

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 4TH NOVEMBER 2024 AT 8.00PM

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

APOLOGIES: Cllr R. Britain and Cllr A. Holt

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

Open Session

Report by District Cllr Silander

District Cllr Silander reported that there have been no updates on the application for land south of Greenview Avenue, or the possibility of the new Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 sites going back out for consultation. An Edenbridge Residents' Association has put together a legal challenge against the draft Local Plan. A planning application for the development of a site as new gas works in Sevenoaks is being discussed at the SDC Development Management Committee meeting on Thursday. The officer's recommendation is refusal and the application is controversial as there is a threat of irretrievable water poisoning. The application is being brought before the Development Management Committee due to its size and nature. The SDC 2025/26 budget gap has widened due to increased costs associated with IT systems and audit, and it may widen further due to other rising costs. SDC is £337,000 over budget on waste.

Report by County Cllr McArthur

County Cllr McArthur reported that the resurfacing works on Hildenborough Road start on Thursday. Cllr Rogers asked C.Cllr McArthur to request that the water leak on Hildenborough Road by The Old Vicarage is repaired prior to the resurfacing works being carried out. The new Entry and Exit System for European countries to enter and leave the UK has been delayed as some countries do not have the relevant technology in place. SDC will be undertaking a boundary review to ensure equal representation for their elected members. There will be a reduction of six elected members in the district.

County Cllr McArthur and District Cllr Silander left the meeting at 8.10pm.

Closed Session

98. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Britain and Cllr Holt, and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council.
99. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
100. **The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 7th October 2024** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Backlog, seconded by Cllr Marchant, and all were in favour.
101. **Planning**
 - i. To consider applications received
 - i. SE/24/02637/WTCA: Wheelwrights Cottage, High Street, Leigh, TN11 8RL - fell to ground level Pine just to the rear of the house. On the rear boundary cut back to the fence line group of conifers and laurel, including the overhanging branches from the willow. Members had no comment to make on this application.

- ii. SE/24/02619/LBCALT: Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HH - replacement of all the single-glazed windows within the stables at Hall Place with double-glazed units. Members supported this application.
 - iii. SE/24/02718/HOUSE: 12 Lealands Avenue, Leigh TN11 8QU - removal of existing garage, erection of part single storey, part two storey side and rear extensions, rear balcony, alterations to fenestration. Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - iv. SE/24/02878/WTCA: Village Green, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QL - to install a replacement Cobra Bracing system to veteran Oak tree. Members supported this application.
- ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:
 SE/24/01700/LBCALT: The Coach House, Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 9AS - removal of existing door, window and steps to be replaced with new french doors and new ragstone steps. New cast iron airbrick. Removal of fireplace with alteration to external wall. Internal alterations. Renewal of kitchen including removal of modern feature fireplace, renewal of kitchen floor, replacing modern internal door with purpose made half-glazed door and replacing a modern external door and attached sidelight with a pair of purpose-made french doors together with replacing the steps leading to the proposed french doors. Application approved.

102. The Green

- i. To hear update on the specialist cabling work on the Veteran Oak Tree and discuss correspondence with the Parish Council's insurance company
 The Clerk reported that the cabling work was undertaken on 23rd October. The work was awarded to Absolute Arboriculture and sub-contracted to Fletcher Tree Services. The Clerk reported that a response has been received from the Parish Council's insurance company as follows: "It would seem that you have dealt with this matter in a most appropriate manner. The advice and counsel that you have sought from specialist tree surgeons and other reports that have been done ought to all be included within your risk assessment – as I am sure it already is. If this gentleman wishes to express his concern, then I think that it may be fair to include or acknowledge this person's concern within the risk assessment, but to explain that all the contrary evidence and support that you sought from specialists led to your final decision. We would be able to speak to this person, however, we would not be in a position to give them any advice or to tell either you [the council] or the gentleman which decision is best. Ultimately, the decision is at the council's discretion, and we will respect it based on the contents of your risk assessment."
- ii. To discuss grounds maintenance on The Green 2025
 The Clerk reported that the Cricket Club is obtaining an alternative price for the grounds maintenance and item to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting. Cllr Williams asked whether the Parish Council should repair the edges of The Green but it was agreed to leave them for now as they would just get damaged again as the ground is so soft.
- iii. To discuss request for the hedge at The Triangle to be cut back
 Cllr Marchant reported that this has been done by a resident, Clerk to instruct contractor to check.
- iv. Request by the Fleur de Lis to use The Green for an event in 2025
 The Clerk reported that The Fleur has asked if it is possible to hold a beer festival on The Green next year, possibly on Saturday 7th June, with marquees, tents, an inflatable bar, live band in the evening and possibly singers during the day on a stage area. The potential number of attendees is 500 which will fall under a temporary events notice. Members asked for a clear event plan and more details of what would be involved. Clerk to invite representatives of The Fleur to the next meeting.

103. To hear update regarding the refurbishment of the Charcott phonebox

None.

104. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To consider starting a Leigh Community SpeedWatch Scheme
 The Clerk reported that there are 5 volunteers who are trained and have confirmed that they wish to be involved, 1 volunteer who wishes to be involved but has yet to be trained, and 2 volunteers who have trained but have yet to confirm that they wish to be involved.

There are 5 sites that have been approved by Kent Police:

- High Street, junction with The Green, capturing vehicles heading towards the village – 30mph
- High Street, at the bus shelter, capturing vehicles heading towards Hildenborough – 30mph
- Saxby Wood – capturing vehicles heading towards village – 30mph
- Saxby Wood – capturing vehicles heading away from village – 30mph
- Lower Green, junction with Well Close – capturing vehicles heading towards railway bridge – 30mph

The Clerk has requested the following new sites:

- Hildenborough Road, junction with Gibbs Field, capturing vehicles heading towards Leigh – 30mph
- Powdermill Lane, junction with Hollow Trees Drive, capturing vehicles heading towards Leigh – 30mph
- Powdermill Lane, junction with The Forstall, capturing vehicles heading away from Leigh – 30mph
- Peshurst Road, layby, capturing vehicles heading towards Leigh – 40mph
- Tonbridge Road, Whitepost/Knotley Hall, capturing vehicles heading towards Chiddingstone Causeway
- Ensfield Road – Environment Agency drive, capturing vehicles heading away from the railway bridge – 30mph
- Ensfield Road – at barrier by pedestrian access to Leigh Station, capturing vehicles heading towards the railway bridge – 30mph

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

The Clerk reported that she, Cllr Williams and Cllr Britain met to look at the row of conifers adjoining the path. The Clerk had contacted the lawyers for the landowners and received a response to say that the landowners were happy to discuss whatever the Parish Council wanted to do. Members agreed to obtain a quote for removing the row of conifers adjacent to the path and creating a gentler path down from Kiln Lane to Well Close with a barrier to prevent vehicle access, and extend the pavement along to the new path. The plan will be discussed with neighbours, the Kiln Lane and Well Close Residents Associations, KCC PROW and KCC Highways.

iii. To hear update regarding the resurfacing of the Hildenborough Road

The Clerk reported that the road will be resurfaced between 7th and 20th November under road closure from 8pm to 5am. Clerk to contact KCC about the water leak.

iv. To discuss drainage works on Lower Green at the railway bridge

The Clerk reported that these works will take place under road closure from 11th November. Clerk to query the extent of the work proposed.

v. To discuss date for a parish litter-pick

Cllr Kaye suggested that the next date is Saturday 11th January at 11am.

vi. To hear update on the rural swathe cutting contract

The Clerk reported that the second cut has been completed.

vii. The Green Lane

Cllr Marchant reported that work has commenced at The Old Police House and dropped kerbs onto the road have been installed. Clerk to check planning consent.

105. To discuss Leigh Village Halls Management Committee's proposals for the village halls

- i. Cllr Kaye reported that he, Cllr Smith and the Clerk attended a meeting with representatives from the Leigh Village Halls Management Committee on Friday. The project management plan is well under way and there is a meeting on Wednesday 13th November at 7pm in the Large Village Hall to which representatives from Leigh parish organisations and groups are invited as well as other hall users. All members of the Parish Council are invited. Cllr Rogers said that she will assist the Management Committee in writing any bids and with the consultation process.
- ii. The next Leigh Village Halls Management Committee meeting is on 19th November. Cllr Smith said she would attend if possible and Cllr Backlog said she hopes to attend remotely.

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

Cllr Williams reported that he and the Clerk attended a meeting of the cluster last week. The draft plan is being prepared, and consideration is being given to drawing up a list of volunteers who could be contacted in an emergency situation. Cllr Williams said that he is happy to be the parish Community Resilience Officer.

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

The Clerk reported that the next dates are Fridays 15th November, 13th December (run by Leigh Ladies Choir) and 17th January from 10.30am to 12.00pm. The Coffee Corner session to be run for parents and carers of the school was cancelled by the PTA and has not yet been rearranged.

108. Aged Persons Dwellings

The Clerk reported that the tenancy for No.2 The Bungalows renews at the end of November. The terms have been agreed.

109. Aviation

i. Email from GACC: "Following recent engagement meetings I am writing to set out GACC's views on the analysis we expect to see in Gatwick's stage 3 FASI(s) consultation, specifically as it relates to the distribution of aircraft and compatibility of the airport's proposals with the interim Fair and Equitable Distribution (FED) report published by the CAA in January 2024. We've first set this in the context of the FED report's conclusions and the deficiencies in CAA guidance (CAP1616) and the government's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG).

The FED report (CAP 2971): The principal conclusions in the FED report are that most people around airports do not support concentrated flight paths. Community preferences and current government/CAA guidance and policy are therefore directly contradictory. The Department, the CAA and Gatwick have been aware of this contradiction for approaching a year, and of the wider concerns about flight path concentration for much longer, but have done nothing to address them.

Airspace policy, TAG and CAP 1616: This contradiction is amplified by a point not made in the FED report, but repeatedly expressed by community groups, namely that the analysis required by policy/TAG/CAP 1616 is inadequate. TAG only considers noise impacts above the government's lowest observable adverse effects level (LOAEL). This ignores the facts that many people living outside LOAEL contours regard themselves as significantly affected by aircraft noise and that LOAEL is arbitrary and has no scientific basis. It also means that the arrivals options analysis airports are required to perform is largely meaningless. LOAEL contours are almost identical for all arrival options, so the variation in quantified noise impacts is generally trivial, whilst wholly ignoring populations outside LOAEL contours. This is clearly nonsensical, but no action has been taken to amend the guidance. Similar issues apply to the departure options.

Gatwick's shortlisted options: The arrival options shortlisted by Gatwick and approved by the CAA do not comply with FED principles as set out in the interim report. Virtually every shortlisted arrival option would concentrate noise as compared to the current position. The majority of arrival and departure options are single tracks which would concentrate noise profoundly. Gatwick was well aware of the conclusions of the FED study when it chose to shortlisted multiple options that directly contradicted community views. It was also well aware that many people wanted it to assess options that achieved greater dispersal, consistent with the FED study conclusions, but it chose not to do so. It has never explained why it failed to assess these options. The CAA was well aware of these failings in Gatwick's analysis but ignored them. It has failed to take subsequent action on route concentration despite promising to do so.

Gatwick's stage 3 analysis: Given the position summarised above, Gatwick's shortlisted options should not be the starting point for its stage 3 analysis. Instead, the shortlisted options should first be assessed for compatibility with the FED interim report. It is likely that this would lead to all single track options being eliminated and additional options that achieve greater dispersal being assessed. Thereafter each option should be assessed using multiple agreed metrics including noise event frequency and PEI, as proposed in the FED report. Each metric should consider all impacts for aircraft under 7,000 feet, not just those within LOAEL contours."

- ii. Aviation Environment Federation – invitation to their Annual General Meeting on Thursday 28th November, in the afternoon (provisional timing 2-5pm). Dr Alex Chapman, senior economist at the New Economics Foundation will be delivering a talk challenging the industry's claims on the economic benefits of air travel.

110. The Old Burial Ground

None.

111. To review and update Risk Assessment

Members discussed and approved the following changes to the Risk Assessment:

- i. Trees – to include a comment about the correspondence received from a resident and the insurance company and also the advice and counsel obtained from specialist tree surgeons and other reports.
- ii. Volunteers – to now include all volunteers working on behalf of the Parish Council, not just during the pandemic.
- iii. A new risk – Leigh Community SpeedWatch Group.

112. To review and update Complaints Procedure

The Clerk reported that this has been updated in line with the NALC Complaints Procedure. Members discussed and approved the update.

113. To discuss the provision of a new defibrillator

The Clerk reported that VolkerSteven has kindly offered to provide the new defibrillator and outdoor cabinet. The Cricket Club has given permission for this to be located on the outside wall of the pavilion, providing that the Parish Council pay for an electrician to install the defibrillator and to provide all future replacement pads and batteries. Cllr Rogers did not support this location and felt that it should be located at the Eastern end of the village but members felt that it needs to be located on a public building and it was agreed to position it on the pavilion.

114. 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 PC Donegan: I would just like to introduce myself. I have just joined the Sevenoaks community safety unit, and will be a Town Beat officer for Edenbridge, Hever, Penshurst, Fordcombe, Leigh, Cowden and Chiddingstone. I will be working alongside PC Maunsell.”
- ii. Item 5: Email from Lee Banks, Deputy Chief Executive, SDC: “Sevenoaks District Council is legally required to determine the polling districts (the geographical areas that determine which polling station electors must vote at) and polling places (the venues where the Returning Officer will allocate polling stations at an election). We must keep these under review, and must by law complete a formal review this year. See www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/pdr2024. The consultation period runs from 11th October to 15th November 2024, and states:
Polling Districts: Following this review, no changes are proposed to the boundaries and extents of polling districts as they remain relevant and appropriate. It is noted that the Sevenoaks District is currently subject to an Electoral Review being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and they will report their recommendations in 2026.
Polling Places: Leigh Village Hall – current polling place is suitable and accessible.”
- iii. Items 6 and 16: SDC News Releases: (i) “Council expresses concerns about Government plans to increase housing targets and build on the Green Belt - SDC has set out its concerns about the Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with new housing targets. In July 2024, the new Government asked for views on its updated NPPF. It includes a revised housing target for the Sevenoaks District that jumped from 704 to 1,113 new homes to be built every year. This represents a 58% increase in new homes across the District. In response, the Council has said it welcomes efforts to boost local housing supply to meet residents' needs, including more social and affordable housing in future developments.

“However, it also raised a number of concerns. The Council argued the method for calculating the new increased housing target is flawed. While supporting the use of ‘Grey Belt’ sites (poor quality and already developed Green Belt land), the Council said these sites should only be developed in sustainable locations – near transport and local facilities. It was also important that councils get to decide which sites are in the Grey Belt and not developers. Most importantly, the Council reiterated its long-standing stance on behalf of residents that the Green Belt is incredibly important and valued, and should only be built on in very limited circumstances. The Council also raised concerns that there are no proposals in the revised NPPF to compel developers to build homes that have been granted planning permission.”

(ii) SDC News Release: Council to consider new glass and food waste doorstep collections - SDC has published a draft ‘Domestic Waste & Recycling Strategy’ that sets out a broad vision to improve the carbon and cost efficiency of its waste collection services. The new vision is being discussed by District Councillors during November 2024. If approved, it could lead to a wider range of materials, including glass and food waste collections along with other improvements in future years. SDC is committed to tackling climate change and, as part of its new Climate Change Strategy, has promised to reduce general waste and increase recycling. This is because recycling helps to prevent climate change by saving energy and helping to transform items that have been used into something new. But right now, recycling rates in the Sevenoaks District are around 38%. Government has set a new national recycling target of 65% by 2035. Under the current collection arrangements, this target is unlikely to be met unless the Council makes significant changes to its waste collection service. Since the pandemic, the amount of waste collected by the Council has increased by about a third as more people are working from home. There has also been significant growth of parcel delivery services from online retailers, which generates extra packaging and waste. The recycling and waste vision proposes the introduction of dedicated weekly food waste collections, and a new glass collection service every other week, by 31 March 2026 along with a comprehensive review of the collection service. In time, the Council would look to further expand its collections by adding new items, such as small household electrical goods and textiles. The Council will also review the collection containers provided to residents, including the option to introduce wheelie bins for general waste and vehicles capable of lifting them.

See www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/wastestrategy.

- iv. Item 7: Kent Police: A21 in Leigh: on Monday 7th October between 13:00 and 15:00, somebody stole a white Vauxhall Corsa, DV21***, from the road after it was involved in an accident. Crime Report No. 46/170677/24
- v. Item 8: Email from resident regarding vehicles being parked on pavements and blocking access, and the provision of new family sized accommodation.
- vi. Item 10: Helen Breeze Property Management regarding The Renter’s Rights Bill, which was introduced into Parliament this September. “We are closely monitoring its progress and will keep you updated of developments. The Government’s intention is to protect tenants from unnecessary hardships inflicted by no fault evictions and unreasonable rent hikes. The Bill also aims to provide greater flexibility for tenants by making it easier to end tenancies earlier, in part to avoid situations when tenants are tied to commitments they can no longer afford to keep. The main changes will be the abolition of the Section 21 notice, which currently allows landlords to serve 2 months’ notice for any reason.”
- vii. Item 11: KALC: invitation to AGM on Saturday 30th November at Ditton Community Centre.
- viii. Item 12: Email from Lee Banks, SDC Assistant Chief Executive: As you may recall the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is currently undertaking an electoral review of Sevenoaks District Council. LGBCE announced that they have decided that the number of Councillors on Sevenoaks District Council should be 48. This is a change from the current council, which has 54 councillors and will take effect from the elections held in May 2027. At the same time the LGBCE have opened a consultation that will run for 10 weeks, ending on 20th January 2025 to shape new council wards for the District Council.
- ix. Item 13: Email from resident regarding the cabling on the veteran oak tree.
- x. Item 14: KALC – details of the salary agreement and new salary scales from April 2024.

115. Finance:

- i. To approve changes to the Clerk’s salary in line with the NALC agreed salary scales and backdate to April 2024
The Clerk reported that NALC/SLCC have circulated the newly agreed pay scales which will take effect from 1st April 2024. Members agreed.
- ii. To approve costs associated with the Christmas Tree 2024
The Clerk reported that a new set of Christmas tree lights are required. The tree is normally donated free of charge in exchange for advertising it the parish magazine. Cllr Marchant undertook to arrange for the delivery and installation of the tree.
- iii. To discuss the frequency of bulk refuse freighter service in 2024/25
Members agreed to continue to have the bulk refuse freighter four times a year.
- iv. 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.

116. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. Members to consider website security and whether a .gov.uk domain name is required.
- ii. Members to give consideration to adopting a parish planning template.
- iii. The Fleur de Lis to be invited to attend the next meeting in order to discuss their proposed event.

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

The meeting closed at 9.55pm.

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

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
04.11.24	809	Clerk	Salary to include bank dated increase to 01.04.24 per NALC scales	£1,500.64	
04.11.24	810	HMRC	PAYE	£666.52	
04.11.24	811	Clerk	Mileage & reimbursement of costs	£326.55	
04.11.24	812	KCC	Pension contribution	£856.12	
04.11.24	813	Vision ICT Ltd	Website hosting Jan 2025 to Dec 2026	£174.00	£29.00
04.11.24	814	Absolute Arboriculture	Cabling work to veteran oak tree as per recommendation	£1,848.00	£308.00
04.11.24	815	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Maintenance of The Green & areas August	£876.00	£146.00
04.11.24	816	Bandshop Sound & Light	Leigh Panto stage hire, Leigh Performing Arts Grant	£900.00	£150.00
04.11.24	817	Chiddingstone PC	Half share cost of Clerk attending Clerks' Conference 12.11.24	£35.00	
				<u>£7,218.83</u>	<u>£633.00</u>

Signed

Date