

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE SMALL VILLAGE HALL, HIGH STREET, LEIGH ON MONDAY 2ND MARCH 2026 AT 8.00PM

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr R. Britain, Cllr A. Holt, Cllr G. Marchant, Cllr G. Rogers, Cllr S. Smith and Cllr B. Williams

APOLOGIES: Cllr A. Backlog and Cllr R. Swallow

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). County Cllr R. Mayall and 1 member of the public attended the Open Session only.

Open Session

Report by County Cllr Mayall

County Cllr Mayall reported that the KCC budget was passed at the council meeting on 12th February. He has been driving through his ward to look at potholes and is reporting them to Highways. KCC has been in discussion with Ringway about taking on the road maintenance contract from April. Ringway has been responsible for road maintenance for the Highways Agency and Transport for London. The quality of road maintenance should improve from April and Ringway will be held accountable with regular meetings with Highways officers. Cllr Marchant said that when Hildenborough Road was resurfaced, the contractors were GW Highways and they carried out a first class service, using appropriate materials. C.Cllr Mayall said that he would feed this back to Highways. Cllr Rogers asked whether C.Cllr Mayall has had any feedback from Highways after the last Parish Council meeting when the pothole repairs that were carried out in Greenview Avenue were discussed. The pothole repairs carried out were very poorly done and the material washed out of the hole very quickly. Also there was no notice given to residents about the road closure. C.Cllr Mayall undertook to chase Highways for a response. C.Cllr Mayall left the meeting at 8.06pm.

Questions from members of the public

Mr Ian Bishop attended the meeting in order to discuss the upcoming maintenance and use of The Green. Cllr Kaye advised that he, Ian and the Clerk attended a meeting at the school with Jenna Halfhide and Matt Thacker to discuss the school's use of The Green. At the meeting it was agreed that the school would not use The Green at all until after the Easter holidays, they would use Jessica's Hall, and after Easter only use three areas of The Green, two areas on the football pitch and one area to the north of the cricket square. The area to the east of the cricket square should not be used at all as it is severely damaged by over-use. However a school lunchtime club has been using the area to the east of the cricket square. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the school to confirm this agreement. Ian undertook to send a map of the area that the school can use after Easter. The school have said that they cannot use the school playing field in Lealands Avenue because it is too wet and needs grass cutting.

Ian said that he has been in touch with Estate & Field about the maintenance of The Green and the company will carry out a vertidrain of the whole Green, then cut the grass and seed the whole area. It was agreed that the school must not use The Green for an agreed period in order to allow the seed to germinate. The public will be advised on social media and be asked to also minimise use of The Green during this period.

Ian Bishop left the meeting at 8.32pm.

Closed Session

152. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Backlog and Cllr Swallow and their reasons for absence were accepted by the Parish Council.

153. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed
Cllr Holt, Cllr Rogers and Cllr Smith declared an NPI in item 165(ii) as they are members of Leigh Tennis Club.

154. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 2nd February 2026 were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Rogers, and all were in favour.

155. To discuss the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on Monday 27th April 2026

Members discussed possible speakers for the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr Kaye reported that the Village Hall Management Committee has asked if it is possible to hold their AGM on the same evening, which is possible if the items for business are kept separate. The committee is going to discuss and revert to the Clerk.

156. Planning

i. To consider applications received

None. The Clerk reported that the Planning Committee discussed and approved responses to the following applications since the last meeting:

- i. SE/25/03124/HOUSE: Applebys, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway TN11 8JH - installation of 24 free standing solar panels. Members supported this application.
- ii. SE/26/00258/WTCA: Gowers, The Green, Leigh TN11 8QL - Mature Ash tree to the left of the house: due to the presence of fungus and the tree displaying signs of stress, we will reduce the crown by approximately 30-40%. Members had no objection to this application.

ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:

- SE/25/03163/HOUSE: Applebys, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway - erection of detached double garage. Application approved.
- SE/25/03432/FUL: Garages on Eastern Side of Greenview Avenue, Leigh - demolition of existing garages. Erection of one dwelling with associated works. Application approved.
- SE/ 25/01952/FUL: Land North West of The Watch House, Burton Avenue, Leigh - demolition of single storey garage. Subdivision of plot and construction of 2 semi-detached dwellings with roof lights, patio area and dormers. Solar panels to roof. Bin and bike store. creation of 4 parking bays, associated hard and soft landscaping. EV charging point. fencing and retaining wall. Application approved.
- SE/25/03044/HOUSE: 4 Knotley Hall Cottages, Tonbridge Road, Chiddingstone Causeway - demolition of existing shed and conservatory; erection of part one, part two storey rear including garage conversion. Rooflight addition and alterations to roof and fenestration. Minor alterations to patio. Application approved.

iii. To discuss SDC's Local List of heritage and non-heritage assets

The Clerk reported that she, Cllr Holt, Cllr Backlog and Cllr Rogers met today to have an initial meeting on how to take this forward.

157. The Green and parish maintenance areas

i. To hear update regarding the provision of grasscrete on the edge of The Green and the extended paving area in Crandalls

Members discussed the completed works and agreed that the two projects look very good. It was agreed to obtain a price for installing 3 small posts on the paving area in Crandalls in order to stop cars parking under the Yew tree, and also for some wood chip to be laid under the tree.

ii. To consider request for Leigh School PTA to hold a colour run event on The Green

The Clerk reported that the PTA has requested use of The Green for a fundraising colour run in the summer. Members discussed this request and decided that the request would not be approved because there would be a lot of paint residue left on the grass and the lane around The Green which may not be acceptable to some residents. The Clerk advised that the Cricket Club has said that The Green is largely booked up over the summer weekends. It was agreed that the school would be encouraged to use their school playing field for this event, and the Clerk offered to help advertise this through social media and the noticeboards.

iii. To approve Leigh School's use of The Green on 28th March 2026 for an Easter event

The Clerk reported that Leigh School wish to hold an event on Saturday 28th March to meet pre-school children between 10.00am and 12.30pm. Members agreed, providing that there are no bouncy castles and that cars are not parked on the grass under any circumstances. If it is wet or the grass is muddy the event should be held in Jessica's Hall.

158. Highways & Rights of Way

- i. To hear update on speed reduction measures in the parish
No update.
- ii. Leigh Community SpeedWatch
The Clerk reported that the volunteers have been out once in the last month. Kent Police carried out an hour of speed enforcement on the High Street on Saturday 14th February between 2pm and 3pm. Overall it was positive and the vast majority of drivers adhered to the speed limit. The fastest driver recorded was a young male travelling at 40mph. He was stopped and issued with a speeding ticket.
- iii. To hear report of the parish litter pick held on Saturday 28th February
Cllr Kaye reported that 13 volunteer litter pickers met on The Green at 9.30am on Saturday 28th February, and a good pile of rubbish was collected and left by Jessica's Hall. The Clerk advised that she has asked SDC to collect this. Cllr Kaye advised that an additional litter pick may be done whilst Ensfield Road is closed on 10th April for 4 days.
- iv. To hear update on the rural swathe 2026 contract and approve contribution for 2025 contract
The Clerk reported that Leigh Parish Council's contribution towards the two rural swathe cuts carried out in 2025 is £461.28. Members approved the expenditure. For 2026, the contractor is ready with the dates for the cuts timetabled.
- v. Public Rights of Way
Cllr Kaye reported that PROW have responded regarding footpath MT45 from Home Farm Leigh to Meopham Bank, as follows "I have now heard back from the Environment Agency and, given the location, construction of a boardwalk within the culvert is not something that they would be able to recommend if we were to make an application. I'm afraid that pretty much ends the chances of taking this forward."
- vi. Highways
 - i. Temporary Road Closure: Ensfield Road, Leigh - 10th April 2026 for 4 days between 8am and 6pm. The road will be closed between the entrance to Killicks Bank and Ensfield Farm. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while the replacement of one existing telegraph pole and rehang associated cabling works are undertaken by Openreach. See <https://one.network/?tm=GB148162301>
 - ii. Cllr Britain said that a directional sign to Powdermills has been knocked over and needs repairing and re-erecting. Clerk to report.
 - iii. Cllr Kaye said that a resident has reported that the laurels at the end of the path across The Green by the road opposite Porcupine House may need cutting back. Cllr Marchant said that these laurels are currently acceptable. Cllr Kaye undertook to take a look.
- vii. Trees and overhanging vegetation on The Green Lane
The Clerk reported that she wrote to residents of Greenview Avenue asking them to check the trees at the end of their gardens for safety as a branch had recently fallen into the road on The Green Lane, and also to check whether there is any overhanging vegetation. One response has been received: "I fully appreciate that Leigh Parish Council is busy dealing with numerous issues but I must refer you to the LPC meetings, the correspondence from residents of Greenview Avenue between 2014 and 2015 and the meeting on 25.11.15 between Leigh Parish Council, Sevenoaks District Council and the residents of both Greenview Avenue and The Green Lane. The consensus of the meeting was that the ownership of the land on which the trees are growing is not in the ownership of SDC, nor the residents of the properties on Greenview Avenue. Notwithstanding this, at the time, I instructed work to some trees adjacent to my property. I believe other neighbours may have acted similarly. Leigh Parish Council did not make any contributions. It may be that if the Parish Council suggested they would make a sizeable contribution to any required works, residents of Greenview Avenue and The Green Lane would also contribute."
Members agreed that if trees are within the fence line they do belong to the houses in Greenview Avenue as they will have now established a right. The trees that are on The Green Lane side of the fences will belong to SDC and the Clerk has asked SDC to attend and check the trees because a branch did come down recently.

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

The Clerk reported that she has chased VokerStevin for a response, but none received. Members discussed the high fencing that has been removed in parts but not completely, the completed eel run and improvements to the surface where type 1 has been laid at the cattle arch. Also the fence and gate into the site at the end of Greenview Avenue need replacing and a hole needs filling which was created when the lorries were parking on the land when accessing the railway line. Clerk to contact landowner.

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

Cllr Kaye reported that the architects are working on a plan which should be prepared by the end of this month. Cllr Britain said that he felt that it is important to ensure that any proposed development or refurbishment of the Village Halls should include a clear plan for parking.

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

The Clerk reported that the Coffee Corner held on 13th February was successful. The next dates are 13th March, 10th April and 15th May 10.30 to 12.00.

162. Aviation

AEF Newsletter – noted.

163. Aged Persons Dwellings

The Clerk reported that the outside sensor lights at no.1 The Bungalows have been replaced.

164. To discuss correspondence received

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

- i. Item 2: CPRE: the government has published its draft National Planning Policy Framework, an important document that guides what gets built where and how, and announced a major consultation. CPRE's main concerns in the new NPPF are proposals to: weaken Green Belt protections and allow speculative development, erase safeguards for 'valued landscapes', the everyday countryside outside of officially protected areas and there is no guarantee for minimum levels of affordable housing in rural areas.
- ii. Item 3: Sevenoaks Mens Shed seeking new accommodation or financial support to enable them to relocate and continue our work within the Sevenoaks area.
- iii. Item 5: Email of thanks from Leigh PCC for the grant towards magazine circulation.
- iv. Item 7: Kent Police: High Street, Leigh: between 5pm on Saturday 14th February and 1pm on Sunday 15th February, somebody stole both number plates from a Fiat parked in the road. Crime Report No. 46/25760/26.

165. Finance:

- i. To consider application for grant from Leigh School
Members discussed the application for grant and agreed to give a grant of £351.36 for the provision of Spanish dictionaries, a Kapla 280 Stone Craft & Construction kit and a Kapla 200 Stone Craft & Construction Kit as these will enrich the teaching provision at the school. Members were not able to give a grant towards staff costs relating to anti-bullying and drawing and talking. Proposed by Cllr Britain, seconded by Cllr Rogers and all were in favour.
- ii. To consider application for grant from Leigh Tennis Club towards coaching Leigh School children
Members discussed the application for grant from Leigh Tennis Club and agreed to give a grant of £800 this year. Proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Kaye and all were in favour.
- iii. To consider membership renewal to GACC £10
Members approved this membership renewal, proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Williams and all were in favour.
- iv. To sign a quarterly bank reconciliation
Cllr Kaye signed the bank reconciliation and corresponding copies of the bank statements as a correct record.

v. To discuss Earmarked Reserves

Members discussed the Earmarked Reserves but wished to make no changes.

vi. To approve list of payments

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

166. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

- i. Cllr Marchant reported that he has been approached by the owner of the village shop asking if it is possible to have dedicated car parking spaces provided outside the shop, but members agreed that this is not possible as it is part of the highway.
- ii. Cllr Marchant reported that the wall belonging to WKHA at Charlotte Cottages has still not been repaired and Clerk to chase.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Tuesday 7th April 2026 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

**LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL
LIST OF PAYMENTS
March 2026**

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
02.03.26	980	Clerk	Salary	£1,343.04	
02.03.26	981	HMRC	PAYE	£612.92	
02.03.26	982	Clerk	Mileage, coffee corner	£106.05	
02.03.26	983	KCC	Pension contribution	£743.97	
02.03.26	984	Hever Landscapes Ltd	Clear road to the Church	£270.00	£45.00
02.03.26	985	Forvis Mazars LLP	External Audit fee 2024-25	£378.00	£63.00
02.03.26	986	Chiddingstone Parish Council	Contribution to shared telephone costs	£354.07	
02.03.26	987	Chiddingstone Parish Council	Contribution to rural swathe cut 2025	£461.28	
02.03.26	988	Dave Cole Electrical Inst.	Replacement security lights at APD1	£452.10	£75.35
02.03.26	989	Utility Warehouse	Gas and electricity costs APD1	£260.89	£12.42
02.03.26	990	GACC	Membership renewal	£10.00	
02.03.26	991	Hodge Landscapes	Grasscrete and paving areas	£6,060.00	£1,010.00
02.03.26	992	Leigh Primary School	Grant	£351.36	
02.03.26	993	Leigh Tennis Club	Grant towards school coaching	£800.00	
				<u>£12,203.68</u>	<u>£1,205.77</u>

Signed

Date