

## LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2025 AT 8.00PM

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**PRESENT:** Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr A. Backlog, Cllr A. Holt, Cllr G. Marchant and Cllr G. Rogers

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr R. Britain, Cllr S. Smith, Cllr B. Williams and District Cllr M. Silander

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). County Cllr R. Mayall and 15 members of the public attended the Open Session only. One members of the public attended the meeting until 9.00pm.

#### Open Session

##### Report by County Cllr Mayall

County Cllr Mayall said that he has a member's grant fund of approximately £6,000 which he can distribute to good community causes in his ward. He reported that details of a private Reform Party online meeting was leaked to the press and Reform UK subsequently suspended four councillors because the video of the heated virtual council meeting brought the council into disrepute.

##### Report by District Cllr Silander

In the absence of District Cllr Silander, the Clerk read his report:

1. Bevan Place: the fight continues against the Cabinet decision approving the Bevan Place development, as reported last month. There is hope that the matter can be brought before FIAC on 11<sup>th</sup> November for further consideration.
2. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November, the business cases for each of the proposed models for LGR across Kent & Medway will be published. There are five different models of LGR that have been progressed to business case:
  - Option 1a – a single unitary council with three area assemblies proposed by KCC
  - Option 3a – three unitary councils
  - Option 4b – four unitary councils
  - Option 4d – four unitary councils with changes to District & Borough boundaries proposed by Medway Council
  - Option 5a – five unitary councils with changes to District & Borough boundaries proposed by Gravesham & Dartford Borough Councils.
3. Council Leadership: The Leader of the Council recently lost the vote of confidence. However, no further action has been taken at this stage, as the Council's vote is not binding.

##### Questions from members of the public

1. A resident reported that she has started a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and had a very useful meeting with a police officer. New members of the scheme are sought and Clerk to advertise in the parish magazine.
2. Several residents attended the meeting in order to ask for more information on the possible development on land to the rear of Penshurst Road. Cllr Kaye advised that an application was approved to waive the need for an Environment Impact Assessment on the land for approximately 65 dwellings. The Parish Council was not informed or consulted on this application, the decision was reported in the monthly list of delegated decisions provided by SDC. If or when an application is submitted, details will be added to the Parish Council's website.
3. A resident asked about the Hall Place wall adjacent to the High Street, as some of the coping stones have fallen off and the pointing washed out. The Clerk reported that she has had a meeting with KCC drainage officers and the landowner, who is taking this matter up with KCC.

Cllr Kaye advised that the Parish Council will be lighting the beacon on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm. There will be a bar and the food vans will be in attendance.

County Cllr Mayall and 14 members of the public left the meeting at 8.30pm.

4. Ian Bishop attended the meeting in order to discuss the maintenance of The Green. He said that the area that is designed for heavy or sport use is the football pitch. The area to the east of the cricket square needs a lot of work, decompaction, seeding and top dressing. This will be expensive and will require total rest with the area fencing off. A cost for this work will be prepared by the contractor and discussed at the December Parish Council meeting together with the quote for the 2026 maintenance contract. It was agreed that the Clerk will arrange and attend a meeting with Ian and the school. It was also agreed that the school will be asked not to use the area to the east of the cricket square until further notice as work is planned in that area. Ian said that the seeding was planned for tomorrow but had to be cancelled due to weather conditions. The Clerk reported that the Finance Committee approved the seeding cost of between £2,000 and £2,500 + VAT because the work was time critical and the contractors needed to be instructed. Members approved this cost.

Ian Bishop left the meeting at 9.00pm.

### **Closed Session**

89. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Britain, Cllr Smith and Cllr Williams and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council. Apologies for absence were also received from District Cllr Silander.
90. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**  
None.
91. **To hear update on the co-option process for a new member of Leigh Parish Council**  
The Clerk reported that two applicants will be interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> November, and the successful candidate co-opted at the December Parish Council meeting. SDC have confirmed that no electors requested an election and so the Parish Council is able to co-opt a new member.
92. **The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025** were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Kaye, seconded by Cllr Holt, and all were in favour.
93. **Planning**
  - i. To consider applications received
    - i. SE/25/02897/CONVAR: Annexe at Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 9AS - removal of condition 4 (use solely as accommodation ancillary to the main residence) of SE/18/00942/HOUSE for 'conversion of potting shed/outbuilding to residential annex'. Members had no comment to make on this application.
    - ii. SE/25/02864/WTPO: Gowers, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QL - Silver Birch is in decline - fell to ground level. Members supported this application.
    - iii. SE/25/02948/HOUSE: 2 Hunter Seal, Leigh TN11 9AW - erection of garden studio. Members had no comment to make on this application.The Clerk reported that, since the last Parish Council meeting, the Planning Committee considered the following application:
    - iv. SE/25/02010/HOUSE: The Watch House, Burton Avenue, Leigh - erection of double garage with pitched roof with associated hard and soft landscaping. Members had no comment to make on this application.
  - ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:
    - SE/25/02162/WTPO: 1 Lightfoots, Penshurst Road, Leigh TN11 8HN - Works to Trees covered by a TPO - 2 x Pine trees – fell. Application refused.

- SE25/02382/WTCA: Old Chimneys, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QL - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - Tulip tree: reduce and thin crown by up to 20%. Decision No Objection Lodged.
  - SE/25/02512/WTCA: Oak Cottage, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QL - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - large willow with 4 stumps with 6ft shoots to be removed and taken away. Decision No Objection Lodged
  - SE/25/02571/WTPO: The Old Burial Ground, High Street, Leigh TN11 8RQ - Works to Trees covered by a TPO - various works to trees. Application approved.
  - SE/25/02902/RG5: Land West of Allotments, Penshurst Road, Leigh - request for Screening Opinion – Environment Impact Assessment screening opinion for the proposal of approximately up to 65 dwellings, vehicular access points off Penshurst Road and associated open space, attenuation areas and landscaping. Decision - EIA Not Required.
- iii. To hear update regarding the application to renew the listing of the Fleur de Lis as an asset of community value  
The Clerk reported that she has applied to SDC to renew the listing of the Fleur de Lis as an Asset of Community Value. The new owner is aware.
- iv. To discuss the SDC Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation and the process for responding  
The Clerk reported that SDC has commenced their Regulation 18 consultation for the new Local Plan, this will run from 23<sup>rd</sup> October to 11<sup>th</sup> December. The Clerk has asked SDC for an overlay of the proposed site in Chiddingstone Causeway with the parish boundary in order to see whether any of this site is within the Leigh parish.

#### 94. The Green

- i. To discuss the lighting of the beacon for Bonfire Night on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November  
The Clerk reported that the Community Hub has applied for a temporary events notice to serve alcohol and will set up a bar. The fish & chip van, the pizza van and Thai Basil are all attending, and it was agreed that they should park on the road by the school. The School PTA will have a fund-raising stand. Clerk to update Risk Assessment and seek a First Aider to attend the event. Cllr Kaye to source a fire extinguisher. The beacon will be cordoned off by rope for the safety of the public.
- ii. To discuss the lighting of the beacon for Choir Singing on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December  
Cllr Rogers reported that the plans are under way, and it was agreed that the stand for mulled wine will either be in the bus shelter next to the Christmas Tree or in a gazebo on The Green. Clerk to purchase battery operated fairy lights. Cllr Rogers to arrange to borrow a table and seek a First Aider to attend the event. Clerk to update Risk Assessment.
- iii. To hear update on the WI's request for a replacement tree on The Green  
The Clerk reported that she and Cllr Smith asked the tree expert, Bob Noakes from the Original Tree Surgeons, for his opinion on the best tree variety for this location. He said that a tree that would flourish is a Swamp Cypress - a Taxodium Distichum - because they love wet conditions. He said that it can be planted in the same location as the silver birch because it's a different species and the silver birch died because of water conditions. There is already one on The Green in front of The Rectory This was passed on to the WI and they will respond to the Parish Council in due course.
- iv. To discuss maintenance of The Green and any associated cost  
See Open Session above.
- v. To discuss the Leigh Tree Survey carried out in October 2025 and approve costs  
The Clerk reported that the Tree Survey was carried out on 8<sup>th</sup> October attended by the Clerk and Cllr Smith. The full Tree Survey was circulated to all members. The following work is recommended:
- |     |              |         |                    |   |         |
|-----|--------------|---------|--------------------|---|---------|
| T2  | English Oak  | Large   | No visible defects | Crown reduce 25%, deadwood and crown lift 5.2m  | £45.00  |
| T3  | English Oak  | Large   | No visible defects | Crown reduce 15%, deadwood and crown lift 2.75m | £625.00 |
| T5A | Silver Birch | Sapling | No visible defects | Dead - remove                                   | £15.00  |

T6	English Oak	Medium	No visible defects	Crown lift 2.5m	£40.00
T7	English Oak	Large	No visible defects	Selective crown lift to 3.0m and clear road sign	£90.00
T8	English Oak	Large	No visible defects	Selective crown lift to 3.0m and clear road sightline	£90.00
T10	English Oak	Large	Deadwood visible	Remove deadwood at top	£60.00

Total: £1,365 + VAT. Members approved the work and expenditure. Proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Backlog and all were in favour.

vi. To discuss request for additional contribution towards hedgecutting adjacent to Barden Cottages

Members discussed a letter received from a resident, which was circulated. Members had previously discussed this matter in June 2023, when it was agreed that the Parish Council owns the verge in front of the hedge but not the hedge itself. The Parish Council agreed in June 2023 to give a contribution of £200 to this work as a gesture of goodwill. Members agreed that the situation has not changed and did not agree to give a further contribution to this work.

vii. The Clerk reported that an email was received from a resident: "Below is the reference to the documentary on BBC4 available on iPlayer, together with Melissa Harrison's concerns for sparrows and weed seeds. We do hope that the Parish Council will recognise the harm that weed killing, fertilizing and rolling can do to the soil on the outfield adjacent to all our oaks young or old. We also hope that the plastic netting can be dispensed with as it is clearly serving no purpose; that the yellow hose too be put away for the winter, all in the spirit of 'good housekeeping'. An unprecedented one and half hour documentary entitled 'Oak Tree: Nature's Greatest Survivor, Dr George McGavin's detailed scientific study of a 400 year old oak tree in Wytham Woods near Oxford. The oak is directly comparable to our ancient oak. The scientific study began with the autumn season and how crucial its root system was in coping with the most treacherous of winters and changes in climate. The research centre at East Malling is where for 100 years they have experimented with roots of plants. Dr Louisa Robinson-Boyer took us through the vital importance of the mycorrhiza fungi and truly vast network just below the surface of the ground. Professor Peter Gregory showed in graphic detail the network of roots that this fungi support well beyond the circumference of these oaks. In last Saturday's Times, Melissa Harrison in The Nature Book Column under 'Struggling Sparrows' mentions factors implicated in house sparrows' present struggles, including air pollution, fewer nesting places on modern buildings and lack of weed seeds to eat in the south and east of the UK."

The Clerk reported that she raised this with the tree expert during the Tree Survey and he said that the amount of rolling and spraying on The Green is not enough to impact the roots of the trees on The Green. Members agreed that The Green needs to be maintained adequately to keep it healthy for everyone to enjoy. Clerk to respond accordingly.

viii. The Clerk reported that a request has been made for a memorial tree or bench in memory of Joyce Woodhouse, who sadly passed away earlier this year. Members discussed the idea of starting a project to allow people to sponsor planters in the village, either the annual cost of plants and soil or the purchase of a new planter if one needs to be replaced. A simple brass plaque could be added to the planters. Clerk to discuss with Leigh in Bloom.

ix. It was noted that a decision has been made not to forward any information on the Health & Safety Executive visit to a resident because the Parish Council has previously agreed not to engage further with this resident on matters in connection with the Veteran Oak Tree, given that these matters are linked.

## 95. Highways & Rights of Way

i. To hear update regarding the Leigh Community SpeedWatch Scheme

None.

ii. To hear update on speed reduction measures in the parish

The Clerk reported that traffic surveys were carried out by KCC in two locations on Hildenborough Road and Ensfield Road.

The results have been received and were circulated. The statistics show:

- i. Hildenborough Road north of Home Farm, average speeds recorded were 39.9mph northbound and 38.1mph southbound. The speed limit is 60mph.
- ii. Hildenborough Road south of Home Farm, average speeds recorded were 41.8mph northbound and 41.4mph southbound. The speed limit is 60mph.
- iii. Ensfield Road, average speeds recorded were 38.7mph northbound and 38.1mph southbound. The speed limit is 60mph.

The results have been sent to the engineers for their comments.

iii. To discuss the cluster verge cutting contract and approve costs

The Clerk reported that she received three quotes for the verge cutting contract. The cluster of Parish Councils have discussed the quotes and it was agreed to award the contract to the contractor providing the lowest quote for the next cut providing he can get all the documentation together for KCC. This is Ashley Brigdale who is known to other parish councillors in the cluster. Members approved.

iv. Road Closures

- Temporary Road Closure - B2176 Moorden Lane, Chiddingstone Causeway - 24<sup>th</sup> November for 1 day between 09.30 and 15.30 between B2027 Tonbridge Road and B2176 Station Hill. The closure is required while works are undertaken by Openreach. See: <https://one.network/?tm=GB145367259>
- Temporary Road Closure - The Green, Leigh - 24<sup>th</sup> November for 5 days outside Cherry Tree Cottages. The closure is required while the Installation of underground service cables are undertaken by UK Power Networks. See <https://one.network/?tm=GB145193265>

**96. To hear update on the proposed refurbishment of Leigh Village Halls**

Cllr Kaye reported that there are regular meetings and the project is progressing.

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

The Clerk reported that the Coffee Corner held on 10<sup>th</sup> October was very successful. The next dates 14<sup>th</sup> November and 12<sup>th</sup> December 10.30 to 12.00.

**98. Aged Persons Dwellings**

i. To discuss the vacancy at No.1 The Bungalows and property refurbishment

The Clerk reported that the property is now cleared of furniture apart from the bed and a cabinet which are being collected on Friday. The property will be inspected next week to see if any redecoration work is required. Expressions of interest have been received and the deadline for applications is 21<sup>st</sup> November with a meeting to discuss them on 28<sup>th</sup> November.

**99. Aviation**

- i. GACC: there was an online briefing session on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October with an update on what's happening with the challenge to Gatwick's expansion plans.
- ii. AEF – invitation to the AGM on 20<sup>th</sup> November 11am to 2.30pm in Fleet Street, London EC4. Speaker Gary Fuller, Associate Professor of Air Quality Management at Imperial College.
- iii. CAGNE (Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions) has filed a legal challenge against Gatwick Airport's new runway.

**100. The Old Burial Ground**

i. To discuss application for works to trees in the Conservation Area and with TPOs

The Clerk reported that the application for tree work has been approved. The quote is £1,350 + VAT and a contribution by the resident has been agreed. The work will be done on 15<sup>th</sup> December.

**101. 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 4: CPRE: invitation to their Annual General Meeting on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2025 from 10am - 2:30pm approx. at Lenham Community Centre, 12 Groom Way, Lenham, ME17 2QT
- ii. Item 7: Kent Police: Ensfield Road, Leigh - on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October at around 07:00, somebody gained access to a site and stole equipment. Crime Report No. 46/184264/25

## 102. Finance:

- i. To discuss application for grant from Leigh in Bloom  
The Clerk reported that Leigh in Bloom have applied for a grant towards their costs in relation to the planters in the village. Members agreed to give the same level of grant as in previous years, £400, and Clerk to ask that village clubs and organisations also carry out their own fund raising.
- ii. To approve costs associated with the Leigh Christmas Tree 2024  
Cllr Marchant undertook to contact the company who normally donate the tree. If this is agreed, there are no anticipated costs this year. Clerk to put an advertisement in the parish magazine.
- iii. To approve list of payments  
Cllr Marchant proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Backlog and all were in favour.

## 103. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

Cllr Kaye reported that he will lay the Parish Council wreath for Remembrance Day on Sunday.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.45pm.

### LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL LIST OF PAYMENTS November 2025

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
03.11.25	931	Clerk	Salary	£1,299.04	
03.11.25	932	HMRC	PAYE	£608.32	
03.11.25	933	Clerk	Mileage, Land Registry, coffee corner, wreath	£151.94	£27.28
03.11.25	934	KCC	Pension contribution	£734.21	
03.11.25	935	KALC	Training event	£48.00	£8.00
03.11.25	936	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Mowing The Green and areas August	£672.00	£112.00
03.11.25	937	Imperative Training	Defibrillator battery	£282.00	£47.00
03.11.25	938	Leigh in Bloom	Grant	£400.00	
				<b><u>£4,195.51</u></b>	<b><u>£194.28</u></b>

Signed .....

Date .....