

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 8TH JANUARY 2024 AT 8.00PM

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

Open Session

Questions from members of the public

Two residents attended the meeting in order to express their concern about the fun fair returning to Leigh. They said that the sports clubs using The Green, as well as the school who use The Green for recreation and PE, find that the fun fair severely disrupts their use of The Green. Sport matches have to be either cancelled or re-arranged, and there is a risk to residents, the fun fair and the sports teams if matches are played at the same time as the fun fair is using The Green. Members discussed the poll carried out by the school and also the feedback received from residents and comments received were circulated to all members. There was concern about damage to The Green, parking on The Green and the impact of the fun fair on other uses on The Green. There were more residents who expressed concern and objected to the fun fair than those in support. See item 117(vii) for the decision.

Two members of the public left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Report by District Cllr Silander

District Cllr Silander reported that the SDC Budget gap is narrowing after discussions and the next Finance & Investments Advisory Committee meeting is on 11th January. The deadline for responses to the Local Plan 2040 consultation is on 11th January. Cllr Kaye said that members have been considering the consultation and will ensure that the Parish Council's comments are submitted before the deadline. D.Cllr Silander said that SDC has not decided yet how to proceed with the land at The Forstall.

District Cllr Silander left the meeting at 8.45pm.

Closed Session

- 112. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Williams and his reason for absence was accepted by the Parish Council. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur. Cllr Rogers was absent.
- 113. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
Cllr Backlog declared a DPI as she owns the garden where the porosity test was carried out.
- 114. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 4th December 2023** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Marchant, and all were in favour.
- 115. To approve list of meeting dates 2024**
Members approved the following dates:
- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| Monday 8 th January | Parish Council | 8.00pm |
| Monday 5 th February | Parish Council | 8.00pm |
| Monday 4 th March | Parish Council | 8.00pm |
| Monday 8 th April | Parish Council | 8.00pm |

Monday 29 th April	Annual Parish Meeting	8.00pm
Tuesday 7 th May	Annual Parish Council Meeting	8.00pm
Monday 3 rd June	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 1 st July	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 2 nd September	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 7 th October	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 4 th November	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 2 nd December	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 6 th January 2025	Parish Council	8.00pm

116. Planning

- i. To consider applications received
 - i. SE/23/03574/HOUSE: 2 Hunter Seal, Leigh TN11 9AW - garage conversion with associated works, rooflights and alterations to fenestration. Members had no objection to this application. The Clerk reported that since the last meeting, the Planning Committee considered the following application:
 - ii. SE/23/03398/HOUSE: Chapel House, 47 Well Close, Leigh TN11 8RQ - front porch with alterations to fenestration. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:
 - SE/23/02808/HOUSE: 1 Forge Square, The Green, Leigh - off street parking bay with formation of vehicular access. Electric car charging point. New fence and landscaping. Porous hardstanding. Application withdrawn.
 - SE/23/03129/LBCALT: 1 Home Farm Close, Leigh - proposed detached double garage. Landscaping. Alterations to vehicular access with associated works. Application withdrawn.
 - SE/23/03113/MMA: Hawthorns, Egg Pie Lane, Sevenoaks Weald – Minor Material Amendment to 22/01794/FUL (to demolish existing five bedroom detached house and detached double garage. Replace with four bedroom detached house and detached garage over a part cellar/ basement.) To adjust siting of approved dwelling. Application approved.
 - SE/23/02520/FUL: Leigh Layabouts Rugby Football Club Playing Field, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway - change of use from agricultural to Class F2 (outdoor sports and recreation). Application approved.
 - SE/ 23/02723/HOUSE: Parkholt, Penshurst Road, Penshurst - erection of 2m closeboard fence, set back 1.5m from the highway, behind existing trees on the verge. Application refused. Reasons: (1) As per paragraphs 152 and 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the proposal would be inappropriate development and therefore harmful to the maintenance of the character of the Green Belt by definition. The proposed development would result in appreciable harm to the visual characteristics of the Green Belt due to the proposed boundary treatment representing a visually jarring level of built form when viewed within the verdant context of the site and the eastern side of Penshurst Road. The case of very special circumstances does not outweigh the resultant harm of the openness or visual characteristics of the Green Belt. The proposal would be contrary to the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework. (2) The proposed development, as a result of its height and width, would result in an impermeable means of enclosure that would undermine the verdant, landscape character of the High Weald National Landscape. Therefore, the proposal is considered contrary to policy EN5 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. (3) The proposed boundary treatment, by virtue of its height and width, would represent significant and demonstrable harm to the verdant and rural character of the streetscene contrary to policies EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan, and SP1 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.
- iii. To discuss SDC Draft Local Plan public consultation which runs until 11th January 2024
The Clerk reported that the public consultation is open and comments are required by 11th January. Cllr Smith undertook to draft a response for agreement by members and submission.
- iv. To hear update regarding the porosity tests in Greenview Avenue
The Clerk reported that a response has been received from Aaron Hill, Development Manager at SDC, regarding 21 The Green Lane SE/23/01574/MMA.

The letter suggested that the Parish Council contacts the Environment Agency over potential non-compliance with the General Binding Rules, as they are enforcing authority. Clerk to implement.

117. The Green

- i. To discuss quote for grounds maintenance of The Green 2024
Members approved quote supplied by Commercial Services, as follows:

	Maintenance	2023	2024	%
1.	To gang mow green on 21 occasions	£860.33	£920.55	7%
2.	To spike the whole green on 2 occasions	£539.13	£576.87	7%
3.	To roll the whole green in both directions in April	£393.12	£420.64	7%
4.	To contravate (shallow lines are dug in the goal mouth and grass seed sown) the football pitch in April	£655.48	£701.36	7%
5.	To fertilize the whole green on 2 occasions	£1,123.69	£1,202.35	7%
6.	To vertidrain the whole green on 1 occasion	£651.45	£697.05	7%
	Total	£4,223.20	£4,518.82	7%

- ii. To discuss quote for the on-going maintenance of other Parish Council owned land
Members approved the quote supplied by Hever Landscapes for the following work:
1. First cut of The Green in front of Porcupine House early June.
 2. To mow The Green in front of Porcupine House from June to end October.
 3. To mow the strip adjacent to the road from March to June.
 4. To mow The Green in front of The Rectory / around War Memorial.
 5. To mow the edge of The Green where Commercial Services can't reach.
 6. To mow the triangle of grass at Well Close at the junction with Lower Green.
 7. To mow Richard's Triangle.
 8. To mow Charcott Green.
 9. To strim The Old Burial Ground and remove cuttings.
- iii. To repair damage to The Green opposite school
Members approved the quote from Hever Landscapes to repair the damage caused by a car before Christmas, adding 1 ton of top soil and grass seed. Cost: £180 + VAT.
- iv. To discuss the provision of posts around The Green
Members agreed to install a memorial bench on The Green opposite Old Wood Cottage at their own cost.
- v. To discuss the clearance of ditches and edge of lane to the church
Cllr Kaye undertook to report the footpath that runs adjacent to The Forstall as he is a Countryside Access Warden. The path possibly needs raising with a suitable hard paving material. The ditch that runs adjacent to The Green and the Vicarage then drains under the road to a mains drain. The edge of the lane to the church will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.
- vi. To discuss the planting of a memorial tree on The Green
The Clerk reported that the family of Colin Stratton-Brown are very pleased and grateful to the Parish Council for offering to plant an oak tree in his memory. Members to agree cost via email and Clerk to arrange for it to be planted as soon as possible. Cllr Marchant said that there is a tree guard that could be re-used, Clerk to ask WeldDone to remove it and repair where necessary. Clerk to obtain a memorial plaque to be fastened to the tree guard.
- vii. To discuss residents' feedback regarding the application by Shayler's Fun Fair to visit Leigh from 14th to 21st August 2024
See Open Session above. Members discussed the feedback and comments received from residents and agreed that the fun fair coming to Leigh is too disturbing and not as popular as it once was. Cllr Satterley proposed that the fun fair is not invited back to Leigh, this year or in the future. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Smith and by show of hands, all members were in favour. Clerk to write, and to explain the decision in the parish magazine.

- viii. To discuss proposal to increase the bracing on the Veteran Oak Tree and approve costs
The Clerk reported that a meeting was held with Cllr Marchant and Cllr Smith and Bob Noakes from The Original Tree Surgeons. Allan Middleton was invited. A triangulate system was agreed. The contractor was instructed and the work carried out shortly afterwards. Unfortunately the work done was not as instructed and the Clerk and Cllr Kaye, Cllr Marchant or Cllr Smith will meet the Original Tree Surgeons to discuss further. Allan Middleton will be invited to attend as well. In the meantime, Mr Middleton has sent an email with his views on this matter which were circulated to all members. Members agreed that, whilst Mr Middleton's views are to be taken into account, the advice of a professional tree expert must be followed due to liability and insurance reasons.
- ix. Request for a coffee and cake mobile van
The Clerk reported that a request has been made for a coffee and cake mobile van to visit Leigh. The van will be parked on the road on Powdermill Lane, not on the grass and all rubbish will be removed. Members had no objection to the use of a generator and supported the visits.

118. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To hear update regarding drainage works on Coppings Road
Cllr Marchant reported that the landowner has cleared out the stream, which has improved the drainage. This is his responsibility as riparian owner.
- ii. To hear update regarding drainage works on Powdermill Lane
The Clerk reported that a meeting was held with Cllr Marchant, a resident and Lewis Sutton from KCC. Lewis agreed to clear the pipes under the pavements and gateways. The resident agreed to keep the ditch clear of leaves to prevent build up in future. None of the work has yet been done.
- iii. To hear update on drainage on Ensfield Road
The Clerk reported that the blocked drains have been reported to Network Rail. Cllr Britain reported that there were three emergency call-outs due to flooding under the railway bridge which makes the road impassable and pedestrian safety is compromised.
- iv. The Green Lane
The Clerk reported that she has reported a protruding kerbstone and potholes in The Green Lane to Peter Edmed at SDC. Two people tripped over the kerbstone over Christmas.
- v. Rural Swathe cutting contract 2024
The Clerk reported that she has now heard back from KCC regarding the cluster taking back the rural swathe cutting contract this year. KCC no longer allow devolved maintenance of visibility splays, and KCC will carry these out 3 times per annum. Rural hedge cutting can be devolved, but is now carried out between December and January. The budget has yet to be set by KCC for the 2024 season. Members agreed to proceed with two cuts if all the parishes in the cluster are in favour. Clerk to ask C.Cllr McArthur to request that visibility cutting is devolved.
- vi. Highways
 - Urgent Road Closure - The Green, Leigh - 19th December 2023 for up to 5 days outside Leigh Primary School to enable water pipe repairs to be carried out by South East Water.
 - Cllr Britain reported that £8.3bn that was part of the HS2 budget is being devolved by the Government to local councils for the building and repairing of roads. Highway authorities are obliged to publish on their websites how the money has been spent.

119. To discuss proposal to work in a cluster with neighbouring parishes to create an area Emergency Plan

The Clerk reported that Chiddingstone Parish Council is in discussion with the Kent Resilience Hub about the possibility of working as a cluster with Leigh, Penshurst, Hever and possibly Cowden on an area Emergency Plan. There will be support for the cluster from the Kent Resilience Hub, and maybe one or two people per parish could be involved. The majority of issues will be the same for the neighbouring parishes. Members were interested in joining a cluster and agreed to take the discussion to the next step.

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

The Clerk reported that the Coffee Corner held on 8th December was a success with a good turnout. This was kindly run by Leigh Ladies Choir. Next dates: Fridays 19th January, 16th February, 15th March. All 10.30 to 12.00 in the Scout Hut.

121. Aviation

The Clerk reported that under the Planning Act 2008 – Sections 88 and 89; and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rules 4, 6, 9, 13 and 16, an application has been made by Gatwick Airport Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Project. See <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/document/TR020005-001330>. There is a Preliminary Meeting on Tuesday 27th February 2024 at 10:00am at the Sandman Signature London Gatwick Hotel and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

122. Charcott

The Clerk reported that she has now heard back from Batcheller Monkhouse regarding the proposed new Charcott signs and the Trust has asked for their exact location. Clerk undertook to raise the very muddy area where people park on the entrance to Charcott. Cllr Holt reported that there are multiple potholes in Charcott and Clerk to report.

123. Aged Persons Dwellings

The Clerk reported that the British Gas Landlord's Agreement is due to be renewed for both properties and an inspection will be carried out shortly.

124. The Old Burial Ground

- i. To hear update regarding the provision of the new path
The Clerk reported that the work will start at the beginning of April.
- ii. To discuss purchase of new noticeboard and approve costs
Cllr Satterley reported that he has investigated types of information boards and undertook to obtain a proposal and price.

125. To discuss nominations for the KALC Community Award Scheme 2024

Members discussed and agreed the recipient of this year's award.

126. To discuss dates for the Bulk Refuse Collection Service 2024

The Clerk reported that the dates for this year's Bulk Refuse Collection Service are: 17th February, 15th June, 14th September and 9th November. Time will be 1pm to 1.30pm at Crandalls. There will be a price increase from 1st April of cost per stop £121.25 + VAT. The 2023/24 cost is £112.70 + VAT. Members approved.

127. 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: Kent Police – November Newsletter: Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway: regular patrols of both villages continues by local beat officer. There was a report of potential cold caller/distraction burglary tactics being adopted by individuals in the area. They were challenged by the resident and were not able to gain entry to the property and swiftly left. Residents are urged to stay vigilant. Report any issues on Kent Police website.
- ii. Item 3: Southeast Communities Rail Partnership: If you would like to know more about the history of Gatwick railway station and the airport, Bruce Healey, who designed and researched the project has shared a link which will take you to the project via the Redhill & Reigate Society website.
- iii. Item 5: Email from Kathy Aucott, Environment Agency, with an update on the Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme - winter 2023. "In summary, our specialist supplier is currently building the new gates and we expect to install the first of the three new gates next year. The bank raising work at Cattle Arch is progressing well, even with works slowing down due to the recent storms. New kerbing has been installed at the top of the embankment and we are currently placing the material to raise the embankment. Works have started on the eel pass alongside the control structure, which will allow elvers to travel upstream. The eel pass is due to be completed in summer 2024. At Hildenborough, Southern Water have started works to divert a sewer main. This needs to be done before we can start constructing the new embankment. Southern Water's works are due to be completed in spring 2024, weather and ground conditions permitting.

"We will start vegetation clearance at Hildenborough in early 2024 before the bird nesting season starts. Construction work will start on the embankment in the spring." Dated 15.12.23.

- iv. Item 6: SDC: "Sevenoaks District Council has allocated £1,308,500 in the latest round of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to support exciting local projects. The projects will help to deliver health, social and environmental benefits to communities right across the District.
- The Kent Wildlife Trust will receive £250,000 towards improvements at the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve Visitor Centre and improvements in biodiversity
 - £209,000 has been awarded to KCC to improve nine Public Rights of Way in Otford, Kemsing, Swanley, West Kingsdown, Knockholt, Sevenoaks and Edenbridge
 - Swanley Town Council has secured £25,000 towards a sewerage connection for its public toilets in Swanley Park
 - West Kingsdown Village Hall Management Committee will get £17,000 to pay towards car park improvements at the village hall
 - Sevenoaks Town Football Club and Sevenoaks Town Council have been awarded £787,500 towards the construction of a new Community Pavilion at the Greatness Recreation Ground
 - Crockenhill Parish Council will receive £20,000 towards playground improvements at Harvestfield Park."
- v. Item 9: Kent Police: Station Hill, Leigh - between 16:27 on Friday 15th December and 15:35 on Monday 18th December, somebody stole a log splitter. Crime Report No. 46/222816/23

128. Finance:

- i. To discuss the 2023/24 Actual vs Budget and Earmarked Reserves, and the 2024/25 Budget
Members approved the budget for 2024/25 as recommended by the Finance Committee.
- ii. To set the level of the 2024/25 Precept
Members discussed the level of precept and the Finance Committee's recommendation. Cllr Britain proposed that the precept for 2024/25 be set at £52,500, an increase of £1,000, which represents a 2.096% increase. This was seconded by Cllr Satterley and, by show of hands, members were unanimously in favour.
- iii. To consider Earmarked Reserves
As recommended by the Finance Committee, members agreed the following transfers to Earmarked Reserves:
£5,000 from the General Fund to APD Earmarked Reserve
£5,000 from the General Fund to the Preservation of The Green Earmarked Reserve
£3,088.34 from the General Fund to the CIL Reserve.
£200 from the Leigh in Bloom Earmarked Reserve to the General Fund.
- iv. To consider application for grant from Leigh PCC towards magazine costs: £375
The Clerk reported that the Finance Committee has considered the information supplied by the applicant. Members agreed to make a contribution towards the parish magazine of £375 per annum for the Parish Council's use of space each month in the magazine.
Members agreed that the Clerk should draw up a grant application form to standardise applications.
- v. To approve list of payments
Cllr Holt proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Backlog and all were in favour.

129. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

Cllr Smith reported that she will be attending the next quarterly Patient Participation Group meeting on Friday and will be agreeing the wording for advertising the services of the Hildenborough Medical Group with the Weald representative.

Next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 5th February 2024 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.

**LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL
LIST OF PAYMENTS
January 2024**

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
08.01.24	693	Clerk	Salary	£1,195.42	
08.01.24	694	HMRC	PAYE	£523.18	
08.01.24	695	Clerk	Mileage, petty cash	£103.40	
08.01.24	696	KCC	Pension contribution	£687.07	
08.01.24	697	Leigh Scouts	Hall hire	£20.00	
08.01.24	698	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Maintenance of The Green and areas October	£768.00	£128.00
08.01.24	699	Original Tree Surgeons	Tree work as per 2023 tree survey	£228.00	£38.00
08.01.24	700	SDC	Emptying dog bins Oct to Dec 2023	£562.92	£93.82
08.01.24	701	Joe Kaye	Chairman's expenses Dec 2023	£45.40	
08.01.24	702	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Strim Old Burial Ground and remove cuttings	£108.00	£18.00
				<u>£4,241.39</u>	<u>£277.82</u>

Signed

Date