

LEIGH PARISH PLAN

December 2004

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CONTENTS

1.	Leigh - The parish	1
2.	Development of the Parish Plan.	2
3.	The Village Community	4
4.	Housing	7
5.	Transport	7
6.	Environment.	9
7.	The Best and the Worst	10
8.	Action Plan	11
	Appendix A - Survey Results.	18
	Appendix B - Village Societies and Organisations.	26
	Local Businesses	
	Acknowledgements	29

Sections 3-7 comment on some of the findings of the survey and the relevant recommendations. The full Action Plan is set out in section 8.

1. Leigh - The Parish

Leigh (at various times spelt Lye or Lyghe and meaning a forest clearing) lies in the Weald of Kent to the south of the Sevenoaks Ridge and north of the River Medway. It is a village in a rural environment close to a major London commuter railway and to the built up areas comprising Sevenoaks, Hildenborough and Tonbridge. It is however, still physically separated from all of these towns by open farmland and woods and retains a strong sense of its own separate identity.

The civil parish of Leigh also includes the hamlets of Charcott and Moorden to the west and Powder Mills to the east.

The village itself still has a Post Office/General Stores which provides a wide range of vital goods and services, and also a garage, hairdresser's, two public houses and several small businesses. Charcott has its own public house and garage and Moorden is served by a Post Office/General Stores at Chiddingstone Causeway.

There has always been a well developed community spirit in the parish and in 2004 Leigh was awarded the Large Villages winner in the Community Life category, runner up in the Older People category and highly commended in the Business category in the Kent Village of the Year Awards.

History

Although the origins of the village are difficult to determine, a hamlet existed by the latter part of the 11th century being part of the Lordship of Tonbridge and by the end of the 12th century it clearly had a significant population as three moated farmhouses date from this period.

In the 14th century the stone Parish Church was built and large areas of land surrounding the village were acquired by the owner of Penshurst Place, Sir John Pulteney. The estate passed from him to the Sidney family (originally the Earls of Leicester and later Viscounts de Lisle and Dudley) in 1533 and they retained ownership of the land around Leigh until the early 20th century when much of it was sold. Several houses in the village built by the family in the 19th century have plaques bearing the family crest of the Bear and Ragged Staff.

Three events in the 19th century changed the nature of the village, the first being the acquisition of Hall Place by the Baily family in 1820 and the second its purchase by the Morley family in 1870. Both families undertook substantial building works in the village employing talented architects, Charles Baily, George Devey, Ernest George and George Bodley, each of whom, by the use of local materials and distinctive vernacular design, gave the village many of its most distinguished buildings and design characteristics, including Hall Place, East and Old Lodges, The Square, Forge Square, the Village Hall and the School Master's House.

The third significant event was the construction of the Tonbridge to Redhill railway in 1842 along the southern edge of the village. This not only brought an influx of new residents, but also its embankment created a natural physical boundary effectively preventing any expansion of the village further south.

The original core of the village is designated as a Conservation Area which, in broad terms, extends from Park House and Kennards in the north east to the entrance lodge to Hall Place in the west and includes the area surrounding the Green, the Church and the area immediately to the south of it, the High Street and land to the east of Kiln Lane. Within the Conservation Area are 49 Listed Buildings or structures.

Economy

Until the mid 20th century the predominant source of local employment was agriculture although the village also had a brickworks along with a number of shops and a forge. A large number of villagers were employed at the nearby cricket ball factories and gunpowder works, and others at Hall Place.

Increased mechanisation resulted in a drastic reduction of agricultural jobs, and the closure of the other small industries has meant that traditional jobs have virtually disappeared. Most residents now commute to jobs in West Kent or London, but there is still some local employment in small light industrial estates within the parish, and an increasing number of self-employed people work from home.

2. Development of the Parish Plan

In November 2000 a Rural White Paper "Our Countryside - The Future" was published by the Government. One of its aims was to give more power to Parish Councils to ensure that their own communities had the facilities and resources that they needed. The way that the Parish Council was to find out what was valuable and necessary in its own parish was by developing a Parish Plan. This would then be used by the local organisations, including the local authority, in our case Sevenoaks District Council, when planning developments which would affect our community.

A Village Design Statement had been produced in early 2003 which set out how parishioners wanted the structure of the village to develop. A Parish Plan would complement this by setting out how the facilities, environment and services of the parish should develop.

Following this, the Parish Council agreed in June 2003 to set up a small Steering Committee, comprising both of parish councillors and other residents to manage the development of the Parish Plan. This committee brought together a wide range of interests and skills covering, among others, children and youth activities, the Church, village hall, environment, sports clubs, British Legion, Village Design Statement and information technology. After obtaining funding and support from the Countryside Agency, GlaxoSmithKline and the Parish Council, a schedule was drawn up for the project that required three stages:

- 1) Consultation
- 2) Analysis of the information gathered during the consultation
- 3) Development of an Action Plan and production of a Report

In addition, it was decided to set up a website (www.leighparishplan.org.uk) to allow details of the initiative to be fully available to parishioners and other interested people. The website was kept updated as the project progressed.

Consultation

It was agreed that consultation should be as wide as possible to ensure that everyone in the parish had the opportunity to make their views known. To achieve this end a wide range of consultative processes was used.

The start of the initiative was an Open Meeting held at the end of January in the Small Village Hall which was attended by over 50 parishioners. The value of Parish Plans to the community was explained by representatives from Kent Rural Community Council and Sevenoaks District Council and followed by an outline of the consultation process planned for Leigh. Those

attending also participated in several exercises to obtain their views on a variety of issues and Volunteers for various projects were obtained.

A parish-wide survey was the main source of general data on the way the local community viewed the existing facilities and what their additional wishes were. A total of 1,283 questionnaires, a copy for everyone on the electoral role, were delivered to the 683 households in the parish. The collectors made repeated visits to all households after the initial delivery to collect the completed documents to ensure that the vast majority of parishioners participated in the survey. This was an exceedingly successful exercise with collectors obtaining returns from over 75% of the households in the parish.

A separate survey was carried out by two members of the Steering Group to identify the needs of those aged between 11 and 18. In addition we worked with the village primary school to determine what the children like, and dislike, about the village and what additional facilities they would like.

A questionnaire was sent to all village organisations and businesses and they were asked for their comments on the village and its facilities as they apply to their specific needs. This also allowed us to build up a complete picture of the facilities available within the parish.

A Suggestion Box was located in the Post Office and facilities were available to e-mail suggestions, via the website, to the Steering Committee.

In order to keep the parish fully informed, there was a monthly article published in the Parish Magazine detailing the progress of the initiative and explaining how parishioners could be involved.

Analysis

All the data gathered from the surveys was analysed by computer using a tailor-made system developed in Lotus Approach. This allowed for the maximum flexibility in grouping the data and the fast production of the full analysis of the results. These could then be examined alongside the data gathered by other means from groups within the parish to get an overall picture of the needs of the parish.

Part of the survey was designed to produce data of a purely statistical form, but there was also a series of questions which asked parishioners to give their ideas and comments. The computer system allowed all of these to be collated and resulted in over 120 pages of closely printed responses.

The full statistical results of the parish survey were published in June and distributed to every household in the parish.

Action Plan & Report

Before fully developing the Action Plan, an Open Weekend was held in Jessica's Hall where some initial ideas were put forward and further input from parishioners was invited. The event was well attended and copies of the full survey report, including all the comments made by parishioners were available for inspection. There were a number of projects parishioners had identified through the survey and this event also looked for volunteers to help with them. These included the development of a parish website, setting up a Speedwatch team to monitor traffic speeds through the village in conjunction with West Kent Police, walkers to help monitor and maintain the footpath network and people to help with proposed youth activities in the village.

Following this event, the Steering Committee developed an initial Action Plan that reflected both the data gathered in the consultative process and the responses to ideas floated at the Open Weekend. This initial draft was then discussed in detail at a joint meeting with the Parish

Council and further refined with their input. The final draft was then distributed to every household in the parish and a Parish Meeting was held by the Parish Council to obtain reactions and responses to the proposed plan. Following the Parish Meeting, the draft Action Plan was further refined to reflect views expressed by parishioners and the final Action Plan was approved by the Parish Council at its meeting on 1st November 2004.

The Parish Council, having approved the Action Plan, then moved to the final stage to plan their implementation of all the points in the plan, and the Steering Committee produced this report on the whole project.

Sections 3-7 comment on some of the findings of the survey and the relevant recommendations. The full Action Plan is set out in section 8.

3. The Village Community

In 1801 census the village population of Leigh was 739 adults and children, rising to 1,329 by the 1901 census. The parish is now the major part of the Leigh and Chiddingstone Causeway ward of Sevenoaks District Council and the 2001 census gives a figure of 2,040 for the whole ward.

The current population of the parish of Leigh, based on the survey, is about 1,600 with 46% male and 54% female. A quarter of the population is aged under eighteen and a further 25% aged sixty and over. The parish seems to encourage people to stay with 36% of the adult population having lived here for twenty years or more and another 20% between ten and twenty years.

One of the features most valued by residents is the community spirit that prevails in the village. This is emphasised by some of the comments from the survey in response to the question "What is it that you like most about the parish?".

"This is still a rural community"

"Leigh still has the village feel despite being close to Hildenborough and Tonbridge"

"That it still remains an idyll of quiet country village living. No street lighting, we can still see the stars!! Ask any Londoner the same question"

"Friendly, social and caring community"

"Having lived here for 28 years I could not imagine living anywhere else"

"Still remains a village, friendly atmosphere and a good cross-section of society"

"Its a real community with a healthy mix of properties, ages and building styles. It was the friendliness of the people in the village that first attracted us here"

Whilst there is no specific single recommendation within the Action Plan to ensure the continuation of the community spirit within the village, this is a feature that underlies a number of the individual recommendations.

The village has a large variety of sporting, social, cultural and leisure groups and associations, including the Cricket Club which can trace its origins for over 300 years, the Produce Association, the Royal British Legion, and the Historical Society to name but a few. All these are well supported and contribute greatly to the sense of community. The playing of cricket on the Green is cited by many residents as an essential feature of Leigh. Full details of all these organisations are given in Appendix B.

The survey asked the question “What new sports or leisure facility would you like to see?”. Approximately 50% of those who responded and believed that there was need for new sports or leisure facilities in the village identified a children’s play area. This was an issue which was raised a number of years ago when it was suggested that a play area should be provided on the village Green. The suggestion started a heated debate within the community and a petition was presented to the Parish Council with a large number of residents against the idea. In fact, due to the terms of the transfer of the village Green to the Parish Council, it is not permitted to have any permanent fencing or surfacing put on the Green and therefore a play area here would not be feasible. However, in view of the wishes expressed in the survey

We recommend that a committee be set up to examine possible sites, costs and potential usage of children’s play area(s) in the village.

The main venues for outdoor activities are the village Green and the Tennis Club off Lealands Avenue, while the Large and Small Village Halls accommodate most of the indoor activities. The Large Hall, originally built as a Congregational Church in 1872, is not particularly well suited to its modern role and is costly to maintain. A project is currently under way to renovate the Village Hall complex and enable it to provide the facilities required of a modern hall. Fund raising activities are in full swing and initial applications have been made to Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council for grants. These will be followed by applications for lottery grants from the appropriate sources.

We recommend that the Village Hall complex be refurbished to the standards necessary to provide first class facilities for the village.

The village Primary School was built in 1870 to cater for a far smaller population than exists today. The old “Iron Room” used by the school was recently replaced by a new hall, named Jessica’s Hall which was built as the result of a major fund raising exercise in the community. However, the school is still in urgent need of additional accommodation to enable it to continue its role as an essential part of the community.

The playing fields at the top of Lealands Avenue, used by the Tennis Club, belong to Kent County Council / Kent Education Authority (KEA) and were intended for use by the school. In the past the Parish Council approached the KEA to purchase the land but were unable to conclude a deal. However, there are serious drainage problems with the site and currently they are not in use by the school, who tend to use the village Green for sports activities. The facilities would be of great use to the whole parish, not just the school, and there is a serious danger that, if proper drainage facilities are not installed, then this much needed land may be lost to the community.

We recommend that the playing fields at the top of Lealands Avenue are used for the benefit of the community.

It was significant from the surveys carried out with the young people in the village and with the pupils in the primary school that they felt that there was a lack of facilities for their generation. The parish is extremely fortunate to have a Youth Worker employed by St Mary’s Church and it is important that the community gives him as much support as possible. Providing facilities for the young can only be done if adult members of the community become involved and whilst

Leigh is well served by a number of members of the community, there is always a need for additional help.

We recommend that a Youth Forum be set up to encourage the youth of the village to participate in the development of activities and facilities for the younger members of the community.

The parish is extremely fortunate that it has not lost all its traditional facilities. There is still a village shop and post office along with a hairdresser's, garden machinery supplier, three pubs and three garages and a doctors surgery together with a range of local services such as plumbers, electricians, garden contractors etc. In addition, there is a small light industrial estate on the edge of the parish with a wide range of units including a timber supplier, automobile works, fencing contractors etc. There are also two major employers in the parish, GlaxoSmithKline who have a major research establishment at Powder Mills and the Environment Agency who have an operational base near the Leigh Flood Barrier.

In response to the question "What is it that you like most about the parish?", a significant number of responses mentioned the village shop.

"Splendid shops and post office"

"Leigh has got a very good shop and post office that has everything that you need"

"The village post office and shop is invaluable"

We recommend that every effort be made to ensure the continued existence of the village shop/post office.

The survey also addressed the problem of vandalism. The main areas in the parish that attract this unwanted attention are Leigh station and the public toilets built on to Jessica's Hall. The parish has been lucky that we have had a Special Parish Constable who has maintained a much higher police profile that we could expect from the main police station at Tonbridge. There is also a "police box" in the village store where parishioners are encouraged to leave information, anonymously if wished, that may be of help to the police. This seems to work fairly well, though many parishioners are not aware of its existence. There are Neighbourhood Watch schemes operating in parts of the village in a rather desultory manner.

Whilst, in reality, there is almost no crime in the parish, residents expressed a large degree of concern about anti-social behaviour etc.

Apart from the wish for a more visible police presence, some of the comments that came out of the survey included:

"More organised structured youth activities to divert energies"

"Hold the parents of the children accountable"

"CCTV cameras in affected areas"

"Extend Neighbourhood Watch"

We recommend that villagers comply with the advice of the police to report to them all incidents, crimes and any suspicious behaviour and that the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme be strengthened.

The Parish Council does not come out of the survey unscathed. Although only 36% say that it does not publicise its activities well enough, only 20% have ever attended a Parish Council meeting. Surprisingly, 55% of the survey respondents say that they would use a parish website if one were developed. Some of the comments on the activities of the council include:

“Who is the Parish Council?”

“Important that the Parish Council continues to represent the village on major issues”

“They should give more publicity to their decisions and activities”

“Does it need some younger members?”

“It performs a thankless task well”.

We recommend that the Parish Council should give greater publicity to its activities and should develop a website.

4. Housing

The village and the parish had major concerns about housing and the expansion of the village which were at the same time both sensible and yet possibly contradictory. They wanted to see the Green Belt around the village preserved and to ensure that there were green spaces left within the village; and they were worried that more housing - particularly large developments - would overwhelm village facilities. Yet, at the same time, there was a genuine desire to help with housing that could be afforded by people on average incomes, especially those with connections with the village. In order to maintain a viable and vibrant community, it is essential to ensure that the village does not lose all its younger inhabitants.

These matters were discussed in the Village Design Statement and a separate survey on this issue was carried out by the Rural Housing Trust. This showed that there was a large majority supporting the provision of such housing. The parish plan survey showed that 85% were in favour of a single property or small site developments with the vast majority favouring small family homes or homes for the young. If a community is to be able to survive it is important that it does not lose all the young people.

We recommend that affordable housing be provided as a matter of urgency.

Alongside this need for affordable housing, there is the necessity to ensure that character of the village is retained. There was a lot of development around the turn of the century which established a “feel” to the village. This has been set out in detail in the Village Design Statement which has been adopted by Sevenoaks District Council as additional planning advice.

We recommend that the village should retain its unique character.

5. Transport

Leigh has its own railway station on the Tonbridge-Redhill line, with a regular daytime service. Hildenborough station provides frequent fast services to London and the south coast. There is a regular but infrequent bus service from Leigh to Tonbridge, with a commuter service between Hildenborough station and Penshurst, but there is no direct access for the general public by

bus to any of the local hospitals or to Sevenoaks or Tunbridge Wells. There is a weekly senior citizens service to Sevenoaks or Tunbridge Wells.

The survey indicates that 61% of the adult population travel to work, school or college. Of these 70% use a car or van as their main means of transport with 15% using the main line train from Hildenborough. Only 3% use the train from Leigh station, though this is used by a number of children travelling to secondary school in Tonbridge.

In terms of general use of the local transport systems, 52% of the adult population use the train from Hildenborough, the largest number of people using it for social and leisure purposes. The local bus and train provide an important service for the village with 13% using the bus and 10% the train on a regular basis. In addition a further 9% use the public bus services and 28% use the local railway service from either Leigh or Penshurst stations on an occasional basis.

Comments on the transport system within the parish produced the expected range of complaints:

“The problem is lack of reliability...”

“Trains are often too short and therefore crowded and dirty”

“Bus service appears inadequate compared with years gone by”

“Additional bus service from Leigh to Hildenborough would help reduce traffic”

“Car park at Hildenborough too expensive”

“No car park at Leigh station”

One worrying aspect is the condition of Leigh station. This is an unmanned station and is a regular target for vandalism. There have been repeated communications from the Parish Council to South East Rail over the condition of the station but with limited results.

We recommend that the condition and security of Leigh station be improved.

The village has developed mainly along the B2027 which is the main route between Tonbridge and Crockham Hill, with connections to Edenbridge and Penshurst. With the increase in the number and speed of cars on the roads, this has inevitably caused traffic problems through the village, both in terms of traffic speed and congestion. The problem of parking is one that is felt by many villages where there is no natural area to use as a car park. It does, however, have one advantage as there is normally a row of cars parked down one side of the High Street outside the village shop and pubs and this provides a natural traffic calming scheme!

The issue of parking is one that has been discussed at some length with officers from Sevenoaks District Council and a detailed paper prepared on a variety of options which could be implemented. All these options have drawbacks and need a great deal of further consideration before being progressed further.

We recommend that the possibility of additional car parking be investigated by the parish council, based on the suggestions drawn up after discussions with Sevenoaks District Council.

The Parish Council have already agreed to participate in the Speedwatch initiative set up by the West Kent Police and Sevenoaks District Council and the data gathered from this should be used to examine methods of traffic calming that could be applied in the parish.

We recommend that the problem of traffic speed through the village be addressed.

6. Environment

The River Medway and the railway form natural boundaries to the south of the village, while Hall Place and its Park have prevented any expansion to the north. The village has therefore extended along an east/west axis, principally on the south side of the B 2027, part of which is the village High Street, and to a lesser extent along Powder Mill Lane to the east of the Green. There has also been considerable residential development of the land lying between the Green and the railway embankment in the last 70 years.

Open farmland lies to the north and east of Hall Place, while water meadows lie between the railway and the river. Since the building of the Tonbridge Flood Barrier in 1981 these are deliberately flooded in times of heavy rainfall, which also involves the closure of Ensfield Road (to the south). At its western end, the village is enclosed by a number of separate woods most of which form part of the Hall Place, Redleaf and Penshurst Estates.

There is currently no street lighting in the village and only a minority, 31%, of the respondents to the survey said that they would like street lighting installed. The 58% majority wanted the village to remain without street lighting.

The main focus of outdoor village activities is the Green. The Green was gifted to the Parish Council by Lord Hollenden in 1948 and is probably the best known feature of the village with its range of ancient trees providing a real central focus for the community.

We recommend that every effort be made to retain the Green in good condition as the focus of the village.

Within the parish there are a number of footpaths, all of which are well used, although none provides a direct connection to other villages, save that leading from Paul's Hill through Penshurst Park to Penshurst. It is necessary for pedestrians using some of these paths to walk along busy roads without footways in order to reach them.

There are very few bridleways or cycleways within the parish, although there are many horses stabled locally, and many cyclists, all of whom are forced to use the busy roads at considerable risk.

The footpaths are only moderately well kept and signposted by Kent County Council and it is important that the standard of the network be improved. One problem which has been identified is that dog users should be more aware of "fouling" problems on the Green and pavements as well as on footpaths. It would also be advantageous, especially to people living on the outskirts of the parish, to examine the possibility of additional footpaths.

We recommend that every effort be made to improve the footpath network, including a link to Home Farm.

Litter is a problem that is becoming more prevalent nowadays and it was therefore welcome to find that only 38% of respondents to the survey believed that it was a problem in Leigh.

7.The Best and the Worst

To give an overall taste of the response from the survey, we list below a selection of replies to the final two questions.

What is it that you like most about the parish?

The peace. The Countryside. The friendliness of the people.

The whole environment and situation plus mainly friendly atmosphere and relatively good community activities

The green as a true village centre

Quiet rural retreat and that is the way it should be maintained

It gets on with its life quietly and does not take itself too seriously

In spite of increasing traffic and development it still retains its rural character and remains a good place to live

Community - it's what I thought a village should be before I moved here.

The countryside and the country people. If the Parish Council should only do one job then it should be make sure that these are looked after.

The village is a "live" village. The fact that it has a shop, Post office and school. All the time these remain it will draw people to live here. The village Green has the ability to look pretty and give a sense of space, whilst also providing an area for all sorts of sports activities. All these things make it a wonderful place to live.

What is it that you like least about the parish?

Traffic, heavy goods vehicles, no speed controls in village or on Causeway Road. B2027 has become a major thoroughfare for HGVs.

From my point of view it has everything, although, less mobile people could have issues with your transport services, well lack of them at times

Home Farm is cut off without footpath to the village. used to be a unofficial path when i moved here and we then always used to walk to village

Children driven to school - have they lost their legs - certainly their mothers have.

Newcomers trying to take over!

The lack of a playground and the modern housing on the High Street. I fully support the location and need for sheltered housing on the High Street but I wish the buildings had been designed to be in keeping with the village.

8. Action Plan

Several of these recommendations are for the Parish Council to set up independent committees to deal with specific subjects. These committees would have terms of reference drawn up by the Parish Council and would report back, in writing, to the Council. Each committee would have a chairman and secretary and, in order to spread the workload, the majority of members would probably not be parish councillors. The majority, however, are for the Parish Council to progress itself and a schedule for this work has been drawn up and agreed by the Council.

The following abbreviations have been used:

KCC	Kent County Council
SDC	Sevenoaks District Council
KRCC	Kent Rural Community Council (now Action with Communities in Rural Kent)

Full details of the Action Plan are shown on the following pages.

1. SECURITY

Recommendation	Ideas for Action	Responsibility	Target Date
1.1 That continued pressure be put on the Police Authority for an increased police presence in Leigh and that police report back on the extremely small number of crimes to reassure villagers	Lobby West Kent Police Contact Special Parish Constable Eade	Parish Council	Jan 2005
1.2 That villagers comply with the advice of the Police to report to them all incidents, crimes and any suspicious behaviour	Inform village community and remind them of the "post box" in the village shop	Individual villagers	On going
1.3 That the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme be strengthened	A Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator be recruited for the Village More roads be included in the Scheme	Parish Council	April 2005
1.4 That the Leigh Immediate Search Network (LISN) be introduced as soon as possible	Parish Council and West Kent Police to support the start-up of LISN	Parish Council	Dec 2004
1.5 That the Civil Protection Team be re-activated	Identify volunteers to re-activate the Team Team Leader to liaise with Jeff Seear of SDC	Parish Council	March 2005

2. TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC

Recommendation	Ideas for Action	Responsibility	Target Date
2.1 That the condition and security of Leigh station is improved	Press Network Rail to keep continued watch on condition of the station. Institute weekly inspection/report on conditions to be submitted to Network Rail. Press Network Rail to install CCTV	Parish Council	March 2005 Aug 2005
2.2 That the provision of some form of protection for pedestrians under the bridge at Leigh station be investigated	Discuss with SDC the possibility of a footpath/barrier/pedestrian lights	Parish Council	Dec 2005

Recommendation	Ideas for Action	Responsibility	Target Date
2.3 That every effort be made to ensure that there is no reduction in the existing timetable for trains stopping at Leigh station	Lobby South East Rail to retain existing service	Parish Council	Jan 2005
2.4 That parking costs at Hildenborough station are excessive	Approach South East Rail over charges	Parish Council	March 2005
2.5 That train and bus timetables be available in the village shop	Approach Alan Johnston to see if the service could be provided Obtain supplies of timetables from South East Trains and Arriva buses	Parish Council	Jan 2005
2.6 That the village should be made aware of the current position of the Central Railways proposal	Publish statement	Parish Council	Dec 2004
2.7 That the problem of traffic speed through the village be addressed	Set up Speed Watch initiative in conjunction with SDC and West Kent Police Use data obtained to discuss traffic calming options with KCC and SDC	Traffic Committee set up by Parish Council	Dec 2004 Dec 2005
2.8 That the possibility of additional car parking be investigated	Parish Plan parking paper to be presented to the Parish Council and SDC Examine short term ideas within the paper Commission study of long term ideas, including parking at Leigh station	Parish Council	Nov 2004 Dec 2005
2.9 That the provision of a cycle path to Hildenborough be investigated	Parish Council to discuss possibility with SDC	Parish Council	Aug 2005
2.10 That the condition of traffic and street signage be improved	Prepare list of damaged/broken/dirty/crooked signs and send to SDC	Traffic Committee	Feb 2005
2.11 That a salt bin is provided at Charcott	Approach SDC	Parish Council Individual residents of Charcott	Dec 2004

Recommendation	Ideas for Action	Responsibility	Target Date
3.5 That dog walkers should be encouraged to clear up their dog waste	SDC to be asked to provide an additional dog waste bin at the top of Greenview Avenue, Powder Mill Lane by grass triangle at start of footpath to Kennards and at the junction of Lower Green and Well Close	Parish Council	July 2005
	SDC be asked to provide additional notices to convey the anti social aspect of dog waste together with the dangers and penalties of not using the facilities provided	Individual dog owners	On going

4. FACILITIES

Recommendation	Ideas for Action	Responsibility	Target Date
4.1 That the Village Hall complex be refurbished to the standards necessary to provide first class facilities for the village	Village Hall Management Committee to progress their development plan and applications for grant funding with the full support of the Parish Council and all village societies	Village Halls Management Committee	2006/7
4.2 That a Youth Forum be set up to encourage the youth of the village to participate in the development of activities for the younger members of the community	Contact SDC and KRCC for advice Provide Forum with all data gathered as part of Parish Plan survey Forum to work closely with Village Halls Management Committee	Parish Council Youth Leaders	March 2005
4.3 That the playing fields at the top of Lealands Avenue be used for the benefit of the community	Examine the feasibility of providing drainage so that the field can be used Identify range of activities that the field could be used for Consider the possibility of the Parish Council purchasing the land	Joint Working Party set up by Parish Council and School Governors	Sept 2005
4.4 That a football team for 11-14 year olds be set up	Identify adults to organise and support the project Encourage Football Club to support the initiative	Individual villagers	Jan 2005
4.5 That the cricket club be encouraged to review the appearance of the cricket pavilion to improve the visual aspect of the Green	Parish Council to approach cricket club	Cricket Club	March 2005

Recommendation	Ideas for Action	Responsibility	Target Date
4.6 That a village website be launched	Develop a website to promote the village and its activities	Development team set up by Parish Council utilising local volunteers	Feb 2005
4.7 That noticeboards should be provided at strategic points throughout the village	Noticeboard next to Parish Council one to be replaced Noticeboards to be erected outside Village Halls and the School Condition of existing noticeboards to be reviewed including clarification of who can use which boards	Parish Council	July 2005
4.8 That very effort should be made to retain the Leigh surgery and to make it more accessible	Discuss future of surgery with Senior Partner of practice Discuss possibility of providing wheelchair and other disabled access to surgery Ensure the surgery times and prescription service through Post Office is widely publicised	Parish Council	April 2005
4.9 That one or more children's play areas be created in the village	Set up a Committee, including parents of young children, to examine possible sites, costs and potential usage. It should be noted that, for legal reasons, the Green is not an option.	Committee set up by Parish Council	Jan 2005
4.10 That Adult education facilities be offered in Leigh	Work with Village Halls Management Committee who are already investigating this provision Contact West Kent Adult Education service to identify range of courses that could be offered	Parish Council	June 2005
4.11 That the Governors of Leigh Primary School investigate the use of the school's computers for evening classes in computer skills for villagers	Contact Head Teacher and Governors of Leigh Primary School Work with Village Halls Management Committee who are already investigating this provision Contact West Kent Adult Education for advice	Parish Council	June 2005
4.12 To ensure that the toilets adjacent to Jessica's Hall remain open	Discuss security problem with SDC, including the possibility of installing CCTV	Parish Council	Feb 2005

Recommendation	Ideas for Action	Responsibility	Target Date
4.13 That the Parish Council should give greater publicity to its activities	Produce a leaflet explaining the functions and responsibilities Produce an Annual Report based on the Annual Parish Assembly to be distributed throughout the parish with the June parish magazine	Parish Council	June 2005
4.14 That affordable housing for local people be provided as a matter of urgency	Lobby SDC to grant permission to develop identified sites Continue to pressurise Rural Housing Trust to develop identified sites Any development of affordable housing needs to reflect the villages concerns that there are no large developments either within or on the boundaries of the village	Parish Council	On going
4.15 That the village wishes to retain its unique character	Lobby SDC to ensure that no unsuitable or large developments are agreed and that the concepts in the village Design Statement are incorporated within any SDC Planning Documents Identify areas where development could cause concern Be constructive about small, affordable, infill developments	Parish Council Planning Committee	On going
4.16 That every effort be made to ensure the continued existence of the village shop/post office	In conjunction with Alan Johnston identify any means by which the community can provide additional support	Parish Plan Steering Committee	Dec 2004
4.17 That the existing allotments, owned by the Morley Trust, be retained	Try to ensure continued use of the site by a significant number of villagers	Morley Trust Allotments Committee	On going
4.18 That additional recycling facilities for cardboard and toy/book charity bin be provided	Approach SDC and charities	Parish Council	July 2005
4.19 That some form of screening be provided for the recycling facility to improve the visual quality of the Green area	Approach SDC	Parish Council	March 2005

SURVEY REPORT

HOUSEHOLD DATA

Compiled from the completed Household questionnaires.

Number of households returning surveys	483
Percentage of total households in parish	75%
Number of people living in households	1,207

Ages of people resident in households

Age	Male	Female
0 - 4	2%	2%
5 - 10	4%	6%
11 - 15	4%	4%
16 - 17	1%	2%
18 - 24	3%	3%
25 - 44	10%	13%

Age	Male	Female
45 - 59	11%	11%
60 - 64	3%	3%
65 - 74	5%	5%
75 - 84	3%	4%
85+	1%	1%

Location of households

Leigh	80%	Moorden	2%	Other	6%
Charcott	8%	Powder Mills	2%		

Vehicle Ownership

How many roadworthy vehicles do the households own?	755
Estimated number of vehicles in 5 years time	707

Parking

	Yes	No
Do you have off-road parking at your property?	84%	11%
If yes, is it sufficient for all the vehicles owned by the household?	76%	4%

Internet Access

	Yes	No
Does the household have access to the internet	59%	33%
If there is access to the internet, is broadband installed	9%	47%

PERSONAL DETAILS

The remainder of the data is compiled from the individual questionnaires completed by individual respondents.

No respondents	849
Percentage of parish	66%

Percentage of Males	45%
Percentage of Females	55%

Age

18-24 years old	4%
25-34 years old	8%
35-44 years old	21%
45-59 years old	31%
60-64 years old	7%
65-74 years old	15%
75-84 years old	9%
85 years and over	2%

Length of Residence

Less than a year	4%
1-5 years	17%
6-10 years	15%
10-15 years	11%
15-20 years	9%
20-25 years	10%
25-50 years	19%
51+ years	7%

Employment status

An employee	36%
Unemployed	0%
Self-employed	16%
In full-time education	2%
In part-time education	0%

Unwaged housewife/husband	11%
Retired	27%
Permanently sick/disabled	2%
Other	1%

Main place of work, school or college

Home	15%
Leigh	7%
London	11%

Elsewhere within 10 miles	25%
Elsewhere over 10 miles	9%

TRANSPORT

What is the main means of transport to work, school or college

Car / Van	43%	Train from Leigh or Peshurst	2%	Motor bike	1%
Public bus	2%	Train from Hildenborough	9%	Walking	2%
School / Private bus	0%	Bicycle	1%	Other	1%

PUBLIC BUS SERVICE

Percentage using Public Bus Service

22%

<i>Frequency and purpose of use</i>	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Work	3%	2%	3%
School/College	1%	0%	1%
Shopping	5%	4%	4%
Social / Leisure	2%	2%	4%
Medical / Hospital visits	2%	2%	1%

<i>Rating of services</i>	Good	Reasonable	Poor
Adequacy of timetable	5%	10%	3%
Reliability	11%	6%	0%
Cost	6%	8%	2%
Disabled access	0%	2%	6%

TRAIN FROM LEIGH OR PESHURST STATIONS

Percentage using this train service

38%

<i>Frequency and purpose of use</i>	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Work	2%	4%	4%
School/College	1%	0%	0%
Shopping	2%	5%	4%
Social / Leisure	4%	12%	14%
Medical / Hospital visits	1%	2%	2%

<i>Rating of services</i>	Good	Reasonable	Poor
Adequacy of timetable	10%	21%	4%
Reliability	8%	21%	6%
Cost	4%	22%	8%
Disabled access	1%	7%	7%

TRAIN FROM HILDENBOROUGH STATION

Percentage using this service

52%

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
<i>Frequency and purpose of use</i>			
Work	11%	5%	3%
School/College	0%	0%	0%
Shopping	1%	6%	3%
Social / Leisure	4%	23%	14%
Medical / Hospital visits	1%	2%	2%
<i>Rating of services</i>			
	Good	Reasonable	Poor
Adequacy of timetable	15%	28%	5%
Reliability	8%	32%	8%
Cost	4%	27%	17%
Disabled access	1%	9%	8%

FACILITIES

<i>Do you use the following?</i>	Often	Rarely	Never
Leigh PO & Stores for pensions or postal services	59%	21%	8%
Leigh PO & Stores for shopping	66%	24%	3%
Causeway PO & Stores for pensions or postal services	8%	9%	29%
Causeway PO & Stores for shopping	8%	14%	27%
Midweek Fortnightly Shopping Bus to Tunbridge Wells or Sevenoaks	2%	2%	83%
Commuter bus to and from Hildenborough Station	3%	2%	76%
Leigh Surgery	19%	35%	39%
Leigh PO & Stores for prescriptions	25%	16%	51%
Local Pubs and Royal British Legion on a regular basis	30%	36%	26%
Mobile Library	3%	5%	79%
Periodic Large Rubbish Collection	15%	36%	39%
Leigh Garage	29%	30%	32%
Genesis Hairdressers	17%	14%	59%
Fairlawn Garden Services	13%	23%	53%
DART Garage	2%	6%	80%
Gaza Timber	12%	28%	50%
I & M Motors, Gaza Trading Estate	7%	10%	72%

Do you have any difficulty getting to:

	Yes	No
Hospital	6%	90%
Doctor	4%	92%
Chemist	3%	91%
Chiropodist	3%	83%

	Yes	No
Optician	2%	92%
Dentist	2%	91%
Physiotherapist	3%	81%

How well do sports and leisure facilities cater for the following groups?

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Young Children	4%	16%	18%	10%	4%
Teenagers	2%	11%	18%	14%	6%
Families	1%	11%	23%	11%	4%
Single People	2%	12%	17%	9%	3%
Retired People	3%	15%	19%	9%	3%
Disabled	0%	4%	10%	13%	8%

General

	Yes	No
Would you use a village website to obtain local information?	55%	38%
Would you like to know more about activities organised by village clubs?	58%	32%
Is the church important to you?	50%	42%

MEETING PLACES**Which Halls and Meeting Places are used, how frequently and what is the quality of their facilities?**

Respondents were asked to grade the quality of the venues. Where the entry was not graded but just ticked, it has been recorded as "Use"

Often Used

	Good	Adequate	Poor	Use
Large Village Hall	0%	0%	2%	1%
Small Village Hall	1%	6%	1%	4%
Genner Rooms	6%	1%	0%	2%
Scout Hut	1%	1%	0%	2%
Jessica's Hall	2%	0%	0%	1%
Cricket Pavilion	0%	2%	1%	2%
The Green	9%	4%	0%	9%
Playing Fields	1%	0%	0%	1%

Used Sometimes

	Good	Adequate	Poor	Use
Large Village Hall	1%	6%	8%	9%
Small Village Hall	1%	11%	2%	10%
Genner Rooms	3%	1%	0%	3%
Scout Hut	1%	2%	0%	1%
Jessica's Hall	2%	0%	0%	2%
Cricket Pavilion	0%	3%	1%	3%
The Green	5%	7%	0%	12%
Playing Fields	0%	3%	0%	3%

Rarely Used

	Good	Adequate	Poor	Use
Large Village Hall	1%	7%	8%	26%
Small Village Hall	1%	9%	5%	25%
Genner Rooms	5%	6%	1%	28%
Scout Hut	3%	8%	1%	30%
Jessica's Hall	8%	4%	1%	28%
Cricket Pavilion	1%	9%	4%	27%
The Green	2%	3%	0%	15%
Playing Fields	1%	5%	4%	28%

What is each hall/meeting place used for?

	Sports		Social Event		Public Show		Other
		Social Club	Playgroup/ Childcare		Private Function		
Large Village Hall	3%	2%	29%	1%	23%	15%	1%
Small Village Hall	1%	8%	24%	6%	26%	16%	4%
Genner Rooms	0%	3%	9%	1%	3%	2%	4%
Scout Hut	0%	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Jessica's Hall	1%	0%	4%	0%	1%	1%	2%
Cricket Pavilion	10%	1%	7%	0%	1%	0%	1%
The Green	25%	1%	18%	1%	15%	1%	8%
Playing Fields	7%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%

What additional meeting places would be of benefit to the village?

Children's Play areas	33%
Quiet Areas	7%
Wildlife watching areas	14%

Sports fields	11%
Others	6%

What additional educational facilities are needed?

More registered childminders	6%
After School clubs	17%

Adult education evening classes	33%
Others	3%

Housing development**What sort of additional accommodation does the village need?**

Large family homes	7%
Small family homes	48%
Homes for the Young	45%
Homes for the Elderly	26%
Sheltered Accommodation	20%

What type of Housing Development would be acceptable/

Single property sites	30%
Small sites (less than 5 units)	55%
Larger sites	3%
None	23%

General

	Yes	No
Would you like the spelling of the village name to revert to "LYGHE" to reflect the pronunciation?	33%	58%
Are you part of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?	19%	75%
Do you read the Parish Magazine regularly?	76%	19%
Do you read The Courier regularly?	65%	30%
Do you read the notices on the Parish Noticeboards regularly?	46%	49%
Have you ever attended a meeting of the Parish Council?	24%	70%
Does the Parish Council publicise it's activities and decisions sufficiently?	49%	36%
Does the Sevenoaks District Council publicise it's activities and decisions sufficiently?	37%	49%

ENVIRONMENT

The Countryside	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Village footpaths are well identified and signposted	9%	61%	14%	2%
Village footpaths are easily accessible and well maintained	6%	55%	19%	3%
Dog owners need to be more aware of the problems caused by "dog fouling"	42%	36%	9%	1%
Hedgerows and ditches around the village are well maintained	5%	52%	22%	6%
There is a need for a more active tree conservation policy in public areas	11%	46%	20%	2%
There is a need for more conservation of trees and hedgerows	16%	48%	16%	1%
There should be more awareness of our wildlife and it's habitats	24%	53%	6%	0%

Traffic	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Traffic speed, vehicle size and road safety is a major concern	65%	24%	4%	1%
Improvements are required to prevent the Green from suffering from traffic	41%	35%	10%	1%
Street lighting would not be beneficial to the village	28%	30%	18%	13%
There should be more roadside footpaths to aid pedestrians	25%	36%	24%	2%
Separate cycle paths should be provided around the area	17%	25%	30%	14%

The survey also included a number of questions that required comments from the respondents. The number of comments received for each question is shown below, a full listing runs to 121 pages.

	No. Replies
Do you have any comments on the transport systems?	195
Please give details of any problems getting to medical facilities	58
What new sports/leisure facilities would you like to see in the village?	259
What additional church activities would attract your support?	92
Is there a problem with litter in the parish? If so, where	320
Number of responses that stated that litter was not a problem	84
Have you any suggestions for reducing vandalism in the parish?	411
Do you have any comments on the activities of the Parish Council?	179
What is it that you like MOST about the parish?	536
What is it that you like LEAST about the parish?	458
What ONE NEW FACILITY would you like to see in the parish?	452
What one thing would you most like to see prevented from happening in the parish?	562

VILLAGE SOCIETIES & ORGANISATIONS

Allotments	Arthur Lewis, 01732-833113
Arts & Craft Group	Linda Terry, 01732-834317
Badminton Ladies	Debbie Sykes, 01732-832090
Bellringers	Stella Wooldridge, 01892-870323
Crandall Trust	Colin Stratton-Brown, 01732-832174
Cricket Club	Nigel Shaw, 01732-832267
Football Club	Derek Furneaux, 01732-838933
Golden Years	Prim Saunders, 01732-833929
Historical Society	Rowena Love, 01732-832459
Indoor Bowls	Bernard Groves, 01732-838445
Leigh United Charities	William Crocker, 01732-832580
Mothers & Toddlers Group	Helen Everett, 01732-832585
Pre-School Group	Rosemary Hawkins, 01732-833245
Royal British Legion	Kerry Penn, 01732-833601
Rugby Club	Duncan Aldiss, 01732-838159
Scouting - Beavers	David Bennie, 01732-833245
Scouting - Brownies	Vanessa Pullen, 01732-838420
Scouting - Scouts	David Bennie, 01732-834252
Scouting - Cubs	David Bennie, 01732-834252
St Mary's Youth Clubs	David Bennie, 01732-834252
St Mary's Fellowship	Christine Curwen, 01732-832984
St Mary's Church	Rev Lionel Kevis, 01732-833022
Stoolball Club	Carol Rance, 01732-838663
Table Tennis Club	Andrew Everett, 01732-832585
Tennis Club	Rob Swallow, 01732-832334
Village Produce Association	Joyce Field, 01732-832143
Women's Institute (Lyghe)	Mrs J Castell

LOCAL BUSINESSES

The following businesses all have premises within the parish.

Air-Britain	Aviation Book Publishers Units 2 and 5, Stable Block, Hall Place, 01732-838968 and 01732-835637
Bat & Ball	Public House High Street, 01732-833230
Charcott Automotive Repairs	Automobile Engineers Charcott Garage, Charcott, 01892-870673
Creative Catering	Catering Contractors Manor Buildings, Powder Mill Lane
DART Garage	Automobile Engineers Penshurst Road, 01732-838551
Environment Agency - Leigh Flood Barrier	Medway House, Powdermill Lane 01732-703003
Fairlawn Garden Services Ltd	Garden Machinery Maintenance and Sales Penshurst Road, 01732-838254
Fleur-de-Lis	Public House High Street, 01732-832235
Fox's Pots	Pottery The Coach Yard, Hall Place, 01732-833369
The French Collection	Catering Contractors Manor Buildings, Powder Mill Lane, 01732-838999
Genesis	Hairdressing Salon High Street, 01732-833000
GlaxoSmithKline	Pharmaceuticals Research Old Powder Mills, 01732-372000
The Greyhound	Public House Charcott, 01892 870275
Leigh Motors Ltd	Automobile Engineers Lower Green, 01732-833209
Leigh Newsagents & Stores	General Stores / Newsagents and Post Office High Street, 01732-832194
Lo-Cust Drillings Ltd	Hall Place, 01732-832223
Manor Hire	Marquee Hire Manor Buildings, Powder Mill Lane, 01732-834445
Woodside Kennels	Penshurst Road, Penshurst, 01892-871090

The following businesses have premises on Gaza Trading Estate, Scabharbour Lane, Hildenborough which is within the parish of Leigh

I & M Motors	Automobile Engineers Unit 1, 01732-463654
I M V Scooters	Scooter Sales and Repairs Unit 1, 01732-461370
Gigglepin 4x4	Automobile Engineers Unit 1, 463600
Weald Coachworks	Automobile Body Repairers Unit 1, 01732-463428
Cottham & Son	Car and Commercial Vehicle Repairers Unit 1, 463614
Gaza Timber	Timber Merchants & Builders Merchants Unit 4, 01732-743200
Sheridan Cabinet Makers	Cabinet Makers Unit 10, 01732-460047
Pegrum Range Cookers & Heating	Range Cookers and Heating Suppliers Unit 12, 01732-463256
E J P Fire Protection	Fire Protection - Extinguisher Sales and Maintenance Unit 12a, 01732-450308
Webbs Furniture and Mirrors	Mirror Makers Unit 12b, 01732-460305
Enviroguard	Pest Control Unit 13, 01892-870164
Hodson Engineering	Performance Racing Engines Unit 14, 01732-463658
Chestnut Products	Fencing Contractors to the Building Industry Unit 15, 01732-463777
Ray Watson	Unit 16
Jon Woodrow	Design and Manufacture of Bespoke Furniture Unit 18, 01732-452059

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Steering Committee consisted of:

David Bennie	Peter Penn
Helen Everett, Vice-Chairman	Martin Pollard, Chairman
John Knock	Chris Rowley

The Steering Committee would like to thank the following people for their contributions and advice

Kathy Bugden	Action with Communities in Rural Kent (formerly Kent Rural Community Council)
Alison Cooke	Sevenoaks District Council
David Forster	Chairman, Leigh Village Design Statement Committee
Kevin Haugh	Countryside Agency
Keith Hunt	GlaxoSmithKline
Leigh Parish Council	
Leigh Primary School	
Carole Smith	Countryside Agency
Maggie Smith	Sevenoaks District Council

All the people of Leigh, especially those who delivered and collected Questionnaires and contributed to the meetings.

The development of the parish plan was funded and supported by the Countryside Agency, GlaxoSmithKline and Leigh Parish Council.