

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 6TH JANUARY 2025 AT 8.00PM

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

APOLOGIES: Cllr A. Backlog and County Cllr M. McArthur

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). District Cllr M. Silander and 4 members of the public attended the Open Session until 8.50pm. 1 member of the public attended the meeting until 9.05pm.

Open Session

Report by County Cllr McArthur

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

“KCC becomes almost dormant over the festive season, and the main thing which has caused any excitement has been discussion around the devolution white paper. This will be debated at County Council this Thursday when a decision will be made as to whether KCC wants to apply to become a Mayoral Strategic Authority and be included in the first tranche of reorganisation.”

Report by District Cllr Silander

District Cllr Silander reported as follows:

- SDC is also discussing the devolution white paper and it is thought that this could mean the end of district councils by 2027.
- The revision to the NPPF is being looked at by SDC but it is not clear what the impact will be. The Green Belt will be reassessed, but 93% of the Sevenoaks district is categorised as Green Belt, and the Government state that pure Green Belt land will be protected.
- There is a current consultation regarding expansion at Gatwick Airport. District Cllr Richard Streatfeild is pushing SDC to submit a response along the lines of the submission made by KCC which was a robust response to protect the communities that are impacted by aircraft noise.
- The Parish Council will have received notification that the application for land south of Greenview Avenue has been refused. There is always a presumption in favour of development, and planning officers have to consider whether objections made by stakeholders are strong enough to refuse an application. In this case, the objections raised by KCC Highways were stated as a reason for refusal, as was the impact on the Green Belt.

Questions from members of the public

1. A resident asked for his request to receive a copy of correspondence between the Parish Council and their insurance company regarding the veteran oak over the past six months to be approved. Members agreed to provide this information. The Parish Council has made a decision on the Veteran Oak Tree cabling in accordance with professional advice received. Members agreed that the Parish Council has engaged thoroughly with the resident on this matter over many months and the Parish Council does not propose to respond to the resident, nor engage with him further, on this issue. The matter is now closed.
2. A resident asked whether it is possible to create some car parking spaces near the Crandalls recycling bank. The Clerk advised that she has contacted SDC about the new clothes recycling bin and suggested a meeting on site to discuss how the area could be better utilised.
3. The same resident asked whether it is possible to extend the double yellow lines at the junction of The Green on Powdermill Lane as people park there at school drop off and pick up times and create sight line difficulties at the junction. Members agreed that currently cars are not parking illegally in this location and it was agreed to consider whether the yellow lines should be extended.

4. A resident asked whether improvements to The Green could be made where a car has parked near to Barden Cottages. Members agreed to look at the area and consider what could be done.
5. The same resident asked whether the green netting around the cricket square could be removed and replaced with the rope previously used. Members agreed to discuss with the Cricket Club.
6. A resident stated that he has read in the decision notice for the application on land South of Greenview Avenue that the applicant has six months to take the application to appeal. The Clerk explained the appeal process.

Four members of the public and District Cllr Silander left the meeting at 8.50pm.

Closed Session

134. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Backlog and her reason for absence was accepted by the Parish Council. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur.

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

136. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd December 2024 were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Williams, and all were in favour.

137. To approve list of meeting dates 2025

Members agreed the following meeting dates for the year:

Monday 6 th January	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 3 rd February	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 3 rd March	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 31 st March	Annual Parish Meeting**	8.00pm
Monday 7 th April	Parish Council	8.00pm
Tuesday 6 th May	Annual Parish Council Meeting*	8.00pm
Monday 2 nd June	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 7 th July	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 1 st September	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 6 th October	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 3 rd November	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 1 st December	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 5 th January 2026	Parish Council	8.00pm

138. Planning

i. To consider applications received

- i. SE/24/03162/HOUSE: Alphester, 3 Greenview Avenue, Leigh TN11 8QT - hip to gable loft conversion with three roof lights to the front and a dormer to the rear. Members had no objection in principle to this application, but the Parish Council is concerned that the design does not take full notice of sections 22 and 23 of the Leigh Village Design Statement. The number of skylights in the front elevation are, members believe, excessive given the number of other examples in Greenview Avenue and the hip to gable design does not maintain the symmetry of pitches. Both would affect the visual amenity of the neighbourhood. Some adjustment to the design and use of side windows, rather than front facing skylights, would help mitigate this.
- ii. SE/24/03371/WTCA: The Coach House, Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HH
 1. Cherry: Crown reduction - reduce height and spread of the tree by up to 1 metre.
 2. Holly and Yew - reduce height of ivy covered Holly by 2-3 metres, reduce lateral growth of Yew trees back to boundary of the wall. Members had no comment to make on this application.

Cllr Williams reported that since the last Parish Council meeting, the Planning Committee has considered the following applications:

- iii. SE/24/03024/FUL: Bushes Oast House, Bowzell Green, Sevenoaks Weald - conversion of former agricultural buildings to residential use, to enlarge existing dwelling, including demolition and replacement of a single storey extension, insertion of dormers. Insertion of rooflights and additional fenestration (adjoining parish consultation). Members had no comment to make on this application.
 - iv. SE/24/03080/FUL: Little Barnetts Farm, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh - erection of an agricultural building. Leigh Parish Council objects to this application as the evidence suggests that this is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The site is not agricultural but equestrian as it is used as grazing land for horses. The proposal would also have a significant impact on views from the footpath to the north, and in general caused by its location away from the existing stables and other storage areas.
 - v. SE/24/03150/LBCALT: Lower Mead Cottage, High Street, Leigh TN11 8RW - installation of through-floor lift. Members had no comment to make on this application.
- ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:
- SE/24/02619/LBCALT: Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh - replacement of all the single-glazed windows within the stables at Hall Place with double-glazed units. Application approved.
 - SE/24/02878/WTCA: The Green, Leigh - installation of a Cobra Bracing System to Veteran Oak Tree. Decision: no objection to works.
 - SE/22/02495/OUT: Land South of Greenview Avenue, Leigh - outline application for the erection of up to 39 dwellings with access and layout and some matters reserved. Application refused. Reason: (i) On the basis of the information submitted to date, the proposals would fail to provide acceptable highway conditions during the construction phase of the development proposed and would be likely to exacerbate existing pressure for parking on the adjacent road network and create conditions that are prejudicial to all users of the highway. As such the proposals would be contrary to policy T1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan and paragraph 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework. (ii) The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where strict policies of restraint apply. The site is not considered as being grey belt and fails to conform to paragraphs 156, 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Given the scale, bulk, height and amount of development proposed it would result in significant harm to the openness of the Green Belt, both in visual and spatial terms. The harm to the Green Belt is not outweighed by the case of very special circumstances presented. The proposal is therefore an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt and by definition would be harmful to its openness. As such the proposal is contrary to the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and policies L01, L08, SP1 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy and policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan. (iii) The proposal fails to make appropriate provision for affordable housing, education and other infrastructure provision, contrary to Policies SP3 and SP9 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy, as well as the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. (iv) The proposed development could potentially lead to a deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat being the Veteran Oak tree on the village green contrary to paragraph 193(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework which recognises Veteran Trees as an irreplaceable habitat.
- iii. To hear update on potential breaches of planning approval
The Clerk updated members on a potential breach of planning approval.
- iv. 21 The Green Lane
Members briefly discussed copy correspondence from a resident to SDC.

One member of the public left the meeting at 9.05pm.

139. The Green

i. To discuss grounds maintenance on The Green 2025

The Clerk reported that the Cricket Club has obtained an alternative price for the grounds maintenance. All prices are subject to VAT at standard rate. Clerk to request references for Estate & Field from other Town and Parish Councils or Sports Clubs where similar work has been undertaken. If references are acceptable, members agreed to approve their quote for the 2025 season. The quotes are as follows:

	Maintenance	Landscape Services 2024	Landscape Services 2025	Estate & Field 2025
1.	To gang mow green on 21 occasions	£920.55	£1,104.66	£2,205.00
2.	To spike the whole green on 2 occasions	£576.87	£692.24	
3.	To roll the whole green in both directions in April	£420.64	£504.77	£385.00
4.	To contravate (shallow lines are dug in the goal mouth and grass seed sown) the football pitch in April	£701.36	£841.63	
5.	To fertilize the whole green on 2 occasions	£1,202.35	£1,442.82	£1,484.00
6.	To vertidrain the whole green on 1 occasion	£697.05	£836.46	£820.00
7.	Rolling			£385.00
8.	Scarifying			£775.00
	Total	£4,518.82	£5,422.58	£6,054.00

ii. To discuss damage to the fence around the Veteran Oak Tree by vehicle

The Clerk reported that Royal Mail has agreed to pay for the damage and is sending the Parish Council a payment of £325 being the net amount of the quote provided by Weld Done. Members agreed that Weld Done should be asked to proceed with the work.

iii. To discuss the Annual Tree Survey and approve cost of tree work required

The Clerk reported that the Annual Tree Survey took place on 17th December. Work amounting to £180 + VAT is recommended for some removal of deadwood and hanging limbs. Members approved the expenditure. The Clerk advised that the Tree Survey is online under Parish Council meetings, additional documents.

iv. Veteran Oak Tree

Members briefly discussed an email from a resident about the cabling on the Veteran Oak Tree. See Open Session above. Members agreed to send the resident a redacted copy of correspondence with the Parish Council's insurance company for the last six months.

140. Highways & Rights of Way

i. To consider starting a Leigh Community SpeedWatch Scheme

The Clerk reported that a date to meet and train the volunteers at the roadside will be arranged when the weather has improved.

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

The Clerk reported that the following quotes have been received:

RWE: To remove row of conifers £600 + VAT. To grind stumps: £300 + VAT

Hodge Landscapes: To remove old path, regrade slope, install path edgings, lay 50mm layer of 20mm base tarmac, grass seed edges of the path, install barriers to prevent vehicle access. Price: £5,900 + VAT.

Clerk to notify the owner of the land with the conifers of the Parish Council's intention to fell them, also neighbouring residents of the proposed works, which are to be carried out on safety grounds. Clerk to contact KCC PROW to request that the path be designated as a formal footpath. Members approved both quotes.

iii. To discuss date for a parish litter-pick

Cllr Kaye advised that the next date is Saturday 18th January at 11am meeting on The Green.

iv. Hildenborough Road

Members discussed the email received from a resident regarding the removal of the rumble strips on the Hildenborough Road. Members did not feel it was necessary to request that they be replaced.

v. High Street

Cllr Marchant reported that the surface water in the High Street is badly damaging the estate wall. The Clerk reported that she has reported this blocked drain to KCC Highways and also the water leak to SE Water. She has also been in contact with the landowner.

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

Cllr Kaye reported that survey responses have been received and are being analysed. Cllr Marchant reported that work in the garden to the rear of the Small Village Hall by Scribbles playgroup has commenced.

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

The Clerk reported that Leigh Ladies Choir hosted the Coffee Corner on 13th December which was successful. The next dates are: 17th January, 14th February, 14th March. 10.30 to 12.00.

143. Aged Persons Dwellings

The Clerk reported that the British Gas Landlords Gas Safety inspection has been carried out for both properties.

144. The Old Burial Ground: To discuss installation of information board and bench

Members agreed that the bench removed from the area adjacent to Barden Cottages should be located in the Old Burial Ground. Clerk to suggest to Leigh in Bloom that a planter could be placed on the area adjacent to Barden Cottages. Cllr Holt reported that the details for the information board are ready to be scanned and the information board can be erected in the spring.

145. To discuss the dates for the Bulk Refuse Freighter 2025

The Clerk reported that this year's dates have not yet been received from SDC.

146. To discuss SDC's Big Waste Consultation on new proposals for waste and recycling

It was agreed that individuals should be encouraged to respond to the consultation. Clerk to prepare a response on behalf of the Parish Council.

147. To discuss correspondence received

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

- i. Items 3 and 4: Kent Police November and December reports.
- ii. Item 5: SDC News Release: A fly tipper who dumped waste, including asbestos, across the District has been handed a 120-day custodial sentence on each offence concurrently, following an investigation by SDC. He was also ordered to pay £4,665 in fines, costs and compensation on his release.

148. Finance:

i. To discuss 2024/25 Accounts and 2025/26 Budget

The Clerk circulated the 2024/25 accounts which have been considered by the Finance Committee. Members agreed that the expenditure is running to budget and income is on track. Members discussed and approved the 2025/26 Budget.

The budget includes the employer's National Insurance Contribution increase and an estimated 3.45% increase in salary but this will depend upon the agreement reached between NALC and the SLCC. The proposed budget would leave a surplus of £533.61.

ii. To set the level of the 2025/26 Precept

Members discussed the 2025/26 Precept requirements and it was agreed to set the precept at £55,250 which represents a 3.096% increase in council tax. The Parish Council portion of the council tax for a band D property would increase from £54.02 to £56.85 per annum. This year, the tax base has increased from 952.15 to 971.93. Cllr Britain reported that if the precept is not increased, there will be a budget deficit in 2025/26. Proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Holt, and at show of hands all members were in agreement.

iii. To consider the level of contribution from the Parish Council to Leigh PCC towards magazine costs

The Clerk reported that Leigh PCC has requested a contribution towards magazine printing costs for distribution to the whole parish twice a year. Members discussed the figures supplied by the PCC but requested clarification. Item to be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

iv. 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 reported that Vision ICT have invoiced for the email account volunteers@leighkent.org.uk. Members asked the Clerk to cancel this email address.

149. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. Cllr Marchant undertook to dispose of the Christmas Tree and store the stand for next year.
- ii. Cllr Kaye reported that there is surface water on the footpath to the Cattle Arch, Clerk to contact VolkerStevin. Clerk to ask whether the Heras fencing can now be removed.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 3rd February 2025 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.

**LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL
LIST OF PAYMENTS
January 2025**

Payment		Payee	Detail of payment	Amount	
Date	Number			Inc. VAT	VAT
06.01.25	825	Clerk	Salary	£1,260.97	
06.01.25	826	HMRC	PAYE	£521.71	
06.01.25	827	Clerk	Mileage & reimbursement costs	£133.98	£4.80
06.01.25	828	KCC	Pension contribution	£711.22	
06.01.25	829	SDC	Emptying dog bins Oct to Dec 2024	£563.16	£93.86
06.01.25	830	Hodge Landscapes	Steps, rail and lean-to at No.1 APD	£2,640.00	£440.00
06.01.25	831	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Maintenance of The Green & areas October	£768.00	£128.00
06.01.25	832	Helen Breeze Property	No.2 APD renewal of lease	£120.00	£20.00
06.01.25	833	Forvis Mazars LLP	External audit fee 2024	£378.00	£63.00
06.01.25	834	Leigh in Bloom	Grant	£400.00	
				<u>£7,497.03</u>	<u>£749.66</u>

Signed

Date