

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 1ST JULY 2024 AT 8.00PM

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr G. Rogers, Cllr A. Holt, Cllr G. Marchant, Cllr S. Satterley and Cllr S. Smith

APOLOGIES: Cllr A. Backlog, Cllr R. Britain, Cllr B. Williams and County Cllr M. McArthur

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). District Cllr M. Silander, PC Fergus Maunsell and 5 members of the public attended part of the meeting.

Open Session

Report by County Cllr McArthur

In the absence of County Cllr McArthur, the Clerk read her report:

“Only item of note from KCC is that Operation Brock will be back in operation from 10 July throughout the summer. A new permitting system for freight is also being introduced which is designed to stop vehicles rat-running off the motorway thus avoiding traffic queuing on the M20. Permits will be issued at the front of the Operation Brock queue and without a permit, freight vehicles will not be allowed to access the port. It is hoped to relieve the pressure on side roads and the approach to Dover. Local HGVs and deliveries will be issued with local haulier licenses and allowed to continue their journey, with passenger and local traffic, onwards into Dover. For where to go for the latest traffic and travel updates in Kent visit: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/check-before-you-travel>.”

Report by District Cllr Silander

District Cllr Silander reported as follows:

- The new leader of SDC, Cllr Roddy Hogarth, has offered to attend Town and Parish Council meetings if requested.
- There is a new place-based approach to engagement and to how officers make decisions, this will be operational within the next couple of months.
- Refuse collection, the decision to move to bags-for-life for recycling is purely a financial one, but collections will continue to be on a weekly basis. Residents are asked to leave all their refuse and recycling bags at the front of their property and the refuse collection team will collect the bags and place in a bin and take to the end of the street, where it will be collected by the freighter. The new bags-for-life will be sturdy and animal/bird-proof, with a volume of 190 litres. Bags will be circulated to residents in September and they are to be used straight away, although residents may continue to use the clear recycling bags until they have run out.

Report by PC Fergus Maunsell

PC Fergus Maunsell said that he is working alongside PC Harry Kemp and they are the face of local policing in this area. They will split the shifts in order to cover the area. If there is a crime in the process of being committed and is an emergency, residents must call 999. If the crime is not an emergency, residents should call 101 or report the crime online at www.kent.police.uk. Residents are encouraged to sign up to My Community Voice at <https://www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk> for up-to-date information.

Cllr Rogers said that speeding vehicles is an issue in and around Leigh. PC Maunsell said that the PCSOs are being trained on the use of speed guns. A resident said that he has found a lot of empty wine bottles thrown into the verges and was concerned that there may be some incidences of drink driving. PC Maunsell said that he will log this information and request for a drink driving check to be carried out.

PC Maunsell left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Questions from members of the public

1. A resident raised recent correspondence with the Parish Council on the cabling of the Ancient Oak Tree. Cllr Kaye said that the Parish Council carries out an annual tree inspection of all trees on Parish Council owned land and recommendations for work are carried out.

The recent tree inspection on the Ancient Oak Tree was carried out by a professional arboricultural expert, and the Parish Council will also carry out a specialist survey on the cabling on the tree. As part of the tree inspection, it was recommended that the crown is reduced to previous pruning points, deadwood removed and the hole at the base of the tree blocked. It was also recommended that the whole area under the canopy be covered in deep woodchip mulch. All of these recommendations will be carried out shortly. Cllr Kaye added that any work undertaken on any of the trees on Parish Council land will be on the advice of trained professional arboriculturalists and for insurance reasons the Parish Council is obliged to follow the advice of these specialists and would not be covered for insurance if it followed the advice of third parties whose specialism is in other fields.

2. A resident asked whether the Parish Council has heard whether a decision has been made on the application for land south of Greenview Avenue. The Clerk advised that this application has not yet been determined. Members asked District Cllr Silander to obtain more information from the planning officer.
3. The same resident asked whether the church fete will be held this year. The Clerk undertook to check.
4. The same resident asked where the proposed car park will be located, which is on the agenda under item 48. Cllr Kaye advised that this has been raised by a resident and said that the location is on land currently owned by South East Water. However, it is unknown whether this land would be available and how the project would be funded.

To welcome members of the Leigh Village Halls Management Committee who will give an outline of the plans to refurbish the two village halls

Cllr Kaye welcomed members of the Leigh Village Halls Management Committee to the meeting, and said that the Parish Council has discussed the Committee's proposal to undertake works to upgrade and renovate both village halls, and to date a lot of discussions have been held with a firm of architects who have carried out a feasibility study.

Paula Beresford said that there is currently a long list of work that is required to be done to improve the village halls, such as replacing the floor in the small village hall, updating the heating, lighting and acoustics, and works to improve the kitchens. The committee agreed to consider a whole renovation project rather than just to undertake this work which will in itself cost a lot of money. There is currently inadequate storage at the halls and the project would address this too. The committee has looked at funding options for the project, and is keen to involve residents and seek their views on what they would like included in the project, and what uses they envisage the halls providing. It is hoped to have an open day in the halls in September, this would be widely advertised so that people come along.

John Tuke said that a lot of the ideas put forward by the architects are good, and some will be put to the public for their views. It has been agreed that Scribbles Playgroup will have the use of the garden to the rear of the small hall. A topographical survey of the buildings has been carried out which has been very useful. A regular update will be included in the parish magazine and the website will be improved in order to keep residents up to date on the project as it progresses.

Cllr Kaye thanked members of the Leigh Village Halls Management Committee for coming along to talk about the project.

The members of Leigh Village Halls Management Committee and District Cllr Silander left the meeting at 8.55pm.

Closed Session

41. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Backlog, Cllr Britain and Cllr Williams, and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur.
42. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
Cllr Rogers declared a DPI in item 44(i)(i) as she is a neighbour to this planning application site, and an NPI in the same item as she is a School Governor.
43. **The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd June 2024** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Smith, and all were in favour.

44. Planning

i. To consider applications received

- i. 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. Cllr Rogers reiterated her DPI and NPI in this application and took no part in the discussion or vote. Members agreed to support this application to provide better facilities for the school, but with a request that a condition be imposed to remove permitted development rights which could allow a more permanent structure to be built on the site in future.
- ii. SE/24/01517/WTCA: Green Ways Cottage, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 8QE – to reduce by up to 50% two Ash trees on the far left hand boundary, and to fell to ground level two Ash trees by the old garage area. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- iii. SE/24/01443/FUL: Land West of Oakfield Farm, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 8PZ - subdivision of land for the erection of a detached four bedroom dwelling with solar panels, together with access, parking and landscaping including a pond. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- iv. SE/24/01445/HOUSE: 2 Cherry Tree Cottages, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QP - demolition of existing conservatory. Single storey side extension with roof lantern and two storey rear extension. Alterations to fenestration. Members agreed to undertake a site visit.
- v. SE/24/00930/FUL: Applebys, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JH - installation of 32 free standing solar panels within field adjacent to Applebys. Members agreed to undertake a site visit.

The Clerk reported that since the last Parish Council meeting, the Planning Committee considered the following application:

- vi. SE/24/01150/FUL: Hall Place, Peshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HH - proposed storage building with hardstanding and landscaping. Members submitted the following comment: Leigh Parish Council note the comments submitted by the tree officer and The Gardens Trust. The Parish Council has no comment to make on this application, but members would support the provision of a secure storage building for garden/estate maintenance equipment due to concerns regarding theft. Any such application must include details of adequate screening, and with minimal impact on existing trees.

The Clerk reported that this is currently invalid as the application is subject to Biodiversity Net Gain and requires documentation including a BNG small site metric. The applicant claims de minimus exemption but this is not applicable to the development.

ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:

- SE/24/00659/HOUSE: Spilebank, Moorden Lane, Chiddingstone Causeway - demolition of existing rear conservatory to be replaced with new single storey extension with rooflights, infill side extension, extending first floor dormer with new julliet balcony, adding pitched roof to existing dormer, replace rooflight with larger rooflight and additional rooflight added to dwelling. removal of chimney. Application approved.
- SE/24/00876/LDCPR: Middle Cottage, 42 Well Close, Leigh TN11 8RQ - Lawful Development Certificate for proposed loft conversion with dormer window to rear elevation and 4 rooflight windows to front elevation. Application approved.
- SE/24/01058/WTCA: South View, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QR - works to trees in a Conservation Area: Horse Chestnut, reduction of 20%. No objection lodged.
- SE/24/01160/LBCALT: Hall Place, Peshurst Road, Leigh - extension to the south-west of the existing garage consisting of two garages, a store and a covered area. Application approved.

45. The Green

i. To discuss quote for the specialist cabling report on the Ancient Oak Tree

The Clerk reported that two quotes have been received:

- i. Quote 1. To produce a report on the current bracing of the Oak tree and methods for further bracing, if and where required, price: £330 + VAT. This is an arboricultural consultant with 26 years' experience in arboriculture. He has owned and managed a tree contracting company and has advised on bracing numerous times as well as having experience on installing bracing systems.

He is a technical member of the Arboricultural Association, Britain's leading organisation for all things trees and undertake periodic CPD.

- ii. Quote 2: To visit site, write a brief report and propose an alternative bracing system and assess the cavity, including costings for installing any proposed intervention, price £390 + VAT. This company was recommended by the company which carried out the veteran tree inspection.

Members agreed to accept Quote 1 because the consultant is a technical member of the Arboricultural Association and it was felt that this accreditation is important. Proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Satterley and all were in favour.

- ii. To discuss quote for pruning the Ancient Oak Tree and provision of mulch for beneath the canopy

The Clerk reported that she met Bob Noakes from The Original Tree Surgeons to look at the tree, and he has provided the following quote:

- i. To crown reduce to previous pruning points, remove all deadwood. Work to be carried out with a spider platform. To block the hole in the base by the installation of a hard wood board. Price: £1,725 + VAT.
- ii. To cover the whole root plate in deep woodchip mulch. Price: £375 + VAT.

Members agreed to accept this quote, proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Holt and all were in favour.

- iii. To hear report of the D-Day 80 event held on 6th June 2024

Cllr Kaye reported that a very successful event was held on The Green. The Beavers and Cubs read the International Tribute and Brian Ball read the Exhortation. The Leigh Ladies Choir led the singalong to 1940's songs, and the beacon was lit at 8.30pm. Cllr Kaye thanked everyone involved in the organisation of the event.

- iv. To consider request for Land Registry Titles K444927 & K759711 to be returned to Hall Place Estate
To be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

- v. To hear update regarding water leak on The Green near Porcupine House

The Clerk reported that a water leak has made the bank exceptionally wet, this has been reported to South East Water.

- vi. To discuss request by Leigh Beavers and Cub Group to use The Green on 15th July 2024

The Clerk reported that a request to use The Green on Monday 15th July has been received. This will be for their end of summer term barbeque. There will be games and activities from 5.30pm to 7.00pm. There will be soft drinks and food available but no alcohol will be served or for sale. Members approved this request.

46. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To discuss the patching works on The Hildenborough Road

The Clerk reported that County Cllr McArthur had advised that the whole road would be resurfaced in this financial year, but Mike Payton at KCC has now reported that it will be carried out in 2025/26. Patching work has been undertaken. Cllr Marchant said that the road surface is failing and it is important that the whole road is resurfaced. It was agreed that all potholes must regularly be reported to KCC online.

- ii. To discuss uneven surface on footpath between Kiln Lane and Well Close

Members discussed the recent fall of a lady who tripped on the footpath at the end of Kiln Lane and broke her arm. The Kiln Lane Association owns this land, and members agreed that the Clerk should make contact to discuss the dangerous tree roots.

- iii. To discuss the abandoned vehicle parked in the High Street

The Clerk reported that the SDC Parking Office Admin Officer has emailed regarding the abandoned car in the High Street. "We only investigate abandoned vehicles if the owner is not known and one or more of the following criteria are met: (1) the vehicle tax has expired by at least a month; (2) the vehicle is damaged (for example broken windows or missing body panels) or it is burnt out or (3) a number plate is missing." The tax expired today and the MOT expired 18th May.

Two members of the public left the meeting at 9.30pm.

- iv. The Clerk has reported that the path across the airfield in Chiddingstone Causeway SR416 is very overgrown as is the permissive path to Knotley Hall Cottages. This has been reported to PROW.
- v. The Clerk reported that a resident has asked for the overgrown verges at the end of Killick Bank to be cut back. This has been reported to KCC but as the Parish Council is no longer able to cut the visibility splays, this is the responsibility of KCC and the Parish Council cannot cut it.
- vi. The Clerk reported that a resident has asked whether a replacement gate or fence could be erected on land at the end of Greenview Avenue. The Clerk has enquired as agreed to buy a gate from KCC PROW for £60. However this will be a metal gate which the resident feels will be noisy. Members agreed for a couple of posts to be installed with single strand wire.

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

See Open Session above. Members supported the Village Halls Management Committee in their proposal to upgrade the village halls and were happy for the Parish Council to be involved.

48. To discuss resident's idea for a carpark to be built on land south of Leigh Station

Cllr Kaye reported that a resident has written to Tom Tugendhat about his idea of creating a car park on land south of the railway line, with access on the privately owned Southern Water track. He undertook to speak to the resident to obtain more information on viability of this proposal.

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

The Clerk reported that a meeting was scheduled to be held last Thursday but had to be cancelled. A draft plan has been drawn up for discussion.

One member of the public left the meeting at 9.50pm.

50. To hear update regarding from the Hildenborough Medical Group's Patient Participation Group meeting

- i. Cllr Smith reported that an email has been received from Leanne Flux, Practice Manager, Hildenborough & Tonbridge Medical Centre: "We have been working hard behind the scenes to try to sort out something to ensure that medication delivery to Leigh patients could continue. As noted previously, the delivery of medication to Leigh from our dispensary is above and beyond our contractual obligations but we do this as we want to ensure the Leigh patients of HTMG could receive their medication with ease. However, as noted, this was becoming a strain to the staff of HTMG as they were delivering these medications during their lunch breaks and when they were unable to, the Doctors were doing this delivery in between their clinics. I am delighted to confirm that we have now negotiated an external driver (Alan) to do this delivery on a daily basis, and when the driver is on holiday, we will make a plan and ask the doctors to take this on short term until his return from holidays. Thank you for your help and for trying to see if there was a way to support us through this dilemma." Members were pleased with this outcome.
- ii. Cllr Smith reported that she has asked the Hildenborough & Tonbridge Medical Centre for information for inclusion in the parish magazine, with details on how to contact the medical centre and what to expect when you ring.

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

The next dates are Friday 12th July, Friday 23rd August, Friday 20th September from 10.30am to 12.00pm.

52. Aged Persons Dwellings

- i. To discuss quote for painting the exterior walls and windows at both properties
The Clerk reported that the following quote has been received from LCS Painters & Decorators: To prepare and paint (i) the guttering and down pipes to both properties; (ii) the apex to both properties and (iii) the masonry/pebbledash to both properties. Price: £1,995. Members approved this quote, proposed by Cllr Satterley, seconded by Cllr Marchant and all were in favour.
- ii. To discuss shower repair at No.1 The Bungalows and associated cost
The Clerk reported that a plumber was called to replace the pressure release valve in the shower.

53. The Old Burial Ground

- i. To discuss installation of information board
Cllr Holt said that she has prepared some information with the assistance of Leigh Historical Society, and undertook to send to all members for approval. The cost of this project has previously been approved.
- ii. To discuss installation of bench
Members agreed to install the bench in the Old Burial Ground when the information board is installed.

54. 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: RACE (The Rural and Community Housing Enabling Service) Newsletter May 2024.
- ii. Item 3: RACE & Shepherdswell Community Land Trust: invitation to see new development of 10 new local needs housing units in Shepherdswell Village Hall on Wednesday 10th July at 2pm.
- iii. Item 4: KALC Training:
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Training on 3rd July 2024, 6.30pm-8.30pm, online. Cllr Williams, Cllr Smith and the Clerk attending.
 - Mastering Planning Applications on 17th July 2024, 7pm-9pm, online.
- iv. Item 5: SLCC Planning Themed Summit, online on Wednesday 10th July 2024 from 9:55am – 4:00pm. Cllr Williams and the Clerk attending.
- v. Item 6: PC Harry Kemp: introduction to his new counterpart, PC Fergus Maunsell, who will be assisting Harry with the coverage of his beat areas and Parishes.
- vi. Item 7: KCC Consultation: “Every year KCC sets a budget to determine how much money will be spent on services. We are continuing to face the challenge of significant spending demands and cost increases largely in adults and children’s social care and home to school transport. We need to manage this within the funding available, which mainly comes from Council Tax and Government grants. This requires tough choices about priorities for the future. As we plan our spending for the year ahead, we need to hear your views on (i) our council tax proposals, (ii) how comfortable you would be with reductions in spending across our different service areas, and (iii) your suggestions for how to make further savings and increase income.
- vii. Item 8: Invitation to the Uckfield Line Steering Group meeting to be held on Wednesday 10th July from 10.30-12pm at Rickards Hall, Edenbridge.
- viii. Item 9: Email from Cliff Hayward, Chair of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Beekeepers: “On behalf of Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Beekeepers, I would like to thank you for your generous donation to our Asian Hornet awareness campaign. As you are clearly aware, if Asian Hornets become established in this Country, the threat to our already debilitated insect population is enormous. And with it, our ability to produce our own food with the loss of so many pollinators. Kent, being nearest to the continent, is the front line in the fight against those Hornets flying across the channel, or coming over on the numerous freight traffic. So far this year, 13 Asian Hornets have been found in Kent. None, so far, in our Branch area, but four from the Hawkenbury area, just to the South. All found have been subsequently killed by DEFRA.”
- ix. Item 12: Emails from Liz Faulkner, VolkerStevin Customer Liaison Officer.
- x. Item 14: Email from District Cllr Silander regarding the new refuse collection arrangements: “There are still ongoing discussions about some locations which present particular difficulties for refuse collection, such as flats, which might use communal bins, or properties on High Streets, or areas with narrow inaccessible roads which use collection points for bags rather than outside individual properties.”
- xi. Item 16: Funding For All: invitation to Funding for All’s free Funding Conference taking place on Wednesday 3rd July between 10am and 3pm at Shoreham Village Hall near Sevenoaks.
- xii. Item 20: Email from support at Vision ICT regarding Spam emails: “Our mail hosts are working on getting these messages automatically blocked but in the meantime, I have blocked the IP Address range that these have been coming from. It can take up to 48 hours to propagate over the network but after that you shouldn’t receive any more of them.”

55. Finance:

- i. To discuss application for grant from Scribbles Playgroup for work to the garden to the rear of the hall
The Clerk reported that quotes and information have been received from Scribbles. Members were concerned that the plans for the garden should be considered with the project for the hall. Clerk to discuss with Scribbles and the Village Hall Management Committee.
- ii. To approve payment to resident for provision of plants for Powder Mills planter
The cost for new plants is £30. Members approved this expenditure.
- iii. To approve list of payments
Cllr Smith proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Satterley and all were in favour.

56. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

None.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 2nd September 2024 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.30pm.

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

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
01.07.24	771	Clerk	Salary	£1,221.03	
01.07.24	772	HMRC	PAYE	£497.57	
01.07.24	773	Clerk	Mileage & reimbursement costs	£141.00	
01.07.24	774	KCC	Pension contribution	£687.07	
01.07.24	775	SDC	Emptying dog bins April to June 2024	£592.80	£98.80
01.07.24	776	SDC	Bulk refuse freighter 15.06.24	£145.50	£24.25
01.07.24	777	Jill Johnson	Reimbursement plants for Powder Mills planter	£30.00	
01.07.24	778	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Maintenance of The Green and areas	£528.00	£88.00
01.07.24	779	Treework Environmental Practice	Specialist survey of the Ancient Oak Tree	£2,064.00	£344.00
01.07.24	780	Luke Saunders	Fix issue with shower in No.1 The Bungalows	£100.00	
				<u>£6,006.97</u>	<u>£555.05</u>

Signed

Date