

The Minutes of the Meeting of Leeds Parish Council on Tuesday, 10th March 2026
at 7pm in the Leeds and Broomfield Village Hall

Councillor's present:

Bernini
China
Greeff
Razzell
Springford

Also present:

Sherrie Babington – Parish Clerk
Cllr Gary Cook(MBC)
Cllr Linden Kemkaran (KCC)

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 Ingram – Sickness
- Cllr Fort – Personal

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 were circulated to all members.

These were proposed by Cllr Bernini as a true record, seconded by Cllr China and agreed by all present. The minutes were then signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.

4. **Matters arising from the Minutes.**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Public Comments and Observations.**

Members of the public attended to raise concerns regarding the ongoing road safety issues in the village, in particular the damaged retaining wall in Lower Street, speeding traffic, HGV movements, safety around the school crossing and the general impact of roadworks.

Retaining Wall – Lower Street

A resident in attendance explained that the wall had been struck again since the original damage and expressed serious concern that, unless something changed, any rebuilt wall would simply be hit again.

She reported that the insurance company's surveyors had attended and that structural engineers were expected to provide plans within approximately six weeks, after which works would take place over an estimated three-month period. She understood that some form of road closure would likely be necessary while the wall was rebuilt.

It was noted that the final decision on any road closure would rest with Kent Highways rather than the insurer. It was further noted that the wall would need to be rebuilt sympathetically due to its location within the conservation area.

Speeding Traffic

Residents raised concerns regarding speeding and lack of enforcement of the existing 20 mph restriction through the village, particularly near the school.

Members acknowledged that this had been a long-running concern and confirmed that a range of traffic calming options had been pursued in the past. However, many proposals had previously been declined due to data, sightline issues or lack of available funding.

Members advised that they were continuing to look at possible changes to speed limits on the approaches to and through the village. It was recognised that although revised speed limits alone would not solve the issue without enforcement, they could still have an effect in slowing traffic.

Residents also asked whether safer crossing arrangements for parents and children near the school could be revisited. Members noted that previous requests for a zebra crossing had been rejected because of insufficient line of sight but agreed that the matter remained a serious concern and should continue to be raised with Kent Highways.

Concerns were also raised regarding the cobbled access road leading to the church car park. Ownership of this access remained unclear.

A resident also raised ongoing concerns about littering in the village. Members noted that littering remained a regular nuisance and confirmed that the next village litter pick would take place on 18 April 2026.

The Kent County Councillor also updated the meeting on wider work being explored across Kent in relation to fly-tipping and waste disposal.

The Chairman thanked the residents for attending and for raising their concerns.

6. Highways Matters.**a. General Update:**

Many highways' matters had already been covered under public participation.

Members noted that speed limits in Back Street and Caring Lane had also been raised and confirmed that these would be considered as part of the Parish Council's HIP.

The possibility of placing a mirror on the school fence to improve visibility for vehicles exiting the church car park was discussed. It was noted that concerns had previously been raised regarding liability if such a mirror were installed.

The Chairman raised the issue of coordinating any future road closure for the wall repairs with any planned Southeast Water works in the village, so as to reduce repeated disruption.

It was agreed that contact should be made with Southeast Water and/or its programme team to establish whether any future works were planned.

b. Other highways

Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)

Cllr Bernini reported that the HIP was currently being progressed.

c. 13/14 bus review

To receive an update on this matter.

An update was received regarding the local bus service. It was reported that the Saturday Route 13 service appeared to have been removed and that the overall service remained inadequate for Leeds and neighbouring villages.

Cllr Razzell reported that had been made with several nearby parishes and it was hoped that a joint approach could be made to the operator and others involved in local transport provision in order to seek improvements.

7. **Clerks Report.**

The Clerk's Report was received and noted by Members.

Road Safety & Active Travel Group (RSATG) Seminar

The Road Safety & Active Travel Group (RSATG) at Kent County Council (KCC), is hosting its first dedicated RSATG Seminar and we would be delighted for you to join us at one of the two sessions. This has been designed to bring together Parish and Town Councils, County Members, Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), Kent Police, your Community Engagement/ Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) representatives and the wider Road Safety & Active Travel Group.

Many of you will know us best through the HIP process and whilst HIPs remain a key part of how we work with you, this seminar aims to offer a broader insight into how we collaborate across RSATG, the wider Highways & Transportation teams and Kent Police to identify the most appropriate, effective and long term solutions to the concerns you raise.

The seminar will be held across two dates/venues to allow as many of you to attend as possible and the details of each can be found below:

Tuesday 21 April 2026 (09.00am–13.00pm) – Lecture Theatre, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ.

Thursday 30 April 2026 (09.00am–13.00pm) – The Glass Room, Betteshanger Park, Sandwich Road, Deal, CT14 0BF.

It was agreed that Cllr China would attend this event.

8. **Chairman's Report.**

The Chairman reported that an email had been received from a resident complaining of noise emanating from behind the playing field. Members considered that this was likely to relate to approved works associated with a nearby new property, including piling and movement of earth. It was agreed that the resident should be updated accordingly.

9. **Parish Council Communication.**

Cllr Razzell reported that the Ramblers' map had now been uploaded to the Parish Council website.

It was noted that councillor profile information was still required for the website and members were asked to provide this to the Clerk.

10. Financial Matters:

a. Financial Statement.

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

The financial statement was approved proposed by Cllr China seconded by Cllr Springford and agreed by all present.

11. KCC Councillors Report.

The Kent County Councillor Linden Kemkaran gave her report to the meeting:

An update was provided on pothole repairs and resurfacing. It was explained that Kent County Council had moved to a larger patch repair approach where possible, rather than small, isolated pothole repairs, with the intention of providing a more durable solution. It was noted that this type of work was generally more effective during warmer months.

A member raised concerns regarding anti-skid surfacing on a local bend, which appeared to have worn away much more quickly than expected. The Kent County Councillor agreed to investigate this further and report back.

County Councillor Kemkaran also advised that KCC had passed a balanced budget in February and had limited the council tax increase to 3.99%, rather than the maximum otherwise permitted, after identifying over £14 million in savings.

An update was also provided regarding Local Government Reorganisation. Kent County Council's preferred option remained a single Kent and Medway authority with area assemblies. Members discussed the lack of clarity and consistency in the information being provided, together with concerns over the potential effects of some proposals on community identity and parish areas. It was noted that the consultation remained open until 26 March 2026.

She also referred to support for reservists and cadets, the development of family hubs, efforts to preserve libraries by expanding their community role, improvements in food recycling figures, and positive outcomes from recent secondary school allocations.

The Chairman thanked the Kent County Councillor for the report.

12. MBC Councillors Report.

Maidstone Borough Councillor Gary Cooke reported that Maidstone Borough Council remained heavily involved in Local Government Reorganisation discussions and was supporting a three-unitary option, which it believed more closely reflected the government's stated direction on scale and structure.

It was reported that Maidstone Borough Council had increased its precept by around 4%. Concern was expressed regarding increases to parking charges and the impact this was having on Maidstone town centre, especially given the number of empty shops and the decline in footfall.

He also referred to concerns regarding spending priorities, including proposals relating to Maidstone House and a cycle bridge, while more significant transport infrastructure issues such as the need for a Leeds Langley relief road remained unresolved.

The wider issue of utility roadworks, emergency closures and poor reinstatement of road surfaces was also discussed, together with the cumulative impact this was having on local roads.

13. LGR and Community Governance Review.

No matters were raised.

14. Planning Matters.

a. To consider Planning Applications Received.

25/505173/LBC - The Lodge Leeds Castle Ashford Road Hollingbourne

Listed Building Consent for installation of replacement automated gate motors, to be mounted on fabricated metal box-section stand-off brackets, on existing stonework pillars.

PC Comment – No Objections

26/500377/FULL - Inverarnold Back Street Leeds Kent ME17 1TE

Demolition of existing conservatory. Erection of a two storey and attic space side extension and single storey rear extension with new landscaping (part retrospective).

PC Comment – No Objections

b. MBC Decisions and Appeals

The following decisions were noted:

25/505173/LBC

The Lodge Leeds Castle Ashford Road Hollingbourne Kent ME17 1PD

Listed Building Consent for installation of replacement automated gate motors, to be mounted on fabricated metal box-section stand-off brackets, on existing stonework pillars.

Application Permitted

26/500499/NMAMD

Caring Stud Caring Road Leeds Kent ME17 1TH

Non-material amendment of application 25/504214/FULL: to amend the requirement of condition 9 relating to the CEMP to a compliance condition and amend the requirements for the property to be built out as M4(2) compliant (condition 13).

Application Permitted

25/504649/SUB

Arnoldbrae Oast Back Street Leeds Kent ME17 1TF

Submission of details pursuant to condition 4 (joinery details), subject to application 25/502907/FULL.

Application Withdrawn

c. Other Planning Matters

No other matters were raised.

15. Parish Maintenance.

To receive an update on Parish Maintenance.

a. Parish Maintenance

The Clerk advised that the updated quotation from Stephen Waring had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Members noted that the proposed increase for 2026/27 was 4%. It was acknowledged that this reflected the effects of inflation and increases in the minimum wage. It was agreed that the current contractor provided a responsive and flexible service and that no complaints had been raised regarding the work undertaken.

Whilst members were satisfied with the standard of service, it was agreed that, as public money was involved, comparative quotations should be sought periodically. It was therefore agreed that a quotation comparison exercise should be undertaken in September 2026.

Resolved:

- a) To accept Stephen Waring's quotation for 2026/27.
- b) To undertake a quotation comparison exercise in September 2026.

Action: Clerk to action.

The Clerk reported that the barrier at the sports car park had now been repaired. Insurance issues were, however, still being pursued as there remained disagreement over whether the relevant area had been included within the council's cover.

The Chairman reported that the old village noticeboard at Farmer's Coast had been removed.

Members discussed the for a Leeds village logo for use on agendas, letterheads and council materials. It was agreed that this should be explored further. Cllr Razzell agreed to take this forward.

Action: Cllr Razzell to action.

b. Beautiful Leeds Campaign

Cllr Razzell reported that he was progressing this initiative and would report back when more information was available.

Action: Cllr Razzell to progress and report back.

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

To receive a report on Leeds Playing Field.

Members received an update on the electricity meter at the pavilion. The existing meter was an RTS meter and required replacement, but EDF had repeatedly failed to attend and complete the work despite several appointments. The Clerk confirmed that photographs of the meter had now been supplied.

Members also discussed the broader issue of utility usage at the pavilion and whether water and electricity use should in future be measured more accurately for user groups, particularly the football club.

The Clerk reported that a refund was being pursued from Castle Water, with approximately £1,400 in credit identified due to overestimation, together with £800 compensation relating to interrupted supply.

The safety inspection for the children's play area was discussed. Repairs were needed to the fencing and a play item. It was agreed that Brian Doyle should be asked to inspect the required works and provide a quotation.

Members were reminded that a £5,000 grant was available for expenditure on play equipment or related improvements in the next financial year, and that possible projects would need to be considered.

17. Street Lighting.

To receive a report on Parish Street Lighting.

Nothing further to report.

18. Parish Council Events.

Members noted that the village litter pick would take place on 18 April 2026.

An update was received on the Summer Fair scheduled for 30 May 2026. It was reported that a number of stallholders had already been confirmed and that several providers were available on that date.

An update was also received regarding the silhouette figures previously discussed for remembrance purposes. The council had agreed in principle to two silhouettes, but further decisions were still needed on the exact design, location, timing of ordering and storage arrangements. The possibility of a small dedication event once installed was also discussed.

Resolved: That the silhouette figures be placed as an agenda item for the next meeting for further decision.

19. Items for next Agenda.

No matters were reported.

20. Date of next meeting.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 14 April 2026.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed to the press and public at 8.55pm.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: _____