

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON TUESDAY 7TH MAY 2024 AT 8.00PM

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

APOLOGIES: Cllr G. Rogers, Cllr S. Satterley and Cllr B. Williams

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). County Cllr M. McArthur, District Cllr M. Silander and 1 member of the public attended the Open Session only.

Closed Session:

1. **a. Election of Chairman for year 2024/25**

Cllr Britain proposed that Cllr Kaye be elected as Chairman for the year 2024/25. This was seconded by Cllr Smith and there were no other nominations. Members unanimously voted to accept the proposal. Cllr Kaye said that he was willing to stand and was duly elected.

b. To receive Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Kaye signed the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was counter-signed by the Clerk.

2. **Election of Vice-Chairman for year 2024/25**

Cllr Kaye proposed that Cllr Smith be elected as Vice-Chairman for the year 2024/25. This was seconded by Cllr Holt. There were no other nominations. Members unanimously voted to accept the proposal. Cllr Smith said that she is willing to stand and was duly elected.

The Closed Session was suspended for the Open Session

Open Session

Report by County Cllr McArthur

County Cllr McArthur advised that it is really quiet at KCC and there is nothing to report. There is no date for the resurfacing of the Hildenborough Road but it is scheduled to be done in this financial year.

Report by District Cllr Silander

District Cllr Silander had nothing to report.

Questions from members of the public

David Furneaux from Leigh Football Club attended the meeting to advise that the club is in a predicament and may cease to exist. The Football Club has been running since 1898 and has been quite successful in the last 15 years, and the club is currently running two teams. David said that at the end of the last season he stood down from his managerial role in the club and two players stepped forward, but sadly both are now leaving. The club is financially sound but needs a new manager. Derek Furneaux continues in his role of treasurer and he still marks the pitch. New players are also sought ages 18+. David is happy to return in the short term to be secretary of the club if no-one else steps forward. He would be keen to see the junior football progress. Cllr Silander reported that girls' football sessions are starting on Friday mornings.

Cllr Kaye thanked David for attending and said he hoped that new managers come forward to support the future of the club.

County Cllr McArthur, District Cllr Silander and the member of the public left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Closed Session

3. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Rogers, Cllr Satterley and Cllr Williams, and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council.

4. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed
None.

5. Appointment of Committees and representatives to other bodies

Finance Committee:	Cllr Kaye (Chair), Cllr Britain, Cllr Williams
Planning Committee:	Cllr Williams (Chair), Cllr Marchant, Cllr Smith, Cllr Holt, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Backlog
ROW Committee:	Cllr Kaye (Chair), members of public
Affordable Housing Committee:	Cllr Kaye, (Chair), Cllr Smith, Cllr Britain, Cllr Holt, Cllr Satterley
Leigh United Charities:	Brian Ball / Sally Bresnahan
Leigh Village Halls Management Committee:	Cllr Satterley
Internal Auditor:	Mulberry & Co
Tree Warden:	Cllr Smith
Pond Warden:	Cllr Britain
Countryside Access Wardens:	Cllr Kaye, Joe Staffurth, Rachel Valentine
CPRE:	Cllr Smith
KALC Sevenoaks branch:	All members

Members discussed the Parish Council representation on the Village Halls Management Committee during the period of their extensive refurbishment project. It was agreed that if Cllr Satterley is unable to attend any committee meetings during this period another member will act as a stand in and attend the meetings to represent the Parish Council.

6. To confirm that the Parish Council remains eligible to use the General Power of Competence

The Clerk reminded members that the General Power of Competence gives authorities the power to take the reasonable action they need 'for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'. Under the provision a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally have full legal capacity to do. To remain eligible, the Parish Council has to confirm that:

- (a) the number of members of the council that have been declared to be elected, whether at ordinary elections or at a by-election, is equal to or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the council;
- (b) the Clerk is qualified in the Certificate in Local Council Administration;
- (c) the Clerk has completed the relevant training.

There are some restrictions: to abide by statutory duties such as considering the likely effect of crime and disorder and conserving biodiversity, and to abide by legislation, such as employment law, health & safety, equality and data protection.

Members agreed that the Parish Council remains eligible to use the General Power of Competence.

7. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 8th April 2024 were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Marchant, and all were in favour.

8. To hear report of the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Monday 29th April 2024

The Clerk reported that there was an interesting talk by the Environment Agency and VolkerStevin on the Leigh Flood Storage Area Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme, and also an interesting talk by the Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Beekeepers Association on the challenge of Asian Hornets and the risk they pose to our honey bees and the entire insect population. Leigh's local Police Officer, PC Harry Kemp, attended and gave a brief overview of local policing and crime statistics. The meeting was well attended by the public. The 2024 Leigh Community Award was presented to Paula Beresford for her continuing contribution to the parish as the Chair of The Leigh Village Halls Management Committee.

9. Planning

- i. To consider applications received
 - i. SE/24/00659/HOUSE: Spilebank, Moorden Lane, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JE - demolition of existing rear conservatory to be replaced with new single storey extension with rooflights. Infil side extension, extending first floor dormer with new juliet balcony.

- To add a pitched roof to existing dormer. Replace rooflight with larger rooflight and additional rooflight added to dwelling. Removal of chimney. Members had no objection to this application providing that the proposal does not increase the floorspace by over 50%.
- ii. SE/24/01058/WTCA: South View, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QR – works to trees in a Conservation Area, Horse Chestnut, reduction of 20%. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - iii. SE/24/01060/WTPO: 4 Hollow Trees Close, Leigh TN11 8QF - works to tree with a TPO, Oak tree on boundary, cut back encroaching branches. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - iv. SE/24/00876/LDCPR: Middle Cottage, 42 Well Close, Leigh TN11 8RQ - proposed loft conversion with dormer window to rear elevation and 4 rooflight windows to front elevation. Members had no objection to this application.
 - v. SE/24/00734/FUL: Land West of Hale Oak Farmhouse, Hale Oak Road, Sevenoaks Weald TN14 6NQ (adjoining parish consultation) - the conversion of an existing agricultural barn into a two storey dwelling and detached garage. Members had no comment to make on this application as the building is within Chiddingstone parish.
- ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:
- SE/24/00757/AGRNOT: Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh – erection of an agricultural building. Application refused. Reason: There is considered insufficient information to determine the agricultural use of the site, as an agricultural unit. The new building is not considered to satisfy the requirement of being 'reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit' and the proposal does not comply with Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
 - SE/24/00526/LBCALT: Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh - replacement of all the single-glazed windows with double-glazed units. Application approved.
 - SE/24/00362/HOUSE: 6 Mill Stream Rise, Leigh - garage conversion. Alteration to fenestration. Application approved.
 - SE/24/00488/HOUSE: 1 Home Farm Close, Leigh - installation of fully screened ground mounted solar panels. Application approved.
- The Clerk reported that an email has been received from Aaron Hill, Development Manager at SDC, regarding the application on land south of Greenview Avenue, which said that the planning officer is currently reviewing the responses to the recent re-consultation on this application, several of which were submitted late, and which were crucial to the consideration of the application, such the views of the KCC Highways. SDC hopes to be able to determine this application in the coming month.
- iii. To report notification of appeal decision:
 Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/W/23/3332313: Land off Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 8PZ. The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission. The application ref is SE/23/00738 and is for the erection of a detached four-bedroom dwelling, together with access and landscaping. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted. Although Green Belt land, the proposal would constitute limited infilling and meets exemption set out in para 149 (e) of the Framework.
- iv. New Planning Enforcement legislation
 The Clerk reported that new planning enforcement laws have come in. The 4 year rule for breach of operational development (eg building work) or change of use to single dwelling house has changed to 10 years if completed on or after 25th April. The 4 year rule still stands for development completed before 25th April. The legislation states:
 In most cases, development becomes immune from enforcement if no action is taken:
- within 10 years of substantial completion for a breach of planning control consisting of operational development where substantial completion took place on or after 25 April 2024
 - within 10 years for an unauthorised change of use to a single dwellinghouse where the change of use took place on or after 25 April 2024
 - within 4 years of substantial completion for a breach of planning control consisting of operational development where substantial completion took place before 25 April 2024;
 - within 4 years for an unauthorised change of use to a single dwellinghouse where the change of use took place before 25 April 2024

- within 10 years for any other breach of planning control (essentially other changes of use)
See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ensuring-effective-enforcement>

10. The Green

i. To hear update on the specialist inspection carried out on the Ancient Oak Tree

The Clerk reported that the inspection was carried out by Treework Environment Practice on 4th April, and an interim response has been received, which states:

- The tree is both ancient and veteran. As well as their historical and cultural value, such trees are primarily associated with the presence of decay and dead wood, offering the richest saproxylic biodiversity and the rarest resource within any tree population. This habitat value is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (revised 20 July 2021), recognising that such trees are considered to be irreplaceable habitat.
- An historic English oak (*Quercus robur*) pollard with an approx. 2.5 m high bole, overall height of 14m and girth of 590cm. The bole has historically developed into three discrete, separate stems to the north (itself significantly hollow), north-west and the east, supported by a decayed, open cavity, shell of a trunk, the trunk consisting of at least two separate functional units, albeit with vigorous callous growth around the margins of the cavity, that is considered to be providing structural strengthening.
- General moderate vitality.
- Minor die back in the mid and upper crown was observed.
- Epicormic growth was observed in the crown only.
- Known interventions (works) include:
 - Significant historic crown reduction/end weight works (date unknown) at an approximate height of 11m, which the tree appeared to respond favourably, with vigorous extension growth.
 - Historic rigid, metal rod and bolt cable bracing has been installed (approximately 6m in height).
 - Recent, flexible, cable bracing (Cobra) has also been installed (approximately 4-5m and 4-8m in height). Thought to be installed in December 2022.
 - Metal fencing to the canopy drip line has been relatively recently installed.
 - Mulch applied on the soft ground, to the crown's drip line, although some grass is now growing through it.
- Known targets include:
 - A minor road runs 0.5m to the south, with traffic volume of approximately 24 cars per hour.
 - The nearest property is approximately 14m from the tree's trunk.
 - The nearest car parking appears to be well outside of the canopy spread of the tree.
 - A park bench is situated well away from the canopy.
 - It has been reported that children climb into a relatively small open cavity at the trees base (this will be addressed as a part of the recommendations).
- This assessment will apply a TreeCalc wind load analysis to generate illustrative models of the stability of the tree's stem (provided with significant caveats). The models will show that, common with ancient and veteran trees with hollow stems and branches, the Basic Safety Factor of the tree will have been significantly reduced by decay. They may, for example assist in evidencing crown reductions or amendments to the current bracing system.
- I have sought initial additional advice on the bracing systems and am still waiting for further input, particularly in relation to the use of Cobra bracing in veteran trees, where the main branches are rigid, as is the case here.

Depending on the findings of the above analysis, coupled with the aim of enabling longevity of such an important tree, a range of (broadly costed) management options will be presented."

ii. To discuss D-Day 80 event on 6th June 2024 and Light the Beacon

The Clerk reported that the Fleur de Lis has agreed to sell drinks at the event, and has applied for a Temporary Events Notice. The event will start at 6.30pm with the beacon being lit at 8.30pm. The International Tribute will be read at 7pm and Leigh Performing Arts and Leigh Ladies Choir are arranging some sing-along songs, with lyrics available online for people to print off. Leigh School PTA will run a raffle throughout the evening event. There will be a Grandparents' Day on The Green in the afternoon. The Thai food van and ice cream van have confirmed attendance. Cllr Marchant offered to provide wood for the beacon, which will be filled during the day.

- iii. To consider request by Leigh School PTA to use The Green on 21st May 2024 for a sports day BBQ
The Clerk reported that the PTA would like to use The Green for a barbeque and some games stalls and they will run a bar for drinks. Cllr Holt advised that the reserve date in case of poor weather is 4th June. Members approved.
- iv. To consider request by Leigh School PTA to use The Green on 19th July 2024 for a leaver's event
Members approved this request.
- v. To consider request by Leigh School PTA to use The Green on 8th June 2024 for Grandparents Day
Members approved this request.
- vi. To consider request for Land Registry Titles K444927 & K759711 to be returned to Hall Place Estate
The Clerk reported that Shaun Gilchrist from Hall Place has requested that Titles K444927 and K759711 are returned to Hall Place. Members agreed to consider this further at the next Parish Council meeting.
- vii. To consider request for an Unknown Tommy statue to be placed at the War Memorial
The Clerk reported that a request has been made for an Unknown Tommy statue to be placed by the War Memorial in memory of the lady's father. Members approved this request.

11. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. Rural Swathe cutting contract 2024
The Clerk reported that the first cut of Tier 2 roads has been done and Tier 1 roads is underway. The cost for the four parishes is £3,600 + VAT.
- ii. To approve payment of £60 towards the replacement gate for FP SR432 on Greenview Avenue
Members approved the expenditure. The fence will need to be restored with posts and stock fencing. Clerk to contact the resident who raised the request.

12. 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 with the architects and members of the Village Hall Management Committee to discuss the refurbishment project. The Committee is keen to gauge the views of residents as to what is required and what uses the village halls should be providing, and will undertake a public event to show residents some ideas. Cllr Britain said that the Parish Council needs to know whether funding options have been investigated before more financial contributions are made. Members would like to meet with the committee and any other interested party to discuss this in more detail.

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

The Clerk reported that the second meeting of the cluster to discuss the Emergency & Resilience Plan will be on Monday 20th May. The Kent Resilience Forum is holding a Communities Prepared Building Resilient Communities Training Workshop on Tuesday 21st May from 9.30 am at the Civic Centre, Ashford Borough Council.

14. To hear report from the Hildenborough Medical Group's Patient Participation Group meeting

Cllr Smith reported that the Hildenborough & Tonbridge Medical Group has advised that it is under no obligation to deliver prescriptions and it has become a burden for staff to carry out this service. They have asked whether volunteers from Leigh could collect the prescriptions and deliver them to Leigh Post Office every day, and then return to the medical centre with the paper prescriptions. Members were concerned and surprised that HTMG feels that it is acceptable and consistent with its obligations for patient care and security to hand that responsibility over to a third party. Members had the following concerns:

- Accountability – there is a concern on safety, security, risk, liability and insurance. At the moment these stay within staff of HTMG and the Post Office, and patients have complete confidence. Members are concerned about where that sits with a more casual volunteer arrangement.
- Confidentiality - the patient lacks the security of a closed circle of staff handling their medication.
- CQC - it is noticed that the last CQC report on HTMG did mention the supply of prescriptions to patients over a mile away as a positive. The idea that the CQC is now unhappy with the current arrangement and that this is an additional reason for stopping, as mentioned in the last PPG meeting, is therefore confusing. It is also surprising that using a volunteer network outside the NHS would be a system the CQC views as being less risky and more suitable than the existing practice.

Members agreed that this is an important, highly valued and much appreciated professional service that affects around 230 people (estimated figure given recently by HTMG) in the village of Leigh. The Parish Council would be interested in exploring possible alternative suggestions to the problem where possible, such as:

- If HTMG is unable to continue this service, maybe an interim measure is delivery just twice a week instead of the current five days, as was suggested by HTMG for the would-be volunteers, and one that Weald is doing.
- It may be that a number of those in Leigh using this service could manage the change by collecting medication themselves. There are some alternative home delivery services that could be the solution for those patients that are unable to collect themselves. Presumably they would be given advice and help by HTMG to move to a delivery service.

Clerk to respond to the medical centre accordingly.

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

The Clerk reported that the next dates are Fridays 24th May, 14th June and 12th July from 10.30am to 12.00pm in the Scout Hut.

16. Affordable Housing

The Clerk reported that Liz Crockford, SDC's Housing Enabling Officer, has emailed as follows: "I am aware Leigh Parish Council is not supportive of this application (SE/22/02495/OUT). As you will recall, back in 2021 and 2022, English Rural Housing Association were in discussion with the developer regarding delivery of the on-site affordable housing for local needs housing. There has been no recent contact between the developer and English Rural. Whilst we wait for the planning application to be determined, in order for English Rural to pick this up again they would need Leigh Parish Council to be supportive of the site for affordable housing. If Leigh Parish Council wished to speak to English Rural again, they would be happy to arrange this. I am conscious that no other affordable housing sites have come forward in the Parish, but understand Leigh Parish Council may simply feel they cannot support this site for local needs housing." Members did not support this suggestion of a scheme of affordable housing on this site as the access is not suitable and the site is therefore unsustainable.

17. Aviation

The Clerk reported that the following email has been received from GACC: "Here's GACC's second report on events and a reminder of our briefings throughout the 6-month examination under the heading Gatwick DCO News to update our members on progress. These will be published separately from our normal Newsletters. There is an Issue Specific Hearing on Climate Change (ISH 6 on Tuesday 30 April) and an additional Open Floor Hearing (OFH 3 on Thursday 2nd May at 2:00 pm). On the 28th March the Examining Authority published updates on a number of Deadline responses. This included a list of questions arising from the first series of hearings (ISH 1 to ISH 5). There are 288 of these and most of these are addressed to Gatwick – the applicant. However there are some addressed to other participants and where pertinent we have been submitting our responses. Also published are Written Representations relating to the hearings so far, and a series of statements and documents including Local Authority Impact Reports were published. We highlighted in our last issue that the complexity of noise issues was such that it became obvious that the subject could not be covered in one hearing. This was in part answered in the questions referred to above and this has allowed us to submit a detailed response challenging Gatwick's proposed methods of managing noise. We'll publish as soon as it's been acknowledged by the Examining Authority."

18. Aged Persons Dwellings

Cllr Marchant reported that No.2 The Bungalows has a leaky gutter which he undertook to look at. He added that the front two gables have pebbledash that needs re-painting, and the windows too may need attention. Clerk to obtain a quote.

19. The Old Burial Ground

The Clerk reported that the lectern style information board has been delivered. Members agreed that the new path looks very good. Cllr Holt undertook to prepare a draft of the information for the board and Cllr Satterley will arrange for this to be printed at a price of £200 + VAT.

20. Summer Family Fun Day

The Clerk reported that the Leigh Summer Family Fun Day is on Friday 9th August from 10.30am to 1.30pm. The children's entertainer Mr Hiccup, who came to last year's event, has been booked at a cost of £275 for 3 hours of balloons, pocket magic and magic show. Members approved the expenditure.

21. To discuss correspondence received

The Clerk reported that the list of correspondence received has been circulated, and drew members' attention to the following:

- i. Item 4: CPRE Annual Report. This has been emailed to Cllr Smith.
- ii. Kent Police:
 - Peshurst Road, Leigh: on Friday 5th April between 16:00 and 17:35, somebody smashed a window of a residential and were disturbed by an alarm. Crime Report No. 46/55387/24
 - Greenview Avenue, Leigh: on Saturday 13th April between 11:15 and 11:35, somebody stole items from a skip and a garden table from a residential garden. Crime Report No. 46/59847/24.
- iii. Item 9: Invitation to The Annual General Meeting of the Leigh Village Halls Management Committee to be held on Tuesday 14 May at 8pm in the Small Village Hall. Cllr Kaye undertook to attend.
- iv. Item 10: Kent Police: Newsletter April 2024: "Community events: Local Beat Officer was extracted for part of the month with Annual refresher training. As well as regular patrol of all beat areas, attending burglary locations, assisting response teams with High Risk missing people and RTCs, there have been a few key events. Edenbridge Police and Community Together meeting was attended by Local Officer, PC Kemp. This brings together members of the Town Council, Councillors, partner agencies and community members to discuss any matters within the Town. PC Kemp was out on the beat with the Edenbridge Community Warden, Kevin, to attend areas of ASB and recent criminal damage. Child Centred Policing Team had the addition of another member, in the way of PC Harrison. PC Harrison is an incredibly experienced officer and a wealth of knowledge around ASB. PC Harrison will be working alongside PCSO Darling to provide support and advice to young people and their families. Leigh Annual Parish Meeting to round off the month. It was great to see so many people from the community."
- v. Item 13: Mulberry & Co (our internal auditors). Training Programme:
 - Councillors – Policies, Powers & Duties: Thursday 9th May 6.30–8.30pm - zoom
This 2 hour Zoom training session provides an understanding of the regulatory framework councils operate within, and how policies and procedures underpin the core work of the council. The session will explain the range of powers and duties which parish councils have available, including the General Power of Competence (GPC), and how these can be used for the benefit of the community. The session is suitable for new councillors as well as being a useful refresher for existing councillors. The cost is £45 + VAT per person
 - Making Effective Planning Representations: Tuesday 14th May 9.30am–12.00pm – zoom. This session is aimed at parish clerks and councillors with planning responsibilities who want to understand the way in which representations on planning applications can be drafted efficiently and professionally. It will give you an understanding of the way in which planning officers use consultee comments to determine an application and the terminology that will help to get your points across. We also look at where to gather information about an application and which issues you should consider (and which to avoid) when your council is discussing a response. Rather than planning policy, this session focuses on the practicalities of your involvement in the planning process and putting the right points across as effectively as possible. The cost is £50 + VAT per person
 - Councillors Roles, Responsibilities & Working Relationships: Wednesday 15th May 6.30–8.30pm – zoom. This 2 hour Zoom training session covers the fundamental aspects of the role of a councillor and is recommended as an excellent starting point for new councillors as well as being a useful refresher for existing councillors. The session will include understanding what a parish council is, the council structure, observing the requirements of the Member Code of Conduct, the responsibilities of different roles within the council and exploring good practices for managing key relationships within the council and with the wider community. The cost is £45 + VAT per person
 - Chairs Training: Wednesday 22nd May 6.30–8.00pm – zoom. A 90-minute Zoom training session exploring the role of the Chair. This covers the Chair of the council, and the Chair of a committee, and includes guidance on the skills required to be an effective Chair.

The session is suitable for existing or aspiring Chairs of council and/or committees, and will include advice and guidance on managing meetings, conflicts within the council and the council's role as an employer. The cost is £45 + VAT per person.

22. Finance:

- i. To approve 2023/24 Year End Accounts
Members discussed and approved the Year End Accounts, proposed by Cllr Backlog, seconded by Cllr Britain, and all in favour.
- ii. To review the effectiveness of the Parish Council's Internal Control Procedures
Members reviewed the Internal Audit Procedures and agreed that they remain effective. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Britain, and all were in favour.
- iii. Audit for year ending 31st March 2024: to consider and agree Annual Governance Statement
Cllr Kaye read the statements as set out on the Annual Governance Statement and members responded as appropriate. Members approved the responses to the Statement, proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Britain, and all were in favour.
- iv. Audit for year ending 31st March 2024: to consider and approve Accounting Statements 2023/24
Cllr Kaye proposed that the Statement of Accounts be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Britain, and all were in favour.
- v. To discuss the Internal Audit report 2024
The Clerk reported that the Internal Audit was carried out by Mulberry & Co on 30th April and the report has been received and circulated. The report states "Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk. It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered system. It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Leigh Parish Council are well established and followed." There was one recommendation: "I remind the Council that it is required to also post any supporting documentation with the agenda as outlined by the Information Commissioner's Office." This does not include the correspondence list, but if a report is prepared for consideration of members then this should go online with the agenda, unless it's confidential or relating to a contract, tender, or Clerk's salary.
- vi. To approve insurance policy renewal from 1st June 2024
The Clerk reported that this year's renewal premium is £1,981.88 including Insurance Premium Tax, which has increased on last year's premium of £1,873.79. Cllr Backlog proposed that this premium is accepted and the policy renewed. This was seconded by Cllr Smith and all were in favour.
- vii. To approve membership renewal for Kent Association of Local Councils: £774.95
Cllr Marchant proposed that this membership be renewed. This was seconded by Cllr Holt and all were in favour.
- viii. To consider grant application towards marquee hire costs for the Leigh Horticultural Society Show
Cllr Smith proposed that a grant of £500 is made, this was seconded by Cllr Holt and all were in favour.
- ix. To consider application for grant from the Sevenoaks & Tunbridge Wells Beekeepers Association
Cllr Marchant proposed that a grant of £200 is given, this was seconded by Cllr Backlog and all were in favour.
- x. To approve list of payments
Cllr Holt proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Marchant and all were in favour. The Clerk advised that Hodge Landscapes' invoice is £3,750 + VAT, and the Parish Council has received a grant for £3,750 from UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Helping Hand invoices are £504.06 + VAT, and the Parish Council will be receiving grant of £500 from C.Cllr McArthur Members Fund

23. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. Cllr Smith reported that the edges of The Green are overgrown. The very wet weather has created a delay in getting these cut but Clerk to speak to the contractor and arrange for the work to be done as soon as possible.
- ii. Cllr Marchant reported that there is a problem with vermin in the village but the advice from SDC Environmental Health is that private pest controllers should be employed.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 3rd June 2024 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.40pm.

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

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
07.05.24	748	Clerk	Salary	£1,221.03	
07.05.24	749	HMRC	PAYE	£497.57	
07.05.24	750	Clerk	Mileage, petty cash	£167.65	
07.05.24	751	KCC	Pension contribution	£687.07	
07.05.24	752	Hodge Landscapes Ltd	New path in Old Burial Ground	£4,500.00	£750.00
07.05.24	753	C&A Consulting Engineers	Technical Transport report	£1,412.23	£235.37
07.05.24	754	Shaw & Sons	Purchase new minute book	£106.80	£17.80
07.05.24	755	Neil Davies, Weld Done	Fitting signs to new tree, railing, new brackets	£120.00	£20.00
07.05.24	756	KALC	Membership renewal	£929.94	£154.99
07.05.24	757	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Work to The Green, fitting signs to posts	£375.60	£62.60
07.05.24	758	Mulberry Local Auth.Serv.	Internal Audit fee	£270.78	£45.13
07.05.24	759	Zurich Municipal	Insurance renewal	£1,981.88	
07.05.24	760	Helping Hand Company	Purchase litter pickers and hoops	£509.06	£84.84
07.05.24	761	Helping Hand Company	Purchase child size high visibility vests	£79.84	
07.05.24	762	Leigh Village Hort.Society	Grant	£500.00	
07.05.24	763	Sevenoaks/TW Beekeeper Association	Grant	£200.00	
				<u>£13,559.45</u>	<u>£1,370.73</u>

Signed

Date