

## A VILLAGE GREEN FOR LEIGH?

At the Parish Meeting on 23 May, it was decided that a formal Poll should be held to ask registered voters of Leigh **'Do you support the concept of a community open space for Leigh?'**

For the Poll, the wording 'community open space' was adopted in place of 'Village Green' to avoid any possible legal complications in the future.

In accordance with regulations for Village Polls, it will be held on **THURSDAY 22 JUNE from 4PM -9PM**, in Leigh Village Hall. No Polling cards will be issued, and postal and proxy votes will not be available. The result of the Poll is not binding on the Parish Council. But a good turnout will help the Parish Council in its next consideration of the issue.

### What would a Leigh Village Green look like, and what would it be used for?

LPC envisages a c.2 acre mowed grass area, surrounded by a post-and-rail fence (or equivalent). Council members envisage no buildings or other facilities on it. The precise location will be subject to negotiation with the current land owner, but a site on the field immediately to the West of the Village Hall would be the current preferred location. It would be intended for use as open space that anyone could enjoy, for activities such as: stalls during village annual events, picnics, informal family games and other such activities that families without access to a suitable garden might otherwise not be able to enjoy. It would secure the area as an open, green space for all future generations. WDCC have previously indicated that they would be likely to look favourably on the necessary planning consent.

### How would it be paid for?

While at this stage costs are only outline, it is envisaged that a capital expenditure of some £30k would be required. This includes purchase, minimal landscaping and fencing. Thereafter, annual maintenance costs of c.£600pa would be incurred (grass cutting, occasional fence maintenance) – this annual maintenance cost would be paid by LPC.

The capital sum would be raised initially by securing a loan, probably for a period of not more than 10 years. This loan would be paid off by a combination of fund raising, securing of grants, and, if required, by a proportion of the parish charge element of residents' Council Tax. In any event, in order to pay back any part of the loan, it is not intended to increase the parish charge above the current FY2017-18 amount (Band D property: £36.91 *per annum*).

### Next steps

If you are a registered voter in Leigh Parish, **you are strongly encouraged to take this opportunity to register your opinion at the Poll on THURSDAY 22 JUNE.**