

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR THE PARISHES OF
BRANSFORD AND LEIGH**

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14th April 2026, 7pm at Leigh & Bransford Memorial Hall

Present: 22 Parishioners and Representatives of local organisations

1. WELCOME
2. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING
Dave Fereday, Chair of the Parish Council, was elected Chairman for the meeting.
3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 14th APRIL 2025
Having been previously circulated the minutes were approved unanimously.

4. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Fereday gave a comprehensive report on what's been happening in our Parish during the last year from planning, to precepts and funding. He also gave thanks to Cllr Whatley and wished him the best for the future. Cllr Fereday's full report can be seen on page 6 of the Appendix below.

Questions/Comments: None.

Community Policing, West Mercia Police

(Due to time constraints PCSO's Smith and Emeny, Community Policing, gave their report - highlights as follows:

Crime Type:	Number:
Criminal Damage	10x
Burglary	Dwelling: 1x
	Business: 4x
	Non-dwelling: 3x
Drugs	4x
Theft	4x (recorded as 'other theft')
Public Order	4x
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	5x
	Monthly breakdown: N/A
Vehicle Crime	2x (interfering with motor vehicle)

Crime numbers in our parish are still relatively low but we still have a problem with speeding and general road safety. There is now a dedicated road safety officer in Malvern, PC Charlie Farmer and there is also a new speed gun (TrueCam). A visit to Little Lodge Nursery where road safety concerns are discussed with staff along with a potential pedestrian crossing near the Fold. Routine patrols continue as normal through day and

night, with the main message being 'if you see/hear anything suspicious, please report it'. Also 4x4's off roading on bridle ways; the police are working with local land owners.

Questions/Comments:

A request from the floor – speeding along Suckley Road is a real problem – 30mph – drivers continue to drive at excessive speeds. PCSO Smith confirmed they're aware of this issue and will be using the new speed gun regularly in this area.

A resident wanted to point out that the police online publication "Neighbourhood Matters" is a really useful read, full of local information and would encourage parishioners to sign up to it too.

More issues concerning speeding coming in from the Herefordshire end of the village (particularly affecting the road by Haywood Close) and what long term solutions could be looked at.

It was confirmed by Cllr McSweeney (WCC) that a new VAS will hopefully be erected at the southern end of the village.

5. **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Chris McSweeney (WCC)

This was Cllr McSweeney's first report at our APM, the detail of which can be found in the Appendix. He did finish by thanking Cllr Peter Whatley for his commitment to MHDC over the years.

Questions/Comments:

A resident wanted clarification concerning being in the black or red of £100M next year. Cllr McSweeney clarified it as being £100M in the red.

Cllr Ralph asked why it keeps on losing money each year with Cllr McSweeney saying much of it is to do with structural issues within management and the reserves used. He said that adult social care (ageing population) takes up 75% of the budget, before anything else gets a look in.

Another resident raised concerns following the auditors' review of WCC's budget at the end of last year, noting that while a transformation plan has been requested, there is a lack of clarity on how this will ensure the council can live within its means. They expressed concern that the focus may be on restructuring rather than achieving genuine financial sustainability. The risk highlighted is that, without a clear and credible plan, the council could face a Section 114 Notice UK local government, potentially leading to government intervention to enforce spending controls—an outcome the resident believes should be avoided at all costs.

Lastly a concern was raised by a resident whose son lives on Potters Reach around new builds in the village and the fact that owners have to pay rather large maintenance fees. This fee, along with council tax payments tend to make 'affordable' housing, unaffordable. She

doesn't know who to speak to as this is a real problem for people buying new builds. A resident who lives on Malvern Rise confirmed that the maintenance payments are very high but said that once they take charge of the management company themselves the costs will be reduced (much of the present cost being for the management agent). She kindly offered to speak to the new home owners in question so she could give more detail to them. The Chair confirmed that Cllr McSweeney attends our parish council meetings so everyone always welcome to come and discuss views/concerns.

Point 5 of Cllr McSweeney Q/comments: The comment was made by a person whose son lives at Potters Reach regarding the management charges being high. It was then residents from Malvern Rise who made the comment that this would be reduced etc....

Sarah Rouse (MHDC)

Cllr Rouse sent her apologies in advance with the Chair reading her report. This can be seen in full on page 8.

Questions/Comments: None.

6. REPORTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

Memorial Hall (Jon Gamble)

Dale Humpries read key points of a report prepared by Jon Gamble who couldn't be with us. Jon's full report is shown in the Appendix.

Questions/Comments: None.

Scouts (Dale Humphries)

Dale gave a comprehensive report touching on how well the various groups are doing and he also gave an update on the progress of the 'big build'. Dale's full report can be found starting on page 13.

Questions/Comments: None.

WI (Jane Beach)

An update on the year's events was given by President Jane Beach and Jane's report can be seen in Appendix below.

Questions/Comments: None.

Leigh and District Gardeners Club (Steve Kent)

Steve wasn't able to be here tonight but his full report can be found on page 14 below.

Questions/Comments: None.

Leigh Guides (Valda and Wendy Cane)

Valda kindly read Leigh Guides report which Wendy had written and what a busy year the Guides have had! Full report on page 14.

Questions/Comments: None.

Bowls (John Sharp)

John gave a light hearted update for what is a fun and lively Bowls group who always welcome new members! Full report can be found in the Appendix.

Questions/Comments: None.

Malvern Martial Arts and Fitness Centre (Julian Burton)

In the absence of Julian Burton, the Chair read out Julian's report on what is a fabulous and busy community based fitness centre! Please refer to page 17 for full report.

Questions/Comments: None.

Leigh Church (John Drage)

There were two main Thank-You's from John.

1. For the annual grant the Parish Council gives to the church for maintenance of Leigh church yard and the land around Bransford cemetery.
2. For the allocation of CiL money for a toilet and kitchen in the church and to improve disabled access. He said because it's a Grade I Listed Building, they need to apply to the Diocese who will ensure that everything is above board as the church is a historical asset. The application went in some weeks ago so should hear back soon with the necessary paperwork called a Faculty. Until they have the Faculty they're unable to approach potential grant providers.

He also gave a Thank You to those organisations who put Christmas trees in the church at Christmas time. He also said that there are the most fantastic flower arrangements in the church, created by Pauline. She's a member of the Worcester Cathedral Flower Arrangers and uses Leigh Church as her 'training ground'! John said all are welcome to visit Leigh Church.

Questions/Comments: None.

Leigh Brownies (Deb Cook)

The clerk read the report on behalf of Deb Cook and Leigh Brownies. Full report on page 18.

Questions/Comments: None.

Leigh Rainbows (Leah Heard)

The clerk read the report on behalf of Leah Heard for and Leigh Rainbows. Full report on page 18.

Questions/Comments: None.

St Richard's Hospice Warehouse (Nigel Christie)

Nigel gave a heart felt report concerning St Richards and the warehouse. Again, volunteers are welcome. You'll find Nigel's full report on page 19 of the Appendix.

Questions/Comments: None.

Leigh and Bransford Primary School (Stuart Bill)

In the absence of Stuart Bill the Chair read a condensed version of the report and confirmed the full version is on page 20 of the Appendix.

Questions/Comments: None.

Leigh & Bransford United Charities (John Sharp)

John confirmed that he stepped down as Chair and Trustee at Christmas (with Elaine and John Drage taking on various roles), but was able to give a brief update. Full report at end of appendix.

Questions/Comments: None.

6. OPEN FORUM AND DISCUSSION

There was a short discussion after which the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and contributing. The meeting then closed for refreshments with a thank you to Denise Fereday and Ann Sharp for facilitating the catering.

Meeting finished at: 8:30PM

Signed.....

Date

Appendix

Chairman's Report

There have been very few changes to the Parish Council this year. We currently have 8 of the possible 11 Council seats filled. So, we have vacancies for 3 Councillors if anyone wants to volunteer.

I would like to thank Peter Whately our District Councillor, who resigned last week, for all the work and guidance he has given to the PC over the years and wish him all the best for the future.

Planning applications this year have been more problematic with Developers recognising that MHDC have been unable to show a 5 Year Housing Land Supply which means that their major policies carry no weight. Luckily our Neighbourhood Plan has offered us some protection.

The Parish Council considered 37 Planning Applications this year. We approved 31 and refused 6.

On the Development side we have seen the completion of Phase 1 of Potters Reach for 33 houses. However, we appear to have a battle on our hands with MHDC who want to convert the 12 Self Build homes in Phase 2 to 28 more affordable houses. The Parish Council unanimously objected to this proposal at its last meeting.

The 52 houses at The Hamlet are springing up very quickly. There has also been approval for 18 Rural Exception houses adjacent to Haywood Drive. So, the number of houses in Leigh & Bransford could rise by more than 130 houses in a short space of time.

One piece of planning good news we had during the year was the refusal on appeal of the application for 46 mobile homes at the Lower Howsell junction.

The application to build a 271 acre Solar farm has been withdrawn and the search for a site for the mobile phone mast continues.

There is no real update on the Community Land Project. With the funding of £1.1 from MHDC secured I would expect to see a planning application in the near future.

You may remember the Parish Council kept the precept the same last year. Unfortunately, it has been necessary to increase the precept to £27k this year which represents a 5% increase.

This year the PC made grants/donations of £2,000 to local organisations down from the £5,500 last year.

You may have noticed recently that all the wooden edging in Jubilee Garden has been replaced. The PC have appointed a gardener for a few hours a month who has made a surprising difference over the last few months. Well worth a look if passing. Any feedback would be appreciated.

Last year we received our 1st ever payment from MHDC of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) of £36k this has increased to £78k during the year with another £32k expected very soon. With other planned developments mentioned earlier I would expect the CIL fund to rise to approx. £130k. The Parish Council resolved to allocate the CIL money in the ratio of 2:1 between the Scouts Big Build

Project and Leigh Church kitchen and toilet project. Both of which I'm sure you will hear more about later this evening.

Report from West Mercia Police Safer Neighbourhood Team

The figures showcased below represents the time frames of 13st April 2025 to 13th April 2026

Crime Type:	Number:
Criminal Damage	10x
Burglary	Dwelling: 1x
	Business: 4x
	Non-dwelling: 3x
Drugs	4x
Theft	4x (recorded as 'other theft')
Public Order	4x
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	5x
	Monthly breakdown: N/A
Vehicle Crime	2x (interfering with motor vehicle)

The above crime statistics reflect incidents recorded within the Leigh and Bransford Parish Council area. Due to the way our internal systems are configured, the wards also incorporate neighbouring areas such as Suckley, Alfrick and Knightwick. Every effort has been made to appropriately identify incidents to the relevant parish areas.

For those who may be unaware, Kempsey & Alfrick Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) consists of two Police Constables and two Police Community Support Officers: PC Stanley, PC Smith, PCSO Smith and PCSO Emeny.

The current priority set for the team is speeding. Within Malvern Safer Neighbourhood Team, PC Farmer acts as single point of contact for road safety/speed enforcement for the area and has continued to carry out speed enforcement activities across the area. This goes in conjunction with the Road Safety Team activity in the villages.

Recently, PC Smith and PCSO Smith attended Little Lodge Nursery to meet with staff. This visit also provided an opportunity to discuss road safety concerns, safeguarding trends and opportunities to engage with the children helping reinforce a positive relationship between the police and local community.

Routine patrols continue throughout the villages during both daytime and nighttime hours. Where burglaries have occurred, follow-up visits have been arranged and carried out with affected residents.

The team has also received periodic reports of 4x4 vehicles using bridleways, leading to incidents of damage. Patrols remain ongoing, and we continue to work closely with local landowners to address these concerns.

The team continue to conduct patrols in the area. We continue to encourage residents to please report incidents to us. Incidents can be reported on 101 or online if they have occurred or are being reported for information purposes. If an act is ongoing where harm could be caused to a person or property, then 999 should always be used.

Thank you again for your continued support.

WCC

This is my first Leigh and Bransford Annual Parish Meeting – it's been a privilege to be a councillor for such a lovely area and great community. It has been an enjoyable though sometimes frustrating year, as it has not always been possible to get done all the things I would like to do for the community, due to policy outside my control.

It seems like nothing much has changed at County Council level. The main issues my predecessor, Karen Hanks, mentioned in her report last year were Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the budget. The main issues at Worcestershire County Council this year have been Local Government Reorganisation and the budget!

We are further along on LGR now, with a decision on the future expected in June or July. There are two options which have been put forward to the government: One Worcestershire, a single unitary council for the whole of Worcestershire; separate North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire unitary councils – South Worcestershire would include the area currently covered by Malvern Hills District, Wychavon and Worcester City Councils. The public consultation on these options has now closed and we await the government decision.

There isn't any good news regarding the budget and council finances. You will be aware by now of the nearly 9% increase in council tax - this goes along with £60 million Exceptional Financial Support from central government. There was no better option available given the state of the finances of the council – a combination of national pressures of increasing social care costs and decisions made by the previous administration which had led to a large deficit, which has increased under the new administration. Had we failed to set a budget, which was the only other possibility, the government would have stepped in, resulting in services being cut and taking control away from elected councillors. Unfortunately, things look even worse for next year!

There is a bit of good news coming from county – the Worcestershire On Demand bus service is now available in Leigh and Bransford. This provides a convenient way to travel around the local area and I recommend giving it a try.

Locally, it was an honour to participate in the Remembrance Sunday Service at Leigh Church and I hope to be there again this year.

I have been dealing with various highways issues, including parking issues, extension of speed limits, enforcement of existing limits and issues with flooding on Stocks Lane. I have recently visited the school and hope to be working with them on a few things in the next year.

Finally, I have to thank Peter Whatley, who has served as your District Councillor for the last 7 years, but has now resigned. Peter gave me a very warm welcome and we have always worked well together. I am sorry that he is stepping down - I'm sure he will also be missed in Leigh and Bransford and the other parishes in the ward he represented so well. He will be a hard act to follow.

MHDC

We are all grateful to Peter Whatley for his dedicated service as a district councillor, and I am sure we wish him well for the future. I hope he continues to enjoy his extensive travels abroad and embraces whatever new adventures come his way. His observations about MHDC are ones I broadly share, and in particular his insight into finance and licensing will be greatly missed. At a time when MHDC appears to be in gradual decline, it is not an easy place in which to serve as a councillor.

I would also like to extend my thanks to all Parish Councilors and the clerks who put so much time and energy into the local community, supporting local initiatives and being community leaders. It is

always a lot easier to complain from the sidelines than to step up and take on the role of a Councillor .

MHDC has now approved the SWDPR and, in theory, this means that we now have a five-year land supply in place. As a result, it has been suggested that speculative development should be avoided. However, this may prove optimistic. Given current Government housing targets and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework aimed at accelerating housing delivery, development pressures are likely to continue. Those progressing Neighbourhood Development Plans should ensure they fully understand these legislative changes and the more limited weight such plans may carry going forward.

I voted against the SWDPR. In particular, the proposed 1,000 homes at Rushwick are unlikely to ever be supported by a new railway station, and the development will place additional pressure on already constrained local roads. While this is a plan, for MHDC it is not genuinely rail-based, it is not green in its approach, and it does not deliver the type of homes that are most needed. It is also worth noting that land supply figures do not necessarily correlate with housing need—Wyre Forest, for example, has a reported nine-year land supply, yet still has around 3,500 people on its housing waiting list.

MHDC continues to draw on its reserves ahead of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and several new grant schemes are now being developed which may be of interest to local communities. Once the application criteria are confirmed, I will share details with Parish Clerks and ensure links are circulated via local social media.

On LGR, a decision is expected this summer. While both proposals are likely to leave us starting from a challenging financial position, it will be interesting to see which option the Government chooses. Early indications suggest a move away from previous population “red lines”, with smaller unitary authorities now being considered. However, until a final decision is made, meaningful forward planning cannot take place, leaving a significant structural change to be resolved very late in the process.

We have been very fortunate to see an MHDC Legacy Grant application in every parish, and I have been tracking their progress through compliance. Projects in Suckley, Alfrick, and Leigh and Bransford are now underway, including improvements to village halls and works to the clubhouse at Suckley Playing Fields. A further project with Moto Legacy is currently going through the planning process and has not yet drawn down funding.

I have also been pleased to support a number of local initiatives through my ward budget this year, including EDDY, which runs sessions at Escape to the Lakes for neurodiverse individuals, a new sign for the Spinney in Alfrick, and support for a Guides outing.

Later this year, we will see the introduction of separate food waste collections. This was originally legislated for under the previous Conservative Government and is now being implemented. Every household will receive a food waste caddy, with weekly collections. In addition, residents can now recycle items such as foil and plastic tubes in their household bins, helping to improve recycling rates.

There are also a number of funding opportunities emerging to support local businesses. A recent £2 million investment package across the Malvern Hills District includes funding both for community

wellbeing and for business support, jobs and skills over the coming years. In addition, Worcestershire-wide schemes continue to offer support for businesses of all sizes, including grants for start-ups and growing businesses, as well as larger innovation and energy efficiency funding for eligible projects. There are also specific rural funding streams available to support diversification, tourism and local enterprise.

Many of these schemes are competitive and often require match funding, and availability can change as funding rounds open and close. I would encourage local businesses and community groups to keep an eye on opportunities, and I will continue to share relevant schemes as they arise. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like support with any local issue or funding opportunity, please do not hesitate to get in touch. I am always available by email or phone and will do my best to assist wherever I can.

Memorial Hall

REPORT TO THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON 14 APRIL, 2026 FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE LEIGH & BRANSFORD MEMORIAL HALL TO BE READ ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIR BY DALE HUMPHRIES

Good evening, as Jon (Gamble) can't be here this evening, I've (been instructed) 'volunteered' to read the Hall's annual report to this meeting. My brief to Jon again this year was to make our report slightly shorter than 'The Forsyte Saga' – so that you don't all lose the will to live while I read it out. Here goes

This year the Memorial Hall is 106 years' young – although much has changed since it opened its doors on January 20, 1920!

These days the Hall's Financial Year starts in March, so this **short** report covers the period from 1 March 2025 until 28 February 2026. As trustees our over-arching objective each year is *to maintain and improve the Hall, its grounds and facilities as a financially viable and welcoming safe place for all hirers and their guests to use and enjoy.*

So, how did we do last year? Here are the HEADLINES about our ANNUAL BOOKINGS; FINANCIAL VIABILITY and IMPROVEMENTS MADE or PLANNED.

ANNUAL BOOKINGS

Well, in all we had a total of 441 bookings which is not only, on average, slightly more than one a day, but also 65 (or 17%) more than the previous year. Included in that number were 9 wedding celebrations – 1 more than last year.

Over the previous two years we averaged 359 bookings per annum, so our new three-year average is now 384 (an improvement of 25 bookings per annum). At the end of March – just one month into our new financial year) we have already taken a total of 184 bookings for the year ahead, 8 of which again are weddings. That's already 48% of our three-year average at this early stage.

We had 9 regular groups, clubs or organisations that met regularly at the hall last year – and some of you are most probably represented here tonight. Although we lost a couple of those groups as the year progressed, others started which kept our regular group numbers at 9 throughout the year.

Other occasional but regular hirers continue to include the NHS Stroke Rehabilitation Team and Priory Group (who run a residential adult care facility on the Bromyard Road). Both organisations use the hall for their staff training events. We also host regular children and baby events run by Tiddler Town and Baby Sensory respectively.

A lot of our other hires are for family parties and children's birthday parties, together with bookings for naming ceremonies, wakes, family church gatherings, organised school holiday activity events for young children and teenagers, pony club gatherings, the odd tabletop sale and even a pit stop/refreshment stage for cycle races passing through our neck of the woods, together with various other community events and meetings. A varied selection of events I'm sure you'll agree.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Well, the good news is that, subject to final verification, last year we slightly exceeded our income target of £30,000 (which excludes grant income) and kept our overheads down to just over £21,000, resulting in a net positive balance of income (excluding grant income) over expenditure of almost 30%. Some of this margin will be invested back in the Hall over the coming year to make further improvements to the building and its amenities. So, we start the new financial year on a strong footing.

Over the past year we secured two significant grants:

- The first was from an anonymous source last March, awarding us £7,800.00 to restore the original porch (built in 1920) that was also the original 'front door' to the Hall. The work was done by local craftsman and joiner Mark Davies of RMD Joinery based in Leigh Sinton. If you have a moment this evening, take a look at the work he did to replace the rotten window frames and remake the double front doors.
- The second award was from the Malvern Hills DC Legacy Grant, received in January. This significant award will help us to finance new acoustic panelling and curtaining material in the Large Hall, together with a new floor covering in the lobby area to the Small Hall and Front Porch, new soundproofed folding doors between the Large and Small Halls and a Bluetooth Hearing support system across the building to support people using the hall who are experiencing hearing loss. We will commence that work in the next few weeks. A condition of the award was that the trustees commit some match funding, which, I'm pleased to say, due to our successful year last year we are able to do.

IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to these two improvements, over the past year we funded the following:

- A new microwave oven and catering oven were purchased and installed in the kitchen
- Completely restored the Memorial Planters along the Small Hall wall either side of the original porch. The project was overseen by a local gardening expert Barrie Thornley who lives in the parish and who volunteered his time and expertise to excavate the planters, replace the spent earth with fresh topsoil, repair the brickwork, design and then install the planting plan, which is based on a patriotic red, white and blue colour scheme. Most of the plants were provided free of charge by Bransford Webbs together with a contribution of small bulbs from local resident Gill Gale. Barrie continues to maintain the planters which have been designed to produce a changing display over the seasons.
- Renew the WiFi system throughout the building and replace most of the light bulbs across both halls with energy efficient ones.

- In the coming year we will be rewiring the kitchen to ensure that all the equipment can be used at the same time to avoid tripping the circuit!

IN CONCLUSION

Our community continues to use the Hall for many and varied events over the year. We strive to keep hourly rates affordable for everyone and are pleased to offer discounts for hires of 12 hours or more and to our local groups who commit to 12 months of hires.

Jon Gamble, Chair of Trustees

WI

Leigh & Bransford Women's Institute is part of the Worcestershire Federation of the WI and our members meet on the first Tuesday of each month from 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm in the village hall. The purpose of the WI is to bring women together to learn, share skills and work on issues that impact their community and is aimed at all women. We are a very friendly group of women of all ages and backgrounds, and we provide activities to appeal to a variety of tastes and interests.

Over the past 12 months our activities have again been many and varied. We had a very interesting talk on antiques where members had the opportunity to bring in some of their own treasures and to see if they could identify 'basic, better and best'. They also very much enjoyed a recent talk on the Magistry and physical activities such as Curling and Smite, chair exercises, Christmas and Easter crafts and our Christmas Party with quiz. In addition, we have had regular social sessions such as coffee mornings and following on from one of our talks, members very much enjoyed a trip to Whitley Court. We have a number of outings to look forward to this year, for example, a visit to Harvington Hall and to see CATS in Birmingham. Being part of the Worcester Federation means members also have access to trips, talks and activities and to an extensive range of online courses, many of which are free.

Last year saw us enter our first County WI Craft competition and we were thrilled to be commended. It encouraged us to set up a Creative Ideas sub-group who have exciting plans for us to enter more competitions. Our long-standing sub-groups of embroidery and book club continue to be popular. A couple of our members organised the poppy displays for the Memorial Hall.

Last year it was 90 years since the establishment of Leigh and Bransford WI. We held a very successful afternoon Tea Garden Party, joined by many of our previous members. Our membership has been steady over the past 12 months and we continue to look at ways of raising awareness and attracting new members. This includes contributing to a bi-monthly article in the Sphere and we are looking into setting up a Face Book Page.

A free taster session is available for women who would like to come and find out more.

Jane Beach

President

Leigh & Bransford WI

Scouts

Another busy year for the Group!

We've had yet another busy year over at 1st Leigh with all sections running at (or near) capacity.

November saw another strong Group presence for Remembrance Day at Leigh Church, I think you'll all agree it was again nice to see the church full with so many young faces!

In December we saw all Sections making a contribution to the local Christmas tree making event as well as attending and taking part in the Leigh & Bransford Hall Carol service.

Across all sections we now offer Climbing, kayaking, shooting, axe throwing, crossbows, archery, hiking, camps etc etc which is brilliant to see!

Snap shot from each section:

Squirrels: We currently have 13 Squirrels all working hard towards their Acorn Awards.

Beavers: We currently have 16 Beavers who have racked up an impressive amount of badges. They've attended various camps & district events and are looking forward to another busy summer!

Cubs: We currently have 22 Cubs and they've held a joint camp with 2nd Malvern and already have 2No. more this summer. They've also attended the District swimming competition and Quiz & chips event performing well at both.

Scouts: We currently have 20 Scouts who last year attended the Brecon Beacons for their week camp. They've attended the District swimming competition, Muddy Fox, Archery competition and most recently the shooting competition. Again performing well in all events. Another good year for Chief Scout Gold Awards with 6 being presented at a presentation recently.

Explorers: We've now increased numbers upto 22 with 6 also now helping in other sections as young leaders. Over the past year we have attended the week camp with the scouts, weekend expedition training in both Snowdonia & Brecon Beacons, ShireHike and plan this year a Mudrunner event, numerous weekend camps and a week long camp down in the Cotswolds.

Our close connection with our community continues and thrives . Our Sections have litter picked in the village, carried out maintenance at the Churchyard, sang for the residents at Waterside Care home and every September make our annual volunteering contribution to the Alfrick & Lulsley Show. This has developed into a symbiotic relationship and provides us with invaluable funds via generous donations.

Finally onto The Big Build, with recent pledges of generous donations we've now raised an amazing 112k towards our goal. Although a long way to go still it's been a fantastic effort in what has only been 18 months of fund raising.

We're now working with a local charity who'll hopefully become a 'partner' with the build which will fingers crossed enable our next lottery bid (being compiled as we speak) to be accepted.

As always an amazing amount of effort is invested by all the team and the fantastic achievements are testament to this ...thank you to all the scouts, parents & team members for making this group still by far the most successful group in the District

Leigh and District Gardeners Club

The club has organised a wide and varied programme over the last year that hopefully is of interest to members but for whatever reason the numbers of members attending our meetings has been dropping off. The visits we organise are still popular however. As a result of this situation we have decided to have a rethink and are considering making a few changes such as a change of venue, a greater social media presence, to stop running a 'bar' and a change in the way the club is run. To this end myself as chair and Marian as secretary are standing down as from the AGM in September 2026 and the club is to be run by the committee who have agreed to split the aforementioned roles amongst them.

The club stall at the Alfrick and Lulsley Show was as popular as ever again raising well over £600. We are grateful to the show committee for their kind donation of £200 to the club to assist with the funding of speaker fees which are ever increasing.

Finally, I wish to thank the club's committee for their service over the last year (and to Helen Cook for running the raffle and George Thomas for running the bar) and for jointly taking on the roles of Chair and Secretary as no individuals came forward to take on these positions.

Local Walks with Steve Kent

Our local walking group has continued to expand with, on average, 15 walkers regularly attending. The walks are generally local within 5 miles or so of the Leigh district and are between 3 and 5 or so miles long with, if possible, a point of interest on the walk. We have visited old churches, a medieval dovecote and more recently a local cider maker near Broadheath.

If possible I try to include a pub as a starting point so that a drink or meal can be had afterwards but as most pubs are not open at midday this is not always possible which is a shame as apart from the health and wellbeing benefits of the walking the other main focus of the group is the social aspect.

We do organise a Christmas meal at a local hostelry which is always well supported. A new 'venture' this year has been yoga sessions which have been provided by one of our members free of charge once a month with voluntary donations to Macmillan Cancer Care as is the case with the walks. We raised a fabulous £382.50 last year thanks to the generosity of our walking group members.

Leigh Guides

Thank you for giving us the time to speak again to give you all an overview of the last 12 months of activity from 1st Leigh Guides.

We find ourselves in a wonderful position at the moment. In August last year we welcomed a new leader, Gemma. Gemma found us through one of our leaflet door drops we did in Leigh Sinton and after just having had a baby was looking for something to do (crazy I know!). Gemma has bought a

fantastic warmth to our unit and has fitted in with the Guides very quickly. Gemma is a teacher at the Chase and known to many of the Girls who were already fond of her as a teacher so that was a good start.

In recent months we have had a surge in numbers and now find ourselves sitting quite comfortably at 14 Guides and Rangers. The nice thing about the new Guides that have come in is they are all from a school in Malvern so we have pulled from outside of the Parish which means a brand new shiny group of girls who do not know many of our existing Guides so new 'out of school' friendships are being made.

As mentioned previously we went on a recruitment drive for new leaders. This is still ongoing. In an ideal world we are looking for two or three wonderful kind and caring women who would come and help on a weekly basis and also help with camps... so if you know anyone please ask them to get in touch with Wendy.

The Guides were keen this year to celebrate their Dad's on Father's Day by making upcycled herb gardens using milk bottles, tin cans, fruit juice containers. We had some amazing creations from three tin cans decorated to look like fish, chips and mushy peas to a beautifully decorated collection of fruit cartons to match kitchen decor.

Not to be outdone, recently we spent nearly 6 weeks creating Mother's Day gifts. Quite often as the Guides get older, they get more sentimental when given the opportunity to create something for their parents. This year we made fabric flowers and a handprint vase to put them in. The vase was made using a coffee jar with a clay handprint stuck to the outside. They all looked beautiful and the Guides took such good care. It's good to know that teenagers still appreciate their mum's!

In the summer along with Leigh Rainbows we attended 'Magical Midlands', an event hosted by Girl Guiding Midlands which saw somewhere around 8,000 members of Girl Guiding ascend on Uttoxeter Race Course in Staffordshire. The Guides spent a really fun day taking part in varied activities including rock climbing, archery, inflatable obstacle courses, craft and a whole fairground. It was a very hot day but was so much fun and the day was finished off with a concert from Disney Princesses, an Abba Tribute and a Taylor Swift tribute.

On a weekly basis we follow our standard Girl Guiding Syllabus, OK, we might tweak it a little bit. Sometimes we feel that being a rural unit a lot of activities are built for units that meet in a community hall surrounded by street lights and shops. We however have the advantage of being in the middle of fields and fresh air so we do alter some things to our benefit.

The Girl Guiding syllabus is broken into six themes.

- Know myself
- Be well
- Have adventures
- Take action
- Skills for my future

To complete a theme the Guides are required to.

- Complete a minimum of 1 interest badge from the section of which there are usually 8 choices
- Complete a selection of Skills Builders which are designed to help the Guides learn skills including 1st Aid, communication, team work etc.

- Complete 260 minutes of Unit Meeting Activities, these are mostly games designed to bring the Guides together and make them think about the world and how they fit into it.

These themes then lead into Bronze, Silver and Gold Guide Awards. To gain bronze you have to complete 2 themes, silver 4 and gold all 6.

In the last 12 months 4 Guides have completed their Bronze Awards. 2 Guides have completed their Gold Awards and have now moved into Rangers.

Of our newer members, 2 have already completed their first theme badge so are well on their way. We fully expect more Bronze's and some Silver's to be awarded so that is very exciting.

We have seen some fantastic work put into interest badges including Guiding History, Personal Brand, Friendship and Travel. The new Rangers have been working hard on interest badges and I do believe there to be a bit of rivalry between two of them as to who can get more done and can present the most amount of work with them. They have been working on creative writing which saw a beautiful story written, Booktivist and an interest badge called interests. The Rangers are also busy in the planning stage of their Chef badge. To put a little twist on the badge for the Rangers we are linking their Chef badge with the Guides food critic badge so we are all working on a badge together.

It's always amazing to see how each individual tackles badges differently and to see the wonderful things they bring in with them.

We have been in the community probably not as much as we would have liked but we were able to support Leigh Church Summer Fete by running the tombola, Alfrick & Lulsley Show on the Children's Toy Stall and also with the Christmas Tree display in Leigh Church which saw the Guides also work towards an upcycling part of their badges by recycling bottle lids for tree decorations.

As mentioned, we are still looking for more leaders, our exiting and long-standing leadership team of Valda, Charley and Wendy are not planning on going anywhere but we need more support to be able to give our wonderful Guides the best opportunities we can.

Finally, we would like to thank the Parish Council and everyone in the Parish for their continued support of our lovely unit.

Bowls

John as speaking on behalf of Bowls Group who meet here in the hall every Monday between September and April. It's indoor bowling on a carpet and it's great fun! It's been going for many years and people from neighbouring parishes also join. At the moment we have 15 members and are always on the look out for more. It's very reasonable – membership is £5 (which goes towards the Christmas lunch) and then £2.50pw to cover cost of hall etc. If anyone's interested please contact me (John).

Malvern Martial Arts and Fitness Centre.

Another year older but none the wiser!

Once again I must apologize for not being there in person but this year the AGM has fallen on my Birthday and at my tender age I need to make the most of them with family time.

Firstly, I would like to thank the PC and various representatives present for the support given to the centre from the beginning (17 years ago!) . The idea of operating a community based fitness venue has proved to be a big part in the village, keeping me very occupied inside teaching and finding the demand for ONE on ONE (PT) sessions becoming even more popular.

Classes have proven to be very busy with the usual groups :

Taekwondo, Boxing, Kickboxing, Ladies only Kickboxing, Self Defence and Personal Awareness, Pole Dancing/fitness etc. plus we offer private hire for small private group sessions.

My own classes are still filled with young teenagers finding their way in the fitness and martial arts giving them a safe place to meet and make new friends and reach their own personal goals, many are becoming champions in their styles with several title holders still looking for that big break into the professional league.

The gym is well support by the village with a considerable amount of family groups, adults of all ages and teenagers that enjoy having the more private environment removing the pressure often associated with the larger commercial gyms.

We continue to offer "Heath & Fitness in the Community", we have more local gym memberships coming through but a few less class alternatives over the past year due "challenging times" we are still here for the community.

Have a good evening everyone

Julian Burton (Master J)

Leigh and Bransford Church Parish Report

There were two main Thank-You's from John.

3. For the annual grant the Parish Council gives to the church for maintenance of Leigh church yard and the land around Bransford cemetery.
4. For the allocation of CiL money for a toilet and kitchen in the church and to improve disabled access. He said because it's a Grade I Listed Building, they need to apply to the Diocese who will ensure that everything is above board as the church is a historical asset. The application went in some weeks ago so should hear back soon with the necessary paperwork called a Faculty. Until they have the Faculty they're unable to approach potential grant providers.

He also gave a Thank You to those organisations who put Christmas trees in the church at Christmas time. He also said that there are the most fantastic flower arrangements in the church, created by Pauline. She's a member of the Worcester Cathedral Flower Arrangers and uses Leigh Church as her 'training ground'! John said all are welcome to visit Leigh Church.

1st Leigh Brownies

We continue to run with a full unit of over twenty girls who enjoy a varied selection of fun activities from the guiding programme.

At the end of the summer term we planted flower tubs and made cards to thank Kaye James as she retired from actively being part of leading Brownie meetings after over twenty years as a Guider for 1st Leigh. Although greatly missed, Kaye continues to support our unit in various ways including as treasurer and an adviser.

With only one leader left we were in danger of having to close but after a year to settle in her teaching role, we have been delighted to welcome back Fluffy Owl (Millie Atkinson) as an active leader.

In the autumn, after many years of meeting on a Wednesday evening, we moved to a Thursday to take up the generous offer of support from Leah and the Rainbows leaders. Although the Rainbows and Brownies hold separate meetings in the different halls it allows for leaders to provide support and cover if needed.

We still need to recruit another volunteer adult leader for Brownies.

Over the course of the year, we have had support from three young people volunteering as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award and their support has been invaluable, especially Erin who continued way beyond the expected time period.

Last spring, we were blessed with a lovely sunny day when we welcomed Rainbows and Brownies from across our district to a fun day hosted at our excellent memorial hall. With the support of Leigh Guides, the girls enjoyed camp fire cooking as well as games, crafts, a drumming workshop, a picnic and a large camp fire 'sing song'.

We also joined other local Brownie units when we went to explore the 'Maize Maze' at Powick at dusk where we were excited to spot bats.

This autumn, Girl Guiding launched a number of new interest badges and Leigh Brownies took a vote to decide which ones to work on first. So far we have enjoyed designing, playing and evaluating our own games as part of the Gamesmaster badge, creating with food, textiles and other materials as part of our Craft badge, hearing folktales (including that of the 'Alfrick Fairies') and retelling stories through clay models and puppet shows for our Folklore badge and learning more about how to care for local endangered wildlife which included a visit from staff and two magnificent owls from a local rescue centre as part of our Animal Helper badge.

We have also continued to learn through the skill builder aspects of the guiding programme including 'Camp' which incorporates games to reinforce some basic outdoor skills, 'Live Smart' with some life skills such as cooking and using money, 'Innovate' with encouragement to explore questions and ideas, 'Feel Good' with some tips for good mental and physical health, 'Make Change' that focuses on games to promote effective communication skills and Network that encourages good teamwork. Deb Cook (Snowy Owl)

Leigh Rainbows

Rainbows – AGM Annual Report (12 Month Summary April 2025-2026)

Over the past 12 months, Rainbows has continued to be a busy, successful and thriving unit. We began the year with 26 girls on the roll. Due to girls moving up to Brownies before Easter, we currently have 6 spaces available, with 5 girls on the waiting list ready to start in the Autumn. We anticipate approximately 7 girls moving up to Brownies in July, ready for the new term in September, and are currently undertaking advertising to maintain healthy numbers.

We were delighted to welcome our first Duke of Edinburgh volunteer in many years, who has thoroughly enjoyed supporting the unit and will be staying on. Her contribution has been extremely valuable within such a busy unit.

We are very grateful to the Parish for their generous donation, which has helped fund travel costs for trips. This support has significantly reduced costs for parents and made trips more accessible and viable.

Throughout the year, the girls participated in a wide range of trips and activities, including the Three Counties Show, Magical Midlands at Uttoxeter Racecourse, a summer visit to Cheeky Monkeys Soft Play in Worcester, a challenge badge visit to the Worcester and District Model Engineers, and a Christmas trip by train to Birmingham to visit the Thinktank Science Museum, finishing with a meal at Pizza Express.

As part of our "Take Action" community theme, we welcomed visits from Malvern Police, Two Hoots Owl Rescue, and Severn Area Search and Rescue (SARA). A particularly special moment was attending the wedding of one of our leaders, whose Girlguiding involvement spans generations, where the Rainbows sang guiding songs and formed a guard of honour.

The girls have earned well over 450 badges in the last year. In addition, 10 girls achieved their Gold Award, 15 their Silver Award, and 17 their Bronze Award, with several more working towards their next award. We are also proud that two Rainbows and our Young Leader received County Awards, which we celebrated at an awards presentation.

Overall, it has been an extremely positive year, filled with achievement, growth and memorable experiences.

St Richard's Warehouse

St Richards Hospice - Nigel Christie Leigh and Bransford

As last years presentation Nigel commenced with a quote from a patient at St Richards. "St Richards is a place of love." Why is the hospice so relevant to our Parish? Because at Crowcroft there is a huge warehouse operated by the charity, which takes in donations and then sells them online and through the 22 shops in south Worcestershire that are run by St Richards.

The income from the sale of donations generates a very significant part of the hospices turnover, which in turn provides care across Worcestershire. Nigel quoted some figures. In 2025 St Richards looked after 3100 patients and that on any one day the hospice was supporting over 980 people at the hospice, in the community and at home. With volunteers giving a staggering 106,000 hours of help. A few examples were given of the level of sales achieved by warehouse through the shops and online. In February over £68k of woman's cloths, £35k of bric a brac and £30k of books. With all categories of sales a turnover in excess of £250k was achieved in one month. Along with a great team of staff at the warehouse, there are over 60 volunteers, making it by far the largest charitable activity in our Parish. Nigel emphasised that the warehouse is always keen to receive donations, open five days a week and once a month on Saturday, check their website for details. The hospice is always looking for help in the warehouse and shops, again details can be found on St Richards website.

Leigh and Bransford Primary School

1. Demographic Context

Leigh and Bransford Primary School serves a distinctive and vibrant community, and its demographic profile plays an important role in shaping the learning environment. Compared with national averages, the school is smaller in size, with a pupil roll that enables staff to know children exceptionally well. This smaller cohort fosters close relationships, strong pastoral care, and personalised learning that supports children academically and emotionally. The school's proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is significantly lower than the national average, reflecting the relatively low levels of socio-economic disadvantage within the

surrounding area. Levels of SEND are broadly in line with national averages, demonstrating that the school serves a balanced and inclusive cohort. Staff expertise, targeted interventions, and positive relationships ensure children with additional needs are well supported and able to take part fully in school life. The demographic stability of the local area also means that most children remain at the school for their full primary education. This continuity supports the school's strong results, positive behaviour culture, and sense of belonging.

2. School Performance

Leigh and Bransford Primary School continues to perform strongly in national assessments, demonstrating sustained effectiveness across core subjects. Over the last three years, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have remained consistently in line with or above national averages, reflecting the stability of teaching and the school's consistent focus on high-quality curriculum delivery. Reading results, in particular, highlight the school's success in providing a well-structured early reading programme. Phonics teaching is well embedded, and pupils develop secure decoding skills before moving on to increasingly complex texts. The rich reading culture across the school ensures that pupils are regularly exposed to high-quality literature, and they read with growing confidence, fluency and understanding. Inspectors during the 2026 Ofsted visit noted that pupils read clearly, choose suitable texts and show developing rhythm and expression when reading aloud, indicating strong progress from their starting points. Writing outcomes similarly show that pupils are progressing well over time. Books demonstrate clear evidence of pupils developing accuracy, stamina and a stronger sense of audience and purpose. High expectations, well-established routines and consistent modelling from teachers contribute to pupils producing increasingly well-structured and thoughtful written work. The progression documented across year groups illustrates that pupils secure foundational transcription skills before moving on to composition and refinement, enabling them to build confidence and independence as writers. In mathematics, results have remained stable and broadly aligned with national outcomes, demonstrating the school's consistent approach to curriculum sequencing. The school's developing use of mastery principles—emphasising fluency, representation and reasoning—is strengthening pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils show secure recall of number facts, increasing ability to apply methods and strategies, and growing confidence when explaining their thinking. Leaders' focus on identifying gaps and supporting pupils who need additional input is helping ensure that most pupils move through the curriculum at an appropriate pace. Attendance is another area of significant strength. The school's overall attendance has remained above national averages, and persistent absenteeism is consistently well below that seen nationally. This reflects the school's proactive and supportive approach to monitoring attendance, working with families early and constructively, and maintaining strong home-school communication. High attendance levels contribute directly to positive outcomes in learning, as pupils benefit from uninterrupted access to the curriculum, consistent routines and strong relationships with staff. Families value the school highly, and pupils' reliable attendance demonstrates strong engagement, commitment to learning and a positive experience of school life.

3. January 2026 Ofsted Findings

The January 2026 Ofsted inspection, carried out under the revised 2025 framework, confirmed that Leigh and Bransford Primary School met the expected standard in every evaluation area. Inspectors found that pupils achieve well across the curriculum, make secure progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of learning. Reading was

highlighted as a strength; pupils read with interest and increasing fluency, and phonics outcomes in Key Stage 1 were reported as just above national averages. Pupils could speak confidently about their learning, and their work showed clear progression. Attendance was described as a significant strength, remaining above national averages with persistent absence well below national figures. Behaviour across the school was judged to be positive and respectful, with pupils interacting well and engaging constructively in lessons. Instances of disengagement were dealt with quickly by staff, and bullying was reported as rare and effectively resolved when it occurred. Curriculum design and teaching were found to be broad, balanced and well sequenced. Teachers generally demonstrated secure subject knowledge, and leaders ensured that gaps in learning were identified and addressed. Inspectors noted that assessment practices were not always applied with full consistency across all teaching and recommended that leaders embed these strategies more routinely into everyday practice. Support for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND was judged to be effective, enabling pupils to access the curriculum well. Early years provision received particularly positive feedback. Inspectors described strong routines, warm relationships and a well-planned curriculum that builds knowledge progressively. Children were seen to participate confidently, and early reading and mathematics were prioritised effectively. Leadership and governance were praised for clarity of vision, high expectations and a strong commitment to improvement. Governors and trust leaders demonstrated good knowledge of the school and ensured statutory responsibilities, including safeguarding, were fully met. Safeguarding was judged effective, with pupils stating that they feel safe and know who to talk to if they need help.

4. Future Developments

Leigh and Bransford Primary School is planning for several key developments that will strengthen provision and improve the experience of pupils and families. One major area under exploration is the creation of an on-site nursery. Establishing nursery provision would enhance early years education, support smoother transitions into Reception and give families greater access to high-quality early learning within the village. Leaders are currently reviewing space, resources and long-term feasibility to ensure any new early years offer is sustainable and beneficial for the community. In addition to internal expansion, the school is set to benefit from the new development opposite the site. Once completed, this development will improve access routes around the school and provide additional parking, easing congestion at busy times and enhancing safety for families. The anticipated increase in open space will also create further opportunities for outdoor learning, physical activity and school events, giving staff more flexibility to broaden the curriculum. These improvements will support smoother daily operations, enrich the learning environment and strengthen the school's connection with the wider local community. Taken together, these future developments demonstrate a forward-looking approach, positioning the school to grow responsibly while continuing to meet the needs of a developing village community.

5. School Environment and Values

The grounds offer a wide range of opportunities that enrich daily learning experiences. Large open areas, garden spaces and well-maintained play zones allow pupils to explore, experiment and build confidence beyond the classroom. Staff make purposeful use of these spaces to deliver cross-curricular activities, encourage curiosity about the natural world and promote healthy, active lifestyles. In addition, the layout of the site enables group work, team games and problem-solving activities that help pupils develop social skills and resilience. Whether

engaging in outdoor science investigations, practising sports skills or taking part in whole-school events, pupils benefit from an environment that is both inviting and thoughtfully designed to broaden their learning. The calmness, safety and quality of the setting are frequently noted by visitors and contribute to the strong sense of pride pupils have in their school. Our Values in Action The school's values underpin every aspect of its culture, curriculum and relationships. The motto 'Together We Succeed' is lived daily through the way children collaborate, support peers, and take pride in their achievements. The ethos — Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Your Best — guides behaviour and decision-making, helping children develop self-regulation, empathy and responsibility.

No Questions or comments.

Leigh & Bransford United Charities

The charity has a long history, dating back many years when people generously donated money and property—something that continues to this day. It also owns 22 acres of land at Guarlford, which is currently leased out. Each year, the charity provides grants to individuals in the parish who are in need. However, identifying those in need has become more challenging due to GDPR regulations so The Trust is very open to suggestions on how best to identify and reach those who could benefit from its support. Traditionally, assistance has mainly gone to older residents, but increasingly, younger people are also finding themselves in need.

Grants are typically distributed just before Christmas, helping recipients with additional financial support during the festive period. Although it is an old charity, it continues to make a significant difference in the lives of those it helps. Its work covers the historic parish of Leigh, which extends into Malvern Link, meaning it serves quite a wide area. Finally, a sincere thank you to John and Elaine Drage for taking on the responsibility of running the Trust.

End of Appendix