

LEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

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

PRESENT: Cllr J. Kaye (Chairman), Cllr R. Britain, Cllr A. Holt and Cllr G. Marchant
APOLOGIES: Cllr A. Backlog, Cllr G. Rogers, Cllr S. Smith, Cllr R. Swallow, Cllr B. Williams, County Cllr R. Mayall and District Cllr M. Silander
IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L. Kleinschmidt (Clerk). 9 members of the public attended the Open Session only.

Closed Session:

1. a. **Election of Chairman for year 2026/27**
Cllr Holt proposed that Cllr Kaye be elected as Chairman for the year 2026/27. This was seconded by Cllr Marchant and there were no other nominations. Members unanimously voted to accept the proposal. Cllr Kaye said that he was willing to stand and was duly elected.
- b. **To receive Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**
Cllr Kaye signed the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office, which was counter-signed by the Clerk.
2. **Election of Vice-Chairman for year 2026/27**
Cllr Kaye proposed that Cllr Smith be elected as Vice-Chairman for the year 2026/27. This was seconded by Cllr Marchant. There were no other nominations. Members unanimously voted to accept the proposal. The Clerk reported that Cllr Smith is willing to stand and she was duly elected.

Open Session

Questions from members of the public

1. A member of the public asked whether the Parish Council know who drove onto The Green at the weekend. Cllr Kaye said that this is being looked into and it was lucky that The Green was dry and not too much damage was done.
2. The member of the public asked about the current year planning applications listed on the Parish Council's website. The Clerk undertook to look into this matter.

Closed Session

3. **Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr Backlog, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Smith, Cllr Swallow and Cllr Williams 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.
4. **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest / Non-Pecuniary Interest on matters to be discussed**
None.
5. **To present the Leigh Community Award 2026**
Cllr Kaye presented the 2026 Leigh Community Award to David James, for providing exceptional and longstanding volunteer work to Leigh Primary School, spanning countless years and generations of pupils. He is an integral part of school life, and members of the Parish Council thanked him for his contribution.

8 members of the public left the meeting at 8.10pm.

6. **Appointment of Committees and representatives to other bodies**
Members approved the following:

- Finance Committee: Cllr Kaye (Chair), Cllr Britain, Cllr Swallow, Cllr Williams
- Planning Committee: Cllr Williams (Chair), Cllr Kaye, Cllr Marchant, Cllr Smith, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Holt, Cllr Backlog
- ROW Committee: Cllr Kaye (Chair), members of public
- Affordable Housing Committee: Cllr Kaye, (Chair), Cllr Smith, Cllr Britain, Cllr Holt
- Emergency & Resilience Planning: Cllr Williams
- Leigh Village Halls Redevelopment Group: Cllr Kaye, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Smith
- Leigh SpeedWatch Group: Cllr Williams, Cllr Rogers, Lisa Bryan, Vicky Patient, Joe Staffurth, Alison Tyler and the Clerk
- Countryside Access Wardens: Cllr Kaye, Joe Staffurth, Rachel Valentine
- Leigh Village Halls Management Committee: Cllr Backlog
- Tree Warden: Cllr Smith
- Pond Warden: Cllr Backlog
- CPRE: Cllr Smith
- KALC Sevenoaks branch: All members

7. To confirm that the Parish Council remains eligible to use the General Power of Competence

The Clerk reminded members that the General Power of Competence gives authorities the power to take the reasonable action they need 'for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'. Under the provision a local authority has power to do anything that individuals generally have full legal capacity to do. To remain eligible, the Parish Council has to confirm that:

- (a) the number of members of the council that have been declared to be elected, whether at ordinary elections or at a by-election, is equal to or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the council;
- (b) the Clerk is qualified in the Certificate in Local Council Administration;
- (c) the Clerk has completed the relevant training.

There are some restrictions: to abide by statutory duties such as considering the likely effect of crime and disorder and conserving biodiversity, and to abide by legislation, such as employment law, health & safety, equality and data protection.

Members agreed that the Parish Council remains eligible to use the General Power of Competence.

8. The minutes of the Leigh Parish Council Meeting held on 7th April 2026 were approved and duly signed. Proposed by Cllr Kaye, seconded by Cllr Marchant, and all were in favour.

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

The Clerk reported that a Community First Responder attended the meeting in order to give advice on what to do if someone has a heart attack or cardiac arrest. The Leigh Village Hall Redevelopment Group gave an update on plans for the village halls, Cllr Williams gave an update on Leigh SpeedWatch and Cllr Kaye gave his report of activities in 2025-26. County Cllr Mayall and Cllr Silander gave a report for the County and District Councils. There were approximately 60 people present. Cllr Kaye said that the meeting was well attended, and most people attended in order to hear any details about the proposed development on land south of Peshurst Road.

10. Planning

i. To consider applications received

- i. SE/26/00672/ LDCPR: Brook Cottage, Leigh Road, Hildenborough TN11 9AH - erection of two detached, single storey roundhouses. Members agreed the following response "Leigh Parish Council has no objection to this application but would request that SDC in their deliberations confirm that the proposed development does meet all requirements for permitted development rights particularly in so far as they refer to the Green Belt. Leigh Parish Council would like to see a condition applied to any approval that states that the use of the roundhouses must be strictly incidental to the enjoyment of the main dwellinghouse, as stated in the applicants covering letter, and as such may not be separately let out."

- ii. SE/26/00748/FUL: Land East of 21 Barnetts Road, Leigh TN11 8QH - subdivision of land, erection of detached 4 bedroom dwelling. creation of new access with associated hard and soft landscaping. bin store. bike store and PV panels. Members agreed that the Planning Committee would consider this application.

- ii. To report SDC planning application decisions:

None.

- iii. To hear report of draft proposal for 64 units on land south of Penshurst Road

Cllr Kaye reported that notification has been received from Elivia Homes regarding a draft proposal being brought forward for land south of Penshurst Road in Leigh. The proposal is for the delivery of up to 64 new homes, including affordable housing, new green spaces, walking and cycling connections and biodiversity enhancements. There is an online public consultation, see <https://leigh.your-feedback.co.uk> and leaflets have been delivered to a lot of households in the village. He stressed that this is not a formal planning application but an early draft proposal. Any comments on the proposal should be submitted online direct to the developers, with a copy to the Clerk.

11. The Green and parish maintenance areas

- i. The Clerk reported that the Cricket Club has said that they will spray the cricket square in the coming days, early in the morning at 6.30am, and the cricket square will remain roped off. Clerk to add a page to the website setting out the annual maintenance work on The Green, and to post on social media that spraying will be undertaken within the near future, weather permitting.
- ii. The Clerk reported that the after-school football club is still using parts of The Green not approved although the school is largely abiding by the agreement. Members agreed that the Clerk should write to Superskills UK and reiterate the agreement reached with the school for both school and after-school use. The after-school club is run by a business and is a paid-for activity and therefore does require the permission of the Parish Council. It was agreed that if the agreement is not abided by the after-school club will be asked to use the school playing field in Lealands Avenue.
- iii. The Clerk reported that the Cricket Club is interested in buying a watering system that pulls an impact sprinkler automatically over a big distance. It will be used on the cricket square and The Green as a whole.
- iv. The Clerk reported that the Cricket Club has started renovations to the toilets in the pavilion, costing £4,000. These are used by the sports clubs and for village events.
- v. Cllr Marchant asked if there is any progress with mapping the new Openreach cables on The Green. Clerk to contact Openreach.
- vi. It was agreed that the Old Burial Ground should be regularly strimmed over the summer months.

12. 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 three times in the last month.

- iii. To hear update on the rural swathe 2026 contract

The Clerk reported that she is waiting for the public liability certificate to be approved by KCC. The contractor has said that his price has increased due to increased fuel prices. Members approved the increase and the Clerk reported that the other parishes in the cluster have also approved the cost. The first cut will be one within the next couple of weeks.

- iv. To discuss local sign cleaning service and approve costs

The Clerk reported that a resident of Chiddingstone Causeway has set up a new small business, cleaning road signs. He has bought a backpack jet wash and has provided a quote on the finger post at the junction of Powdermill Lane and the High Street as an example of cost. Members discussed the likely cost and agreed to look at the signs and review the situation.

- v. 235 Bus Service

The Clerk reported that the following response has been received from Stephen Pay, Planning & Operations Manager, KCC Public Transport: "We have had a few enquiries about this and I am sorry for the understandable concern it has caused."

“To be clear, whilst the registration for the service has been withdrawn by Starline, the service is not being cancelled. This service is one which operates under contract to KCC and the de-registration by Starline relates to this contract ceasing. We have issued a tender for a replacement operator who will be appointed to coincide with the end of the Starline operation and there will be no break in service. We will provide information about the new operator as soon as we are able.”

vi. Kent Highways

Temporary Road Closure - Charcott 18th May 2026 for 2 days outside number 12 Old Orchard. Pedestrian access will be maintained during the works. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while works are undertaken by South East Water Ltd. For the most up to date information on these works please visit: <https://one.network/?tm=GB148439296>

1 member of the public left the meeting at 9.03pm.

13. To hear update about the provision of a new defibrillator on the Cricket Pavilion and approve costs

The Clerk reported that she is meeting the electrician at the Pavilion tomorrow morning and it was agreed that the Finance Committee should approve the cost of fixing the external cabinet to the wall of the Pavilion. The new defibrillator once installed will be added to The Circuit which is the national database of defibrillators.

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

The Clerk reported that the Coffee Corner held on 10th April was very successful. The next dates are Friday 15th May, 19th June and 10th July 10.30 to 12.00. The Village Hall has asked about combining Coffee Corner with a trial they are doing for a community café, more details will be forthcoming.

15. 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 6: Southern Water: (i) “Thank you for your email. We've spoken with our Waste Duty Manager, who has confirmed that the tankers on Ensfield Road are linked to a complex repair currently underway. The team requires specific permits before they can carry out the necessary work, and they expect to receive these within the next two weeks. At this stage, they are unable to provide a firm timeframe for when the repair will be fully completed or when the tankers will no longer be needed, but they will update us as soon as more information is available. I will keep you informed as soon as I receive any further information.” (ii) I have received further advice that we do not currently hold the required licence to remove the asbestos, and obtaining this carries an estimated lead time of around two weeks. Until the license is in place and we are able to complete a full survey, we will not have a confirmed method of repair. Based on what we know so far, it is expected that a specialist team will be needed to carry out the works. Given these constraints, it is very likely that the situation will remain ongoing until the end of June. I will continue to provide updates as soon as further information becomes available.” Members agreed that lorry warning signs are needed and Clerk to find out more information.
- ii. Item 7: Email from Liz Crockford at SDC in response to the Clerk's email asking whether SDC has plans to do another Housing Needs Survey for Leigh. Leigh's HNS is dated January 2022 and, with a 5-year shelf life, it would be need to be done again at the end of this year. The response is as follows: “The accepted shelf life of a local housing needs survey is indeed 5 years. The Council's programme of surveys has now come to an end. Going forward, any Parish Council wishing to update their local needs data should commission a survey direct with the independent rural housing enabler, Tessa O'Sullivan at RACE.” Item to be added to the next Parish Council agenda.
- iii. Item 8: KALC training events, all online:
 - Introduction to Planning - £50 + VAT. 20th May 2026 10.00am-1.00pm.
 - The Essentials of being a Good Employer - £50 + VAT. 16th June 2026 10.00am-12.00pm.
 - Mastering Planning Application Responses - £50 + VAT. 25th June 2026 6pm-8pm.
 - Doughnut Economics from theory to practice for Local Governments £15 + VAT. 9th July 2026 10am-11am.

- Procurement and Writing Contracts - £50 + VAT 24th September 2026 10.00pm-12.00pm.
 - The Nuts and Bolts of Parish Councils for Councillors - £50 + VAT. 6th October 2026 6.00pm-7.30pm.
 - The Nuts and Bolts of Parish Councils for Clerks - £50 + VAT. 22nd October 2026 10.00pm-11.30pm.
 - Funding for Parish and Town Councils - £50 + VAT. 29th October 2026 10.00am-12.00pm. Cllr Britain wished to attend this event.
 - Managing Projects - £50 + VAT. 12th November 2026 10.00am-12.00pm.
 - Addressing the Biodiversity Crisis - £50 + VAT. 1st December 2026 10.00am-12.00pm.
- iv. Kent Police: A21 Tonbridge, Leigh, between 21:00 on Monday 27th April and 07:00 on Tuesday 28th of April, somebody stole fuel from a DAF Trucks parked in the road. Crime Report No. 46/67438/26.

16. Finance:

- i. To approve 2025/26 Year End Accounts
Members discussed and approved the Year End Accounts, proposed by Cllr Marchant, seconded by Cllr Kaye, and all in favour.
- ii. To review the effectiveness of the Parish Council's Internal Control Procedures
Members reviewed the Internal Audit Procedures and agreed that they remain effective. Proposed by Cllr Holt, seconded by Cllr Britain, and all were in favour.
- iii. Audit for year ending 31st March 2026: to consider and agree Annual Governance Statement
The Clerk read the statements as set out on the Annual Governance Statement and members responded as appropriate. Members approved the responses to the Statement, proposed by Cllr Britain, seconded by Cllr Holt, and all were in favour.
- iv. Audit for year ending 31st March 2026: to consider and approve Accounting Statements 2025/26
Cllr Kaye proposed that the Statement of Accounts be approved, this was seconded by Cllr Britain, and all were in favour.
- v. To discuss the Internal Audit report 2026
The Clerk reported that the Year End Internal Audit was carried out by Mulberry & Co on 28th April and the report has been received and circulated. The report states: "Our testing did not identify any procedural errors requiring reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we observe any material weaknesses in internal controls that would pose a risk to public funds. In fact, the processes and procedures together with own built in compensating controls are robust, strictly followed and in many respects a model of good practice. We are pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures currently in place are appropriate and effective. While this report may include recommendations for improvement, these should not be viewed as indicators of significant deficiencies. Rather, they are intended to support the continued development of what is, in our view, a well-managed and robust governance framework." There were two recommendations:
Under Digital and Data Compliance: (i) I recommend the Privacy Notice and Website Accessibility Statement are updated. (ii) I recommend the council ensures that a data audit is conducted during 2026/27 to comply with GDPR regulations. This may be an audit test under Governance Assertion 10 next year. Members discussed the internal audit report and the recommendations made. Members agreed to accept the recommendations and make the necessary changes.
- vi. To approve insurance policy renewal from 1st June 2026
The Clerk reported that this year's premium is £2,359.33 including Insurance Premium Tax. Last year's premium was £2,267.69. Cllr Britain proposed that this premium is accepted and the policy renewed. This was seconded by Cllr Kaye and all were in favour.
- vii. To approve membership renewal for Kent Association of Local Councils: £905.86
Cllr Kaye proposed that this subscription be renewed, seconded by Cllr Holt and all were in favour.
- viii. 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.

17. Items for reporting or inclusion in future agenda

None.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 1st June 2026 in the Small Village Hall at 8.00pm

The meeting closed at 9.51pm.

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

Date	Payment Number	Payee	Detail of payment	Amount Inc. VAT	VAT
05.05.26	1006	Clerk	Salary	£1,339.04	
05.05.26	1007	HMRC	PAYE	£618.32	
05.05.26	1008	Clerk	Mileage & reimbursement costs	£132.79	
05.05.26	1009	KCC	Pension contribution	£450.99	
05.05.26	1010	NALC	Planning Reform training event GM	£42.00	£7.00
05.05.26	1011	Mulberry Local Authority	Internal Audit fee	£175.50	£29.25
05.05.26	1012	Zurich Municipal	Insurance policy renewal	£2,359.33	
05.05.26	1013	KALC	Membership renewal	£1,087.03	£181.17
05.05.26	1014	Estate & Field	Maintenance of The Green: 2 mowing, vertidrainning, rolling and seeding	£4,332.00	£722.00
				<u>£10,537.00</u>	<u>£939.42</u>

Signed

Date