

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2024 AT 8.00PM

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr A. Backlog, Cllr R. Britain, Cllr A. Holt, Cllr G. Marchant, Cllr G. Rogers, Cllr S. Satterley, Cllr S. Smith and Cllr B. Williams

APOLOGIES: District Cllr M. Silander

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). County Cllr M. McArthur attended the meeting from 8.55pm to 9.05pm.

Report by County Cllr McArthur
See page 57.

Closed Session

- 130. Apologies for absence** were received from District Cllr Silander.
- 131. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
Cllr Backlog declared a DPI in item 133(v) as she owns the garden where the porosity test was carried out.
- 132. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 8th January 2024** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Marchant, and all were in favour.
- 133. Planning**
- i. To consider applications received
 - i. SE/24/00125/FUL: Hall Place, Peshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HH - proposed Photovoltaic Array. Members supported this application.
The Clerk reported that since the last meeting, the Planning Committee considered the following applications.
 - ii. SE/23/03685/HOUSE: 1 Waterworks Cottages, Kiln Lane, Leigh TN11 8RT - single storey side extension with rooflight, first floor rear extension and new single-storey rear extension with rooflights. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - iii. SE/23/03681/LBCALT: 7 Forge Square, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QR.
Repair and renovation to existing external staircase. Members supported this application.
 - iv. SE/23/03693/HOUSE: 14 The Forstall, Leigh TN11 8QG - single storey conservatory to side of property. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - ii. To consider SDC Appeal Start Dates:
 - Appeal by: Mr & Mrs Amos. Site: Land West of Oakfield Farm, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 8PZ - subdivision of land for the erection of a detached four bedroom dwelling, together with access and landscaping including a pond. SDC Ref: 23/00086/RFPLN. Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/G2245/W/23/3332313. Start Date: 18th January 2024. Deadline for comments: 22nd February 2024.
 - Appeal by: Mr Andrew Major. Site: 4 Knotley Hall Cottages, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JH - part single, part two storey, rear extensions. Alterations to existing garage to create habitable space. Alterations to roof. SDC Ref: 23/00088/RFPLN Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/G2245/D/23/3332468. Start Date: 24th January 2024. As this Appeal is proceeding under the Householder Appeals Service there is no opportunity to submit further comments.
 - iii. To report SDC planning application decisions:
 - SE/23/03128/HOUSE: 1 Home Farm Close, Leigh - proposed detached double garage. Landscaping. Alterations to vehicular access with associated works. Application approved.

- SE/23/03091/FUL: Unit 7 & Unit 17 Gaza Trading Estate, Scabharbour Road, Hildenborough - revised application for replacement of two existing timber framed buildings (Unit 7 and Unit 17) with steel framed buildings. Application approved.
 - SE/23/03046/HOUSE: 33 Penshurst Road, Leigh - two storey front extension. Loft conversion. Rooflights and fenestration alteration. Roof alterations. Removal of existing chimney and installation of a flue. Application approved.
 - SE/23/03574/HOUSE: 2 Hunter Seal, Leigh - garage conversion with associated works, rooflights, alterations to fenestration. Application approved.
 - SE/23/03398/HOUSE: Chapel House, 47 Well Close, Leigh - front porch with alterations to fenestration. Application approved.
 - SE/23/02604/HOUSE: 7 Valle Gardens, Leigh - double storey side extension consisting of an attached garage and 4 new rooms, replacing existing car port. Alterations to driveway. Application approved.
- iv. Members discussed the email from D.Cllr Silander regarding the Draft Local Plan
- v. To hear update regarding the porosity tests in Greenview Avenue
The Clerk reported that she emailed the Environment Agency and finally had a response to say that this issue does not fall within the remit of the Environment Agency, and the Parish Council should contact the local water company. Members agreed that the Clerk should do this, and members also discussed another possibility for a conduit for the waste water.

134. The Green

- i. To discuss tidying the edge of lane to the church
Cllr Marchant undertook to arrange for this to be done in April.
- ii. To discuss the planting of a memorial tree on The Green
- i. Memorial tree for Colin Stratton-Brown: the Clerk reported that a 10-12cm girth English Oak tree from English Woodlands, together with a 28L bag of peat free compost, some rootgrow and delivery is £306.75 + VAT. An engraved brass plaque on an oak backing will cost £49.16 + VAT. WeldDone has repaired and painted the tree guard and he will fix the memorial plaque to the top rail. Members agreed to the above costs. This will replace the Horse Chestnut that was felled last year. Cllr Kaye said that watering the tree will be important, and Cllr Holt said that she would ask the school to do this. Clerk to also ask Leigh in Bloom.
 - ii. Request for a memorial tree for Michael Hill. Members did not approve this request. The scattering of ashes on The Green is forbidden.
- iii. To discuss the provision of a memorial bench on The Green
Memorial bench for Alan Johnston: the Clerk reported that new benches are approximately £400 + delivery and a small plaque. Members approved the cost and Clerk to implement.
- iv. To discuss request to secure an existing bench and lay some hardstanding
The Clerk reported that Jane Steare has asked for permission to secure Lucie's memorial bench with anchor bolts in the ground, and to lay some sandstone pavers in front of the bench to prevent the area becoming muddy. Members approved.
- v. To discuss D-Day 80 on 6th June 2024 and Light the Beacon
Members agreed to light the beacon either on Thursday 6th or Saturday 8th June, to be considered further.
- vi. To discuss the proposal to run junior football sessions on The Green together with grant funding
Members discussed the grant application from Michael Parker for junior football sessions on The Green. Clerk to contact Michael regarding marketing the sessions and working with the school.
- vii. To discuss cleaning the column of the War Memorial
The Clerk reported that Burslems have quoted as follows: "using a cherry picker to access the full height of the memorial we would clean all of the memorial carefully and thoroughly water wash the memorial by hand using a bristle brush, and use a steam cleaner with an atomizing nozzle to ensure low surface water pressure. We would not seek to achieve a 'like new' finish, or remove all surface lichens. No chemicals would be used in the cleaning of the memorial. £1350.00 plus VAT." Members approved the quote. Clerk to inform Leigh in Bloom in case they want to move the plants at the base of the war memorial.

- viii. Cllr Marchant reported that some cane hoops have been placed on The Green where the hedge was cut back, this prevents parking. Members to consider whether action is required.
- ix. Cllr Satterley reported that the refuse lorry has damaged The Green by being driven on the grass and missing the grasscrete.

135. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To hear update regarding drainage works on Powdermill Lane
 - i. The Clerk reported that Lewis Sutton has advised that works were completed on Powdermill Lane, no defects were located however there is a small section with some roots so his team will be attending again to root cut these. Cllr Marchant advised that the contractors cleared the gully on both sides of the road.
 - ii. The Clerk reported that a resident has asked for a drain to be installed by the ditch at the entrance to The Forstall in order to minimise surface water. Lewis Sutton has advised that he will pass this request to his maintenance team to unblock the gully as this appears to be blocked from the photos further up. KCC did resurface a section to try and stop the pooling but unfortunately it doesn't look like it achieved it. Lewis said that due to tight restrictions on budgets, this may need to be reviewed at a later stage.

County Cllr McArthur joined the meeting at 8.55pm. The Closed Session was suspended for the Open Session.

Open Session

Report by County Cllr McArthur

County Cllr McArthur reported as follows:

1. Children's Services at KCC: KCC returned to court just before Christmas with an appeal against the findings that children's services were being run illegally by giving preference to citizen children over Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). The outcome was that the previous ruling was dismissed and KCC allowed to proceed as previously. At end of November 2023, Kent has 2,013 Looked After Children – 541 UASC and 1,472 non-UASC. By comparison, one year earlier the numbers were one thousand less children. The total number of UASC arrivals for 2023 now stands at just under 2,200 This already exceeds the previous record for a calendar year which was 1,403 in 2022. As required by the Court, KCC has been working closely with the Home Office on the provision of appropriate levels of accommodation to meet the required anticipated need. Three options in Ashford, Dartford and Faversham have been identified as suitable and compliant for potential use as new Reception Centres, subject to the agreement of full funding from Central Government. KCC has been assured that the new Reception Centres will be wholly funded by Central Government and will not present an additional burden on Kent taxpayers. They will only provide temporary accommodation and care for UAS Children until they are transferred to another UK local authority.
2. Bus Services: the situation has worsened and the use of off-peak bus services is still low. The funding from Central Government has been spent and KCC spent £3m in bus subsidies. Unless there is a legal requirement to transport a child to school for special educational needs or if the child attends the nearest appropriate school (not a grammar school or faith school) if the school is more than 3 miles away, there could be no bus services. This could start from the beginning of April, whereupon it will be the parents' responsibility to get their children to school. For those entitled to free transport to school, KCC will provide this by a variety of means, as they do at present, this will be by private hire of coaches or cars mainly.
3. M25: the Government will introduce emergency areas on all-lane running motorways, of which the M25 is one. Work will commence between junctions 5 and 7 in March/April.

The Clerk asked whether it would be possible for KCC to devolve the cutting of visibility splays to the cluster of parishes, and C.Cllr McArthur undertook to investigate.

County Cllr McArthur left the meeting at 9.05pm and the Closed Session resumed.

Closed Session

- ii. Rural Swathe cutting contract 2024
The Clerk reported that she is still waiting to hear back from KCC regarding the cluster funding.

iii. Highways

- i. Email from resident requesting that the pavement along the High Street opposite the shop and houses is removed in an effort to ease congestion. Members agreed the pavement is in the ownership of KCC and the Parish Council would not support this request.
- ii. Temporary Road Closure - Penshurst Lane and Penshurst Road, Leigh on 15th February 2024 for 1 day from 09.30 to 15.30 between B2027 Tonbridge Road and Cinder Hill Lane. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while works are undertaken by Openreach. See <https://one.network/?tm=136227338>
- iii. Cllr Marchant reported that the pavement at the junction of the High Street and Lower Green is blocked by scaffolding and pedestrians have to walk in the road which is dangerous. Clerk to monitor.
- iv. Cllr Britain reported that cars are parked on the double yellow lines outside the Fleur de Lis which makes visibility at the junction difficult. Clerk to ask the pub landlord to try and stop people parking there.
- v. Cllr Britain reported that very large vehicles are using Ensfield Road to access the site for the barrier works. They are leaving the road very muddy. He undertook to contact Volker Stevin in this regard.

iv. Parish Litter Pick

This has been arranged for Saturday 23rd March at 11am.

v. Rights of Way

The Clerk reported that sadly a dog died on the water meadows, it ran into the temporary fencing erected for the Leigh Barrier works. The fencing was construction Heras fence panels and had protruding sections. Clerk to write to the Environment Agency. Clerk to ask also when the ROW will re-open.

136. To discuss Leigh Village Halls Management Committee's proposals for the village halls and application for financial assistance

Cllr Kaye reported that he and the Clerk met John Tuke to discuss the Village Halls Management Committee's plans to improve the halls. Members agreed to give a grant to the Village Halls Management Committee for £2,750 + VAT for the initial architect's work and to request that the invoice is addressed to the Parish Council. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Backlog and all were in favour. Clerk to suggest that a public information event is held in the village hall in order to include residents in the process and to seek their views.

137. To discuss the creation of an area Emergency Plan

The Clerk reported that there will be an initial meeting to discuss how to take this forward. Cllr Williams and the Clerk to attend.

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

The Clerk reported that the Coffee Corner held on 19th January was a success with a good turnout. The next dates are Fridays 16th February, 15th March and 12th April. 10.30am to 12.00pm. It was agreed that the parish organisations should be encouraged to run the events as a means of fund raising.

139. Aviation

- i. AEF: The third annual meeting of the AEF's Airspace and Noise Community Forum will be held at 10.00am on Friday 9th February 2024 by Zoom. The meeting is expected to last approximately 90 minutes.
- ii. The Clerk reported that the GACC newsletter has been received.

140. Charcott

None.

141. Aged Persons Dwellings

The Clerk reported that a British Gas engineer was called out to No.2 The Bungalows as the boiler wasn't working. It is now in full working order.

142. The Old Burial Ground

Members discussed the purchase of new information board and it was agreed to approve the design and cost at the March Parish Council meeting. Cllr Holt said that there is a lot of interesting information available, some of which can be displayed on the information board.

143. 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 3: Email from Howard Clark, Sevenoaks District Independent Advisory Group (IAG) Chair: "The IAG is a group of community volunteers who work with Kent Police to improve policing services across the county acting as critical friends. IAGs were created to challenge conventional thinking, to give an independent perspective on issues and to work as partners with Kent Police to inform improvements in service delivery. The group support policing by:
 - providing a link between the police and the communities of Kent
 - sharing community feedback with the police and other agencies
 - giving advice and support during critical incidents as required."
- ii. Item 6: Agenda for Tonbridge, Redhill & Reigate Steering Group Meeting on Tuesday 27th February from 10:50-12:30 at Tonbridge Castle and via Teams. Cllr Britain said he may be able to attend remotely. The Clerk reported that a Year 6 Rail Safety event has been arranged for Leigh School.
- iii. Item 8: KALC re: the Kent Parish Council Winter Support Scheme, which is aimed at assisting individuals experiencing financial hardship due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Members agreed that the Clerk should contact Leigh United Charities to see if they are able to administer the funding.
- iv. Item 9: Kent Police:
 - Station Hill, Leigh: between 17:00 on Monday 1st January and 21:00 on Friday 5th January, somebody broke into a shed at a residential property. They do not appear to have taken anything. Crime Report No. 46/3038/24
 - High Street, Leigh: on Sunday 21st January around 16:05, two boys walked past a residence and catapulted a stone at a window. No damage caused. Crime Report No. 46/11571/24
- v. Item 10: KALC Training:
 - 15th February Mastering Planning Application Responses (online) 7pm to 9pm. Cllr Williams and the Clerk to attend.
 - 22nd February Finance for Councillors (online) 10am
 - 27th February Finance for Councillors (online) 6:30pm
- vi. Item 11: Vision ICT: There are two website information events, each costing £25 + VAT:
 - Enhance Your Website with Text and Imagery: February 8th 2023, at 10:00am.
 - V6-5 Advanced Workshop: Elevate Your Web Editing Skills - date to be confirmed.Members approved the cost of the Clerk attending both events.
- vii. Item 17: SDC: the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) have informed SDC that they are required to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements for Sevenoaks District Council. The LGBCE cannot create or abolish town or parish councils as part of their review, nor can they amend the external boundaries of any town or parish. However, parish wards could be created under certain circumstances. Under the current timetable, there is likely to be a consultation on the District Council's warding patterns from October this year.

144. Finance:

- i. To consider application for grant from GACC towards costs associated with Gatwick Airport's Development Control Order application for use of their Northern Runway
Cllr Williams proposed that a grant of £500 is given to GACC, this was seconded by Cllr Britain and all were in favour.
- ii. To approve list of payments
Cllr Marchant proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Smith and all were in favour. Cllr Kaye and Cllr Britain to authorise the payments online.

145. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

Members discussed the Annual Parish Meeting which will be held on Monday 29th April.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 4th March 2024 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

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

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
05.02.23	703	PCC of Leigh	Parish magazine column	£375.00	
05.02.23	704	Clerk	Salary	£1,208.23	
05.02.23	705	HMRC	PAYE	£510.37	
05.02.23	706	Clerk	Mileage, petty cash	£109.13	
05.02.23	707	KCC	Pension contribution	£687.07	
05.02.23	708	Leigh Scouts	Hall hire	£20.00	
05.02.23	709	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Maintenance cut hedge at The Triangle	£174.00	£29.00
05.02.23	710	Vision ICT Ltd	Webinar 08.02.24	£30.00	£5.00
05.02.23	711	English Woodlands	Oak tree for The Green	£368.10	£61.35
05.02.23	712	Selene Signs Ltd	Memorial plaque	£59.00	£9.83
05.02.23	713	GACC	Grant	£500.00	
				<u>£4,040.90</u>	<u>£105.18</u>

Signed

Date