

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

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

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr R. Britain, Cllr A. Holt and Cllr S. Smith
APOLOGIES: Cllr A. Backlog, Cllr G. Marchant, Cllr G. Rogers, Cllr G. Southwell and Cllr B. Williams
IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). County Cllr R. Mayall, District Cllr M. Silander and 7 members of the public.

Open Session

To hear reports from District Councillor Silander

District Cllr Silander reported that most of the work taking place at SDC level is to prepare for the local government reorganisation and devolution. The council is putting groups in place to consider topics such as budget and debt management. The Local Plan is being worked on.

Cllr Holt asked if there is any update on the appeal for land south of Greenview Avenue. D.Cllr Silander said that the KCC Highways objections were the most important in the application refusal as they stated that the roads would be unsafe for pedestrians and other road users. The Clerk reported that the appeal start date has not yet been set, and currently appeals are taking 29 weeks to be determined. Members suggested that members of the public contact County Cllr Mayall with any requests to seek further objections to the appeal from KCC Highways.

Questions from members of the public

A resident attended in order to provide further clarification on his request for a memorial bench on The Green.

District Cllr Silander and 1 member of the public left the meeting at 8.18pm.

Closed Session

37. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Backlog, Cllr Marchant, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Southwell and Cllr Williams, and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council.
38. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
Cllr Kaye and Cllr Smith declared an NPI in item 41(i) as they have been invited to the event.
39. **The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd June 2025** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Britain, seconded by Cllr Smith, and all were in favour.
40. **Planning**
 - i. To consider applications received
 - i. SE/25/01611/HOUSE: Hollow Trees, Hollow Trees Drive, Leigh TN11 8QA - demolition of existing garage and erection of new garage of same footprint. Members had no objection to this application.
 - ii. SE/25/01787/WTPO: West Cottage, High Street, Leigh TN11 8RL - Crimson King Acer fell to ground level and treat the stump with ecoplugs. Members had no objection to this application.
 - iii. SE/25/00621/FUL: 4 The Green Lane, Leigh TN11 8QX - demolition of existing garage and erection of new dwelling (Use Class C3) with associated curtilage, landscaping, access, parking and other associated works. (i) Amended drawings and certificate B received. (ii) Sequential test has been received and a letter from Upper Medway Drainage Board regarding surface water run-off discharge. (iii) The applicant has provided a roof plan and clarification of proposed materials within updated material schedule and elevations.

Internal arrangement of second floor has been adjusted. Members had no comment to make on this amended application.

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

- iv. SE/24/03333/FUL: Applebys, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JH - installation of 24 ground-mounted solar panels on the land south of Applebys, between the property boundary and the Green Belt field boundary. Members supported this application.

ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:

- SE/25/00998/WTCA: Ivy Cottage, The Green, Leigh - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area: 3 hawthorn trees to remove and grind resulting stumps. Decision: No Objection Lodged.
- SE/25/00926/HOUSE and SE/ 25/00927/LBCALT: Old Brickmakers, 92 Lower Green, Leigh - demolition of modern half of garden outbuilding (old cobbler's shop) with flat roof and roof light, and erection of new matching extension to create a double piled roof formation. New extension to existing rear lean-to Utility/WC comprising a cranked extension with pitched roof. New extension in matching facing brick. Existing adjacent lean-to enclosed porch with replacement window, existing rear door to be infilled. New rear single storey bedroom extension with pitched clay tiled roof to form third pile to existing roof formation. White painted feather edged cladding to match existing. New replacement bathroom window at 1st floor with painted timber finish. Application approved.
- SE/25/00756/HOUSE: Edgehill, Greenview Avenue, Leigh - demolition of existing conservatory and removal of existing roof. Part ground floor side extension, new porch, rear extension, new second floor and loft conversion with sky lights. Alterations to fenestration. Replacement of existing garage and shed at rear of property. New vehicular access. Application approved.
- SE/25/01077/LDCPR: 1 Wyndham Close, Leigh - Lawful Development Certificate Proposed for loft conversion including dormer window, and rooflights. Application approved.
- SE/25/01184/WTCA: Leigh County Primary School, The Green, Leigh - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area: Yew crown lift to 3.25m and reduce by 1.25m. No Objection Lodged.

iii. To discuss the appeal for the refused application on land south of Greenview Avenue

25/00025/RFPN: Outline application for the erection of up to 39 dwellings with access and layout and some matters reserved. The appeal was lodged on 19.06.25. The Parish Council has not yet been notified of the start date. It was agreed that members of the Parish Council will compare the original application and the appeal documents to see where the changes are, and then consideration to be given to the Parish Council's submission to the Planning Inspectorate. It was agreed that funding could be spent on employing a planning consultant if required, cost approval delegated to the Finance Committee.

iv. To hear report of meetings with SDC Planning Policy Officers and SDC Design & Conservation Officer and to discuss whether to undertake a Leigh Character Area Assessment and Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk reported that the following meetings were held:

- i. 10th June at SDC with Emma Coffin, Planning Policy Officer, Cllr Williams & Cllr Marchant, also with Chiddingstone Parish Council.
- i. The first regulation 18 Local Plan consultation looked at sites that were brownfield or previously developed land, plus weakly performing Green Belt land around those sites, and then sites in the National Landscape around the top tier settlements in sustainable locations.
 - ii. The new NPPF was published which increased the new housing target for Sevenoaks District from 704 to 1,149 new dwellings per year for the length of the plan period (15-20 years). The option of Grey Belt land was introduced.
 - iii. SDC is undertaking a Green Belt assessment which will look at sites around a wider range of settlements, not just top tier.
 - iv. SDC is looking at sustainable locations for Grey Belt sites outside the National Landscape, they carried out a second regulation 18 consultation including a call for sites, and the results will be available at the end of the summer. These sites will include brownfield sites, previously developed land, Green & Grey Belt land. New sites put forward will be subjected to a sustainability and site assessment process.

- v. The third regulation 18 consultation on the sites put forward will take place in October/ November 2025.
 - vi. SDC is looking at sites outside the National Landscape for development.
 - vii. SDC is preparing an infrastructure delivery plan which will be a moving document that will sit alongside the Local Plan, this will consider infrastructure requirements such as capacity for additional pupils in schools.
 - viii. SDC also preparing a small sites policy for a minimum of 5 dwellings. The SDC Settlement Hierarchy is important here.
 - ix. Discussed Leigh and Chiddingstone Character Area Assessments and Neighbourhood Plans. It was felt that the evidence based documents such as the CAA could be combined but the Neighbourhood Plans should be individual.
 - x. It was agreed to move forward and not do a joint Neighbourhood Plan but the parishes could support each other and proceed at their own pace.
 - ii. 24th June with Rebecca Lamb, SDC Design & Conservation Officer, on Teams with Cllr Williams and Cllr Marchant, also members of Chiddingstone Parish Council.
 - i. For a Character Area Assessment, the Parish Council will need to analyse and articulate the character of the parish.
 - ii. The community will need to be involved with regular public consultations, this will add weight to the documents
 - iii. All policies must mirror Local Plan and National Planning Policies.
 - iv. The first stage is to apply for the Leigh Neighbourhood Area, which is likely to be the parish boundary. A statement of why this is the most appropriate Neighbourhood Area will need to be included
 - v. Neighbourhood Plans run at the same length as a Local Plan, but reviewed every 5 years.
 - vi. The Parish Council should prepare a Parish Infrastructure Statement based on community feedback.
 - vii. A recommendation to contact Fawkham Parish Council for advice.
- Members agreed that the following actions should be undertaken prior to the September Parish Council meeting:
- i. Meet with Fawkham Parish Council with Chiddingstone Parish Council.
 - ii. Have a bespoke event with Alison Eardley, KALC's planning consultant, the cost of this to be shared with Chiddingstone Parish Council.
 - iii. Meet with Chiddingstone Parish Council and Hever Parish Council to discuss the possible application to change the boundary of the National Landscape. There is evidence that the National Landscapes are willing to discuss this but it will be a long-term process.
 - iv. The motion to approve commencement of a Character Area Assessment and/or a Neighbourhood Plan will be made at the September Parish Council meeting.
 - v. KALC Planning Conference
The Clerk reported that she attended the KALC Planning Conference on 20th June which was very useful and interesting.

Members agreed to suspend the Closed Session at 8.30pm in order to allow County Cllr Mayall to give his report.

Report by County Cllr Mayall

County Cllr Mayall reported that the committees at KCC are now up and running. There are 57 new Reform UK county members and it has taken a while to bring them up to speed and carry out inductions. The Committees that C.Cllr Mayall is sitting on are: Overview Health, Regulation, Adult Social Care, Children & Young People and the Adoption Panel.

Cllr Holt gave C.Cllr Mayall a summary of the application and appeal on land south of Greenview Avenue, and said that KCC Highways' objections and evidence are vital. Clerk to send a link to the application.

The Closed Session resumed at 8.40pm.

41. The Green

- i. To discuss request for a private gathering on The Green on 18th July 2025
Cllr Kaye and Cllr Smith reiterated their NPI in this item. The Clerk reported that a request has been made to erect a gazebo or small marquee on The Green on Friday 18th July for a gathering between 5pm and 8pm, as a pre-wedding event. Members had no objection to this request but said that the school is also using The Green for their Year 6 party that day and to make all parties aware. If the weather is wet, cars will not be able to park on the grass.
- ii. To discuss request to park on The Green on 6th August 2025 for the WI Picnic on the Green
The Clerk reported that the WI has asked for permission to park a few cars on The Green for a picnic on Wednesday 6th August at lunchtime. Members had no objection to this request. If the weather is wet, cars will not be able to park on the grass.
- iii. To discuss request for a memorial bench on The Green in memory of Chris Davidson
The Clerk reported that there has been a request for a memorial bench on The Green for Chris Davidson. Mr Davidson has suggested removing one of the two oldest metal and wood benches and replacing it with a solid wood bench. Members agreed, Clerk to meet Mr Davidson to agree location.
- iv. Repair to Memorial Bench on The Green
The Clerk reported that the Ian Stevens memorial bench has had to have an emergency repair. She has advised his partner who has offered to pay for the repair, however members were happy to cover this cost.
- v. Cricket Club Event on The Green
Cllr Kaye reported that the Cricket Club is 325 years old this year, and they are holding a commemorative event on The Green on Friday 25th July. The Marylebone Cricket Club is attending the event.
- vi. Emails from resident
The Clerk reported that three emails have been received from a resident since the last meeting, which have been copied to all members. Members agreed that the nature and tone of these emails are increasingly vexatious. The Parish Council has engaged with the resident in the past but these communications have been unsuccessful. Members agreed to reiterate previous responses to the resident namely that the Parish Council has previously resolved on 6th May 2025 to no longer engage with this resident on these issues. The resident is entitled to ask the Parish Council to review its response, this must be made within 40 working days of receipt of the Parish Council's original response dated 15th May 2025. If the resident is still dissatisfied after an internal review, the resident can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office within six weeks of receiving the outcome of the internal review.

42. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To hear update regarding the Leigh Community SpeedWatch Scheme
The Clerk reported that the volunteers met on Saturday 21st June from 8.30am and captured 17 speeding vehicles, the details of which were sent to Kent Police.
- ii. To discuss speed reduction measures in the parish
The Clerk reported that the following projects were added to the Leigh Highways Improvement Plan, and she is awaiting a response from KCC Highways.
 - i. B2027 Hildenborough Road from the parish boundary at Bid Bridge to the 30mph zone at the entrance to Leigh village. Reduce from 60mph to 30mph or 40mph.
 - ii. Pauls Hill from the end of the 30mph zone at the railway bridge to the brow of the hill. Reduce from 60mph to 30mph.
 - iii. High Street, Leigh, traffic calming measures such as road markings or signage to slow traffic.
- iii. To hear update regarding the work to trees and footpath between Kiln Lane and Well Close
The Clerk reported that the conifers have been felled and the path has been laid by Hodge Landscapes, including adding a barrier to prevent vehicles using the path. Members agreed that the new path and area look very good and is much safer and no longer hazardous. Members agreed that this will be partly paid by CIL funding at £3,236.89, and £2,663.11 from the general fund.

iv. Public Rights Of Way

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Section 14(1), As Amended By The Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991. KCC intends to make an Order the effect of which is to temporarily close Public Footpath SR430 along the northern boundary edge of the property known as Applegarth from the 11th July 2025 for a maximum of six months, although it is expected that it will reopen in August 2025. The path is closed because works are planned on or near it. There is no alternative route.

43. To discuss the proposed sale of The Fleur de Lis public house, which is listed as an asset of community value

The Clerk reported that the Fleur de Lis was listed for sale, but the current owner took a while to inform SDC, so the initial 6 weeks period expires on 1st August. The process with assets of community value is as follows: Community groups can submit their intention to bid within the first 6 weeks, which then triggers the 6 month period in which their bids can be formulated. Community groups have no rights of purchase over other potential buyers. The owner is under no obligation to sell the asset to the community group or any other person. If the owner decides to sell to the community group, they may do so within the six month moratorium period. Once the six month moratorium period has passed, and if the community group has not successfully bought the property, a further 12 month protection period is triggered. During this period the asset may be sold by the owner on the open market without the risk of any further moratorium period being triggered. In total there is an eighteen month moratorium period commencing on the day the council receives written notification of the owner's intention to dispose of the asset. A community group bid may only be submitted by a suitably constituted community group which can demonstrate a local connection. If no intention to bid is made within the first 6 weeks by a community group, then the owners are able to sell to whomever they likes.

Cllr Mayall and 5 members of the public left the meeting at 9.09pm.

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

The Clerk reported that the Coffee Corner held on 13th June was successful. The next dates are: 11th July and 15th August which will be held on The Green, as it is the same day as the fun event. Time: 10.30am to 12.00pm.

45. Aged Persons Dwellings

Cllr Britain reported that he went to look at the fuse board in No.2 The Bungalows as the electricity was off but this was due to a faulty toaster. The issue is rectified.

46. Aviation

- i. GACC Newsletter.
- ii. AEF: invitation to the AEF 50th anniversary event on Wednesday 10th September from 6pm to 9pm at Camley Street Natural Park, London N1C 4PW.

47. To hear update regarding the Charcott phonebox refurbishment and agree costs

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council approved a contribution of £250 and there was local fund raising carried out and the landlords of the Greyhound Inn has also made a contribution. The cost of materials is in addition to the grant, this is £149.67. Members approved the request to pay for the materials, making the grant £399.67. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Smith and all were in favour. Cllr Holt said that the refurbishment of the phonebox and letterbox is excellent and both much improved.

48. The Old Burial Ground

Cllr Holt reported that the information board has been erected. Unfortunately some garden waste has been left in the burial ground. Clerk to make a notice to go on the gate asking people not to do this as the Parish Council have to remove the waste at taxpayers' expense.

1 member of the public left the meeting at 9.21pm.

49. Summer Family Fun Day

The Clerk reported that this is booked for Thursday 15th August from 10.30 to 13.30 on The Green. The entertainer has been booked for 3hrs at £275.

50. To discuss the parish cluster Emergency & Resilience Plan

The Clerk reported that the last meeting was held on 26th June. There was an introduction to "Better Together" by Kelly Webb, Head of Communities & Partnerships, Community Safety Unit, at SDC. She also did a presentation on behalf of Sharon Wright - CCTV Partnership and Civil Protection Manager at SDC. There was then a presentation by David Goff - Chair of the National Flood Forum, Chair of the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and Co-ordinator of the Kent Flood Action Group Forum. And also a short presentation on the support, materials and training available via the Kent & Medway Resilience Forum and Communities Prepared. The draft E&R Plan is still being undertaken, and one of the next steps is to draw a group of volunteers together from the communities in the cluster.

51. 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 1: SDC News Releases:
 - (i) SDC is considering leasing a former landfill site in Sevenoaks to a solar farm company to help generate clean electricity for South East Water. The company approached the Council to lease the site off Otford Road which was previously a KCC landfill site. Because of its previous use, the site is not suitable for housing and most agricultural activities. Electricity from the solar farm would power the water treatment works at Crampton's road which is operated by South East Water, with the team exploring the options for surplus energy to be used to power some nearby Council buildings. The proposal includes ideas to support nature, such as wildflower planting and new hedgerows. If the project goes ahead, the site will support more wildlife than at present.
 - (ii) Businesses and communities in rural areas can once again apply to the West Kent Rural Grants scheme. Grants ranging from £5,000 to £20,000 are available to support economic growth initiatives and community, heritage, and tourism facilities. The grants are for capital expenditure only and match funding is required. Other terms and conditions apply.
See www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/westkentrugrants.
- ii. Item 6: Email of thanks for the grant from Leigh Village Horticultural Society.
- iii. Item 12: Leigh Expansion & Hildenborough Embankment Scheme with the latest newsletter for the Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme. "In summary, we successfully lifted in the new centre gate for the Leigh FSA control structure on 21st May. Work to install the final (North) gate is due to begin later in the summer. The concrete for the new penstock is completed and works are starting on the new pumping station. Earthworks have also begun with the formation of the new access road and building of the embankment." There is a Hildenborough drop-in event on Wednesday 9th July between 3p and 6.30pm in Hildenborough Village Hall.
- iv. Item 15: email from KCC Public Transport regarding changes to bus services. At the current time there are no proposed changes to buses from Leigh.
- v. Item 16: Kent Police: June newsletter.
- vi. Item 17: Email from Southeast Communities Rail Partnership attaching minutes of recent Tonbridge, Redhill & Reigate steering group meeting and the 2025 Action plan. There is an invitation to the Rail Fair event being held in Lewes on 1st August. Cllr Britain reported that there was no flooding under the railway bridge after recent heavy rain so the work undertaken was successful.

52. Finance:

- i. To discuss application for grant from Leigh School
Email from Leigh Primary School, co-Chair of School Governors with a request for a grant from the Parish Council for either an interactive whiteboard or some visualisers. It was agreed that the Finance Committee will look at the Grants budget and agree level of grant.
- ii. Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)
Consultation for town and parish councils who are currently participating in the Kent Pension Fund.

The consultation is on proposals to form a LGPS funding pool specifically for town and parish councils as at 31st March 2025, with a possible universal LGPS pooled employer contribution rate for all involved, operative from 1st April 2026. The consultation started on 4th June 2025 and ends on 4th August 2025. Clerk to prepare a response to the consultation.

iii. Area around the noticeboard in Powder Mills

Members agreed to ask Hever Landscapes to dig over the area around the noticeboard and to plant a couple of shrubs.

iv. To approve list of payments

Cllr Smith proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Holt and all were in favour.

53. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. The Clerk reported that she attended the KALC EGM on Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution which was very interesting and useful.
- ii. Cllr Holt reported that the outdoor classroom has been erected on the school playing field and looks very good.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 1st September 2025 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.

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

Payment		Amount		VAT
Date	Number Payee	Detail of payment	Inc. VAT	
17.06.25	889	LCS Painting Decorating	New shower to No.1 APD	£405.00
07.07.25	890	Clerk	Salary	£1,260.97
07.07.25	891	HMRC	PAYE	£584.73
07.07.25	892	Clerk	Mileage & reimbursement costs	£152.45
07.07.25	893	KCC	Pension contribution	£711.22
07.07.25	894	Estate & Field	Mowing The Green on 5 occasions	£630.00 £105.00
07.07.25	895	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Grass cutting March 2025	£126.00 £21.00
07.07.25	896	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Grass cutting April 2025	£684.00 £114.00
07.07.25	897	SDC	Bulk Refuse Freighter visit 14.06.25	£152.77 £25.46
07.07.25	898	SDC	Emptying dog bins April to June 2025	£625.56 £104.26
07.07.25	899	SLCC	GPC qualification fee (share with Chidd)	£15.00
07.07.25	900	Original Tree Surgeons	Tree work to Yew Tree at Crandalls	£216.00 £36.00
07.07.25	901	Jill Johnson	Reimbursement plants for planter Powder Mills	£39.90
07.07.25	902	Mark Ellison	Refurbishment of Charcott phonebox	£399.67
			<u>£6,003.27</u>	<u>£405.72</u>

Signed

Date