

**The Minutes of the Meeting of Leeds Parish Council held on Tuesday, 1st September 2026
at 7.00pm in the Leeds and Broomfield Village Hall**

Councillor's present:

Cllr Scott Bernini
Cllr Bob China
Cllr Richard Springford
Cllr Barney Razzell
Cllr Gill Fort
Cllr Helen Ingram

Also present:

Sherrie Babington – Parish Clerk
MBC Cllr Gary Cooke
Members of the Public

The meeting was chaired by Cllr China.

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 Greeff - Work

Apologies were also received from:

- KCC Councillor Linden Kemkaran

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 Bernini, 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.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes.

Christmas Tree

The contractor had returned to reshape the Christmas tree and Cllr China had attended. It was reported that any further cutting could create gaps in the tree.

The Christmas lights were not working correctly.

Action: The lights to be tested and, if they cannot be repaired, a quotation to be obtained for their removal/replacement.

Facebook Page

The Clerk confirmed that access to the Parish Council Facebook page had now been established and Council notices and information could be published.

Playing Field – Football Hire

The annual hire agreement had been reviewed and issued to the football club together with the invoice for the 2026/27 season and the agreed annual increase. No response had yet been received.

Playing Field – Trees

The outstanding inspection of the Playing Field trees was discussed. A local tree surgeon was willing to undertake an initial assessment. Members also discussed overgrowth around the boundary.

Action: Arrange an initial inspection and obtain quotations for any works subsequently identified.

5. Public Comments and Observations.

Residents raised concerns regarding traffic speeds on Lower Street, particularly in the vicinity of the primary school, church, Village Hall and bus stops. Difficulties experienced by pedestrians attempting to cross the road and previous incidents were discussed.

The recent meeting with KCC Highways concerning the Parish Council's Highways Improvement Plan was discussed. It was noted that the provision of a formal pedestrian crossing was problematic due to the sight-line standards.

Alternative measures were discussed, including the speed limit at Penfold Hill, improved signage, vehicle activated signs, use of the mobile speed camera and Community Speed Watch.

Previous data had recorded approximately 2,700 vehicles, with around 0.7% exceeding the relevant enforcement threshold. Members noted that sustained evidence would be required to support requests for further measures.

The issue of HGVs and the existing 17.5 tonne weight restriction was also discussed, including enforcement, the "except for access" exemption and the effect of satellite navigation systems directing HGVs through the village. The matter was being raised with KCC.

6. Parish Council Policy Review.

The Council's existing policies were reviewed.

Members also considered the new IT Policy, based on the NALC model policy, which had been deferred from the July meeting. The policy reflected the Council's use of .gov.uk email addresses and requirements relating to IT security, data protection and the AGAR.

It was proposed by Cllr Bernini, seconded by Cllr Ingram and agreed by all Councillors present that the policies be approved and the IT Policy adopted.

RESOLVED: The policies were approved and the IT Policy formally adopted.

7. **Highways Matters.**

a. General Update:

Recent verge cutting and highway works were discussed; concerns were raised regarding the standard of some of the work undertaken.

Members discussed the request for a reduction in the speed limit on Caring Lane requested by resident. Cllr Bernini confirmed that this had been included on the Parish Councils HIP and KCC had advised that it did not currently support a reduction. It was agreed that the Clerk should respond to the residents explaining the reasons why KCC had refused this request.

Action: Clerk to respond to the resident setting out the information received from KCC and the evidence process required to support any future request.

b. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

Cllr Bernini reported on the progress of the Highways Improvement Plan and reported that a full response and site meeting with Kent County Council was awaited.

c. 13/14 bus review

To receive an update on this matter.

An update was provided regarding the 13/14 bus service with Nu-Venture at the previous meeting. Engagement with neighbouring parishes through the transport forum had so far received limited response.

Cllr Ingram agreed to assist with progressing the matter.

Action: Cllr Ingram to progress.

8. **Clerks Report.**

Tommy Figures

The Council had received an Unknown Tommy soldier and nurse figure.

Members considered that the most appropriate location would be for the two figures to be displayed together on the grassed area outside Leeds and Broomfield Village Hall, subject to the agreement of the Village Hall Committee.

RESOLVED: Subject to the Village Hall Committee's agreement, the two figures should be located together outside the Village Hall.

Action: Clerk to contact the Village Hall Committee and provide a photograph of the figures.

Parish Conference 2026

Members were advised that the Maidstone Parish Conference would take place on Wednesday 16 September 2026. Topics would include Local Government Reorganisation, finance and assets, communications and events, and emergency planning.

Cllr China confirmed that he would attend.

Action: Clerk to register Cllr Bernini.

9. **Chairman's Report.**

Members discussed the recent local water supply interruption and the difficulties experienced by some residents in obtaining bottled water and the particular impact on vulnerable residents.

The importance of a community good-neighbour approach and ensuring vulnerable residents were aware of priority support arrangements was noted.

The Chairman also raised the risk of wildfires following the prolonged dry conditions, which was considered further under the Emergency Plan item.

10. Parish Council Communication.

Cllr Razzell gave an update on Parish Council communication.

The Clerk confirmed that access to the Parish Council Facebook page had now been obtained.

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 Springford

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.

Call for Sites / Local Plan

Cllr Cooke provided an update regarding the number of potential development sites submitted in and around Leeds and the possible cumulative impact of development on local traffic and infrastructure.

It was noted that sites submitted through the Call for Sites process were not allocations and would be subject to assessment by Maidstone Borough Council as part of the Local Plan process.

Members considered it important for the Parish Council to prepare at an early stage. Concerns included the absence of the Leeds/Langley relief road, public transport provision, access to services and the cumulative effect of additional traffic.

The possibility of obtaining specialist planning advice was discussed.

RESOLVED: Initial enquiries should be made regarding specialist planning support.

Action: Clerk to contact a planning consultant to establish the services available and likely costs.

Leeds & Broomfield Cricket Club

Cllr Cooke provided an update regarding funding for the proposed replacement Cricket Club pavilion.

Approximately £800,000 of funding had again been removed from the main programme but remained on a reserve list.

He advised that he was continuing to pursue the matter and requested the Parish Council's support.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council supported the Cricket Club's efforts to secure funding for the replacement pavilion.

Action: Clerk to write confirming the Parish Council's support.

14. LGR and Community Governance Review.

Cllr Cooke provided an update on Local Government Reorganisation and proposals for unitary local government.

It was noted that Leeds Parish Council would remain in place. The possible future structure of the new unitary arrangements and implications for services including planning and highways were discussed.

RESOLVED: The update was noted

15. Planning Matters.

a. To consider Planning Applications Received.

Members considered the planning applications listed on the agenda.

26/503107/FULL – Willow Tree House, Lower Street, Leeds ME17 1RL
Rebuilding of stone boundary retaining wall.

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

b. MBC Decisions and Appeals

The following decisions were noted:

c. Other Planning Matters

Street Trading Consent – Sutton Road, Langley

Members considered the application for a hot food van within the lay-by at Sutton Road, Langley. The concerns raised by Langley Parish Council were noted.

Members considered that the proposal could have an adverse visual impact and raised concerns regarding traffic and highway safety.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council would object to the Street Trading Consent on highway/traffic safety and visual impact grounds.

Action: Clerk to submit the Council's objection.

16. Parish Maintenance.

To receive an update on Parish Maintenance.

a. Parish Maintenance

Recent vegetation and verge cutting was discussed. Concerns regarding the quality of some works had been raised with KCC.

b. Beautiful Leeds Campaign

Cllr Razzell reported that the PC was awaiting confirmation from Maidstone Borough Council regarding the availability of planters.

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

Maintenance of the play-area fencing was discussed. A quotation of approximately £334 excluding VAT had been received. It was agreed to seek a quotation for the local handyman and if more cost effective proceed with the work.

18. Street Lighting.

To receive a report on Parish Street Lighting.

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

19. Emergency Plan – Wildfires.

Members considered whether the Parish Council's Emergency/Resilience Plan should be expanded to address the risk of wildfires, particularly following the prolonged dry summer and given the agricultural land surrounding the parish.

It was considered appropriate to provide information to residents ahead of future high-risk periods, including advice relating to bonfires and barbecues.

Emergency planning was also due to be considered at the forthcoming Parish Conference and further guidance would be sought from the relevant emergency and resilience agencies.

The possibility of obtaining a fire risk assessment for the surrounding area was also discussed.

RESOLVED: Wildfire risk would be incorporated into the next review of the Parish Council's Emergency/Resilience Plan.

20. Parish Council Events.

Arrangements for Remembrance were discussed.

21. Items for next Agenda.

Footpath Signage – Church

Members discussed concerns that visitors were walking along the road around the bend rather than using the footpath through the Church grounds, as the safer route was not sufficiently obvious.

Action: Footpath signage through the Church grounds to be included on the October agenda.

22. Date of next meeting.

The next meeting of Leeds Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 13 October 2026 at 7.00pm.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

Signed: _____

Chairman

Dated: _____