

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

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

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

APOLOGIES: Cllr A. Backlog, Cllr G. Rogers, Cllr S. Satterley and District Cllr M. Silander

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk) and two members of the public. County Cllr M. McArthur attended the Open Session only.

Open Session

Report by District Cllr Silander

In the absence of District Cllr Silander, the Clerk read his report:

- “At the SDC budget meeting, CAB had a £35,000 in funding decrease, which has been made up by a £40,000 one-off grant from KCC and central government. There is an on-going debate about the use of a government £165,000 grant and if/how it could and should be applied to support this service.
- The Housing Policy Allocations Consultation is ongoing, SDC members have logged their views.
- SDC’s aspiration to reach Net Zero by 2030 has been described as "no longer realistic" and as such has been scrapped. There will be further debate raised about this. (Note by C.Cllr McArthur: “SDC’s aspiration to reach Net Zero by 2030 has been withdrawn due to its very high cost. The biggest carbon load in SDC’s estate comes from its leisure centres, which would need to be rebuilt. This can’t be achieved by 2030. However, the ambition to continuously reduce carbon emissions remains and the over-all governmental target for 2050 is still in place for SDC.”)
- District Cllr Richard Streatfeild is leading a southern wards reply to the Gatwick local impact report, which he believes was based upon SDC accepting data at face value and misrepresenting the relative scale of the benefits compared to the negative impact.”

Report by County Cllr McArthur

County Cllr McArthur reported that Measles is becoming a concern in the county and is now listed on the World Health Organisation’s list of diseases to eradicate. The national target is for 95% of children to have had two MMR vaccinations before they are 5 years old. There is a serious outbreak in London because the percentage figure of those having two MMR vaccinations is a lot lower. The ‘R’ figure for Measles is 15, and there is concern that the disease will rage out of control if children do not receive two vaccinations. Between 2000 and 2020, deaths from Measles dropped by 94%, which was due to the introduction of the MMR vaccination.

Cllr Holt asked about black and clear sacks. C.Cllr McArthur said that the distribution of black bags has stopped already and the clear ones will be discontinued in the autumn once residents have received their bag for life.

County Cllr McArthur left the meeting at 8.10pm.

Questions from members of the public

1. A resident asked members about the veteran oak tree inspection and whether he could receive a copy of the report. Members agreed.
2. A resident asked about the threat to school buses, and the Clerk advised that the buses in this area are still running at the current time.
3. The same resident asked whether recycling needs to be sorted, and Cllr Britain advised that sorting is carried out at the depot.
4. The same resident asked when the application on land south of Greenview Avenue will be determined. Clerk to contact the planning officer and to ask D.Cllr Silander to find out when the application will be determined.

Closed Session

- 162. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Backlog, Cllr Rogers and Cllr Satterley, and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council. Apologies for absence were also received from District Cllr Silander.
- 163. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
- 164. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 4th March 2024** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Williams, and all were in favour.
- 165. To discuss the format of the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Monday 29th April 2024**
Members discussed the arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 29th April at 8pm. There will be a talk by the Environment Agency and VolkerStevin on the Leigh Flood Storage Area and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme, and a talk about Asian Hornets. There will be a Chairman's report of activities for the year 2023/24, a County Cllr report, a District Cllr report and a Police report. The 2024 Community Award will be awarded.
- 166. To review and update Risk Assessment**
Members considered and approved the Risk Assessment. Cllr Britain raised the possible risks associated with traffic congestion and excessive surface water flooding, but it was agreed that these items are not risks that the Parish Council could control and should be included in the Emergency & Resilience Plan.
- 167. To review and update Standing Orders**
Members considered and approved the Standing Orders.
- 168. To review and update Finance Regulations**
Members considered and approved the Finance Regulations. It was agreed to remove the words 'three-year' under point 3.1 as the Parish Council does review its forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments, but annually not under a three-year plan.
- 169. Planning**
- i. To consider applications received
 - i. SE/24/00362/HOUSE: 6 Mill Stream Rise, Leigh TN11 9FD - garage conversion. Alteration to fenestration. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - ii. SE/24/00411/HOUSE: 1 Hunter Seal, Leigh TN11 9AW - garage conversion into living space with garage door changed to a window. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - iii. SE/24/00526/LBCALT: Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HH - replacement of all the single-glazed windows with double-glazed units. Members agreed to support this application providing that the Conservation Officer has no objection to the scheme.
 - iv. SE/24/00488/HOUSE: 1 Home Farm Close, Leigh TN11 8SB - installation of fully screened ground mounted solar panels. Members agreed to undertake a site visit to ensure that the proposal is well screened.
 - v. SE/24/00757/AGRNOT: Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HH - erection of an agricultural building. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - vi. SE/24/00512/HOUSE: Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HH - proposed garage extension. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - vii. SE/24/00049/FUL: Recreation Ground, Lealands Avenue, Leigh TN11 8QU - erect a replacement outdoor classroom (gazebo style with a fixed roof and open sides). This application is currently invalid. It was agreed that the Planning Committee would consider and agree a response on behalf of the Parish Council when the application is validated.
 - ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:
 - SE/23/03693/HOUSE: 14 The Forstall, Leigh - single storey conservatory to side of property. Application approved.

- SE/24/00366/WTCA: Hall Place, Leigh TN11 8HH – works to trees in a Conservation Area, removal of Tilian x Europaea. No objection lodged.
 - SE/24/00125/FUL: Hall Place, Leigh TN11 8HH – proposed photovoltaic array. Application approved.
- iii. To discuss potential planning policy breaches in the parish
The Clerk updated members on potential planning policy breaches in the parish. Cllr Marchant said that a trench is being dug at 21 The Green Lane in order to connect waste water into existing drainage on the other side of the road. An easement will be required to cross SDC land. Cllr Kaye advised that a conduit is already in place.
- iv. To discuss the adoption of a Leigh Planning Protocol
Cllr Williams reported that he has prepared and circulated two planning protocols which were recommended at a KALC planning information event he attended online. The protocols give a description of the Parish Council's role and the planning process. Cllr Marchant proposed that the protocols be approved and adopted, this was seconded by Cllr Holt and all were in favour. Clerk to post the protocols on the website.

170. The Green

- i. To hear update on the specialist inspection carried out on the Ancient Oak Tree
The Clerk reported that a specialist Inspection was carried out by Treework Environment Practice on 4th April and his report is expected.
- ii. To discuss D-Day 80 on 6th June 2024 and Light the Beacon
The Clerk reported that the Fleur de Lis have agreed to sell drinks for the event, and have applied for a Temporary Events Notice. The event is due to start at 6.30pm with the beacon being lit at 8.30pm. Leigh Performing Arts and Leigh Ladies Choir are arranging some sing-along songs. Leigh School is involved with hopefully incorporating the event into Grandparents Day with a cream tea being held before the main event starts.
- iii. To discuss Leigh in Bloom's request to plant the bank by Porcupine House with daffodil bulbs
Leigh in Bloom have asked for permission to plant bulbs across the whole of The Green by Porcupine House. The cost of bulbs is £154.17 + VAT for 1000 bulbs. Members discussed in detail and at vote there were four votes in favour of allowing the whole bank to be planted with bulbs, and two votes against. Members approved the request, therefore, but Leigh in Bloom would need to provide the bulbs at their own cost.
- iv. To discuss planting hawthorn saplings at the triangle on Church Hill
Leigh in Bloom have requested 4 hawthorn plants to fill the gaps in the hedge at a cost of £63 + VAT. Members agreed that bare rooted saplings should be planted in the autumn.
- v. To hear update on the cleaning of the War Memorial
The Clerk reported that Burslems have said that they will clean the column of the war memorial on Friday.
- vi. To hear update on the planting of the memorial tree for Colin Stratton-Brown
The Clerk reported that an email of thanks has been received from MaryAnne Stratton-Brown. Cllr Kaye reported that the tree was planted on The Green on Saturday but there has been a lot of negative comment received from the Cricket Club, who claim that the tree is within the cricket boundary. After a lengthy discussion members agreed to move the tree approximately 5m to the east, near the bench which will need to be moved once the tree is large enough to cause safety concerns for those sitting on the bench. Members agreed to move the tree on safety grounds because the safety concern has been raised by the Cricket Club. Cllr Kaye said that he will discuss this with MaryAnne Stratton-Brown. It was agreed to reiterate to the Cricket Club that the dumping of grass cuttings on The Green is not allowed.
- vii. To discuss the re-location of the litter bin and dog bin on The Green
Members agreed to move both bins towards the corner opposite the APDs. Clerk to contact SDC.
- viii. To hear update on the installation of a memorial bench for Alan Johnston
The Clerk reported that the bench is now in place and Barbara Johnston is very pleased and thanked the Parish Council.

171. Highways & Rights of Way

i. Rural Swathe cutting contract 2024

The Clerk reported that the amount of funding that KCC will devolve to the parishes is £4,588. The cost of each cut may vary due to fuel prices at the time of the work.

The net cost per parish will be in the region of £655 per annum. Chiddingstone, Hever and Penshurst have all approved the cost. Members approved. The timing of the cuts are as follows:

First cut: tier 1 roads: 1 May and 30 May; tier 2 roads: 1 April to 30 April

Second cut: tier 1 roads: 1 September to 30 September; tier 2 roads: 1 October and 30 October

Members agreed.

ii. To hear report on the Leigh Litter Pick on 23rd March 2024

Cllr Kaye reported that a very successful litter pick was held and thanked the volunteers who helped. A lot of rubbish was collected which SDC removed.

iii. Highways reports

Clerk to report multiple potholes on Compasses Road and to request that road planings are added to the edges of the road.

iv. Rights of Way

i. Cllr Kaye reported that the footpath has partly been resurfaced from Gibbs Field to Powdermill Lane, which is much improved, although one edge needs some attention.

ii. The Clerk reported that a request has been made to reinstate the kissing gate at the end of Greenview Avenue. Clerk to contact PROW.

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

The Clerk reported that the payment to the architects, Kaner Olette, was made before the financial year end. This was £2,900 + VAT.

173. To discuss the cluster Emergency & Resilience Plan for the area

Cllr Williams reported that he and the Clerk attended the first meeting of the cluster to discuss the Emergency & Resilience Plan. If there is a problem or emergency in the cluster area, the emergency services will be contacted if appropriate, or other agencies such as Openreach in the event of broadband disruption. The Plan will help to fill the gap and offer assistance to the community. The next meeting is in the process of being arranged.

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

The Clerk reported that the next Coffee Corner date is Friday 12th April from 10.30 to 12.00. As agreed last month, the purchase of a disability ramp at £57.50 and a new heater at £171.69 for the scout hut were made. A second disability ramp was required and this was approved by the Finance Committee since the last meeting. The contribution towards the scout hut's heating bill was made before the financial year end, this totaled £1,142.50. The cost of the second disability ramp was deducted from the payment.

175. Affordable Housing

The Clerk reported that the ground floor flat at Gibbs Field with a local connection criteria was advertised and a local person has been offered the tenancy as per the local connection criteria. There were 115 bids for the property and 3 people with a strong local connection were put forward to WKHA by SDC.

176. Aviation

The Clerk reported as follows:

- i. Regular updates are being received from GACC on the Development Control Order hearing.
- ii. SDC Portfolio Decision: Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Examination: copy of SDC's Local Impact Report giving details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority's area. It says: The District has a high quality landscape with a mostly rural character. 60% of land lies within the Kent Downs or High Weald National Landscapes and 93% of land is designated as Green Belt.

The positive local impacts are:

- Benefit from the £1 billion projected economy creation
- Benefit from the creation of 14,000 jobs

- Benefit from increased tourism
- District Council ambition to create a world cluster of sporting facilities in the north of the district with key hotel developments
- Improvements to the railway station at Gatwick Airport to provide greater capacity

The neutral local impacts are:

- Road improvements, car parking and active travel routes are localised impacts only.

The negative local impacts are:

- Communities in the southern part of the district already experience adverse disturbance from aircraft noise. The situation would be made much worse. If the number of flight paths are not increased, those communities under the narrow flight path will suffer from 35% more aircraft movements and aircraft noise will become much more intrusive.
- Noise pollution for regional tourist attractions and heritage assets.
- There is little clarity on how Gatwick will achieve the reduction in the noise footprint.
- There is little clarity on the enhanced noise insulation scheme and the areas that will benefit. Request that communities in the southern part of the district are included in the scheme.
- There would be an impact on the district transport network with a 40% increase in passengers travelling to the airport – this will create congestion and increased carbon emissions.
- A lack of improvement to the wider rail infrastructure.
- Little clarity on how Gatwick will directly achieve net zero targets.

Conclusion

Support in principle but concerned about negative social and environmental impacts to communities in the south of the district. These need to be mitigated. The Clerk referred to D.Cllr Silander's comment made in the Open Session.

- iii. AEF: Government's night flight restrictions consultation: Following a 2020–2021 consultation on night noise restrictions at the three noise designated airports (Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted) the Government decided to roll over its existing night noise regime, from October 2022 to October 2025 to allow the sector to recover from the impacts of Covid. The Government is now carrying out a follow-up consultation on its regime at the noise designated airports for a three-year "bridging period" between October 2025 and October 2028. The bridging period is intended to give additional time for the industry to return to pre-pandemic levels of traffic. The other stated intention is to provide time for the findings of current studies – on aviation night noise effects (DfT) and on aviation noise attitudes survey (CAA) – to be reported and factored into future night noise regime decisions. The night-time noise abatement objective for the 2025–2028 regime for the designated airports following consultation in 2023 has now been finalised. The objective is "to limit, and where possible reduce, the adverse effects of aviation noise at night on health and quality of life while supporting sustainable growth and recognising the importance to the UK of commercial passenger and freight services." It is anticipated that an announcement on the 2025–2028 night flight restrictions will be made in July this year. The consultation covers proposals and options for the next night-flight regimes for Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted taking current planning contexts into account.

177. Charcott

Cllr Holt reported that she is in the process of trying to arrange a meeting with The Redleaf Trust regarding parking concerns in the village.

178. Aged Persons Dwellings

The Clerk reported that Hodge Landscapes has provided the following quote for an extended hardstanding area and steps at APD1.

- Build new paved steps and landing to shed using matching paving to path.
- Build new wooden gazebo over path approx. 2.4m and fix wall plate above window.
- Cover gazebo roof with twin wall polycarbonate and fix into roof bars.
- Install mini gutter to collect runoff from roof.
- Pave over flower bed under gazebo.
- Install galvanised handrails to both sides of new steps.

Price £2,430 + VAT. Members approved the quote.

179. The Old Burial Ground

The Clerk reported that the lectern style information board has been delivered. Cllr Satterley has arranged for a quote of £200 + VAT for the printing of the information.

Cllr Holt and Cllr Marchant to liaise about the information. Clerk to ask Shane Hodge to install the information board when we does the path in the Old Burial Ground.

180. 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: SDC News Release: "Council weighs up Local Plan consultation results: Councillors will soon consider the results of the most recent Local Plan consultation, which asked for views on planning policies and development sites across the District. The public were consulted on the draft Local Plan (the Regulation 18 part 2 consultation) over seven weeks from 23 November 2023 until 11 January 2024. The Local Plan has policies to ensure new development comes forward with infrastructure and services and built to high design standards with a minimal impact on the environment. The Plan also includes potential development sites for new homes and business space. Around 5,300 people took part providing 11,000 comments. The public were asked for their views on the possible locations for new developments. Their preferences were:

- Pedham Place (bordering Swanley and close to the villages of Farningham and Eynsford) - 37%
- Multiple sites across the District - 32%
- A combination of multiple sites and Pedham Place - 2%
- None of these options - 29%

The public also raised other issues. These included:

- The need for services to support new housing, eg GP surgeries, schools and public transport
- Considering Green Belt developments in light of updates to national planning policy
- Concerns about the impacts of traffic and congestion
- The need to provide homes and services for older people
- Concerns about specific sites, particularly Pedham Place and land on the edge of Sevenoaks town.

While the public expressed their preferred locations for new developments, the Council will consider all of the issues and concerns that were raised before it revises the Local Plan. At this time, no decision has been taken on which sites will be included in next iteration of the Plan. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the Local Plan (the Regulation 19 consultation) from late summer and in to the autumn."

- ii. Item 4: Kent Police: monthly report, March: "This month highlights the amount of collaborative working that occurs within Kent Police in order to crack down on criminality within the community. There are also continued attempts to reduce antisocial behaviour by teaming up with outside agencies.

- Officers conducted a warrant at an address in Edenbridge on 4 March. Two people were arrested, and a mobile phone believed to be used in county line drug dealing was seized. A suspected stolen vehicle was also recovered. The suspect was charged with being concerned in supply of a class A drug and handling stolen goods. Enquiries are underway to re-unite the owner with their vehicle. He pleaded guilty to the offences and will be sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court at a later date.
- Parish Meeting attended in Penshurst on 4th March and a number of Parish Councillors were given the opportunity to ask questions to PC Kemp around local issues and raise any concerns. These were addressed and fed back to the relevant departments.
- Leigh Parish Council Meeting was attended on the same evening. It was the first time attending both Parish Councils since PC Kemp has been in post so it was a great chance to meet the communities and allow them to put a face to the name. The importance of reporting was addressed and how this is best done.
- Local Beat Officer, PC Kemp, teamed up with the Rural Task force over the weekend of 9th and 10th March. Proactive Patrolling was carried out in Cowden, Penshurst, Hever, Leigh, Chiddingstone and Edenbridge.

- A call of concern over suspicious vehicle was responded to, Farmers engaged with and provided with crime prevention advice and the theft of a vehicle disrupted leading to its swift recovery.
- The annual Edenbridge Meeting was attended on Monday 11th March 2024. It was great to see so many people from the local community in attendance at the meeting. It was a good opportunity for the Local Officer to meet individuals and answer any questions. There was also a lot of useful intelligence that was obtained about local drug dealing/drug use.
 - In relation to key investigation in a local Edenbridge Pub, a warrant was carried out at an address in Edenbridge in order to secure evidence that could assist Detective with their investigation.
 - The Chiddingstone Parish Council Meeting was attended along with Councillors from KCC and the organisers of the Real Football Event. This is promised to be a great event for the community, bringing a lot of people together and business for local pubs and businesses. The organisation is hoping to have a record breaking year for their Charity Fundraising.
 - Due to recent intelligence and reported incidences there has been a Detective assigned to have investigative oversight of Edenbridge and default taskings from tactical resources such as Traffic, Firearms and Rural task force to patrol Edenbridge and surrounding villages.”
- iii. Item 8: Copy email from the Leigh Flood Storage Area and Hildenborough Embankments Scheme to District Cllr Streatfeild regarding the number of flood events this year: “As you may be aware the current legal storage level in flood storage area is 28.05m AOD and this will increase to 28.6m AOD as part of the Leigh expansion scheme. We have attached a map which shows how the flood depths will change across the flood storage area due to the increase in storage capacity. This shows that for Penshurst, Fordcombe and Chiddingstone there will be no change in flood depths as a result of operation of the Leigh Flood Storage Area to the new impounding level. In terms of operation of the Leigh Flood Storage Area (FSA) our operators use flow data from a catchment flood forecasting model input into our operational tools to determine if we will need to store water for individual storm events. We then use real time telemetry data from rainfall and river level/flow gauges in the catchment to monitor conditions and understand the flows upstream on the River Eden and River Medway. We start to store water in the flood storage area when flows coming into Leigh FSA reach 75 m3/s. During a flood event the catchment conditions and upstream level/storage capacity of the flood storage area are continually reviewed and the plan for managing the event is updated based on the real time and future forecast model data. The number of times that Leigh FSA is operated across a winter period depends on catchment ground conditions (how saturated the ground is) and the amount of rainfall/distribution of rainfall that falls during individual events. Over this winter although it has been a very wet winter, we have not met our impounding threshold and so the storage area has not been used to store any water, although there have been several times that it has come close to needing to do this.”
- iv. Item 10: a copy of the signed accounts for 2023 for the Leigh Village Halls Management Committee has been received.

181. Finance:

- i. To approve membership renewal to CPRE: £60
Members approved this membership renewal.
- ii. To approve list of payments
Cllr Marchant proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Holt and all were in favour.

182. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. Cllr Kaye reported that the May meeting is the Annual Parish Council meeting when the Chair is elected and committee membership agreed. If anyone would like to make a change please let the Clerk know, and at the meeting it should be agreed how long the Chair should hold office.
- ii. Members discussed a rat infestation in the High Street and around The Green. Clerk to report and item to be discussed at the next meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Monday 29th April 2024 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting will be on Tuesday 7th May 2024 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.

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

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
26.03.24	735	The Ramp People	Second ramp for Scout Hut	£69.00	£11.50
26.03.24	736	Leigh Scouts	Hall Hire & electricity contribution Nov'22 to Feb'24	£320.00	
26.03.24	737	Leigh Scouts	Hall Hire & electricity contribution Mar'24 to Nov'25	£822.50	
26.03.24	738	Kaner Olette	Initial architect's fees for village halls project	£3,480.00	£580.00
08.04.24	739	Clerk	Salary	£1,208.03	
08.04.24	740	HMRC	PAYE	£510.57	
08.04.24	741	Clerk	Mileage, petty cash	£154.70	
08.04.24	742	KCC	Pension contribution	£687.07	
08.04.24	743	SDC	Emptying dog bins Jan to March 2024	£562.92	£93.82
08.04.24	744	Knockout Print	Annual Parish Meeting boards	£60.00	£10.00
08.04.24	745	Vision ICT Ltd	Backup (net cost to Leigh £60)	£144.00	£24.00
08.04.24	746	Vision ICT Ltd	11 hosted email accounts	£237.60	£39.60
08.04.24	747	CPRE	Membership renewal	£60.00	
				<u>£8,316.39</u>	<u>£758.92</u>

Signed

Date