

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 7TH APRIL 2025 AT 8.00PM

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

APOLOGIES: Cllr A. Holt, Cllr S. Smith, District Cllr M. Silander and County Cllr M. McArthur

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). 2 members of the public attended the Open Session only.

Open Session

Report by County Cllr McArthur

In the absence of County Cllr McArthur, the Clerk read her report: "I regret that I must again send apologies for absence. I have no update of note for the meeting as KCC has been consumed by reorganisation matters of late. I did, however, want to attend to say farewell to you all, with a heavy heart, as I am not standing for re-election on 1st May. I have very much enjoyed working with you all and assisting where I could."

Members wished to express their thanks to County Cllr McArthur for her work with KCC over the years.

Questions from members of the public

1. A resident asked what the Parish Council's intentions were with the seat on The Green by his house, and said that he was concerned that water will no longer be able to drain away if concrete or grasscrete is laid on the area where the seat was positioned. He offered to add top soil and grass seed to the area if the seat is returned.
2. A resident also asked that the seat is returned to its previous position on The Green. She asked whether it would be possible for the cricket supporters to park at the school end of The Green. The Clerk advised that the cars are encouraged to park at the opposite end of The Green because the area by the school is the safe place for children to play whilst cricket is being played.

The members of the public left the meeting at 8.18pm.

Closed Session

- 184. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Holt and Cllr Smith and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr McArthur and District Cllr Silander.
- 185. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
- 186. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 3rd March 2025** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Marchant, and all were in favour.
- 187. To hear report of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 31st March 2025**
Cllr Kaye reported that the Annual Parish Meeting was a success and interesting talks were given by the Village Hall Renovation Committee, the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign, Kent Police and a Leigh SpeedWatch volunteer. The Leigh Community Award 2025 was awarded to Vanessa Pullen for her continuing and tremendous commitment over the past 26 years as Leigh's Brown Owl, which is an outstanding achievement.

188. To review and update Risk Assessment

Members discussed the draft updated Risk Assessment as previously circulated. The Clerk advised that she has added in a risk, item 22, for the uneven path between Kiln Lane and Well Close. Members agreed to include a risk on the APDs regarding the landlord's responsibility. The changes were proposed by Cllr Backlog, seconded by Cllr Kaye and all were in favour.

189. To review and update Standing Orders

Members reviewed and approved the Standing Orders as previously circulated. There were no changes. Proposed by Cllr Britain, seconded by Cllr Marchant and all were in favour.

190. To review and update Finance Regulations

Members reviewed and approved the Finance Regulations as previously circulated. There were no changes. Proposed by Cllr Britain, seconded by Cllr Marchant and all were in favour.

191. To discuss the new domain name for Leigh Parish Council and the SSL add-on

Members approved the new domain name as leighkentparish.gov.uk. The costs are as follows: to register a .gov.uk domain, the cost is £125 for the first two years, with a renewal fee of £65 every two years. Email accounts are £20 per mailbox per year and to migrate emails the charge is £35 per email account. The new SSL certificate is £50 per annum. Members approved costs and Clerk to implement. Proposed by Cllr Kaye, seconded by Cllr Williams and all were in favour.

192. Planning

i. To consider applications received

- i. SE/25/00621/FUL: 4 The Green Lane Leigh Kent TN11 8QX - demolition of existing garage and erection of new dwelling (Use Class C3) with associated curtilage, landscaping, access, parking and other associated works. Members had no objection to this application.
- ii. SE/25/00636/LBCALT: 2 Oak Cottages, High Street, Leigh TN11 8RW - to replace french door set with side lights, to replace 1 Georgian casement window. Members wished to leave the decision to the SDC Conservation Officer.
- iii. SE/00998/WTCA: Ivy Cottage, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QN - 3 x hawthorn trees to remove and grind resulting stumps. Members wished to leave the decision to the SDC Tree Officer.
- iv. SE/25/00961/NMA: Spilebank, Moorden Lane, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JE - Non-material amendment to SE/24/00659/HOUSE (Demolition of existing rear conservatory to be replaced with new single storey extension with rooflights. Infil side extension, extending first floor dormer with new juliet balcony. Adding pitched roof to existing dormer. Replace rooflight with larger rooflight and additional rooflight added to dwelling. Removal of chimney.) Non Material Amendment for the addition of small high level window to the northern elevation. Members had no objection to this application.

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

- v. SE/25/00552/HOUSE: Rivermede, Penshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HL - first floor side extension, roof extension and removal of chimney. Alterations to fenestration. Members objected on the basis that the increase in floor area brings the total to in excess of 50% of the original floor area. While small in terms of square metres it is still close to 30% over, according to the applicants calculations (4.07sqm/14.11sqm), of the remaining permitted allowance.

ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:

- SE/24/02863/HOUSE: Windfalls, Penshurst Road, Leigh - add solar panels to south-facing roof. Application approved.
- SE/24/03080/FUL: Little Barnett's Farm, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh - erection of an agricultural building. Application approved.
- SE/24/03241/HOUSE and SE/24/03242/LBCALT: Hall Place, Penshurst Road, Leigh - 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. Applications approved.

- SE/25/00164/CONVAR: 2 Cherry Tree Cottages, The Green, Leigh - 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. Application approved.
 - SE/25/00123/MMA: Land East of Eggpie Cottage, Egg Pie Lane, Weald – Minor Material Amendment to SE/21/01766/FUL to add two extensions to the dwelling and alter fenestration. Application approved.
 - SE/25/00415/WTCA: Well Close, Leigh: To remove row of conifers along footpath boundary from Well Close to Kiln Lane as they have become a hazard to pedestrians on the public footpath. Decision: no objection lodged.
- iii. To hear report of the SDC planning training event held on 3rd April 2025
Cllr Williams reported that the training event was excellent, and representing Leigh were Cllr Williams, Cllr Marchant at the Clerk. SDC is the busiest planning authority in Kent, and the council approves 85% of all planning applications and of the 15% that are refused about 20% go to appeal. Of the 20% that go to appeal 70-75% are dismissed. The SDC Local Plan should be in place at the end of 2026. Any development in the Green Belt will require special circumstances to be put forward. Green Belt land could be considered Grey Belt if it is previously developed land or is situated next to or close to a village or roads/railway lines. The area of National Landscape has added protection from development. Members discussed whether the Parish Council should commence a Leigh Area Character Assessment, this could be the first stage to undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan. Members agreed to arrange a meeting with a Planning Policy Officer at SDC.
- iv. To discuss the new Green Belt Planning Practice Guidance
Cllr Williams advised that the Government has published a new Green Belt PPG and SDC is currently undertaking a review of Green Belt land in the district. Any development in the Green Belt under the new NPPF will require the inclusion of 50% affordable housing.
- v. Sevenoaks District Council's Call for Sites
The Clerk reported that SDC is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the District and there will be a Regulation 18 public consultation in the autumn. SDC is updating the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) to assess the availability, suitability and deliverability of land for housing, employment and other uses. The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 requires SDC to produce a SHELAA, which is used in the preparation of the Local Plan. National Planning Practice Guidance makes it clear that the assessment does not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development. This is the function of a Development Plan which determines which of those sites are the most suitable to meet the housing, employment or other use requirements. The SHELAA is therefore only one part of the Local Plan evidence used to determine potential development sites in a Local Plan. SDC has re-opened a targeted call for sites, see www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/callforsites. This provides a further opportunity for landowners and site promoters to suggest potential sites that may be suitable for housing, employment or other uses. Sites will need to be within one of the following three categories to be considered:
- Urban sites (within existing settlement boundaries)
 - Previously Developed Land / brownfield land
 - Potential greenfield 'grey belt' land
- SDC will publish an up-to-date SHELAA alongside the Regulation 18 consultation later in 2025.

193. The Green

- i. To discuss the quotes for adding a hardstanding by the recycling bins at Crandalls
The Clerk reported that she has received a quote from The Original Tree Surgeons to crown lift to 3.25m and reduce back the lower limbs by 1.25m to allow access for the new proposed bottle bank site: £180 + VAT. Permission will be required from SDC. Members approved the quote and Clerk to advise the contractor and ask them to apply for permission from SDC for the works. The quote for the hardstanding has not yet been received.

- ii. To discuss provision of grasscrete on The Green
Cllr Marchant reported that the price for the grasscrete has not yet been received. Members agreed to add a section of grasscrete at the area where the bench was previously located. Members took the comments of the members of the public into consideration but agreed that by taking this car off the road as much as possible, it will protect The Green opposite. Members agreed that up to £2,000 could be spent on this project, and the decision will be made by the Finance Committee upon receipt of the quote before the next meeting. Proposed by Cllr Britain, seconded by Cllr Backlog and all were in favour.
- iii. To discuss quote for repair of The Green after damage incurred by delivery van
The Clerk reported that the quote to repair The Green is £385 + VAT, Ocado have agreed to cover this cost and payment should be received this week.
- iv. To discuss request by Leigh School to use The Green on 18th July
The Clerk reported that a request has been received to use The Green for the annual Year 6 leaving party during the afternoon of 18th July. There will be two bouncy castles and a gathering of class parents and families. Members approved the request subject to confirmation from the school that they have the appropriate insurance cover for inflatables.
- v. Request for a memorial bench on The Green
The Clerk reported that a request has been made for a bench to be located on The Green in memory of Geoff Owen. Members did not approve this request.
- vi. Request for a memorial tree on The Green
The Clerk reported that a request has been made for a tree to be planted on The Green in memory of Michael Hill. Members did not approve this request.
- vii. Request for the yew trees around The Pump to be trimmed back
The Clerk reported that the yew trees need tidying up. Clerk to arrange.
- viii. Request for the overhanging vegetation on The Green Lane to be cut back
Cllr Backlog undertook to ask residents in Greenvine Avenue to ensure that the trees and hedges at the ends of their gardens are kept well maintained.

194. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To hear update regarding drainage issues in the High Street and Lower Green
The Clerk reported that KCC carried out a second CCTV session on 26th March but she has not received the results yet. The Clerk also reported that a meeting was held with Mike Payton to look at the levels in the High Street, plus the Hall Place wall on 6th March. KCC suggested that the owner of Hall Place makes a claim against KCC's insurance for the repair of the wall.
- ii. To hear update regarding the Leigh Community SpeedWatch Scheme
Cllr Williams reported that the first SpeedWatch session took place on 11th March at Saxby Wood capturing vehicles travelling away from Leigh towards Chiddingstone Causeway. This is a 30mph speed limit. No cars were recorded as speeding, but residents did stop to tell the volunteers that speeds were much lower whilst the session took place. The next sessions are 8th April and 29th April. The Clerk asked whether members wished to purchase their own equipment, this will cost £2,550 + VAT, and the supplier has quoted an order lead time of 6-8 months. Members agreed that they would prefer to make a contribution towards Chiddingstone Parish Council's equipment if that is acceptable.
- iii. To hear update regarding the work to trees and footpath between Kiln Lane and Well Close
The Clerk reported that the approval to fell the conifers has been received from SDC. RWE Rural Services have penciled in week commencing 28th April for the work, or sooner if possible. Clerk to ask Hodge Landscapes for a date for the installation of the new path.
- iv. To discuss temporary closure for two weeks of SR430 for drainage works
Cllr Kaye reported that the footpath closure is to improve a waterlogged and muddy area by diverting the water away from the path. Members supported this temporary closure.
- v. To discuss extension of closure of SR435 until 1st August 2026, or when the works conclude
Notification under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Section 14(1), as amended by The Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991 that The Secretary of State for Transport has directed that the Order made by KCC on the 01 April 2024, the effect of which was to prohibit all traffic from Public Footpath SR435 has been extended for a further 16 months.

This will be 01 August 2026 or until the completion of the works, whichever is the earlier. The path is closed between Powder Mill Lane and its junction with Public Footpath SR435A. The alternative route is via another spur of Public Footpath SR435 to the east of the closure and will be signed for the duration of the closure.

vi. Kent Highways

- Emergency Road Closure - Ensfield Road, Leigh - 2nd April 2025 for up to 4 days between Pauls Farm Barn and Pauls Hill House to enable restoration of customers services to be carried out by UK Power Networks.
- Emergency Road Closure - Lower Green, Leigh - 2nd April 2025 for up to 4 days between the railway bridge and Pauls Farm to enable restoration of customers services to be carried out by UK Power Networks.

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

Cllr Kaye reported that the next meeting is 6th May and an informative update was given at the Annual Parish Meeting.

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

The Clerk reported that the Coffee Corner held on 14th March was run by Leigh Tennis Club. The next dates are: 11th April, 9th May and 13th June. 10.30 to 12.00.

197. Aged Persons Dwellings

i. To discuss potential work to No.2 The Bungalows

The Clerk reported that a quote has been received from LCS Painting & Decorating for the removal of the existing ceiling, and to supply and fit plasterboard on the entire ceiling and paint. £850 + VAT. Members approved this quote. Consideration should be given to improved roof and wall insulation and Clerk to discuss with the contractor and with SDC to see if there are any grants available under the Home Upgrade Scheme or the Great British Insulation Scheme.

ii. To approve cost of work to a faulty light at No.2 The Bungalows

The Clerk reported that the electrician visited the property to repair a faulty outside light. Cost £136.78 + VAT. Members approved the cost.

198. The Old Burial Ground

To approve printing costs for the new information board

The Clerk reported that a quote from Knockout Print has been received: To print as per supplied PDF artwork 1 x 3mm di-bond - £40+VAT. Members approved the cost.

199. Aviation

Cllr Kaye reported that Charles Lloyd from GACC gave an interesting talk at the Parish Council's Annual Parish Meeting. There are two main things happening currently at Gatwick, the first is the proposed expansion and the second is the proposed change in flight paths in 2026/27, this will have an impact on this area. There has been an inquiry by inspectors that has taken six months and, on the 27th February, the Secretary of State announced that she was minded to approve Gatwick's application for expansion, but said that this was subject to certain conditions. The final decision will be made in October.

- Passenger numbers will increase by 70% to 80m per annum, this will make Gatwick as large as Heathrow.
- Aircraft movements will increase by over 35%, this will increase air noise substantially, as well as road and rail movements, creating local highway congestion.
- Gross CO₂ emissions will increase by over 50%, causing Gatwick to generate 5.5% of all UK CO₂ emissions by 2038, subject to mitigation.
- The conditions required before the Secretary of State will approve the application are:
 - a requirement to increase the area around the airport that would be eligible for compensation on noise. This will not extend as far as Leigh and Penshurst.
 - a requirement to increase public transport targets from 44% to 54% prior to commencement of the dual runway operations.

However, there was no requirement to improve the noise envelope, and no requirement to limit CO₂ emissions. Gatwick is required to respond to these conditions by 24th April, and there will be an opportunity to comment on these new proposals.

- The Government has been approving airport expansion at every airport that has requested it, including Stanstead, London City, Southampton and Bristol, and Luton will receive a decision in two days' time. The proposals to expand Heathrow are in the pipeline.
- Airspace modernisation will include Performance Based Navigation (PBN) which is a form of satnav for aircraft, this has the ability to concentrate flight paths. There will be no compensation for people who live under a new flight path, and Gatwick will announce their shortlist of options on new flight paths with a formal consultation in 2026.
- Gatwick's passenger numbers have not recovered from Covid and are not at the same levels as 2019; Gatwick is the only airport that has not fully recovered.

200. 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: GACC: Thank you for grant, very much appreciated.
- ii. Item 3: Leigh Tennis Club: Many thanks for the Parish Council's continued support.
- iii. Item 4: SDC regarding the Big Waste Conversation. SDC has to modernise its waste collection services so they are more carbon and cost efficient while helping residents to recycle more of their waste. SDC's current recycling rate is only 37%. The average Kent household puts out 420 kilos of waste a year, but in the Sevenoaks District, this figure is 580 kilos. Most residents who responded want more recycling options while reducing the environmental impact of the service. There was strong support for home glass collections and providing households with wheelie bins for their waste. A small majority were in favour of food waste collections and views were split on the frequency of waste and recycling collections. The survey results will be considered by the Council's Cleaner and Greener Advisory Committee then Cabinet along with a timeline for any changes.
- iv. Item 5: SDC Cabinet draft minutes of meeting 20th March. Includes: "The requirement and proposal to introduce food and glass waste collections services no later than 1st April 2026, be noted."
- v. Item 6: Kent Police: Old Orchard, Leigh - on Friday 28th March at around 13:07, somebody damaged a Vauxhall Vivaro parked in the road. Crime Report No. 46/52327/25.
- vi. Item 8: KALC Training events.
- vii. Item 11: Kent Police: March report, including: "Beat officers attended the Leigh Annual Parish Meeting on the 31st March. Speaking with the local community, some concerns were raised over drug use in the area. All residents are reminded to report any suspicious activity or vehicles via 101 or online to Kent police."
- viii. Item 14: KALC re: devolution: on 21st March, the 14 principal authorities in Kent submitted the Kent Interim Plan for Local Government Reorganisation. The paper confirms that while no agreement has been reached on the boundaries of new unitary authorities, they aim to submit a final proposal by November. The plan outlines two potential structures, either three or four unitary councils, and emphasises that devolution (both devolved powers and funding) should take place alongside reorganisation – currently only reorganisation is planned with no timetable for devolution.

Key issues raised in the submission include:

- Funding for major points of entry legacy debt management
- Local plans and the transition between planning authorities
- Engagement with stakeholders and residents before finalising proposals
- Importantly, the paper acknowledges the role of parish and town councils in discussions and states: 'We have been engaging with KALC and are exploring ways in which we can devolve greater powers, funding and responsibilities to Parish and Town Councils.'
- A number of District Councils are exploring the potential for community governance reviews where there are geographical areas without existing Parish or Town Councils. In addition, the future role of Town & Parish Councils is a matter for further work as proposals are developed.'

What's Next?

- KALC Survey on Devolution – A draft survey is available to view on the KALC Devolution page.

- The survey aims to engage parish and town councils before the November final submission.
- KALC EGM on Devolution – A special meeting will be arranged to allow councils to further engage in discussions in June.
 - Training Package – KALC is developing training sessions to ensure that we are supporting councils.
 - Lessons from Other Counties – KALC is organising a workshop to share best practices, covering the movement of assets and services and a case study from a council that has undergone reorganisation.

Councils are encouraged to review local assets they may be interested in taking on. We recommend making one list for district assets and one list for county assets. Some councils have formally listed these as Assets of Community Value. For further guidance, see NALC's Advice Note: "The Community Right to Nominate and Bid for Assets of Community Value (England)".

201. Finance:

- To retrospectively approve additional contribution to Leigh PCC towards magazine costs
The Clerk reported that additional information was received after the last Parish Council meeting and a decision was made to increase the contribution from £150 to £600, members wanted to ensure that the payment was made in the 2024-25 financial year. Members formally approved this expenditure, proposed by Cllr Southwell, seconded by Backlog and all were in favour.
- To approve membership renewal to CPRE: £60
Cllr Rogers proposed that this membership be renewed. This was seconded by Cllr Marchant and all were in favour.
- To approve reimbursement to resident for spring plants for the Powdermills planter
The Clerk reported that a request for reimbursement of £27.39 was made by a local resident. Members approved this expenditure.
- To consider purchase of a new defibrillator for installation at the Leigh Cricket Pavilion
The Clerk reported that the price of a new defibrillator and outdoor cabinet is £1,367 + VAT. Members were very disappointed that VolkerStevin have not been able to supply the defibrillator and cabinet as they promised, and Clerk to make a further request to them.
- Internal Audit
The Clerk reported that the internal auditor will visit on Monday 28th April.
- To approve list of payments
Cllr Backlog proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Marchant and all were in favour. The Clerk updated members on an outstanding invoice from Commercial Services regarding maintenance of The Green, which is under discussion.

202. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- The Clerk reported that a quote has been received by local residents for refurbishing the Charcott phonebox. The paint has already been provided. Item to be discussed next month.
- Clerk to ask for a welcome to Leigh for the new shop owners in the May Parish Magazine, Clerk to contact editor.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting will be on Tuesday 6th May 2025 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 9.55pm.

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

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
12.03.25	552	Leigh PCC	Additional contribution towards magazine	£450.00	
12.03.25	553	Commercial Services	Annual grounds maintenance The Green	£1,783.33	£297.22
12.03.25	554	Imperative Training Ltd	Defibrillator pads	£92.94	£15.49
07.04.25	855	Clerk	Salary	£1,260.97	
07.04.25	856	HMRC	PAYE	£584.73	
07.04.25	857	Clerk	Mileage & reimbursement costs	£176.62	
07.04.25	858	KCC	Pension contribution	£711.22	
07.04.25	859	Knockout Print	Annual Meeting boards	£60.00	£10.00
07.04.25	860	Dave Cole Electrical	Repair faulty light at No.2 APD	£164.14	£27.36
07.04.25	861	Original Tree Surgeons	Tree work as per tree survey 2024	£216.00	£36.00
07.04.25	862	SDC	Emptying dog bins Jan-Mar 2025	£563.16	£93.86
07.04.25	863	Estate & Field	The Green - vertidrainning	£984.00	£164.00
07.04.25	864	Estate & Field	The Green - over seeding & harrowing	£1,371.00	£96.00
07.04.25	865	Hever Landscapes	Repair of The Green by school	£268.80	£44.80
07.04.25	866	Jill Johnson	Plants for Powdermills planter	£27.39	
07.04.25	867	CPRE	Membership renewal	£60.00	
				£6,448.03	£472.02

Signed

Date