

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 5TH JANUARY 2026 AT 8.00PM

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

Open Session

Report by County Cllr Mayall

In the absence of County Cllr Mayall, the Clerk read his report:

"Following the Christmas and New Year period there is probably not a lot to report. I should ask if your roads are being sufficiently gritted in this current cold spell. Other parishes have expressed concerns. KCC is keen to recruit families/households who would consider becoming foster parents. For more information see www.kentfostering.co.uk. As I have previously mentioned, I am asking parishes to put in applications for my member's grant if you can find something for Leigh Parish which no doubt you can."

Members agreed to report to County Cllr Mayall that Coppings Road is very icy due to the constant surface water along the road. It was agreed that the Clerk would request replacement salt bins at the end of Greenview Avenue, on the corner of Lealands Avenue and Greenview Avenue, in both locations there used to be a salt bin but no longer there, a new salt bin on The Green near the chestnut tree opposite Jessica's Hall and a new salt bin for Charcott Green.

Members also agreed to request a contribution towards a new defibrillator and external cabinet, the cost of which is £1,339.

Report by District Cllr Silander

The Clerk reported that District Cllr Silander had nothing to report after the Christmas period.

Closed Session

122. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Backlog and Cllr Britain and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council. Apologies for absence were also received from County Cllr Mayall and District Cllr Silander.

123. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed
None.

124. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 1st December 2025 were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Holt, and all were in favour.

125. To approve list of meeting dates 2026

The following meeting dates for 2026 were approved:

Monday 5 th January	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 2 nd February	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 2 nd March	Parish Council	8.00pm
Tuesday 7 th April	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 27 th April	Annual Parish Meeting	8.00pm
Tuesday 5 th May	Annual Parish Council Meeting	8.00pm
Monday 1 st June	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 6 th July	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 7 th September	Parish Council	8.00pm

Monday 5 th October	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 2 nd November	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 7 th December	Parish Council	8.00pm
Monday 4 th January 2027	Parish Council	8.00pm

126. To approve update to the Leigh Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Members approved the update to the Leigh FOI Publication Scheme. Proposed by Cllr Swallow, seconded by Cllr Williams, and all were in favour. Clerk to post on website.

127. Planning

i. To consider applications received

- i. SE/25/03424/ LDCPR: Fair Acre, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh TN11 8PZ - single storey rear extension with rooflight. Removal of chimney. Alterations to fenestration. Members had no objection to this application.
- ii. SE/25/03432/FUL: Garages on Eastern Side of Greenview Avenue, Leigh TN11 8QS - demolition of existing garages. Erection of one dwelling with associated works. The Planning Committee to consider the plans and recommend a response.

The Clerk reported that the Planning Committee discussed and approved responses to the following applications since the last meeting:

- iii. SE/25/03331/PIP: Land South of The Old Stables, Knotley Hall, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway - erection of dwellings with a minimum of 1 or maximum of 1 net dwellings. Leigh Parish Council had no comment to make in relation to the construction of the proposed dwelling but asked that the applicant report further on the history of the walled garden and identify if it is of historical/archaeological significance. Also, from a biodiversity viewpoint, provide evidence that the removal of the orchard trees will not affect the balance and what additional/replacement planting is envisaged. The Parish Council would like to see conditions imposed on any approval to prevent hedgerows and/or the surrounding wall to be removed as they provide an important buffer. The Parish Council asked SDC if there is also a condition that could be imposed to ensure that the applicant must live in the property for a minimum period.
- iv. SE/25/03044/HOUSE: 4 Knotley Hall Cottages, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JH - demolition of existing shed and conservatory; erection of part one, part two storey rear extension including garage conversion. Rooflight addition and alterations to roof and fenestration, minor alterations to patio. Amended application. Leigh Parish Council objected to this application as the size of the proposal is inappropriate, and appears to further increase floor areas over and above the 50% rule. There would be a negative visual impact on a neighbouring property which it will overlook and there would be an overall detrimental effect on the openness of the Green Belt.

ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:

- SE/25/02897/CONVAR: Annexe at Ramhurst Manor, Powder Mill Lane, Leigh - 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'. Application approved.
- SE/25/02010/HOUSE: The Watch House, Burton Avenue, Leigh - erection of double garage with pitched roof with associated hard and soft landscaping. Application approved.
- SE/25/03156/WTCA: The Green, Leigh TN11 8QL - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area - No Objection Lodged.
- SE/25/02948/HOUSE: 2 Hunter Seal, Leigh - erection of garden studio. Application approved.

iii. To hear update on the SDC Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's response to the consultation was submitted before the deadline. SDC are currently analysing all the responses and the Regulation 19 consultation will be published in the summer.

128. The Green and parish maintenance areas

i. To hear report of the Carol Singing event on Wednesday 10th December

Members agreed that the event was very successful with a good number of people attending. It was agreed to look into whether a source of electricity could be installed on The Green and Cllr Kaye undertook to investigate.

ii. To discuss 2026 maintenance of The Green

	Maintenance	Individual cost 2025	Annual cost 2025	Individual cost 2026	Annual cost 2026
1.	To gang mow The Green	£105.00	£1,365.00	£105.00	£2,205.00
2.	To roll The Green	£385.00		£385.00	£385.00
3.	To fertilise The Green	£1,484.00		£1,484.00	£1,484.00
4.	To vertidrain The Green	£820.00	£2,430.00	£820.00	£2,460.00
5.	Overseed & Groom The Green	£1,275.00	£1,275.00		
6.	Additional quote: Seeding	£2,500.00	£2,500.00		
	Total – subject to VAT		£7,570.00		£6,534.00

Members approved the quote for the 2026 maintenance of The Green by Estate & Field. The individual prices remain the same as last year but quantities of service may change in 2026. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Smith and all were in favour. It was agreed that the weedkilling and fertilising products to be discussed with the contractor. Clerk to speak to the Clerk at Edenbridge Town Council regarding the products they use on their sports pitches and recreational areas. The seeding has not yet been done due to weather conditions and members agreed that the area of The Green seeded could be temporarily fenced off to protect it whilst the seeds germinate. Clerk to arrange a meeting with the school and the sports coach as soon as possible with Cllr Kaye and Ian Bishop.

Members discussed an email received from a resident on weedkilling, the contents were noted.

iii. To discuss hedge cutting at Well Close

The Clerk reported that she is meeting RWE to obtain a quote for the work on Friday 9th January.

iv. To discuss quotes for grasscrete on the edge of The Green

The Clerk reported that two quotes were received, one by Hodge Landscapes and one by Gardens of England. The quotes were discussed and members awarded the work to the contractor who supplied the lowest quote, Hodge Landscapes, for £2,600 + VAT.

v. To discuss quotes for extended paving area in Crandalls

The Clerk reported that two quotes were received, one by Hodge Landscapes and one by Gardens of England. The quotes were discussed and members awarded the work to the contractor who supplied the lowest quote, Hodge Landscapes, for £3,250 + VAT

129. Highways & Rights of Way

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

The Clerk reported that the following projects are on the Leigh Highways Improvement Plan:

- 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.
- Pauls Hill from the end of the 30mph zone at the railway bridge to the brow of the hill. Reduce from 60mph to 30mph.
- High Street, Leigh, traffic calming measures such as road markings or road surface to slow traffic (currently not being taken forward, no recommendations).

The Clerk reported that the Highways officer has received feedback from engineers regarding the issues raised which is follows: "Following the review of the speed limit and drivers' behaviour on Hildenborough Road I confirm that both the average and 85th percentile speed limit on the approach from National Speed Limit zone to 30mph terminal is non-compliant. In addition, concerns have been raised regarding pedestrian safety for those walking between Home Farm and the village. It is recommended:

- “1. Install SLOW carriageway marking to supplement the “pedestrian in road ahead” warning sign approx. 580 yards southbound towards the village speed limit terminal.
2. Install SLOW carriageway marking to supplement the “side road ahead” warning sign approx. 220m southbound the village speed limit terminal
3. Install “pedestrian in road ahead” warning sign and a “SLOW” carriageway marking approx. 79m southbound towards the village speed limit terminal.
4. Vegetation be trimmed around all existing warning signs along the road.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible to join with the 30mph in Hildenborough as the rural space in between does not meet the DfT criteria. Hopefully, these measures will improve driver behaviour at the location within your parish. I have passed the scheme over to engineers for design and delivery. This will typically take around 4 months allowing for design workload followed by a 90-day lead time for contractors.”

Members were disappointed that the 30mph zone could not be extended from the Hildenborough parish boundary. Clerk to ask for evidence of the reasons why this speed reduction was approved in the Hildenborough parish. The Clerk reported that Chiddingstone Parish Council has successfully sought approval from KCC to reduce the speed limit in Camp Hill from the junction of the B2027 to Camp Hill House. Clerk to add to the Leigh HIP a fourth request that this speed reduction be extended to Jessups at Charcott.

- ii. Members discussed an email from a resident of Penshurst Road near Cinder Hill regarding the speed limit of that road. Members agreed that it is unfortunately not possible to reduce the speed of this rural road as it does not satisfy the required Department for Transport criteria.
- iii. Leigh Community SpeedWatch
The Clerk reported that the volunteers are meeting tomorrow at 2.30pm and on Thursday 8th January at 8.30am.
- iv. Road Closures
A21 Resurfacing Works between Morley’s roundabout and Vauxhall roundabout, meaning a closure of the A21 overnight from Morley’s roundabout to Vauxhall roundabout between 8.00pm to 6.00am, Monday to Friday only. Access for emergency services will be maintained through the closures. The A21 southbound carriageway will be closed from Monday 12th January to Friday 23rd January and the A21 northbound carriageway will be closed from Monday 26th January to Friday 6th February. There will be a diversion in place via the B245, A227, A26 in both directions
- v. Rights of Way
Cllr Kaye reported that he will write to Kent PROW regarding the possible diversion of two footpaths near the A21 to make them more accessible.

130. To hear update on the Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Expansion Scheme

The Clerk reported that the following update has been received:

“Leigh Barrier

- We’ve been preparing the barrier for the new north gate. This included surveys, scaffolding, adjusting the concrete, and making repairs.
- The north gate is now installed, and we’re making improvements so it works even better.
- New cabling has been installed at the barrier and the Environment Agency’s control office (Medway House).
- A condition check was done on an existing culvert as part of the crane pad works.

Eel Pass

- Work has started on the eel pass. First, we sealed the base with a special material, then began installing concrete troughs that will hold the stainless steel eel pass.
- The eel pass is being installed to help eels access their natural habitat and support long-term population recovery.

Leigh Pumping Station

- Rabbit-proof fencing is nearly finished and should be complete early January. This fencing protects the reservoir embankments from rabbit burrowing, which could weaken the structure and cause erosion.
- We’re reinstating boundary fencing along the railway line, with the last section now being completed.
- The access road has been prepared for the final jointing works.”

The Clerk reported that a response has been received to her email about outstanding works:

“Water Meadows: We understand the urgency and appreciate your concern. To progress this, we need confirmation of the exact location and a current photograph of the area. This will help us liaise with the relevant parties and ensure the correct solution is implemented. We have placed additional material within our site boundary; however, anything outside of our boundary cannot be impacted as we do not own the footpath. This needs to be managed with KCC Public Rights of Way.

Fencing Removal: We are still awaiting documentation from Network Rail. We will follow up with them and confirm the expected timeline for removal. Please note, we are still undertaking finishing works within the site, and for health and safety reasons, this fencing must remain in place to prevent public access to the Environment Agency’s land.

Hedges: These will be reinstated as part of the landscaping phase at the end of the contracted works. This is being delivered as part of the wider LEHES scheme in consultation with the council and relevant ecologists. This aspect of the works will be undertaken by a separate contractor for the Environment Agency which potentially will be undertaken in Spring 2026 however this is currently out for tender and so the timescales may vary.

Defibrillator: We did respond to your request on 1st September, confirming that equipment allocation will be reviewed toward the end of the project (Summer 2026). If surplus equipment becomes available from this or other sites sooner, we can revisit this for your community. If not, we would consider making a donation to help you meet the cost.

Ensfield Road Access & Verge Cutting: Responsibility for verge maintenance lies with KCC, and due to health and safety regulations, we cannot carry out work on highways land. However, we fully appreciate the concerns raised and will do what we can within our boundaries, such as removing unsightly plastic bollards and tidying our site entrance, to improve the appearance and safety of the area. These bollards and signage will be removed before Christmas. Hedge cutting remains the responsibility of the landowner and Kent Highways.”

Members were very disappointed by this response because these items have been discussed in open public meetings and steps were promised by VolkerStevin to provide a defibrillator for the parish and to fill the dip in the footpath in the Water Meadows. Clerk to respond and escalate the matter.

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

Cllr Kaye reported that tenders have been received from architect practices which are being considered. The successful practice will then prepare a scope for the work and pre-planning documentation.

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

The Clerk reported that the Coffee Corner held on 12th December was very successful. The next dates are: 16th January, 13th February and 13th March from 10.30am to 12.00pm. Members agreed to pay the cost of the hire of the Scout Hut for 2026 at the same rate as previously.

133. Aviation

- i. GACC December newsletters have been received, the contents noted.
- ii. The Clerk reported that GACC have thanked the Parish Council in advance for the grant, which is very much appreciated.

134. Aged Persons Dwellings

- i. To hear update on the new tenancy at No.1 The Bungalows

The Clerk reported that the lease is signed with the new tenant, who will move in on 17th January.

135. To discuss correspondence received

The Clerk reported that the list of correspondence received has been circulated, and drew members’ attention to the following:

Item 4: Kent Police:

- Hollow Trees Close, Leigh - on Sunday 21st September between 13:00 and 13:15, somebody stole a wheelie bin from outside a residential property. Crime Report No. 46/212468/25.
- Charcott - between 22:30 on Tuesday 16th December and 08:00 on Wednesday 17th December, somebody tried to break into outbuildings at a residential property. Crime Report No. 46/216097/25.

136. Finance:

- i. Finance Committee
Members agreed that Cllr Swallow will join the Finance Committee with immediate effect.
- ii. Finance Committee Meeting
The next Finance Committee meeting will be on Monday 26th January. The draft budget and precept requirements for 2026-27 will be discussed. The Clerk advised that Leigh's tax base for 2026-27 has reduced from 971.93 to 965.32.
- iii. To approve list of payments
Cllr Holt proposed that the list of payments be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Smith and all were in favour.

137. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. Cllr Marchant advised that the Christmas Tree has been removed and taken to the Household Waste and Recycling Centre. The resident is storing the lights. Members thanked Cllr Marchant for all his help, and Clerk to thank the resident.
- ii. Cllr Kaye reported that three things that the Parish Council has done have received favourable comments and appreciation by residents:
 - i. The lights on the beacon.
 - ii. Clearing the drive to the Church of fallen leaves and debris.
 - iii. Refurbishing the bench in memory of Mrs Davidson. David Bennie blessed the bench and Mr Davidson was very pleased with the newly refurbished bench. Members thanked Cllr Kaye for his work on this project.
- iii. Cllr Holt asked if there will be a litter pick arranged. Cllr Kaye undertook to arrange one in February.
- iv. Cllr Holt reported that the school has created a new fundraising arm, called the Governors Fund, which has been established to enrich and safeguard the high-quality educational experience provided by the school. The fund enables the school to deliver exceptional teaching, enriching opportunities and a nurturing environment for every pupil. It is a branch of the Leigh Primary School PTA where funds are delegated and spent in line with the Governors' choice. This enables a wider variety of projects to be funded.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 2nd February 2026 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm.
The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL LIST OF PAYMENTS January 2026

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
16.12.25	954	Clean & Dry	Carpet cleaning in no.1 The Bungalows	£132.10	
05.01.26	955	GACC	Grant (approved 01.12.25)	£1,000.00	
05.01.26	956	Clerk	Salary	£1,298.84	
05.01.26	957	HMRC	PAYE	£608.52	
05.01.26	958	Clerk	Mileage, coffee corner	£144.34	
05.01.26	959	KCC	Pension contribution	£734.21	
05.01.26	960	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Mowing The Green and areas October	£726.00	£121.00
05.01.26	961	British Gas	Additional service requirement no.1 APD	£49.00	£8.17
05.01.26	962	British Gas	Additional service requirement no.2 APD	£49.00	£8.17
05.01.26	963	SDC	Emptying dog bins October to December	£625.56	£104.26
05.01.26	964	Helen Breeze Property	Tenancy renewal no.2 The Bungalows	£120.00	£20.00
05.01.26	965	Neal Hardy (plumber)	Supply and fit new kitchen tap no.2 APD	£100.00	
				<u>£5,587.57</u>	<u>£261.60</u>

Signed

Date