

**The Minutes of the Meeting of Leeds Parish Council held on Tuesday, 14th July 2026
at 7.00pm in the Leeds and Broomfield Village Hall**

Councillor's present:

Cllr Scott Bernini
Cllr Gill Fort
Cllr Barnie Razzell
Cllr Richard Springford

Also present:

Sherrie Babington – Parish Clerk
Norman Kemp – NU-VENTURE
Members of the Public

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Bernini.

1. Apologies.

Members who cannot attend a meeting shall tender their apologies to the Parish Clerk prior to the meetings, under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence shall be accepted.

The following apologies and reasons for absence were approved and accepted.

- Cllr China - Personal
- Cllr Ingram - Work
- Cllr Greeff - Work

Apologies were also received from:

- KCC Councillor Linden Kemkaran
- MBC Councillor Gary Cooke

2. Declaration of Interests.

To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers.

No interests were declared.

To consider any Dispensation requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

There were no dispensations to consider.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated to all Members.

Members considered the minutes and agreed that they were an accurate record.

It was proposed by Cllr Springford, seconded by Cllr Razzell and agreed by all present that the minutes be approved.

The minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.

Following approval of the Minutes, a member of the public advised that they had not received notification when the June meeting date had changed.

Members discussed making greater use of the Parish Council Facebook page to ensure future meeting dates and changes were communicated more widely.

Action: Cllr Razzell to setup the Parish Clerk as an Admin on the Parish Council Facebook page.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes.

Encroachment onto Parish Council Land – Farmers Close

The Clerk reported that Golding Homes had acknowledged correspondence regarding the encroachment onto the Parish Council playing field and had confirmed the matter was currently being investigated.

5. Public Comments and Observations.

With the agreement of Members, the Chairman invited Mr Norman Kemp, Managing Director of Nu-Venture, to address the Council regarding local bus services.

Mr Kemp thanked the Council for the invitation and provided Members with an overview of the current position of the 13 and 14 bus services serving Leeds and the surrounding villages.

He explained that the service had operated within the area for over twenty years and continued to be financially supported by Kent County Council, as passenger numbers alone were insufficient to make the service commercially viable. Rising operating costs, particularly fuel prices, together with driver shortages and the continuing impact of road closures throughout the area had all placed increasing pressure on rural bus services.

Mr Kemp advised that approximately twenty-five passengers travelled in each direction daily from the villages served and emphasised that continued use of the service was essential if it was to remain sustainable.

Members discussed the previous withdrawal of Saturday services and changes to weekday timetables, together with the challenges experienced by residents accessing employment, healthcare and shopping facilities without a private vehicle.

Mr Kemp explained that road closures within Leeds frequently prevented buses from operating to timetable and often required diversions which added significant time and cost to individual journeys.

Discussion took place regarding the former East of Maidstone Transport Forum, which had previously enabled neighbouring parish councils to work collectively with Kent County Council and local bus operators. Mr Kemp suggested that a similar forum would provide a stronger voice when seeking improvements to rural transport provision.

Members also discussed the free shuttle bus currently operating between Maidstone East and the Eclipse Business Park near Junction 8 of the M20. Whilst acknowledging that the service was privately funded, Members questioned whether future discussions with developers or Kent County Council may create opportunities for residents of Leeds and neighbouring villages to benefit from improved transport links.

Members recognised that Leeds Parish Council alone would have limited influence but agreed that a coordinated approach with neighbouring parish councils would provide greater opportunity to secure future improvements.

The Chairman thanked Mr Kemp for attending the meeting and for the detailed information provided.

Resolved: That Leeds Parish Council supports the principle of re-establishing a rural transport forum with neighbouring parish councils.

Action: *Cllr Razzell to liaise with neighbouring parish councils to establish interest in forming a joint rural transport forum.*

Road Safety and Speeding

A resident addressed Members regarding concerns relating to excessive traffic speeds through the village and the absence of a safe pedestrian crossing close to Leeds Primary School, the Church, Village Hall and local bus stops.

Members acknowledged that traffic management remained one of the Parish Council's highest priorities and noted that concerns had been consistently raised over many years.

The Chairman explained that previous investigations into a formal pedestrian crossing had concluded that current visibility standards required by Kent County Council could not be achieved at the preferred locations.

Members discussed a range of measures which had previously been considered or remained under investigation through the Highways Improvement Plan.

Concern was also expressed regarding continuing HGVs traveling through the village despite existing restrictions, and the damage caused to verges and road infrastructure.

Residents were encouraged to continue providing photographic and video evidence to support future discussions with Kent County Council.

6. Parish Council Policy Review.

Members considered the draft IT Policy circulated with the agenda.

The Clerk advised that the policy had been prepared following recommendations arising from the Annual Governance and Accountability Review and reflected the Council's transition to official gov.uk email addresses together with updated arrangements for information security and data management.

Members agreed that this would be deferred until the September PC Meeting.

Cllr Razzell confirmed he was happy to assist Members requiring support setting up their official Parish Council email accounts.

Resolved: That consideration of the IT Policy be deferred until the September meeting.

7. Highways Matters.

a. General Update:

Members discussed the continuing impact of road closures and utility works throughout the parish.

Concern was expressed regarding the condition of verges following recent reinstatement works together with disruption caused by repeated highway closures.

Action: Clerk to report damaged verges to Kent County Council Highways.

Members discussed reports that substantial repairs may shortly be required to the retaining wall within the village and that a prolonged road closure may be necessary whilst works were undertaken.

As no formal notification had yet been received, Members agreed that clarification should be sought from Kent County Council regarding the programme of works, likely duration of any closure and proposed traffic management arrangements.

Members also requested that damage to grass verges caused during recent utility works be raised with Kent County Council.

Action: Clerk to contact KCC Councillor Linden Kemkaran and Kent County Council Highways requesting an update regarding the retaining wall works and associated road closure proposals.

b. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

Cllr Bernini reported that the revised Highways Improvement Plan had now been submitted to Kent County Council.

A response and site meeting with Kent County Council was awaited.

c. 13/14 bus review

To receive an update on this matter.

This matter was fully considered during Public Participation.

8. Clerks Report.

Height Barrier Insurance Claim

The Clerk advised that the insurance claim relating to the damaged height barrier at the Playing Field had now been concluded.

Following continued correspondence with the Council's insurers and a formal complaint regarding the handling of the claim, the Council had received a settlement payment of £254.25, representing the repair costs less the policy excess.

The insurers had requested copies of the CCTV footage and any additional information available in order to pursue recovery of their costs from the individual responsible.

Members thanked the Clerk for pursuing the matter on behalf of the Council and welcomed the outcome.

Resolved: That the Clerk's report be noted.

Action: Clerk to provide the Council's insurers with the CCTV footage and all supporting information available.

9. **Chairman's Report.**

Village Fete 2027

Members discussed potential dates for the 2027 Leeds Village Fete.

It was agreed that the proposed dates should first be discussed with the organising committee before a final decision was taken.

Penfold Hill

Members discussed litter in the Penfold Hill area.

It was noted that the location appeared considerably cleaner than previously, although some isolated litter remained.

Members agreed the area should continue to be monitored.

Christmas Tree

Members discussed the recent pruning of the village Christmas tree following comments received from residents.

The Clerk advised that Stephen Waring had confirmed the contractor had not yet completed the works and would be returning to further shape the tree.

It was agreed that, where possible, a member should attend when the contractor returned to complete the work.

Action: Clerk to request advance notice before the contractor returns to site.

10. **Parish Council Communication.**

Cllr Razzell gave an update on Parish Council communication.

Discussion took place regarding improving communication with residents by making greater use of the Parish Council Facebook page alongside the website.

Action: Cllr Razzell to provide the Clerk with access to the Parish Council Facebook page.

11. **Financial Matters:**

a. Financial Statement.

To receive and approve the financial statement and payments – report circulated with meeting papers.

Members received and considered the financial statement and payments report circulated with the meeting papers.

Members were satisfied with the financial information presented.

Proposed: Cllr Bernini

Seconded: Cllr Fort

Agreed by all present.

Resolved: That the financial statement and payments be approved.

12. **KCC Councillors Report.**

Apologies were received from KCC Councillor Linden Kemkaran.

13. MBC Councillors Report.

Apologies had been received from Maidstone Borough Councillor Gary Cooke.

MBC Cllr Fort reported on the following:

Members noted recent updates relating to Local Government Reorganisation and the continuing uncertainty surrounding future local authority arrangements.

Members also noted that Maidstone Borough Council had formally withdrawn the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan following confirmation that insufficient suitable sites had been identified.

Members welcomed news that Leeds and Broomfield Cricket Club's application for approximately £800,000 towards the construction of a replacement pavilion had been reinstated for consideration. The Council recognised the importance of the Cricket Club to the local community and hoped the application would be successful.

14. LGR and Community Governance Review.

Members discussed the latest position regarding Local Government Reorganisation.

It was noted that the Government's decision was awaited and that proposals continued to be developed regarding the future structure of local government across Kent.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

15. Planning Matters.**a. To consider Planning Applications Received.**

Members considered the planning applications listed on the agenda.

26/501636/LBC – 1 Stanley Cottages, Lower Street, Leeds

Listed Building Consent for strengthening of existing floor joists, structural interventions to an existing ceiling beam and associated internal alterations.

Following consideration, Members agreed that the proposals would preserve the character of the Listed Building and raised no concerns.

Resolved: That Leeds Parish Council raises No Objection to the application.

b. MBC Decisions and Appeals

The following decisions were noted:

26/501905/LBC

1 Brogden Farm Cottages Old Mill Road Leeds Kent ME17 1RT

Listed Building Consent for replacement of existing modern concrete pathways and rear patio with limestone paving.

Application Withdrawn

26/501613/LBC

1 Brogden Farm Cottages Old Mill Road Leeds Kent ME17 1RT

Re-point brickwork on the south and east elevations, replacement of damaged bricks on the east elevation and repair slipped and damaged slate roof coverings on east elevation.

Application Permitted

26/501459/FULL

Bay Tree Cottage Upper Street Leeds Kent ME17 1RZ

Erection of detached two storey C2 Assisted Living Unit (amended alternative scheme to permission 19/504579/FULL) with associated landscaping

Application Permitted

26/501418/LBC

2 Brogden Farm Cottages Old Mill Road Leeds Kent ME17 1RT

Listed Building Consent for erection of garden sheds, outdoor kitchen pod and railing and gates to front elevation. Terrace extension and installation of limestone paving and air source heat pump to garden room.

Application Withdrawn

26/501419/FULL

2 Brogden Farm Cottages Old Mill Road Leeds Kent ME17 1RT

Erection of garden sheds, outdoor kitchen pod, terrace extension and installation of limestone paving and air source heat pump to garden room.

Application Permitted

26/501357/PNQCLA

Arnold Hill Farm Building 2 Back Street Leeds Kent ME17 1TF

Prior notification for the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from agricultural to 2no. dwellinghouses and associated operation development. For its prior approval to: - Transport and Highways impacts of the development. - Noise impacts of the development. - Contamination risks on the site. - Flooding risks on the site. - Whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the use of the building to change from agricultural use to C3 (dwellinghouses). - Design and external appearance impacts on the building. - Provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses.

Prior Approval Granted

26/500899/LBC

2-3 Chapel Cottages Upper Street Leeds Kent ME17 1SN

Listed Building Consent for erection of a garden shed (Works completed)

Application Withdrawn

26/500546/ADV

Ledian Gardens The Grange Kings Square Leeds Kent ME17 1WL

Advertisement consent for an installation of a new advertisement of an existing, non-illuminated hoarding sign.

Application Permitted

c. Other Planning Matters

Members noted that advertisement consent had now been granted for the revised hoarding at Ledian Gardens.

Whilst Members continued to consider the original hoarding to have been visually intrusive, it was acknowledged that the revised design represented an improvement.

Members also noted the formal withdrawal of Maidstone Borough Council's Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development Plan following the Council's recent decision.

16. Parish Maintenance.

To receive an update on Parish Maintenance.

a. Parish Maintenance

Members noted that a meeting with KCC to discuss the overgrown footpaths etc, had been arranged for Thursday 30th July 2026, meeting at 10.00am at the Playing Field car park.

Members were encouraged to attend wherever possible.

b. Beautiful Leeds Campaign

Ledian Gardens

Members welcomed the offer of support from the new management team at Ledian Gardens.

Whilst financial contributions towards Parish Council projects were not currently available, Members were pleased to note that Ledian Gardens had offered contractor assistance and labour to support community improvement projects.

Members considered this an excellent opportunity to strengthen links between Ledian Gardens and the wider village community.

Action: Cllr Razzell to continue discussions with Ledian Gardens regarding future community projects.

17. Leeds Playground, Playing Field, Tennis Courts & Pavillion.

Playing Field and Pavilion

Members noted that discussions regarding future football club hire arrangements remained ongoing.

A separate meeting would be arranged to consider future use of the Pavilion and Playing Field.

Action: Cllr Bernini to arrange a meeting.

Donation Towards Tennis Court Improvements

The Clerk reported that WB Chambers Farms Ltd had kindly donated £1,000 towards future improvements to the Parish Council tennis courts.

Members wished to place on record their sincere thanks for the generous donation.

Resolved: That the donation be accepted and a formal letter of thanks be sent.

Action: Clerk to write to WB Chambers Farms Ltd expressing the Council's appreciation.

Rochester Bridge Trust Land

Members considered the correspondence received from Rochester Bridge Trust confirming that they were unable to make additional land available for parking due to future plans for the site.

Whilst disappointed with the outcome, Members agreed the position should be noted and reviewed should circumstances change in the future.

18. Street Lighting.

To receive a report on Parish Street Lighting.

It was reported that there were no known street lighting faults.

19. Parish Council Events.

Members received an update on forthcoming Parish Council events.

The Clerk confirmed that one soldier silhouette and one nurse silhouette had now been ordered and would be delivered to Cllr China ahead of the event.

20. Items for next Agenda.

No matters were reported.

21. Date of next meeting.

Members discussed bringing the September meeting forward due to the Clerk's annual leave and the absence of an August meeting.

Subject to confirmation of Village Hall availability, it was agreed that the next meeting of Leeds Parish Council would be held on Tuesday 1st September 2026 at 7.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.15pm.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: _____