window.
 4. Master Bedroom: North facing roof pitch: Reduced the size of the roof windows.
 5. North Tower: Reduced the size of the two roof windows serving the main bedroom spaces to match the other adjacent roof windows.

Members had no comment to make on this application.

ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:

- SE/23/01845/HOUSE: Fairview, Burton Avenue, Leigh - erection of two storey side extension, alteration to existing porch. Application approved.
- SE/23/01970/HOUSE: 4 Knotley Hall Cottages, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway - part single part two storey rear extensions. Alterations to existing garage to create habitable space. Alterations to roof. 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 additions over and above the size of the original dwelling and of significant size, scale and bulk. The case of very special circumstances put forward does not outweigh the substantial harm. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policy GB1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan, the Sevenoaks Development in Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- SE/23/02455/WTCA: Chilling House, High Street, Leigh TN11 8RH - works to trees in a Conservation Area. No Objection Lodged.

69. To discuss SDC's potential sale of land at The Forstall

See Open Session above. Members were very disappointed that the Parish Council's view that if the land could not be retained as an open green space, the Parish Council would prefer to see the land developed into low cost local needs affordable housing was disregarded by SDC. Unfortunately it was felt that there is no course of action available to the Parish Council.

70. The Green

i. To discuss event to light the beacon on Saturday 4th November

The Clerk reported that The Fleur de Lis pub has agreed to run a bar for the event and possibly food. Members asked the Clerk to invite the fish & chip van, the pizza van and the Thai food van and if the Fleur does food too that would work well. The PTA may sell luminous sticks for the children to purchase. The beacon will be lit at 6pm. Clerk to order one advertising board. The area around the beacon will be fenced off for safety reasons during the event in order to keep the public at a safe distance.

ii. To hear update regarding the proposal to increase the bracing on the Veteran Oak Tree

The Clerk reported that The Original Tree Surgeons has sent some information on the cobra bracing system and she has asked for a specific report on the bracing for this tree.

iii. To discuss quote to remove metal fencing adjacent to Barden Cottages

The Clerk reported that Weld Done has quoted £75 to cut out all the old railing and remove. Members approved this quote. Cllr Marchant will then consider how the area could be improved with grass seed. The Clerk advised that a resident has reported that a bench has disappeared that had been moved temporarily. Cllr Marchant undertook to investigate.

iv. To discuss the PTA's request to hold an event on The Green on Sunday 8th October

Members approved this request.

v. Pizza Van

The Clerk reported that Pizza Cucina has asked to visit on Saturdays. Members agreed providing that the pizza van ensures that the litter bins are empty of pizza boxes before they leave the site.

- vi. Leigh in Bloom village in bloom competition
The Clerk reported that Leigh was awarded Gold in this year's competition. Members were delighted and congratulated Jane Steare and the other members of Leigh in Bloom.
- vii. Cllr Kaye reported that a draft letter has been received from a resident regarding various village matters. This will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

71. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To hear update on the provision two new Charcott signs
The Clerk reported that she asked Batcheller Monkhouse in July for permission to erect the signs, but despite chasing, has not heard back yet.
- ii. To discuss Rural Swathe & Visibility Cutting
The Clerk reported that all four parishes are interested in taking the function back again next year. Clerk has contacted KCC and the dates for two cuts next year would be March/April and October/November. The contractor has given a provisional price of £3,600 + VAT across all four parishes, but this is at today's fuel price. A firm price would be provided nearer the time. Members agreed. Clerk to ask KCC to be allowed to undertake visibility cutting as well as rural swathe.

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

The Clerk reported that Leigh Performing Arts ran Coffee Corner on 15th September very successfully and they raised some money towards their fund raising. Next dates are Friday 20th October, Friday 17th November and Friday 8th December, which will be run by Leigh Ladies Choir.

73. Aviation

- i. GACC Newsletter has been received and circulated.
- ii. Email from Emma Henshall, SDC Principal Infrastructure Delivery Officer, Planning Policy, re: the Gatwick Airport Northern Runway proposal which has recently been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for examination. The application is currently at 'pre-examination' stage. This is primarily an opportunity for PINS to review the information submitted, but it is also an important opportunity for members of the public to register to become an 'interested party'. Registration is open now and will close on 29 October 2023. After this, the examination stage will begin and there will be an opportunity for anyone registered as an interested party to submit their comments/views on the proposal. "The District Council is a statutory consultee and as such will be invited to comment alongside interested parties. We have commented on previous consultations leading up to the submission of the scheme and will continue to do so. Our response tends to be strategic in nature, recognising the concerns of our communities in the south of the District in relation to additional noise disturbance and air pollution, but also recognising the economic benefits the expansion will bring to the District's economy and that of the wider South East. I'm conscious that there will be individuals and groups within your communities with very specific concerns about the proposal, and I would encourage them to register as an 'interested party' now, so that they will have the opportunity to submit their comments and take part in the examination when it commences. See: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/South%20East/Gatwick-Airport-Northern-Runway/>.

74. Affordable Housing

None.

75. Aged Persons Dwellings

- i. To hear report of the new tenancy of No.1 The Bungalows
Cllr Kaye reported that two applications were considered by the Finance Committee for the tenancy of No.1 The Bungalows. Both applications were looked at in detail and considered against a list of questions and criteria. The Finance Committee agreed to offer the tenancy to Mr Ian Linstead, who has strong connections to the parish. The lease will start on Friday 6th October. The Clerk reported that the carpets have been cleaned and the shelf in the entrance hall may need replacing on the wall or the wall made good. Members agreed.

- ii. To discuss the lease renewal for No.2 The Bungalows
Members agreed a 3.47% increase in rent when the new lease commences on 1st December. Clerk to advise the resident and instruct Helen Breeze to organise the contract.
- iii. To discuss work to downpipe at No.2 The Bungalows
Cllr Marchant undertook to look at work that may be required to the bottom of a downpipe on the wall adjacent to the path.

76. The Old Burial Ground

The Clerk reported that Hever Landscapes said that it is not possible to mow the grass in The Old Burial Ground as it is just too uneven and bumpy. It would improve significantly by regular strimming. Members agreed to wait for the outcome of the grant application before approving the quote for the new path.

77. Leigh Village Halls and Royal British Legion Club

Members discussed the possible refurbishment of both halls and the use of the RBL Club. It was agreed to discuss this further when more information is available.

78. 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: KALC Training: List of events circulated to all members.
- ii. Item 3: High Weald AONB Partnership: The High Weald AONB is working with KCC PROW to supply and deliver free galvanized metal pedestrian gates to replace existing stiles. The landowner needs to sign a simple agreement with the relevant county rights of way team, undertake correct installation of the gate following the instructions provided and keep it well maintained. Contact: Public Rights of Way and Access Service, Kent County Council, Worrall House, Kings Hill, Kent, ME19 4AE Email: westprow@kent.gov.uk. Telephone: 03000 417171. This project is led by the High Weald AONB Partnership with support from the Government's Access for All programme.
- iii. Item 4: Email from the Office of the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner: annual consultation about the performance of Kent Police and local crime levels. See www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/KentPolicingSurvey2023.
- iv. Item 5: Kent Police, July newsletter: Edenbridge & Local areas: "Several reports for vulnerable adults being exploited by local drug users have been attended and welfare checks and assessments completed. Working with housing we will endeavour to protect these persons and make sure the relevant referrals to social services are made. Several reports of suspicious behaviour at the NHS Medical centre building site where by the CCTV cameras were disconnected and damage caused to the hoarding. Working hard to identify the suspects and enquiries are on-going. Calls to the control room:
 - Cowden and Hever: 19 calls from members of public, 4 recorded crimes.
 - Edenbridge South and West: 72 calls from members of public, 53 recorded crime.
 - Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway: 29 calls from members of public, 10 recorded crimes.
 - Penshurst, Chiddingstone and Fordcombe: 18 calls from members of public, 5 recorded crimes."
- v. Item 6: Email from Richard Nevard, Churchwarden re: hedge at The Vicarage, which has been cut.
- vi. Item 7: Tom Tugendhat, with details of his annual School Bus Survey which aims to find out which services are working well and which need improvement over the first few weeks of term. He says: "If you, or someone you know, has children of secondary school age, please ask them to complete my survey. September is always a tricky time for any parent, with our children going into a new school year and sometimes a new school entirely. This brings a change to the routine and our travel plans too. With this being the case it's more important than ever to let me know your thoughts so that I can raise these with the relevant operators and KCC. One of the ways that you can ensure our bus services are as good as they can be is by letting me know any issues or concerns that you may have. I meet with our local bus companies and I am able to raise these issues with them directly." See www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2023schoolbussurvey.

- vii. Item 8: SDC: The Community Grants scheme is open, this supports volunteer-led services within the District that help the health and wellbeing of residents. Community groups, whether newly formed or long-standing, that fall into this category are being encouraged to apply for a grant of up to £5,000 to support their important work. Successful applicants will receive their funding in April 2024. See: www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/communitygrants. The deadline for applications is 12noon on Thursday 2nd November 2023, and grants are for the period April 2024 to March 2025.
- viii. Item 9: SDC News Release: SDC is once again teaming up with KCC and Solar Together to offer residents an opportunity to purchase solar panels at a competitive price.
- ix. Item 11: Kent Police: A21 Tonbridge by-pass in Leigh - between 00:01 on Thursday 14th September and 08:41 on Saturday 16th September, somebody stole a blue Kia, LC08***, from a layby in the road. Crime Report No. 46/167244/23.
- x. Item 13: AEF: invitation to a meeting of groups working on aviation issues to develop the No Airport Expansion! Campaign in London on Saturday the 14th October.
- xi. Item 15: Email from WKHA in response to our query about property maintenance.

79. Finance:

- i. To hear update on the proposal to open a second Parish Council bank account
The Clerk reported that an instant access account at The Unity Trust Bank has been applied for and will be opened this week.
- ii. To discuss quote for a porosity test in Greenview Avenue
Cllr Marchant reported that he will arrange for a porosity test to be carried out possibly in two gardens in Greenview Avenue. There may be a small charge for digging the hole.
- iii. External Audit
The Clerk reported that the external audit has been concluded and there were no concerns or issues raised apart from the requirement to sign bank reconciliations and bank statements quarterly.
- iv. To approve list of payments
Cllr Smith proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Rogers and all were in favour.

80. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

Cllr Rogers reported that the Leigh Carol Singing event will take place on Wednesday 13th December.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 6th November 2023 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm
The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL LIST OF PAYMENTS October 2023

Payment				Amount	
Date	Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Inc. VAT	VAT
02.10.23	657	Clerk	Salary	£1,134.76	
02.10.23	658	HMRC	PAYE	£480.48	
02.10.23	659	Clerk	Mileage, petty cash & electricity contribution	£135.20	
02.10.23	660	KCC	Pension contribution	£648.13	
02.10.23	661	Leigh Scouts	Hall hire	£20.00	
02.10.23	662	SDC	Dog bin emptying Jul to Sep 23	£563.16	£93.86
02.10.23	663	SDC	Bulk refuse freighter 09.09.23	£135.24	£22.54
02.10.23	664	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Maintenance of The Green and areas	£768.00	£128.00
				<u>£3,884.97</u>	<u>£244.40</u>

Signed

Date