

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 3RD FEBRUARY 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 one member of the public attended the Open Session only.

Open Session

Report by District Cllr Silander

District Cllr Silander reported that there has been no progress on the SDC budget discussions and there is no update on the unitary councils' proposal.

District Cllr Silander left the meeting at 8.05pm.

Questions from members of the public

A member of the public attended the meeting to ask why the email he had requested from the Parish Council's insurance company was forwarded with all contact details redacted. Cllr Kaye said that the Parish Council is not able under GDPR to share individuals' names and addresses. The resident asked who undertook the Parish Council Tree Survey and why the report says that there are no visual defects on the Veteran Oak Tree. The Clerk advised that the survey is carried out annually by The Original Tree Surgeons and the report, being an incremental report, means that there are no new visual defects on the tree that require attention. Members agreed that the report is adequate to allow the Parish Council to undertake its functions. Members highlighted to this resident that he has shared his own opinions on the Veteran Oak Tree multiple times, and often at great length, and that the Parish Council has expended considerable time and trouble to obtain and take advice from multiple tree specialists. Given this, it was reiterated that the Parish Council, having engaged at length on the subject will not engage further with this resident on matters relating to the Veteran Oak Tree. The resident asked why the Parish Council's Risk Register does not include that there is a 30mph speed limit past the school on The Green when a 20mph speed limit would be preferred. Cllr Kaye said that this is not a managed risk of the Parish Council as it is a KCC responsibility. The resident confirmed that he first raised this concern approximately 3 months ago and members noted that whilst he has expressed his views on the subject with some strength this is an issue that the Parish Council has raised many times, and been concerned about for many years. Requests for speed limit reduction are made to KCC periodically as excess speed is a concern for all residents and the Parish Council.

The member of the public left the meeting at 8.20pm.

Closed Session

- 150. 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.
- 151. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
Cllr Britain declared a NPI in item 156(ii) as the drainage to be discussed has an impact on his property.
- 152. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 6th January 2025** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Britain, seconded by Cllr Williams, and all were in favour.

153. To discuss the Government's Devolution White Paper to reorganise local government

The Clerk reported that the Government published its White Paper on devolution and local government reorganisation in December. Kent County Council and Medway Council have made a bid to Government to join the Devolution Priority Programme. If accepted, Kent will undergo a transformative restructure of its local government. This could involve significant changes to, or the abolition of KCC, Medway Council and the 12 district and borough councils, and the creation of new unitary authorities which will assume the roles and responsibilities currently spread across these councils. Town and Parish Councils will remain in place although it is possible that certain functions could be devolved from county and district councils. If the Government accepts the bid to join the Devolution Priority Programme, in May 2026 there could be elections for a Mayoral Strategic Authority, and unitary authority elections may take place in 2027/28. This restructuring is part of the Government's broader devolution agenda, designed to bring decision making closer to local communities. For Kent, devolution could mean access to new powers, additional funding and improved services for tax payers.

154. Planning

i. To consider applications received

- i. SE/25/00123/MMA: Land East of Eggpie Cottage, Egg Pie Lane, Weald TN14 6NP – Minor Material Amendment to SE/21/01766/FUL to add two extensions to the dwelling and alter fenestration. Members had no objection to this application.
- ii. SE/25/00164/CONVAR: 2 Cherry Tree Cottages, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QP - variation of condition 2 (Approved Drawings) and 3 (Approved Materials) of SE/24/01445/HOUSE (demolition of existing conservatory, single storey side extension with roof lantern and two storey rear extension.) Alterations to fenestration with amendment to change design and size of extension. Members had no objection to this application.
- iii. SE/24/03241/HOUSE and SE/24/03242/LBCALT: Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HH - demolition of ruins of wing to be replaced with new two storey extension with roof lantern. New basement with plant room. Internal swimming pool, internal changes. The Planning Committee will consider this application and agree a response.

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

- iv. SE/24/02863/HOUSE: Windfalls, Penshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HL - add solar panels to south-facing roof. Members had no comment to make on this application.

ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:

- i. SE/20/01691/ADJ: Ashour Farm, Penshurst Road, Bidborough TN3 0LN (Adjoining Authority Consultation): infill of former slurry lagoons for the construction of a hardstanding area for vehicle/plant parking and ancillary agricultural equipment storage (retrospective) Decision: No Objection Lodged.
- ii. SE/24/02968/WTCA: Green Ways Cottage, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 8QE - works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Horse Chestnut in compost area - crown lift right hand side over neighbouring property by up to 5m and reduce remainder of right hand side of crown by up to 2m. Light reduce left hand side of crown to balance. Decision: No Objection Lodged.
- iii. SE/24/03150/LBCALT: Lower Mead Cottage, High Street, Leigh - installation of through-floor lift. Application approved.
- iv. 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 and rooflights, and additional fenestration. Application approved.

iii. To discuss the December update to the NPPF consultation

The Clerk reported that she has read the comparison between the original NPPF consultation and the December update. The following are the key points.

- i. Brownfield site proposals should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused.
- ii. Exceptional circumstances for the development in the Green Belt include, but are not limited to, instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means.

- If that is the case, authorities should review Green Belt boundaries in accordance with the policies in this Framework and propose alterations to meet these needs in full, unless the review provides clear evidence that doing so would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt, when considered across the area of the plan.
- iii. Where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider grey belt which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations.
 - iv. When considering a planning application, the Local Planning Authority should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt including harm to its openness.
 - v. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances
 - i. The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where:
 - ii. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
 - iii. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed
 - iv. The development would be in a sustainable location.
 - vi. 50% affordable housing contribution should apply to developments by default.
- iv. To discuss the SDC bespoke planning training event for Leigh and Chiddingstone Parish Councils
Date to be agreed. Suggested topics are Green Belt protection and the proposed Grey Belt designation.

155. The Green

- i. To hear update regarding grounds maintenance on The Green 2025
The Clerk reported that two satisfactory references have been received from Estate & Field and the company will now be awarded the contract for 2025.

	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.	Scarifying			£755.00
8.	Overseeding: Charterhouse (PitchPower) or			£2,315.00
9.	Overseeding: Guttler (PitchPower)			£1,908.00
	Total – subject to VAT at the standard rate	£4,518.82	£5,422.58	£5,649.00 Excluding (8) & (9)

- ii. To discuss the location of the recycling bins at Crandalls
The Clerk reported that a meeting was held on site with an officer of SDC's Direct Services in order to consider the location of the glass and cardboard recycling bins and the Salvation Army one. SDC has since advised that the cardboard recycling bins have failed their Lolla test and have been removed. It was agreed to recommend to the Parish Council that some hardstanding should be laid between the pavement and the outer canopy of the Yew Tree between the parking area and Jessica's Hall, and the glass recycling bins are re-located to this area, along with the Salvation Army clothes bin. This would free up the whole area for parking.

The Clerk reported that she met the tree officer on site and he would look favourably on an application to raise the canopy and prune back the branches that would overhang the recycling bins to previous cutting points. Clerk to obtain a price for this work from the Original Tree Surgeons and an application for the work from SDC would be required. It was agreed that SDC should be asked to attend with the road sweeper to clean the parking area.

- iii. Cllr Holt reported that she has discussed parking around The Green with the Headteacher who said that the school is proactive about ensuring that staff and parents park sensibly and not on the grass.
- iv. To discuss provision of planters on The Green
The Clerk reported that she has discussed the provision of planters on the muddy area on the southern side of The Green with Leigh in Bloom. The cost would be £44.50 per planter to match those elsewhere in the village. Two or three planters would be required. The Clerk reported that an email had been received from a resident at Barden Cottages who said that they would prefer to see the bench reinstated rather than new planters positioned there. Cllr Marchant undertook to measure the area to see if a second row of grasscrete could be laid which would allow the car to park there and not narrow the road further for passing vehicles.
- iv. Siting of skip on The Green whilst building work undertaken
The Clerk reported that Leigh United Charities has requested the positioning of a skip on The Green whilst building works are undertaken. Members approved the temporary siting of the skip.

156. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To discuss High Street drainage issues and KCC's request for cars to be moved during repairs
The Clerk reported that she met with the KCC drainage officer on Friday and the owner of Hall Place to look at the drainage issues in the High Street. The following was agreed:
 1. The pipe has collapsed that runs from the drain on the northern side of the High Street, located between the shop and the Fleur de Lis. This was recently tarmacked over by KCC's contractors, KCC agreed to close the road and excavate around the drain cover and repair the drain where it has collapsed.
 2. Jet the drain on the southern side of the High Street, the cars will need to be removed.
 3. To clear the blocked drain on the northern side of the High Street as water is running down the road.
 4. To move the drain cover located to the east of (3) above slightly so that it is closer to the kerb, located more or less opposite the end of Lower Green, so that it catches surface water flow.
 The Clerk has requested that KCC use CCTV so that the fault can be clearly identified. The Clerk is going to arrange a meeting with the Highways Maintenance Team and the landowner to look at the levels in the High Street and the damage to the Hall Place wall. KCC has asked for the Parish Council's assistance in asking residents to move their cars away from the High Street whilst work is undertaken. Members agreed.
- ii. Cllr Marchant reported that there is a blocked drain at the junction of Penshurst Road and Leigh Road. Clerk to report.
- iii. Drainage issues in Ensfield Road
The Clerk reported that the KCC drainage officer attended in Ensfield Road and agreed to:
 1. Clear the blocked culvert under Environment Agency land at the northern end of the ditch.
 2. If the drainage pipe can't easily be located, to remove the water in the ditch first.
 3. Reinstall the gully outside the barn so that the surface water is channelled into the ditch.
 The resident will ask a local farmer to remove the silt from the ditch and to keep this well maintained, and to consider putting chicken wire on the end of the drain on the northern end of the ditch to catch leaves and other debris before they enter the drainage pipe.
 4. Remove the drain cover and a layer of bricks on the western side of Ensfield Road, lower the drain so that surface water flows into the drain. Cllr Britain reiterated his NPI on this matter.
- iv. To hear update regarding the Leigh Community SpeedWatch Scheme
The Clerk reported that a date to meet and train at the roadside will be arranged when the weather is better.

- v. To hear update regarding the work to trees and footpath between Kiln Lane and Well Close
The Clerk reported that she has spoken to the Kiln Lane Association and the neighbouring residents regarding plans to remove the old path and the row of conifers and re-lay the path and no objections have been raised. Clerk to ask the contractors to proceed and for RWE Rural Services to obtain permission from SDC to remove the row of conifers.
The approved quotes are:
RWE Rural Services: 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.
- vi. To hear report of the parish litter-pick held on Saturday 18th January
Cllr Kaye reported that there was an excellent turn out and a lot of litter was collected. He said he would like to thank all the regular litter pickers by holding a small event, and members agreed to costs being covered by the chair's expenses budget.

157. To hear update regarding the dates for the Bulk Refuse Freighter 2025

The Clerk reported that the dates for 2025 are:

- 5th April 13.00-13.30
- 14th June 12.15-12.45
- 13th September 12.15-12.45.
- 8th November 13.00-13.30

Cost: £127.31 per visit + VAT. The dates are on the website, and are subject to change. Any amendments would be posted on the website.

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

Cllr Rogers reported that the consultation responses are being analysed. The National Lottery's Funding for All has a scheme where mentors are available to help projects achieve the necessary funding and Cllr Rogers said that she would take advantage of this scheme.

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

The Clerk reported that the last Coffee Corner event held on 17th January was successful. The next dates are: 14th February, 14th March (Leigh Tennis Club hosting) and 11th April. 10.30 to 12.00.

160. Aged Persons Dwellings

None.

161. The Old Burial Ground

None.

162. 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: KALC Training. If anyone would like to attend any of these events, the Clerk will make the booking.
- ii. Item 4: GACC response to the Secretary of State's request for comments from interested parties.
- iii. Item 8: Kent Police:
 - Egg Pie Lane, Leigh - on Wednesday 15th January between 00:35 and 00:55, somebody tried to break into a shed at a residential property. The door was damaged. Crime Report No. 46/8594/25
 - Penshurst Road, Leigh - between 16:30 on Thursday 23rd January and 09:30 on Tuesday 28th January, somebody stole a Thwaites 1 tonne dumper from a park. Crime Report No. 46/15803/25
- iv. Item 9: Email from resident regarding inconsiderate parking around The Green.

- v. Item 10: KCC is consulting on Post 16 Transport Policy Statements for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic years. No significant changes are being proposed for the 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement, but they are proposing two main changes for the 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement.
 - The first is for a Personal Transport Budget to be provided to most learners of sixth-form age who qualify for funded travel support from KCC.
 - The second is to initially require adult learners (those aged 19 or over, whose course started after their 19th birthday) to apply for a discretionary bursary from their education or training provider for help with travel costs first before applying to KCC for additional support.
 This consultation is open until 23 March 2025.
- vi. Item 11: Email from e-scape landscape architects regarding Hall Place's Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the whole of the Hall Park estate. They are exploring a number of possible collaborations that could involve the local community. Cllr Holt reported that the school will liaise with Hall Place about this project.
- vii. Item 13: Email from Cllr Silander: "Kent Police are appearing before Scrutiny Committee on the 11th February 2025. Are there any questions that you would like asked? Cllr Britain asked that wild swimming at Ensfield Road bridge could be raised as the safety of the people congregating and swimming is a concern and so is the amount of parking on both sides of the road, which causes a hazard for vehicles, especially the emergency services. Please could the police monitor this over the summer months.
- viii. Item 14: Email from resident regarding redacted copy emails from the insurance company and 30mph speed limit at Leigh School. See Open Session above.

163. To discuss nominations for the KALC Community Award 2025

Members discussed and agreed the 2025 successful recipient of the award.

164. Finance:

- i. 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. This is a contribution towards the Parish Council page in the magazine rather than a grant. Members asked for further clarification.
- ii. To approve list of payments
Cllr Williams proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Holt and all were in favour.

165. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. Clerk to contact VolkerStevin about the fences still being in position on the water meadows and the surface water laying on the footpath.
- ii. Cllr Marchant reported that the contractor is able to sweep the road to the church past Porcupine House in the spring, the cost has previously been approved.
- iii. Cllr Smith reported that she attended the Patient Participation Group meeting and a request was made for their quarterly newsletters to be included in the parish magazines. The newsletters are on the medical centre's website, and it was agreed that a link could be put in the parish magazine.

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

The meeting closed at 10.10am.

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

Payment				Amount	
Date	Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Inc. VAT	VAT
03.02.25	835	Clerk	Salary	£1,260.97	
03.02.25	836	HMRC	PAYE	£521.71	
03.02.25	837	Clerk	Mileage & reimbursement costs	£137.28	
03.02.25	838	KCC	Pension contribution	£711.22	
03.02.25	839	Joe Kaye	Chairman's expenses - Christmas	£22.20	
				<u>£2,653.38</u>	<u>£0.00</u>

Signed

Date