



Leigh on Sea Town Council News

issue 14

www.leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk



@LeighTCevents

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Note from Chairman

By Cllr Doug Cracknell



As the current Chairman of Leigh-on-Sea Town Council I am delighted to introduce the latest edition of the Leigh-on-Sea Town Council News. It's been just over 3 months since I was elected by my fellow Councillors and I am enjoying promoting and supporting events and activities in our town, particularly after a period of lockdown restrictions which have impacted us all. It has been good to see the reopening of Leigh Community Centre, with classes returning, events being booked and the return of the Youth Club and the ever popular Leigh Farmers' Market celebrating its 21st Birthday. Strand Wharf in the Old Town saw the return of Punch & Judy and we are already planning for an expanded Festive Lighting Display for Leigh Library Gardens. I was pleased to 'virtually' attend the attestation of our first Community Special Constable, William Imbush, in June and am sure you will see him out and about in Leigh soon.

As Chairman I get the opportunity to select a charity to fundraise for over my year in office. I have chosen to support "Phab Life" and you can read more about what they do on page 10.

As a community we were subjected to a rise in incidents and behaviours which had a negative impact, however Operation Union (page 9) was a great initiative and the greater visibility of police during the summer was a step to return to a happier, safer Leigh-on-Sea.

I look forward to meeting local residents at events over the coming months.

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council would like to thank Stewart Orrock for his help with proof reading.

Front Cover Artist

James Ball has been taking many photos, mainly along the Thames Estuary between Shoeburyness and Benfleet Creek. From boats, jetties, groynes, piers and other sea structures he is usually out there capturing what he sees in the golden hour at sunset or early in the morning as the sun rises. His inspiration for photography was travelling abroad and wanting to capture better images of the whole experience of travelling, especially of things he may never get to see again. If you are interested to see any more of his work then please go to www.jamesballphotography.com where you can view his portfolio of favourite images captured.



Note from the Town Clerk, Helen Symmons

As we come to mid-September and as I write this, I am delighted to see that the Community Centre is getting busier and busier. Band nights are back, the Farmers' Market is now twice a month, craft fayres are starting to take place and many of you are booking your long overdue celebrations with us – thank you, it's lovely to see the Centre becoming vibrant again.

Elsewhere the skate park has had more revitalisation and the allotments are yielding great produce for our plot holders, albeit they have had to work very hard this summer to keep their plots under control with the abundant growing season because of the rain with a bit of sun thrown in! I visited Manchester Drive allotments in August and had never seen it all looking so green for that time of year and the sunflowers had grown to great height.

As you will see in this edition, new ideas and features to enhance our life in Leigh are flourishing but do feel free if you have a suggestion to let us know, after all it is your Town Council and if we can bring one of your community ideas to life then that would be great.

Next year we start working on our Strategic Plan for 2023-2027. The Plan will be in place ready for the next election and administration period so do start thinking if you would like to put yourself forward as a Councillor in the future. I am always happy to chat with anyone interested and would like to know more about this valuable community role.

By the time you read this it won't be long before we will be telling you about all the Christmas festivities planned for Library Gardens, so keep your eyes peeled as we have some great features planned.

STAFF DETAILS

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Council News and Updates



Town Council Summer Events

Due to the pandemic, we have been unable to provide our usual programme of family fun in the school holidays since 2019. However, we ran two free events over the school holidays to help get children back into the swing of things! With the help of the Art Ministry, we ran a free seaside themed arts and crafts session and a free Punch and Judy puppet show on Strand Wharf which raised money for the Chairman's Charity.

Keep an eye on our social media, as we will have activities coming in the October half-term too.

2022 Queen's Platinum Jubilee

In anticipation of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022, we are planning to provide a series of free bunting workshops for the people of Leigh. The sessions will give residents the opportunity to make their own fabric bunting from recycled materials. The Council will have a stock of fabric, but residents can also bring their own. The plans have been put in place to help reduce the use of plastic bunting, encouraging people to still enjoy the festivities whilst being mindful of the environment around them.

Look out for details in the new year.



Allotment Update

We were pleased to be able to keep our allotments open as usual during the pandemic and have recently released an Allotment Handbook for anyone who has or is thinking about having an allotment, which is available to download from our website at www.leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk/allotments. The Council do however have an unprecedentedly high waiting list for an allotment plot currently, and whilst we try to allocate plots as quickly as we can when available, there is still a long wait.

Photography Project

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council recently hired a professional photographer to help us update the images on our website and to promote the Community Centre since its refurbishment. We were overwhelmed by the response we received to our advert and spent a long time whittling down the list to just one person. Just Create Photography were successful and have been working with us over the last few months, they have captured some fantastic moments and snapshots of Leigh-on-Sea in all its glory and have even provided the cover artwork for this issue.

Annual Report 2020 – 2021

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council published their Annual Report earlier this year for 2020 – 2021. The report includes key council information such as the budgets, councillor attendance, and a review of our strategic plan; as well as reports from the Chairman, Town Clerk and council staff. This year's Good for Leigh and Volunteer of the Year winners are also announced in the document. The report is available to view on our website at leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk/annual-report. Paper copies can be made available on request.

New Councillors

We have recently welcomed three new Councillors to the Town Council. Cllr Emma Mills who was co-opted to St. Clement's Ward in April, Cllr James Preston who was elected unopposed for the Elms Ward in May, and Cllr Katie Cohen who was co-opted to Highlands Ward in July. You can find out more about our new councillors on page 11.

Merchant Navy Day

On Friday 3rd September Councillors were joined by Southend Council dignitaries, local fisherman and the Sea Cadets to raise the Red Ensign flag on Strand Wharf for Merchant Navy Day.

Merchant Navy Day honours those who kept Britain afloat during both World Wars and celebrates the dependence on modern-day merchant seafarers who are said to be responsible for more than 90 per cent of the UK's imports.



Committee Membership 2021 – 2022

The committee membership was decided at the Annual Council Meeting on 25th May. Cllr Doug Cracknell was elected as Chairman and Cllr Keith Evans was elected as Vice-Chairman. Both councillors are ex-officio members of all committees.

Finance & Governance Committee

- Cllr David Bowry - Chairman
- Cllr Vinice Cowell
- Cllr Doug Cracknell*
- Cllr Keith Evans*
- Cllr Anita Forde
- Cllr Jill Healey
- Cllr Carole Mulroney - Vice Chairman
- Vacancy
- Vacancy

Community & Culture Committee

- Cllr David Bowry
- Cllr Doug Cracknell*
- Cllr Keith Evans*
- Cllr Anita Forde - Chairman
- Cllr Emma Mills
- Cllr James Preston
- Cllr Emma Smith
- Cllr Mike Wells
- Cllr Andy Wilkins - Vice-Chairman

Staffing Committee

- Cllr David Bowry - Chairman
- Cllr Vinice Cowell
- Cllr Doug Cracknell*
- Cllr Keith Evans* - Vice-Chairman
- Cllr Jill Healey
- Cllr Emma Smith
- Cllr Mike Wells

Planning, Licensing & Highways Committee

- Cllr David Bowry
- Cllr Vinice Cowell - Vice-Chairman
- Cllr Doug Cracknell* - Chairman
- Cllr Keith Evans*
- Cllr Paul Gilson
- Cllr Alan Hart
- Cllr Emma Mills
- Cllr James Preston
- Vacancy



Good for Leigh Awards

On Sunday 3rd October we organised a special event to honour and thank all of our Good for Leigh Winners from 2020 and 2021. The winners were presented with their awards and were treated to tea and cake, courtesy of the Leigh Branch of the Royal British Legion. *We also welcomed Donald Fraser Jr. to present the Volunteer of the Year winners in memory of his late father Donald, one of our founding Councillors.*

Good for Leigh Winners

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council selected their Good for Leigh Awards earlier this year. The recipients are nominated by members of the Council for their hard work and devotion to making Leigh a better place; they are "Good for Leigh." We would have normally announced the winners at our Annual Community Meeting, but this was unable to go ahead due to the COVID restrictions.

This year was a truly incredible year for community spirit and we are so proud to have so many wonderful people in our town. The 2021 winners are as follows:

- **Belle Sewfragettes** - made masks and scrubs during the start of the pandemic when there was a desperate need.
- **Eve Kinder** - has been made an ambassador for Southend Young Carers, as she helps her sibling with learning difficulties.
- **Gracie and Alvina Line** - help at HARP. They continued to serve meals throughout lockdown even during great personal sadness.
- **Leigh Tin Teams** - from the 'Clap for NHS' on Thursday nights, a group of neighbours clubbed together to start collecting food for the local foodbanks. This scheme has continued throughout lockdown and is now being extended into Shoebury.
- **Marguerite Drive Street Group** - Born out of the first lockdown, the group hold foodbank collections and do regular litter picks on their road and other neighbourly initiatives.
- **Linda Catling** - has brought an amazing amount of cheer to residents of Leigh with her themed crocheted post box "hats." She also handed out treats and flowers on Mother's Day.
- **Liz Evans and Linda Mitchell** - Former receptionists of Leigh Community Centre, who recently retired, have carried on working with the Council to support the members of our Community Transport Scheme with regular friendly phone calls during lockdown.
- **Madison Edwards** - a year 7 student, who helped cook for the homeless during lockdown. As well as delivering food parcels and buying colouring books and pens for homeless people living in the woods, she also delivered hundreds of council leaflets to the elderly and vulnerable.
- **Michael Cranston** - Michael is the founder of the "Smileigh" Facebook group, created as a positive outlet for local people during lockdown. The group has gone on to gain thousands of members worldwide and has also raised money for local charities.
- **Millie Whipps** - Last Christmas, teenager Millie was so concerned about homeless people that she appealed to friends and family for backpacks and items to fill them with to donate to HARP, as well as buying items with her own money. Millie was also the recipient of our 2020 Citizenship award that we run in partnership with Belfairs Academy.



Volunteer of the Year

In 2019 the Council launched their Volunteer of the Year Award in memory of longstanding past councillor, Donald Fraser, who had served on the Council since its inception in 1996. Donald was an avid volunteer and helped many organisations during his lifetime, so the Council thought this award was a fitting tribute.

This year's chosen winner is Tim Watts, who received several nominations and is well known throughout Leigh as the president of the Leigh Lions. Tim took early retirement from the Ministry of Justice and threw himself into volunteering. As part of the Lions, he helps to run the Lions Charity Shop, organise the Leigh Regatta, Duck Race and raise money for local charities and community groups.

On top of his work with the Lions, Tim is also a trustee of Southend Carers, a member of Southend Borough Council's People Scrutiny Committee, and director of Southend Pier Museum. Tim has also worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, whether it be shopping for vulnerable people, providing aid for food banks, co-ordinating volunteers or helping at vaccination centres; he has committed hundreds of hours to other people.

We can't think of a more appropriate and deserving winner for this award. Leigh-on-Sea Town Council are certainly proud to have such a wonderful person in our Town. Many congratulations to Tim Watts, our Volunteer of the Year 2021.

Belfairs Citizenship Award

Over the last few years Leigh-on-Sea Town Council has been working with Belfairs Academy to honour students who do remarkable things for their communities with our Good Citizen Award.

This year, as the students were still partly learning from home both parents and teachers were asked to nominate students. A panel of senior teachers selected their top 3 nominees and the winner was selected by our Councillors.

Chairman Cllr Doug Cracknell presented the award virtually at Belfairs End of Year Assembly, and we are pleased to announce that Jack Chapman is 2021's Good Citizen!



Nomination 1 – **Rose Johnson**

from Mrs Janine Lilleker (staff):

'I would like to nominate Rose Johnson for 'Commitment to the Arts'. Rose is a fully committed Arts student. Not only has she recently been involved in an Art enrichment project, raising money for enrichment projects for her Art class, but for the past two years Rose has volunteered at 'Create 98'. Create 98 is a local Art hub where Rose helps teach younger art students how to draw after school. '

Nomination 2 – **James Ball**

from Ms Chipperfield (staff):

'I would like to nominate James Paul from Belfairs Academy. James is a student of excellence at Belfairs. He is dedicated to making a difference to win the battle with climate change. James has a massive part to play in our schools eco warrior club. He is an inspiration to his fellow peers and leads by example.'

Nomination 3 – **Jack Chapman**

from Mrs Chapman (parent) – WINNER

'I would like to nominate Jack Chapman, for the 'Good Citizen' award.

Just before the first full lockdown, Jack and his brother typed a note, asking if anyone needed help, shopping collected, dogs walked, or even a telephone call, just to say hello, that they would be there to help in any way that they could, safely of course.

They hand delivered this note to every house and flat in our (very long!) road and surrounding roads.

We had a lovely response and it was the catalyst for a WhatsApp group to start, where if anyone needed anything, they just asked on the WhatsApp group and the whole street was able to reach each other. We met (virtually) so many new people and especially a wonderful lady, who we kept in touch with on a regular basis and helped her out with some shopping and even took her a few puzzles to help keep her busy!

It was really nice to know they helped some people who would have been extremely lonely and vulnerable during lockdown, we were extremely proud of Jack and his brother Theo.'



A New Community Special Constable for Leigh

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council was one of the first in the area to sign up to Essex Police's Community Special Scheme in 2018. Despite having several interested parties make applications and start the process, we hadn't had any volunteers successfully complete the training, until now.

William Imbush, a local teacher, says "I am thrilled to be taking on the role of Community Special Constable in Leigh-on-Sea. The community spirit and culture has always stood out. I have taken on this role to ensure that Leigh-on-Sea continues to have a visible police presence to ensure it keeps the reputation of being a safe and friendly town. I look forward to serving the local community and establishing strong relationships."

Volunteer police officers under the Community Special Constable scheme work closely with their own sponsoring town and parish councils, which fund all the expenses incurred for duties performed within their area.

They are committed to policing the area which pays for them, to identify and address local issues of concern. However, if a major incident occurs, they may be called on to help in another area of the county.

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council Chairman, Councillor Doug Cracknell, said: "We recognise that it is no mean feat to get through the initial training and make the grade and witnessing William's attestation was a reminder of the importance the volunteer Specials make to the wider police service."

Town Clerk, Helen Symmons said: "The council is delighted to welcome its first Community Special Constable. We were one of the first to sign up to this countywide initiative for town and parish councils back in 2018 and it still remains a service that the current administration is passionate about delivering, so we are thrilled that William wishes to serve his community. The council will be giving William as much support as possible to help him start building community relationships and understand local issues ready for when he officially starts his role. We also have another volunteer awaiting a course date and hope in due course a second Community Special Constable will be able to join William."

Southend District Commander Chief Inspector Ian Hughes said: "Over the last few months there have been some issues in Leigh and Old Leigh with anti-social behaviour and violent crime, which has been caused by a small minority of people spoiling the area for the wider community. Neither we nor residents and our partners will tolerate this and we've been working together as a community to take action against troublemakers and criminals. At a time when community policing has never been so important, it is fantastic that Leigh Town Council has supported the introduction of William into their community to help people, keep people safe and to catch criminals."

Partnership working is so important and William will play a key role in building close relationships within the community to understand and address what matters most to residents."

Special Constables are volunteers who have the same full police powers, uniform and equipment and work alongside their regular colleagues attending and dealing with a wide variety of incidents. Community Special Constables work almost exclusively in their sponsoring parish concentrating on issues specific to that area.

We are always looking for more volunteers to join the Special Constabulary, whether they want to become a Community Special Constable dedicated to their local town or parish or police a little further afield. More information can be found at www.essex.police.uk/careers

Operation Union Update

Since the end of February 2021 Southend has seen a number of incidents of serious violence, anti-social behaviour and large-scale public disorder, at our waterfront areas. This has largely coincided with the easing of lockdown and associated restrictions.

Although plans were in place to deal with an anticipated rise in footfall, the level of increase and associated demand was far beyond what had been expected. Southend has seen the highest increase in footfall, post lockdown, of any seaside town in the country.

The number and severity of the incidents occurring, quite rightly, caused concern for residents and businesses across the district. In response to this, Operation Union was established. Operation Union was designed to use as many partner agencies as possible to increase visibility in key areas across the waterfront, focussing predominantly on Marine Parade, Old Leigh and later, Chalkwell beach, to reduce crime and ASB and reassure the wider public.

Some of the agencies involved in supporting Operation Union were Essex County Fire and Rescue, Southend Borough Council, Coastguard, British Transport Police, C2C and the BID Rangers. We have also been supported by specialist Police assets including the Operational Support Group, Dogs, Drones and Traffic. As well as conducting intelligence led patrols, officers conducted a number of knife arch operations at train stations with British Transport Police. We have also conducted several Project Servator deployments, using specially trained officers, who look for tell-tale signs that someone may be engaged or intending to engage in criminality.

Throughout Operation Union, communication has been a key feature, to both reassure the public, identify issues, and develop intelligence. We have maintained regular contact with key businesses, councillors, and MPs throughout the summer, sharing information about the positive work coming out of Op Union, and listening to any feedback.

On the whole, the response from members of the public, businesses and other

partners, has been very positive. Many visitors to the Seafront and Old Leigh, have commented on how reassuring the Police presence has been. There has also been a noticeable decrease in serious violence and disorder, with any incidents that have occurred receiving a rapid Police response and robust action taken.

Numbers of officers attached to Operation Union have varied throughout the summer, based on demand and intelligence, but there have been up to 80 officers patrolling our waterfront locations at a time. The officers have achieved some excellent results.

Op Union officers have completed the following over the summer;

- **72 arrests**, for a wide range of offences, including assaults, public order, drugs supply, burglary, robbery and indecent exposure.
- **204 Stop and searches** – 61 of which were positive for a range of items, including drugs, stolen property and weapons.
- **178 Intelligence reports submitted** – assisting us to develop our proactive activity against known offenders, identify drugs hotspots and prepare for events.
- **340 Incidents attended.**
- **779 visits to licensed premises.** Several of these premises have stated how they feel the additional Police presence and engagement has reduced offending or disorder within the premises.

As we move into Autumn, and demand slows, the number of officers attached to Operation Union will reduce. We will still maintain a presence in these key areas, and have a contingency in place to increase numbers on key dates, or in response to incidents.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners and members of the public who have supported us in any way throughout what has been a very challenging summer across the Southend district. We are already working on plans for next summer to make sure we stay one step ahead of those that wish to cause harm in Southend.



Chairman's Charity

Our new Chairman Cllr Doug Cracknell has been working hard to raise funds for his chosen charity for his year in office. Cllr Cracknell selected Phab Life as his charity, who run the Phabulous Café on Leigh Road and the Phab Shop Charity Shop on Rayleigh High Street.

Phab Life is part of a wider network of Phab Clubs across England and Wales, that inspires and supports disabled and non-disabled children, young people and adults to make more of life together - breaking down community barriers, reducing social isolation, and creating opportunities for all involved to enjoy the same activities and challenges side by side.

With that in mind the local Southend branch of Phab uses their shop and café as an opportunity to provide adults with additional needs work experience, helping to build their confidence, social skills, gain qualifications in a supportive and inclusive environment.

Doug says "As Chairman I can choose a charity to support for my year in office and I have chosen 'Phab Life' which I first encountered when they opened The Phabulous Café on Leigh Road. The Café is more than somewhere to enjoy tea and cake – although I can thoroughly recommend that! – it is a training centre for people with additional needs enabling them to gain skills, experience and confidence in a friendly working environment. I am pleased to support Phab Life which is offering support and opportunities to young adults at a time when many other support services drop away. Please pop by and show them your support – and enjoy some cake!"

Cllr Cracknell has already raised over £150 for the charity by taking part in the Leigh Bric-a-Brac trail in June. His wife Dawn has been busy making greeting cards which are being sold at the Phabulous Café and the Leigh Farmers' Market with all proceeds going towards the charity. Our monthly poetry nights will also be raising money for the Chairman's Charity and donations can also be made at our public Christmas events.



After a lot of planning and delays due to COVID, we finally opened our doors on the 12th of April... A Phabulous day!

As some of you may know the Phabulous Café is no ordinary café... We are a training centre for people with additional needs to gain the much-needed experience, qualifications and confidence in the workplace. It has been a while to get going due to Covid but we're finally up and running!

The Phabulous Café is an extension project to The Phab Shop in Rayleigh, a charity shop that is run by volunteers with additional needs. The Phab Shop was set up to help fill the huge lack of opportunities to those who are capable of work and want to work but who need a little more time and understanding to gain the skills needed.

Through the lack of employment opportunities, people with additional needs can be isolated and left with extremely low confidence, missing opportunities to meet new people and create friendships and connections. The Phab Shop was set up to help change that and has grown from strength to strength, with volunteers building not only skills and confidence but creating friendships and connections.

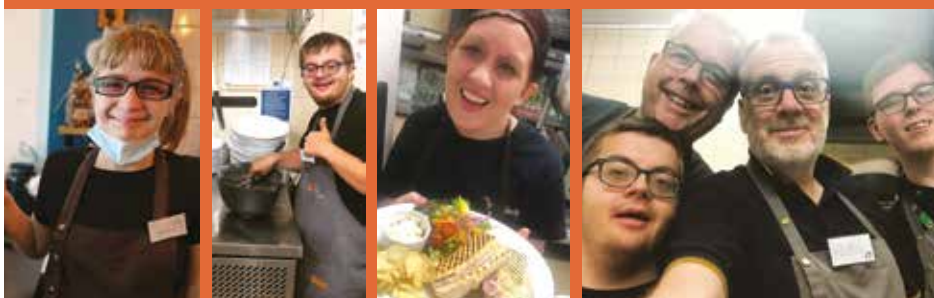
Working in the cafe is a great way to meet people in the community. The trainees divide their time in the different parts of the café giving people with additional needs the opportunity to develop new skills that are transferable in a working environment, hopefully leading onto paid employment or other volunteering opportunities. The ethos of the charity is that everyone is treated equally, everyone has strengths and weaknesses. The cafe will hopefully help change people's perceptions of what it means to be disabled.

Our trainees have really got stuck in! From offering excellent food and customer service and working in the kitchen on food prep... proving, from day one, their capabilities, passion and drive to work.

Mark (trainee on a Saturday) "I'm doing really well and I'm working really hard. I'm very good at cleaning the tables and I've really enjoyed talking to the customers, I've not been shy."

Rachel (Trustee) "Whether you're a member of staff, a trainee or volunteer you're all part of the team at the Phabulous cafe. Volunteering at any organisation makes you feel like a productive member of society which helps increase your confidence and sense of self-worth."

If you interested in getting involved in any way, just get in touch! Sandra@phablif.org.uk or jenny@phablif.org.uk Follow us on Facebook and Instagram





James Preston



Katie Cohen



Emma Mills

Getting to know our Councillors!

Since our last issue we have had three new councillors join us; Councillors James Preston, Emma Mills and Katie Cohen. We thought it right to give them a proper introduction and our residents a chance to get to know their newest representatives.



Katie - I moved to Leigh-on-Sea when I had my eldest child, and was immediately impressed by the sense of community here and wanted to be involved! I'm a school Governor, and an officer of a local political party branch, so this was the next logical step to giving back further to the town. My family and I adore hanging out at the beach, spending time in our wonderful shops and cafes, and engaging with all the cool creative activities and people in the town. Being a Town Councillor means I get to be a part of ensuring the continuity of all the things that make Leigh-on-Sea a wonderful place to live.

Emma - I grew up in Leigh-on-Sea and went to West Leigh Juniors and Westcliff High School. I loved my childhood here. My neighbours in Fairleigh Drive looked out for us all as kids. We would tie ropes across the street to skip - stopping for the occasional car (this was in the 70's!). We were in and out of each other's houses. Neighbours were known as uncle or aunty. As children we spent many hours playing on the cliffs and on Two Tree Island. Local youth groups encouraged us to be community spirited and to help where we could. I later became a teacher and art therapist and have worked in local schools, CAMH teams, local women's refuges, and community wellbeing projects. I believe change begins at community level. One of the reasons that I became a town councillor is to have equal representation for women on the council. Equality is something I passionately believe in.

James - I am very fortunate to have grown up in Leigh and have lived here all my life. I am a well-trained husband and father to a 13-year-old football mad lad as well as a keen cyclist and car nut. I spend my weekends traveling the country with my son watching him play football. When I am not on football fan duties, I immerse myself in all things cycling, cars and DIY.

Throughout the lockdown I found myself getting increasingly frustrated reading all the negativity on social media regarding our lovely town, so after a discussion with my wife I decided to be proactive and get involved with the town council. I didn't know a great deal about the operation of a local town council, so did some research and applied for a vacant ward role. I have so much to learn and feel I am just finding my feet and what really excites me is being available to residents as an outlet and source of information.





What is your favourite thing about Leigh?

Katie - I love living on the estuary, the way the seascape changes all the time. Sometimes as I crest the hill on Grand Parade driving or cycling home and the sea and Chalkwell beach come into view it looks positively Mediterranean on a bright day. On wintry days everything is monochromatic, with the geese dotted everywhere, and I just love the autumnal palette of rich and sludgy greens and browns. I was particularly grateful for the ever-shifting scenery during lockdown, when the same walks were trodden day in, day out. I find you can't help but feel so lucky to live here every time you clap eyes on the estuary and see what mood it is in today.

Emma - My favourite thing about Leigh-on-Sea is Two Tree Island. It's where I used to fly my Peter Powell stunt kite and get lost in the marshes with friends. It's a bit of magic that we can all enjoy.

James - Leigh is a beautiful town, full of charm and history. I love a Sunday stroll through old Leigh with my family or a midweek meal down the Broadway. I really look forward to events like the Regatta or the Christmas lights switch on. The feeling of community and families and friends meeting up to enjoy the atmosphere make me proud to call Leigh my home.



What issues are you excited to tackle during your time as a councillor?

Katie - I'm really looking forward to being involved with the Council's Youth Forum, and in particular looking at ways more events and services can be geared towards youth and young adults in our town.

Emma - I really want to help facilitate more projects for the young people of Leigh, for them to have safe spaces to meet and enjoy each other's company. I would also like to speak up for those living in Leigh on lower incomes. I see growing inequality in our town, and I believe it is essential that every resident has a voice or someone to speak for them.

James - I wish to engage with my peers in striving to do what is best for the community and not giving up on the challenge to improve the space that we are all lucky to enjoy. I also want to ensure that Leigh retains its individuality and historical importance for future generations.

Also, as a father, I am eager to understand and influence how we are able to better engage with our younger residents, offering a safe environment for them to grow and enjoy and helping to better manage anti-social behaviour.

Katie - I went to University in California and lived on a street called 'Del Playa' (The Beach) in a town called 'Isla Vista' (Island Views). Sometimes if I squint on a sunny day, I feel like I'm ba.... No, sorry, that never happens!

Emma - I lived in Botswana, Africa for 10 years, teaching art in a local government secondary school. I felt very privileged to be the 'other' in a community. I felt the warmth, kindness and inclusion from the locals. I believe that the Leigh-on-Sea community can be the same to people that move into the area from wherever in the world under whatever circumstances.

James - I have been married since 2003 (I know, I don't look old enough!) My wife and I actually got married on TV. An ITV show called "Surprise Wedding" aired over the valentine week. Next time you see me feel free to ask me about it!



Tell us something about you, that might surprise people...



Packed with Smiles

By Scott Baker

Packed with Smiles (PWS) is a local charity, providing school uniforms and supplies to families facing financial hardship in Southend-on-Sea. PWS was set up in 2018, after the team witnessed the effects on local families and decided to act. Research confirmed that childhood poverty in Southend was 18.9%* which is above the national average. To put that into perspective, that many children is more than the capacity of Roots Hall Football Stadium. Lacking proper school uniform is just one of many challenges faced by the children PWS support but is important because the impact is much greater than simply practical. Proper uniform improves confidence, sense of dignity, and equality - leading to better outcomes in terms of overall wellbeing.

In 2021 Southend Borough Council announced some funding for school uniforms in exceptional circumstances, although the very narrow criteria mean that most families in need cannot claim, which is where PWS is able to help. They currently partner with five schools across the Borough and a Children's Centre, working with school staff to identify children in need and delivering via schools to protect the anonymity of the families receiving support. Parcels are delivered at two points during the school year, including winter and summer supplies.

PWS also allocates a small budget for extras like after school clubs, which could be a child's first opportunity to try a sport or craft. Emergency funding can also be given for things like bus passes to children living in temporary accommodation away from their school, for example after fleeing domestic abuse.

Since 2018, PWS has provided over 400 parcels containing more than 6,000 items from coats and shoes to socks and swimming costumes. The feedback received from partner schools and families demonstrates the difference made to the children. One parent said, "My children felt very special, loved and blessed. My sons now have the proper attire, are confident, and very well prepared for the new school year". A teacher commented, "The children look lovely in their new uniforms. This clearly has an impact on self-esteem and 'fitting in'".

Like all small charities PWS has been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. Fundraising is more difficult, whilst the number of families facing financial difficulty has increased in part due to pandemic-related job losses. The PWS team are committed to supporting their partner schools with the goal being that all children are given the opportunity to attend school feeling equal, confident and ready to create their own future.

For anyone wishing to find out more, become involved or donate:

visit www.packedwithsmiles.org.uk,

email hello@packedwithsmiles.org.uk

donate www.justgiving.com/packedwithsmiles

*Southend-on-Sea Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2019



Leigh-on-Sea Farmers' Market

Our monthly Farmers' Market at Leigh Community Centre is now back up and running and it feels great to be back! The market reopened in July following the planned easing of restrictions and to celebrate our 21st birthday. After all, it wouldn't be a celebration without an excuse to eat cake!

We warmly welcomed back old stall holders, those who were still operating, and invited many new faces to attend the market offering something different for our customers.

New stalls included blondies/brownies, chocolate truffles, jams, marmalades, gourmet sausages and burgers, pies and even dog treats... All this added to our regular stalls of bread, eggs, milk, cheese, fruit and veg, smoked fish, healthy snack bars, vegan meat-free steaks, gluten-free products, chutney, craft beer, handmade soaps, plants and flowers and sharpening solutions, makes for a fantastic local shopping experience.

The market is currently full with a waiting list for new stalls. Occasionally we do have cancellations which allow us to invite sellers on an ad-hoc basis, so look out for monthly updates on our Facebook page @LeighFarmersMarket for stall updates.

The market runs on the first Saturday and third Friday of the month, 9am-1pm at Leigh Community Centre.

Remaining 2021 dates:

- Saturday 6th November 2021
- Friday 19th November 2021
- Saturday 18th December 2021 – Christmas Farmers' Market



GRANT AWARD RECIPIENTS



Southend in Sight

We are Southend in Sight, a small sight loss charity working to support local visually impaired people. We were thrilled to receive a £500 grant from Leigh Town Council back in May for our "Talk and Support" project.

Our project is aimed at reaching out to people who are housebound, shielding or isolated while also living with sight loss. The grant enabled us to make calls to over 100 visually impaired Leigh residents, led by our Community Engagement Officer Georgie and aided by our Talk and Support Assistant Dean (see picture).

Dean is visually impaired himself which gives him a unique insight into how people are feeling and the problems they face. This peer-to-peer support has been invaluable in gaining people's trust and encouraging them to open up to us so we can offer advice and information on the help that is available.

We are based on Hamlet Court Road in Westcliff and can offer help with magnification, cooking aids, talking books, access to work, school support, benefit forms, phones and IT. If you are living with sight loss and need our support, please call us on 01702 342131.

Phoenix Rangers

Phoenix Ranger Unit is all about trying new things, making friends, having fun and giving something back to your community. We are a group of 14-18 year old members of Girlguiding who meet twice a month in Leigh. We were delighted to receive a grant from Leigh Town Council to help us return to face-to-face meetings and re-build the sense of belonging and group identity having spent a year meeting virtually. The group are very proud of their new hoodies and as a way of giving back to our community, spent a fun evening at our local campsite, Guide Acres, repainting one of the storage sheds. To find out more about getting involved as a young person or as a volunteer visit www.girlguiding.org.uk.



Further grants were also supplied to:

- Incredible Edible to help fund workshops in Leigh Library Gardens for children and adults about different topics relating to growing your own vegetables.
- The Lower Thames Rowing Club were offered a bursary to fund their meetings at Leigh Community Centre.
- And the Four Oars Rowing Club were granted £500 to help them build a seating area on Two Tree Island.

If your community group or charity would like to apply for one of our grants of up to £500 email council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk to request an application form. Funding can also be supplied as a bursary for room hire at Leigh Community Centre.

There are two rounds of applications each year, the cut off dates are 31st March and 30th September, and they are then considered at the next Council Finance & Governance Meeting.

Leigh Branch of Royal British Legion

Although we are a fairly small Branch with about 80 Members, we are normally quite active supporting a number of local Veterans by regular visits and telephone calls. The lockdown has affected all charities quite badly since there has been very little opportunity for fundraising. Our Poppy Appeal last year was badly affected although through hard work and the generosity of Leigh residents, we still managed to collect almost £26.5k. Our new Appeal for 2021/2022 launches at the Community Centre on 30th October.

Our normal monthly meetings started on 16th August at the Moose Hall in Cranleigh Drive.

This year we used the funds received as a Bursary Grant from Leigh-on-Sea Town Council to rent the Large Lower Hall (Donald Fraser Hall) for an Afternoon Tea Party in September for 100 Veterans and Members to celebrate the Centenary of The Royal British Legion.

The Branch are extremely grateful for the continued help and assistance from Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, who do a marvellous job behind the scenes making sure that local businesses and residents are supported as much as they can.





Over 60's Social Club

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council were so pleased to welcome back members of their Over 60's Social Club from 15th September after being on pause since the start of the pandemic.

The Club was initially launched to help tackle social isolation, and unfortunately has not been able to run at a time when some of our older residents needed it most. In the interim we launched a Keeping in Touch newsletter to regularly send to our members to keep them informed of local and council news as well as providing activities and informative articles.

We hope that we are making it up to our members now by providing a fun schedule of activities with a delicious lunch provided by our on-site café Lorna and Lottie's. We have tried to keep the club affordable whilst providing a range of activities and a different menu each fortnight.

The Club meets at Leigh Community Centre on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 12 noon – 1.30pm and now includes lunch as well as an activity.

The cost is just £5 per person. Places must be booked in advance if you are eating lunch with us so we know how much food to prepare. Please make us aware of any dietary requirements.



If you don't want to eat lunch with us or you want to bring your own, you can still come along at a cost of £2, with no advance booking. Hot drinks and biscuits are available to all at every session.

If you would like to book, please call 01702 716288 or email council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk

Help us get the word out by letting friends, neighbours or relatives who may like to be involved know about the club.

Are you looking for a volunteering opportunity? Leigh-on-Sea Town Council are looking for volunteers for our Social Club to assist with serving teas and coffees and providing company and conversation for our members.

If you are interested contact us at council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk or call 01702 716288.



Community Transport Scheme

Our Community Transport Scheme has been running for over 20 years, and aims to take elderly or disabled residents in Leigh on day trips out or to the theatre, providing door to door transport and an opportunity to get out of the house.

Now that we can operate again after being put on hold by the pandemic, we will be writing to our members to offer them trips, which are booked on a first come, first served basis, although we try our best to ensure that everybody gets the opportunity to come along.

If you would like to join the scheme, contact the Council on **01702 716288**

Reasons to come along...

- A chance to socialise and make new friends
- Learn new skills and stimulate your mind
- Get out the house. Be active and improve your quality of life
- Different activities every session
- Refreshments included
- Everyone is welcome!

2021 Autumn/Winter Dates

- **20th October** Elders Inspired will be joining us to provide a taster session of their gentle exercise Active Aging classes. Quiche and salad for lunch.
- **3rd November** The Leigh Royal British Legion secretary Bob O'Leary will be talking to us about the history of the Legion and the Poppy Appeal. Soup of the day and a roll for lunch.
- **17th November** Our own Leigh Town Councillor, Keith Evans will be talking to us about his time as a musician in the Welsh Guard. Ham & Cheese Ploughman's for lunch.
- **1st December** Local charity The Art Ministry will be bringing some Christmas arts and crafts for you to try. Pasta bake for lunch.
- **15th December** The Inspire Theatre Collective will be guiding you through their immersive Tudor Christmas, with costumes, history and food. Festive Afternoon Tea for lunch.

Southend YMCA'S Free Summer Youth Programme

By Davey Hal, Southend YMCA



Throughout the month of August, Southend YMCA hosted a free Summer Programme at Leigh Community Centre for children aged 8-12 years old.

The programme was funded through the Department for Education's Holiday Activity Fund in Partnership with Southend Borough Council & included many fun activities such as sports, music, games, art and historical walks around the town of Leigh-on-Sea.

Each week a different Southend YMCA Youth Commissioner joined in to help with the activities. They were Eugene Vlas, Marion Simakungwe, Emily Harris and Rachel Roach.

Southend YMCA would like say a very special thank you to Leigh Town Council and their amazing team of caretakers Richard, Michael, David and Lewis who were with Southend YMCA every step of the way. And extra appreciation to all the staff at Lorna & Lottie's Cafe who provided the delicious hot meals for all the children.



Art Installation

One of these activities has made a permanent impression in the heart of Leigh-on-Sea with a colourful mural painted by the young participants alongside the guidance of local artist Darren Jones. The painting was completed during 5 sessions over the 4 weeks of the Summer Programme and was set in place during the last days of the month.

Aptly named "A View of Leigh-On-Sea" this huge piece of art is made up of 136 20cmx20cm squares of painted paper using only the primary colours as the young artists learnt how to mix the paints that make the secondary colours and shades that appear off the painting.

Darren Jones (Resident Artist) - "I'm so happy to have had the opportunity to create this piece with the Southend YMCA, it was an honour and pleasure to be a part of."

Davey Hal (SYMCA Music Tutor/Creative Arts Youth Worker) - "They are so proud of their collaborative work and so are we! It's the cherry on top to such a great month of positive activities with all these awesome kids."

You can visit this spectacular art installation in full view by visiting Leigh Community Centre's 'Lorna & Lottie's Cafe' in which it takes full pride on public display outside their window. Follow @southendymca on Instagram to see the artwork's journey from start to finish with many behind the scenes photos of the process of this amazing work.

Historical Walks

Another firm favourite of the weekly activities was the "Historical Walks of Leigh" supplied by Paul Carver and Zoe Nolan of Carver Tours.

Exploring Leigh's rich historical past of local seafarers, witches and royal visits were just some of the highlights of these fantastic and informative tours.

Paul Carver said "We are so pleased and proud that Southend YMCA asked us to take the children on a tour. They amazed us with their own facts and remembered so much for the quiz finale!"

Marion Simakungwe:

"I had a great experience working at the YMCA's Summer Club Programme, I set up games for the young people to enjoy and worked on various art projects, including mug painting and a big art piece for the Leigh Community Centre café. It was great to be able to do activities in person this year and it was lovely to see the young people having fun and making new friends."

My favourite part of the programme would definitely have to be the art projects. To my surprise I loved the mug painting, as Davey had set up a 'Mystery Mug' activity where we were given a random theme and had to paint anything relating to the theme. I had even spent a full day just painting mugs, having become fully qualified in painting bees! Some of the young people even got involved in setting up and directing interviews, during which they spoke with Darren and some of their friends about their time at the Youth Club and what they enjoyed most about it. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Youth Club and would 100% recommend it for anyone interested in joining in the future."

Mitchell, 8 - "I really enjoyed painting the picture because it was very calming. Now I really like it outside the Leigh Community Centre as it's a lot more colourful."

Jonny, 8 - "Painting has been pretty cool and I think our colourful painting makes it look a lot better."

Kie, 12 - "I really like this new painting as it makes the wall really stand out in Leigh."

Find Your Voice and RITES Charter

By Sacha Edwards, Southend YMCA

Find Your Voice (FYV) is a lottery funded project that aims to empower young people to have their voices heard on the issues they care about. The project not only listens to the concerns and aspirations of young people, but it also provides them with the opportunity, skills and resources to take a proactive role in delivering social action projects to benefit their community.

FYV is a network for young people from Southend and surrounding areas aged 10-24 years old, to collaborate and create opportunities that drive the passions of a generation forward to take positive action through the FYV Curriculum Framework:

- Passion & Creativity
- Equality & Justice
- Voice & Empowerment
- Skills & Training
- Health & Well-being

Under our Equality & Justice strand of work we are proud to launch THE RITES CHARTER. We are encouraging teachers and students to sign up to become RITES AMBASSADORS to help us tackle inequality in our society. WWW.SOUTHENDYMCA.ORG.UK/FYV-EQUALITY-AND-JUSTICE

The Racial Inequality Tackled in Educational Settings Charter has been designed to address a big issue that the education system is currently facing: A lack of representation. Southend YMCA recognises that young people from black and ethnic minorities need to be able to see themselves represented in all parts of the school curriculum, not only to combat harmful stereotypes which can fuel racist behaviours but to inspire them to pursue the careers of their choosing.

Recent research undertaken by YMCA England & Wales revealed 95% of young black people in the UK have experienced or witnessed racist language being used in school, and 50% of young black people felt that teacher perceptions were a barrier to their academic attainment. 70% of young black people felt the need to change their hair to be 'more professional' at work or school.

We want the RITES Charter to provide a framework for schools to make

positive changes within their setting, which contribute towards creating a safe environment free from racism and discrimination so that all young people can achieve their full potential.

Representation

Embed black and ethnic minority representation into all parts of the school curriculum, rather than stand-alone lessons, assemblies or just for Black History Month.

Inspirational Role Models

Provide inspirational role models to build confidence, self-esteem and aspirations of black & ethnic minority students.

Training

Staff and students receive training to promote diversity, equality and inclusion.

Equality Committee

Establish an Equality Committee with students and named members of SLT to review policies through the lens of race and ethnicity, to ensure they are inclusive and bring about positive change within the school community.

Teenage Kicks

Teenage Kicks is the Southend YMCA's monthly youth music event which is normally held on the last Friday of the month from 6.30pm - 9pm at Leigh Community Centre. Teenage Kicks provides a platform to showcase young talent and a safe space for young people to hang out and meet their friends. The event is open to 13 - 19-year-olds, and everyone has the opportunity to get on the open mic to perform.

There is no event this month however, as the YMCA held a well-being event for World Mental Health Day on Sunday 10th October instead.

November's Teenage Kicks will be a tribute to Freddie Mercury to mark the 30th Anniversary of his death, on 26th November. And December's session on 17th December will be Christmas themed.

Stand Up & Speak Out

Provide a whistleblowing log for students and staff to report acts of discrimination that occur at school and create a culture that encourages students and staff to challenge and speak out against discrimination.

Become a Peer Mentor

If you are aged between 14 and 19 and want to gain a Level 2 qualification and valuable skills of understanding the roles and responsibilities of peer mentoring, including legislation, safeguarding, building your resilience and confidence, personal goal setting then get in touch via the website. It is also a great opportunity to make new friends!

www.southendymca.org.uk/fyv-skills-and-training

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council Youth Forum

It's with great delight that we announce the return of our Youth Forum. Before the pandemic, the Youth Forum had gained momentum and the centrefold of this magazine was dedicated to the voices of the youth in Leigh.

Well, here we are again and we hope to re-engage with the dynamic, intelligent and active youth of the town. We want to listen to all the issues they have and attempt, as a Council, to help where possible.

The Forum is held at Leigh Community Centre on the second Thursday of the month at 5pm - 6pm and is open to 11 - 18-year-olds.

There will be guest speakers each month and free refreshments will be available.

Remaining 2021 Dates

- 11th November 2021
- 9th December 2021

For more information, contact:

Email: cllrforde@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk
Mobile: 07786 023941

Youth Club

Our regular Thursday Youth Club at Leigh Community Centre is still running weekly with two sessions:
8-11 year-olds 4.30pm - 6.30pm
12-16 year-olds 7pm - 9pm

The club is free to join and encourages young people to take part in activities, have fun, socialise & improve their confidence, self-esteem and personal development.

All events and clubs for Southend YMCA can be booked through bookwhen.com/southendymca



Leigh Community Centre – Art Hub

The Council's Art Group have been working hard to rebuild their programme of art initiatives at the Centre and throughout Leigh since returning from the pandemic. The group regularly meet to come up with new initiatives and services to provide, but if you have any ideas, we would love to hear from you.

At Leigh Community Centre you can now find:

- Artist in Residence – in the attic studio space
- Community Art Wall – up the stairs and along the top corridor
- Monthly Poetry Nights – in the café
- Café Exhibition Space
- Little Library Book Exchange – in the foyer, borrow or swap a book or donations welcome for the Chairman's Charity
- Outdoor Art Wall – at the back of the café, artwork created by the Southend YMCA Summer Youth Programme
- Coming Soon: Little Leigh Gallery – a beautiful, permanent collection of donated artworks of Leigh to the Town Council
- Coming Soon: Welcome sign in the foyer, designed in partnership with the Southend YMCA Youth Club

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council Arts Group

Follow us on Instagram @leightowncouncilartsgroup to find out about all the art initiatives we have going on around the town.

Susan Allen Artist in Residence

During the Summer, Susan Allen hosted six free art events that have been extremely well received by the community with over 50 adults and children participating. The Art programme started on a sunny July day with Walk and Draw on Two Tree Island. A group of adults met at the slipway on Two Tree Island and were given an introduction and demonstration of sketching and drawing. The group then spent the next two hours sketching and walking, recording the landscape and plants and learning how to draw with Susan's guidance. It was enjoyed by all.

This was followed by two On Location Watercolour painting sessions, the first being at Leigh Marshes in July, some of the participants hadn't painted since senior school but all produced lovely paintings. Susan provided step-by-step watercolour demonstrations throughout the morning to give everyone ideas on what to paint and how to represent it. The day was fabulous, with wide open skies, billowing clouds, grass and boats. The second On Location Watercolour Painting session in August at Belfairs Woods was on a cloudy day which provided striking contrast of light and shade. The students followed the demonstration and created beautiful paintings of trees, leaves and the forest floor. They learned about colour mixing and application of paint and how to interpret the woodland.

On 14th August, a group of parents, grandparents and children met at Belfairs Woods for the Family Walk and Draw. Susan commented "It was an absolutely delightful afternoon. We walked into the woods with stops to observe and draw. We started at the Creek and worked our way towards the Woodland Centre, drawing trees, plants, leaves, and even animals. The children produced some fantastic drawings in their new sketchbooks."



The last free art events were two studio classes on developing paintings. A small group of adults met Susan in the attic at Leigh Community Centre where they were guided through the process of developing their photos and sketches into paintings. They worked with pencil and watercolour and were given demonstrations and guidance on composition and interpretation.

Susan is looking forward to some winter events in the New Year to encourage more people to enjoy art and learn to draw.



Applying for AIR Scheme

Applications for our Artist in Residence scheme for 2022 – 2023 will be open in January 2022, with the residency commencing from April 2022.

Artists of all mediums are welcome to apply and will not only have use of our attic as a studio space but will also get to be part of the Town Council's Art Group and work on community art projects around the Town, have two exhibition slots on our Community Art Wall, and the front cover of one of our Town Council News Magazines. Artists will also have the opportunity to create a legacy piece that will be on permanent display at Leigh Community Centre.

For more information get in touch with us at council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk, and look out for updates in the new year on our social media about when to apply.

The Listening Room – Poetry & Open Mic Nights

In September, we launched a new initiative to support the arts in Leigh; "The Listening Room" Poetry and Open Mic Nights.

The idea first came around when the Council's Arts Group were interviewing prospective applicants for the Artist in Residence scheme at the end of 2020. Among those applying was Maddi Crease, a 21-year-old poet and artist from Leigh-on-Sea. Although Maddi was unsuccessful in her bid to become Artist in Residence in 2021, she wowed the interview panel with her creative ideas, maturity and also her love of poetry, which is something the Council Arts Group had been yet to explore.

With this in mind, we approached Maddi to help us in setting up the Council's very own monthly poetry night. However, "The Listening Room" comes with a twist, we are excited to be providing a creative spotlight for not only poets, but also story tellers, musicians and comedians, and we also hope this will appeal to a wide demographic in terms of audience too. Each month we will also be featuring a guest performer, with Maddi being our inaugural speaker.

Maddi says; "I find poetry, and spoken forms of creativity in general, to be a really great way to express everything you might not otherwise say. It can be used to explore topics you may not have had the chance to work through, or express your views in a unique way. Through metaphor, we can protect ourselves if we feel the need.

When performing, there's nobody interrupting your self-expression. It's your chance to be real, raw, and clear, but in a way that often feels safer than a plain conversation.

For the audience, poetry is something you can learn from - about the subject matter, the poet, or even your own reactions. It's also a chance to escape your world and step into someone else's point of view."

The Listening Room will be open on the second Wednesday of the month from 7.30pm – 9.30pm at the Lorna & Lottie's Café in Leigh Community Centre. The bar will be open providing refreshments, including alcohol, soft and hot drinks.

Entry to the nights will be by donation, on a pay what you can basis, with all profits going towards the Town Council's Chairman's Charity, which this year is Phab Life who run The Phabulous Café on Leigh Road.

For more information about attending contact the Council on 01702 716288, or email council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk

For enquiries about performing please contact maddcreasepoet@outlook.com

2021 Dates • 10th November
• 8th December

The Leigh Street Art Wall

At the beginning of the July, we were excited to launch our "Leigh Street Art Wall" at the Leigh Skate Park in collaboration with Scott Irving of Brave Arts.

Scott has been a street artist for over 25 years and has taught the techniques, history and culture of the artform for the last two decades. He believes that street art gives young people the chance to express themselves and be creative. Designs often carry a lot of emotion and the whole culture can be entangled in the artwork.

He often painted the original wall at the Skate Park some 25 years ago, and used this as a springboard to launch his career in the arts. When the Skate Park was refurbished last year, he approached Leigh Town Council to reinstate a street art wall, to give young people a creative outlet in a safe and legal way.

The Town Council hope that this will be a fantastic ever-changing community art project for young people in Leigh and will also help to boost tourism.

On Sunday 11th July four of the "godfathers of Southend Street Art" came together to paint the 70-foot space over 10 hours.

Community Art Wall

The Town Council manage the Community Art Wall at Leigh Community Centre, allowing local artists and groups to host exhibitions in 6-week blocks throughout the year.

The Community Art Wall is part of Leigh Town Council's commitment to promote the provision of accessible social, recreational, educational and cultural facilities within the town for the benefit of the community and visitors.

The Art Wall reopened in July after being closed since the onset of the pandemic, with a wonderful exhibition entitled "Art in the Attic" from our previous and current artists in residence, Kerry Doyland and Susan Allen.

This was followed up in September with Open Arts, who are a charitable, community arts and health programme, which helps manage and maintain mental health and wellbeing through creativity. They had to hugely adapt their delivery over the past 18 months to keep their members connected and supported throughout the pandemic, and their exhibition showcases participants creativity.

"The impact and experience of the COVID-19 outbreak has been different for everyone, as has how we have reacted, but there's no doubt it's been a really difficult time for us all. That's why it's so important to do what we can to look after our mental health and wellbeing – now more than ever – and to reach out if you need support." Jo Keay, Open Arts Manager

The Open Arts Exhibition is on until the 24th October.

At the beginning of November, we are incredibly pleased to be supporting the Royal British Legion's #LeighPoppyTrail, with a selection of the poppies being showcased within the Community Centre. More can be read about that on page 20.

Closing the year, we have a joint exhibition with local artists Mary Doyle (nee Lister) and Hannah Faraway which will be on display from 17th November until the end of the year.

If you would be interested in displaying some of your artwork at the community centre, please get in touch! Whether you are a single artist, duo or group, there is hanging space for approximately 60 A3 paintings, as well as cabinets for 3D work. You can also sell your work from the Community Art Wall as well. There are still slots available for 2022, email council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk for more information.



#LeighPoppyTrail By Francesca Smith

To mark this year's centenary of the Royal British Legion, the Leigh Branch contacted us at the Town Council on the possibility of working together to produce a themed art trail for around the Town during Remembrance Tide 2021.

With the help of local artist Kerry Doyland, we came up with the idea of producing a trail of poppies throughout Leigh to help mark the special occasion. Local artists, groups, schools and residents are all invited to take part and to paint or decorate a poppy in any way they see fit.

We originally hoped to have 100 poppies in the trail to celebrate the 100 years of the Royal British Legion, but by August had already smashed this target with numbers still growing even as this goes to print. We are totally overwhelmed with how many people have wanted to be involved in the project.

You will be able to find the poppies in Leigh Community Centre, Leigh Library Gardens and local shop fronts around the Town. But there may also be poppies displayed on gates, railings and homes around Leigh.

The Poppy Trail will be taking place 30th October – 14th November.

The poppies have been cut from MDF in two sizes and artists have been encouraged to paint, draw, collage using any media and whatever subject matter they want to decorate the poppies. Those taking part have been asked to make a voluntary donation to the Legion to help cover the cost of materials, with all profits being donated to the Poppy Appeal.

The event launch will coincide with the RBL's Annual Poppy Appeal Launch Coffee Morning at Leigh Community Centre on the 30th October.

Check out our social media for updates about the poppies and where you can find them. Our dedicated arts group Instagram page @leightowncouncilartsgroup will also have behind the scene images of some of the poppies being created.

The Story of the Poppy

Poppies are worn as a show of support for the Armed Forces community. The poppy is a well-known and well-established symbol, one that carries a wealth of history and meaning with it. Wearing a poppy is still a very personal choice, reflecting individual experiences and personal memories. It is never compulsory but is greatly appreciated by those who it is intended to support.

Our red poppy is a symbol of both Remembrance and hope for a peaceful future. But what is the inspiration and history behind the poppy becoming a symbol of Remembrance?

During WW1, much of the fighting took place in Western Europe. The countryside was blasted, bombed and fought over repeatedly. Previously beautiful landscapes turned to mud; bleak and barren scenes where little or nothing could grow.

There was a notable and striking exception to the bleakness - the bright red Flanders poppies. These resilient flowers flourished in the middle of so much chaos and destruction, growing in the thousands upon thousands. In the Spring of 1915, a Canadian Doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae was moved by the sight of these Poppies and that inspiration led him to write the now famous poem "In Flanders' Fields"

The poem then inspired an American academic named Moina Michael to adopt the poppy in memory of those who had fallen in the war. She campaigned to get it adopted as an official symbol of Remembrance across the United States and worked with others who were trying to do the same in Canada, Australia, and the UK.

"In Flanders' fields the poppies blow

Between the crosses, row on row,

That mark our place: and in the sky

The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Loved and were loved, and now we lie

In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;

To you from failing hands we throw

The torch; be yours to hold it high,

If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders' Fields"



Make History

Take part in the Leigh Poppy Trail to celebrate 100 years of the Royal British Legion.

Wooden poppies will be available in 2 sizes, to be painted or decorated in any way by local artists, schools, groups or residents and then displayed throughout Leigh-on-Sea during Remembrance Tide.

For more information or to register your interest email Bob O'Leary at leighonsea.secretary@rbl.community.

RBL ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

#LeighPoppyTrail

Also involved with those efforts was a French woman, Anna Guérin, who was in the UK in 1921 where she planned to sell the poppies in London. There she met Earl Haig, our founder, who was persuaded to adopt the poppy as our emblem in the UK. The Royal British Legion, which had been formed in 1921, ordered nine million poppies and sold them on 11 November that year.

The Poppies sold out almost immediately. The first Poppy Appeal raised over £106,000 to help Veterans with housing and jobs; a considerable sum at that time. Today's Poppy Appeal has 40,000 Volunteers nationally distribute 40 million Poppies.

In view of how quickly the poppies had sold and wanting to ensure plenty of poppies for the next appeal, Major George Howson set up the Poppy Factory to employ disabled ex-servicemen. Today, the factory and our warehouse in Aylesford produces millions of poppies each year.

The demand for poppies in England continued unabated and was so high, in fact, that few poppies actually managed to reach Scotland. To address this and meet growing demand, Earl Haig's wife Dorothy established the 'Lady Haig Poppy Factory' in Edinburgh in 1926 to produce poppies exclusively for Scotland.

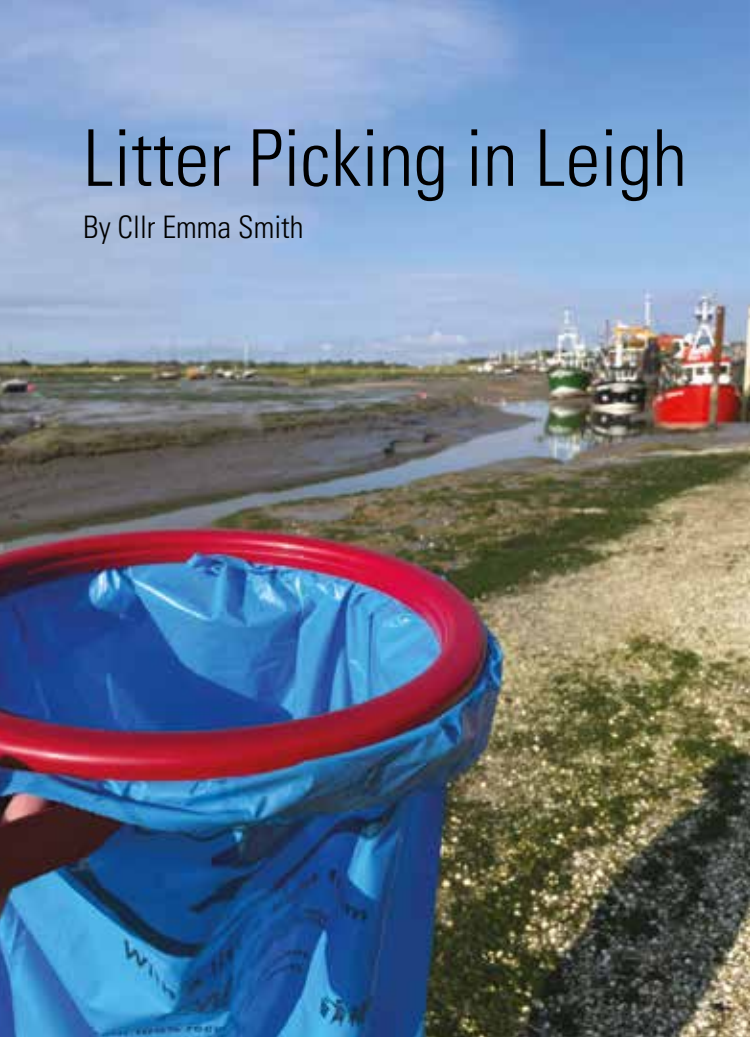
Today, over five million Scottish poppies (which have four petals and no leaf unlike poppies in the rest of the UK) are still made by hand by disabled ex-servicemen at Lady Haig's Poppy Factory each year and distributed by our sister charity "Poppy Scotland"

In Leigh-on-Sea, we have a small band of dedicated collectors who for 2018/19 collected a record £42,321.92. COVID-19 and the lockdown badly affected last years' Appeal – but thanks to the generosity of the residents of Leigh-on-Sea, we still managed to collect £29,218.48

Our Poppy Appeal for 2021/22 will be launched at Leigh Community Centre on Saturday 30th October between 10.30 - 2.30pm

Litter Picking in Leigh

By Cllr Emma Smith



The Leigh-on-Sea Town Council litter picking group started at the end of August, and we're excited to have launched a regular pick that will enable us to not only clean up some areas of Leigh but also engage more frequently with residents.

Litter picking has become increasingly popular over the last few years, and there are now many groups all over Southend Borough that cover specific areas. We wanted to be able to sign-post to these groups but also create our own where our Town Councillors could take some time out on the streets, collecting litter at locations our residents have requested we put some focus.

Our current monthly groups will focus on areas voted for by residents on Facebook polls, and we're also happy to take requests via our reception at Leigh Community Centre. On the last Sunday of the month we'll visit the most popular area with equipment supplied through Make Southend Sparkle. The first event saw us cover the area around Strand Wharf, through Old Leigh, along the cockle sheds and all the way round to the skate park. In fact, we had such a good turnout from councillors and members of the public that several people veered off to other areas too.

We'd love for members of the public to come and join us for a chat about anything to do with our community while helping us have a tidy-up. All equipment is supplied and it's a great way to start a Sunday feeling proud to have done a little bit to make Leigh-on-Sea a great place to live.



Little Pickers

By Eva Jordan

Community litter picking group, Little Pickers, was started in May by concerned Leigh residents, after noticing a rise in the amount of litter on the streets. The group is predominantly aimed at children and their families, to encourage them to take an active part in cleaning up this lovely town. Litter isn't only unsightly and an environmental threat but it's also a danger to our children, our pets, wildlife & marine life, not to mention the fact it costs local authorities and other organisations in the UK over £1 billion a year.

The aim of the group is not only to provide organised group litter picks but also to encourage children and parents to conduct their

own litter picks around the streets of Leigh, and then share their photos and experiences. "We don't want litter to be part of our children's everyday lives and have them grow up thinking it's the norm to see litter everywhere they go. They need to know it's wrong to drop litter and to understand the implications. We want to try and educate our children about the harmful effects of littering and for them to be proud to make a real difference to their community and to the environment."

If you'd like to find out more or get involved, please follow **@littlepickerslos** on Facebook or Instagram.



V.A.C.U.U.M. Southend CIC

By Jason Riley

Formed during the lockdown of 2020 V.A.C.U.U.M. Southend CIC grew out of a desire to do something positive in very trying times for us all. With an hour a day to exercise what better way to spend it than caring for the local community whilst breathing in the fresh air. It is often only when things we take for granted are taken away that we truly appreciate them. So, fresh air, exercise and litter picking on route became the activity of choice for a tiny group of local pickers.

The encouragement, generosity and kind words we received were way beyond what anyone expected and it was a real boom for our litter pickers to receive such a positive response from local residents.

It was as a result of the positive feedback that the idea to involve the local community on a wider scale occurred, and so we set about creating a group whereby those wishing to become involved in this positive litter picking feedback loop, could.

We thus embarked upon our 'enthuse & enable' programme for litter pickers whereupon we gave away - free of charge - to all who applied, a litter picker, a t-shirt and a pair of gloves. We had a great response and with the help of a couple of local businesses, ended up enthusing 198 litter pickers from all corners of the community. It really was wonderful to meet so many residents willing and able to help of their own accord with the upkeep of the local environment. Faith in the goodness of humanity was restored in quite a few local souls.

Notwithstanding the great response to our 'enthuse & enable' programme we felt it had achieved its aims. Almost two hundred people were now litter picking, so, we decided we must re-boot our relationship with the local community and developed our 'Picking Winners' programme aimed at providing access to a litter picker for all 5-11-year-olds in the town. We aim to help fund the development of a litter picking eco-club in 60 local schools and after school clubs by providing a group litter picking kit consisting of 15 sticks, 2 bag hoops and 2 pair of gloves per kit. This amounts to roughly 900 litter picking sticks and 120 bag hoops! Our programme is now well under-way and we have funded nine local groups since inception in June.

The idea underpinning the 'Picking Winners' programme is to re-introduce our children to a relationship with the earth in a caring capacity which we hope will help spawn the development of a future generation of eco-warriors.

A list of the schools and clubs helping us deliver our 'Picking Winners' programme can be found on our website at www.vacuumsouthend.com and if your school or club would like to get involved, please do contact us and we will deliver your kit free of charge.

We would like to thank all of you who have helped us develop the tiniest idea into something having a very real effect upon the wellbeing of the local community and environment. We are very humbled to have been on the receiving end of your warmth and kindness.



Litter-Less Leigh

By Danielle Carbott

With the help of Make Southend Sparkle, a borough council led organisation, Litter-Less Leigh was formed 4 years ago to tackle the overwhelming issue of litter in our beautiful coastal town. Litter causes damage to vital wildlife habitats, is accountable for the death of millions of wild animals and causes soil, water and air pollution across the globe.

As a coastal town we have a responsibility to safeguard and protect the biodiversity of both our land and marine habitats for future generations; a cause easy to shout about. With this in mind I, Danielle Carbott the lead of Litter-Less Leigh, wanted to inspire collective action so the local community could be the solution and ensure the irresponsible acts of some did not ruin the local habitats of Leigh-on-Sea for both people and wildlife.

Our first event brought together over 30 local people and amassed over 60 bags of litter with each volunteer spending 2 hours clearing the coastline from Old Leigh to Two Tree Island. Since then, Litter-Less Leigh has organised monthly litter picks for like-minded people to tackle hot spots around the town, giving a sense of empowerment to create change. With the plastic tap still running, Leigh-on-Sea still needs as much help as possible. Areas we focus on include the Belton Hills nature reserve from east to west, Leigh Marshes, Two Tree Island, Cockle Row to Old Leigh and Leigh Hill. If any of these areas are close to your heart or you enjoying spending time in them, then please consider volunteering and make a difference.

To take part, you can find Litter-Less Leigh on Facebook and Instagram. We welcome anyone wanting to make a difference! We provide all equipment and organise collection of all litter bags, so all you need to do is bring yourself and your enthusiasm.

Bees' Needs and Communities

By Dr. Janine Watts



Why Bees Matter

Bees are key to life on earth. As pollinators, they are crucial in producing much of the food we eat. Bees also play a central role in ecosystems, pollinating many wildflowers which form the basis of complex food chains supporting other wildlife.

During the 20th century two species of bumblebee in the UK became extinct. Of the 24 species of bumblebee now within the UK, eight are endangered.

Highlighting the disappearance of a staggering 97% of wildflower habitat from the countryside in the last 80 years, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust concludes this has: "left bumblebees with little to feed upon and is strongly correlated with range declines".

Bees' Needs

This year, Environment Minister Rebecca Pow called on everyone to take five simple actions to care for bees and other pollinators.

- **Grow more flowers, shrubs, and trees.**
- **Let your garden grow wild.**
- **Cut your grass less often.**
- **Protect insect nests or hibernation spots from disturbance.**
- **Think carefully about whether to use pesticides.**

These actions help sustain pollinator populations, providing crucial food and habitats. However, alongside increased awareness of the imperative to 'save the bees', some of these actions might push the boundaries of our knowledge, inviting us beyond familiar comfort zones. Fortunately, there are informative networks providing resources for our collective journey towards greener and more sustainable ways of living.

Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT)

This nationwide charity has a vision of a world where bumblebees are thriving and valued – its mission is to increase their number and distribution. The charity was founded in 2006 by Professor Dave Goulson and Dr Ben Darvill following serious concerns about the plight of the bumblebee, whose populations have crashed over the last century.

Using their combined knowledge and research background they created the Trust to raise awareness, engage the public and undertake conservation work for bumblebees. As a science-led organization, the work of the Trust is informed through evaluation of the latest scientific research and best practice.

Bee the Change – Online Campaign

Through its website, BBCT provides a wealth of information and resources to support the public in a collaborative response to reverse the declines of the past century. Key to this is advising people about bee-friendly gardening. Even without a garden, flowers can be grown in pots on a balcony or patio, becoming part of a mosaic of forage across the community.

Bumblebees feed exclusively on flowers, but not all flowers are bee-friendly. Local bumblebee populations can be boosted by providing flowers which are rich in pollen and nectar throughout the year. Inviting us to contribute these much-needed flowers to our landscape, the Trust encourages: "you can do your bit for bumblebees by planting at least two kinds of bee-friendly flower for every flowering period".

BBCT provide monthly 'Bumblebee menus' suggesting plants which flower across the seasons – vital for supplying pollinators with the forage they need to sustain them across their lifecycle.

Winter active bumblebees like the buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) can have fully active colonies even when there is snow on the ground. Including winter-flowering plant species such as mahonia and winter-honeysuckle provides forage for this species.

Informed Gardening - The Royal Horticultural Society

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) joined the BBCT and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) to champion Bees' Needs.

As the UK's leading gardening charity, the RHS aims to enrich everyone's life through plants and make the UK a greener and more beautiful place. In addition to showcasing inspirational gardens, this charity conducts scientific research and provides authoritative gardening and horticultural advice - including online resources available to everybody.

It's important to make informed choices when selecting plants, carefully considering which are right for your garden type, space and needs. Some plants are potentially harmful, being poisonous if eaten, creating skin or eye irritation and allergy. Doing your own research and undertaking necessary preparation will help your plants to thrive, protect all garden users and facilitate the joy of gardening. You can find more information on the RHS website.

Protecting our other 'NHS'

Our 'Natural Health Service' needs protecting with the same collective and determined effort shown to our beloved NHS. Tapping into resources within the community can help us honour our responsibility to support nature recovery and move forward with knowledge and hope. Acting together, we can make a conscious effort to live more sustainably - reconnected with the wonders of nature.

Useful links for further information

- www.gov.uk/government/news/buzzing-for-bees-needs-week-2021
- www.bumblebeeconservation.org
- www.rhs.org.uk/advice/beginners-guide





Save the Bees

Tips to help even the littlest people get involved with saving the bees and helping the planet!

1. Get your kit. Visit friendsoftheearthuk.com/bees to get your own Bee Saver Kit, which includes wildflower seeds, a garden planner, bee spotting guide and more!
2. Plant a bee friendly herb garden. Children will love the sensory elements of growing scented herbs and then being able to use them in meals. Mint, marjoram, sage, thyme and rosemary are all good for bees!
3. Grow some fruit. If you can, plant fruit trees or berries, another great way to encourage children to eat healthy food and good for the bees too.
4. Get crafty. Children can make their own bug hotel out of simple materials that you may already have around the house, for inspiration and step by step guides visit friendsoftheearth.uk/bees/make-a-bee-house
5. Bed time bees. Make bees the theme of your bed time stories. There's a plethora of books available, but here's a few to get you started.
 - Give Bees a Chance by Bethany Barton
 - Bee: A Peek-Through Picture Book by Britta Teckentrup
 - Bee Dance by Rick Chrustowski.
 - Bee & Me by Alison Jay
 - The Hidden Rainbow by Christie Matheson
 - Why Do We Need Bees by Usborne Books



FRIENDS OF LEIGH LIBRARY GARDENS

The Friends of Leigh Library Gardens continue to go from strength to strength with new projects, new volunteers and new collaborations.

The easing of restrictions has seen more volunteers coming forward to take part in the weekly work sessions with lots of young children joining their parents over the summer months which has been great to see. The community arts project for children during the summer holidays was also a roaring success!

Having received a grant from Leigh-on-Sea Town Council, the Friends, in collaboration with Create98, held a community arts event for local children each Wednesday during August. They were invited to paint their own nature inspired designs on tiles which was mounted on boards and displayed in the Gardens in September. Every session was fully booked with budding young artists.

Valerie Morgan, Chair of the Friends said "A huge thank you to Create 98 who volunteered their services to the Friends of Leigh Library Gardens to run this very successful event and to Leigh Town Council for enabling it through their funding. Thank you also to all the children of Leigh who took part. Look out for the installations which will be in place in Library Gardens in the coming weeks!"

The Friends are looking forward to working with Leigh Town Council as it prepares its Christmas display, as last year's grotto in the Gardens was extremely popular. FOLLG added their own decorations to add to the festive magic and plan to do so again this year.

FOLLG have also been working with local independent charity, Southend in Sight, to revamp the sensory garden at the rear of the library. Originally created by the Rotary Club of Leigh in 1959, the raised bed will be replanted for scent, texture and colour that will be appreciated by visitors with visual impairments and other sensory needs. The charity's members and volunteers visited the Gardens to advise on the best plants to use and how to create the best surroundings for everyone to enjoy.

The last few weeks have been busy for the volunteers clearing the wildlife area. It

had become overgrown with burdock, an invasive plant that takes hold and chokes other plants. FOLLG volunteer Sheila Webb has taken on responsibility for managing the wildlife area with fellow volunteer Graham Lidbury.

Sheila said "Burdock has very deep roots and it is now coming into seed, growing burrs which attach themselves to clothing or fur and get spread far and wide. These burrs contain hundreds of seeds so we are trying to prevent next year's growth as well as removing this year's large plants. Removing the burdock will allow the bay, lavender and holly plants already in the area to thrive."

A new pond in the wildlife area has been home to tadpoles and baby newts already. Large cobblestones will soon edge the pond and a wetland garden created. In the long term, the area will also have a woodland and a rock land area creating different habitats for a variety of insects, birds and small mammals.

One hundred daffodil bulbs have been planted in the wildlife area. In the Spring, native British wild flower seeds will be sown too. Sheila estimates the work will take between 18 months to two years to complete. The Friends need tarpaulin to create the bog for the wetland and also small bug houses. If anyone has either and are able to donate, please contact them by emailing follg2018@gmail.com.

New volunteers are always welcome. The Friends are a welcoming, sociable group and there is usually cake at the end of a Wednesday session!



Baby and Toddler Groups in Leigh

The lockdowns over the last year have been hard on everyone, but new mothers in particular may have suffered with the isolation of not being able to meet other mums at local baby groups and likewise many younger children have missed out on the chance to socialize with their peers.

In issue 11 of our magazine, which came out just as the first lockdown was descending on us back in March 2020, we published details of baby and toddler groups in Leigh. We have updated the information below and hope that local mums benefit from this directory.

MONDAY

- West Leigh Baptist Church – Little Steps Toddler Group - 9.30am – 11.30am & 12pm – 2pm – Morning session £3 + 50p for additional children. Afternoon session £2 + 50p for additional children. Includes refreshments, free play, crafts, songs and Parish Nurse Clinic. Waiting list currently in operation.
- Highlands Methodist Church – 9.30am – 11.30am - Refreshments Included. For 0–4-year-olds. £1.50 under 18 months, £2.50 for older, £3.00 per family. For more information contact Margaret on 01702 557512
- Leigh Community Centre – Quackers – 10am – 11am, 11.30am – 12.30pm - £5 – For under 5's, call 07905 117099 to book
- Leigh Community Centre – Sweaty Mama – 1.30pm – 2.30pm – 6 weeks for £40 – Exercise with your baby or toddler. Call 07957 310194 to book.
- Leigh Community Centre – Talking Tots – 10.15am – 11am, 11.15am – 12pm – Prices on request, call 07968 743959

TUESDAY

- St Clement's Church – Buggy Time - Tuesday 10.45am – 11.45am, no charge – donation for hot drinks and biscuits.

WEDNESDAY

- St Margaret's Church – Edward Bear Club – 9.15am – 11.15am – For 0 – 5-year-olds. £2.50 for 1 adult and up to 2 children, +50p for additional children. Refreshments Included.
- Leigh Road Baptist Church – Bright Sparks – 10.30 am – 12 pm – 0 – 2-year-olds, 1.30pm – 3.30pm – 0 - 4-year-olds - £1 per adult and child, 50p for additional children or adults. Currently need to book in advance

- Leigh Community Centre – Hartbeeps – 11.45am – 12.30pm, 1.15pm – 2pm - £6 per session. Book in advance with emma@hartbeeps.com. For sitting to walking babies.
- Leigh Community Centre – Hartbeeps – 2.15pm – 3pm, 3.15pm – 4pm - £6 per session. Book in advance with emma@hartbeeps.com. For newborns to sitting babies
- Leigh Community Centre – Hartbeeps – 9.45am – 10.30am, 10.45am – 11.30am - £6 per session. Book in advance with emma@hartbeeps.com. For toddlers to 4-year-olds

THURSDAY

- St James's Church - Parent and Toddler Group – 9.30am – 11.15am – £1 per session. Refreshments included. For 0-5-year-olds.
- St Michael's & All Angels Church Carers and Toddler Group – 1.30pm – 3.30pm - £1 per family. Refreshments included. For 0-5-year-olds.
- Leigh Library - Story and Rhyme Time – 9.30am – Free
- Leigh Community Centre – Quackers – 10am – 11am, 11.30am – 12.30pm - £5 – For under 5's, call 07905 117099 to book

FRIDAY

- Blenheim Children's Centre – Stay and Play – 9.30am – 11.30am - £1 per family
- Leigh Library - Story and Rhyme Time – 10.30am – Free
- Leigh Community Centre – Hartbeeps – 10.45am – 11.30am - £6 per session. Book in advance with emma@hartbeeps.com. For sitting to walking babies.
- Leigh Community Centre – Sweaty Mama – 11am – 12pm – 6 weeks for £40 – Exercise with your baby or toddler. Call 07957 310194 to book.
- Leigh Community Centre – Hartbeeps – 11.45am – 12.30pm - £6 per session. Book in advance with emma@hartbeeps.com. For newborns to sitting babies
- Leigh Community Centre – Hartbeeps – 9.45am – 10.30am - £6 per session. Book in advance with emma@hartbeeps.com. For toddlers to 4-year-olds
- Leigh Community Centre – Tiny Tunes – 10am – 10.40am. 10.50am – 11.30am – £6 per session, siblings half price, info@tinytuneslive.com

Baby Eats Out

By Katy Pearson

A Leigh-on-Sea businesswoman is making it easier for families to dine out.



Baby Eats Out is an innovative website – launched by mum-of-one Katy Pearson in lockdown – making eating out with babies less stressful. Hundreds of pubs, restaurants and cafes all over the UK have signed up to the revolutionary scheme, which has won the support of a Masterchef judge and comedians (and dads!) Rob Beckett and Josh Widdicombe.

Katy believes the service is now more crucial than ever. She said: "My son is five now, but I still remember the stress of struggling to navigate my way into an eatery with my baby in his buggy, only to realise that there were no baby changing or high chairs. On more than one occasion I was forced to change his nappy on the floor of a toilet. As restrictions have eased and families have started eating out again, there are probably lots of new mums and dads feeling a bit nervous going into eateries.

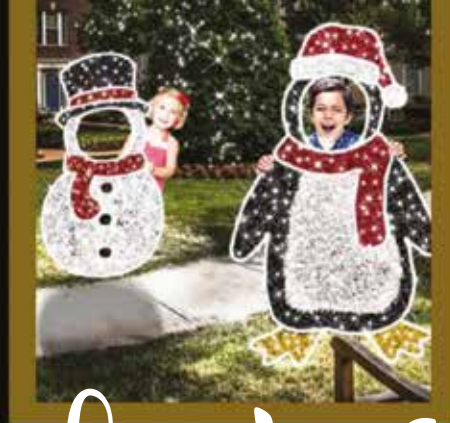
Baby Eats Out helps make it a less stressful experience. The stickers on a venue's door mean you can clearly see what baby friendly services an eatery has. And on the website, we have more than 100 Essex restaurants and cafes clearly showing they are family friendly."

Masterchef judge, author and food critic William Sitwell is a supporter of the scheme. He said on air: "I think Baby Eats Out is a really good campaign. I think it encourages parents and mums who are on their own in the day to eat out."

Essex eateries who back the scheme include Leigh Bagel Bar, Ugo's Café and Bar, The Oakleigh, Mariners Court and Little Talk Cafe. Others wanting to join the scheme – free of charge – are urged to get in touch via the website or Instagram.

Katy added: "After the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, the hospitality sector needs all the support it can get, and Baby Eats Out is helping both families and eateries battle back from the struggles of the pandemic."

Website - www.babyeatsout.co.uk
Instagram - [@_babyeatsout](https://www.instagram.com/_babyeatsout)



Christmas in Leigh

Christmas in Leigh Library Gardens

Once again, we will be lighting up Leigh Library Gardens this Christmas, following the success of last year's display. We plan to make the event bigger and better with more lights, interactive features and weekend entertainment alongside the displays.

These events will be a real community project, involving local groups, charities and volunteers to bring you festive cheer. The lights will be on from 1st December until 20th December, with some tree lights remaining until January.

Santa's Post Box is Back!

The Leigh Town Council Elves will make sure Father Christmas receives all of the children's letters posted in the gardens and make sure he writes back. Please ensure you enclose your name and a return address! The last postal date for letters is Wednesday 15th December.

Last year we helped Santa respond to over 200 letters!

New Interactive Features

We're excited to be adding some new interactive features to the lighting display this year, in the form of snowmen and penguin light up photo opportunities. We are looking for community sponsors for this feature, if you would be interested please get in touch.



Chairman's Charity Festive Event

SATURDAY 11TH DECEMBER, FROM 5PM

In honour of this year's Chairman, Cllr Doug Cracknell's chosen charity Phab Life, which supports the Phabulous Café in Leigh, we will be hosting an evening of fun and entertainment in the gardens, including a special Carol service in the gardens with The Salvation Army Band.

We will also be joined by the Leigh Lions, Friends of Leigh Library Gardens and PHAB Life, who will be running tombolas, games, treat stalls and more. Santa himself will also make an appearance!

More to come...

At the time of writing, planning for Christmas in the gardens is in the early stages, so keep an eye on our social media as there will be much more to come!

Look out for other Character appearances popping up in the park at weekends. Follow @LeighTCevents for updates. Friends of Leigh Library Gardens will also plan their own activities and decorations, working with Create98.

Winter Fayre

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council are pleased to announce the return of their annual festive shopping event at Leigh Community Centre on Sunday 28th November, 11am-4pm.

The Centre will host over 40 Stalls across both floors selling Christmas gifts, crafts and decorations. We also hope to include some children's activities on the day so look out for more announcements.

The event is open from 11am – 4pm and is free entry for all. There will be a buggy park available on the day and Lorna & Lottie's café will be open with their usual menu with festive additions.

Applications for a stall have now closed but if you would like to stay up to date with other possible markets and events, please follow our Facebook Page @LeighTCevents.

Christmas Farmers' Market

You've purchased gifts and decorations at our winter fayre, now prepare for festive food and treats at our regular Farmers' Market, with a special Saturday Christmas market at Leigh Community Centre on Saturday 18th December, 9am-1pm.

All our usual stall holders are ready and waiting to help you stock up for the festive season with lots on offer including, fruit and veg, bread, jams, chutneys, cheese, pastries, cakes and chocolates, vegan offerings and lots more!

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council *giving at Christmas*

Christmas Giving Tree

Leave a tin can beneath our Christmas tree at Leigh Community Centre from the 1st December to support local food banks. The items you donate will help needy families during the Christmas period, so please ensure all the products are long life, with an expiry date beyond January 2022.

Please do not feel totally constrained by the 'tin can' initiative but use that as a guide to inspire your generosity!

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council will work with Leigh Tin Teams to collect donations and deliver them to local foodbanks including Harp Southend, St Vincent's Centre (SVP), Southend Food Bank, One Love Soup Kitchen, Balmoral and Hadleigh Salvation Army.

The Christmas Giving Tree will be collecting until the 22nd December.

Food Bank Items

- Cereal
- Soup
- Pasta
- Rice
- Tinned tomatoes
- Jars/packets of sauce
- Lentils, beans and pulses
- Tinned meat
- Tinned vegetables
- Tea/coffee
- Tinned fruit
- Biscuits
- UHT milk
- Fruit juice

Non-Food Items

- Toiletries – deodorant, toilet paper, shower gel, shaving gel, shampoo, soap, toothbrushes, tooth paste, hand wipes
- Household items – laundry liquid detergent, laundry powder, washing up liquid
- Feminine products – sanitary towels and tampons
- Baby supplies – nappies, baby wipes and baby food

Jingle Meals

By Ryan Gosling

Last Christmas, Jingle Meals successfully delivered 120 Christmas dinners to the vulnerable, elderly, homeless, NHS and those alone on Christmas Day.

It was an amazing community effort, bringing a lot of smiles and love to Leigh on Sea and surrounding areas.

Following last years lockdown announcement, it looked like many people would spend Christmas Day alone, so I decided to set up Jingle Meals with just a few days before Christmas Day, to spread some festive joy during a challenging Christmas.

This involved me teaming up with Leigh Bistro restaurant to cook the Christmas dinners, local businesses donating gifts and volunteers, to help deliver on Christmas Day.

Jingle Meals will be back this Christmas. And with more time to organise this time round, we are hoping to make this year even better by delivering to more local people and making the deliveries even more festive. This is all possible with community support.

How can you be part of Jingle Meals?

- * A restaurant that would like to contribute Christmas dinners
- * A local business that would like to contribute a small gift that can be included in the dinner delivery
- * Would like to volunteer your time on Christmas Day to help deliver
- * Pass on details of someone who we can deliver a Christmas dinner to (vulnerable, elderly, homeless or alone on Christmas Day).

I'm very excited to bring some festive spirit to Leigh on Sea again this Christmas. Please do get in contact with Ryan if you would like to be involved with Jingle Meals

Jinglemeals@outlook.com



Donate your coats to Southend's homeless

Alongside the Giving Christmas Tree at Leigh Community Centre from the 1st December we will collect winter coats, scarves, hats and gloves, in good condition, for homeless charities in Southend, to help a vulnerable person stay protected from cold weather.

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council will work with Leigh Tin Teams to collect donations and deliver them to local homeless charities including Harp and SVP.

We will continue to collect winter coats until the end of January.



2021 EVENTS CALENDAR

OCTOBER

20th

Over 60's Social Club
12pm – 1.30pm

Leigh Community Centre

Book in advance,
includes lunch & activity,
from £2

27th – 30th

LODS Little Shop of
Horrors

Palace Theatre

tickets from southendtheatres.
org.uk

29th

Leigh Floral Group
7.30pm

**Highlands Methodist
Church**

welcoming new members
to learn how to make
floral arrangements – Call
07819431552 for more
information

30th

Halloween Parade
Southend Seafront

30th

RBL Poppy Appeal
Coffee Morning launch

**Leigh Community Centre
Café**

30th

#LeighPoppyTrail launch
Poppy artwork throughout
Leigh

31st

Council Litter pick
9am – 11pm
Check website for location

NOVEMBER

3rd

Over 60's Social Club
12pm – 1.30pm

Leigh Community Centre

Book in advance,
includes lunch & activity, from
£2

3rd

Martin McNeil Blues
Night

7.30pm start –

**Leigh Community Centre
Café**

£5 on the door

6th

Leigh Farmers' Market
9am – 1pm

Leigh Community Centre

6th

Leigh Rock Band Night

The Beatles Tribute Night
7.30pm - £12 in advance/£15
on door

10th

The Listening Room
Poetry & Open Mic Nights
7.30pm – 9.30pm

**Leigh Community Centre
Café**

entry by donation, bar available

11th

Youth Forum

5pm – 6pm

Leigh Community Centre

11 – 18 yr olds, guest speakers,
free entry and refreshments

15th

#LeighPoppyTrail final
day

17th

Mary Lister and Hannah
Faraway Art Exhibition

Leigh Community Centre
(on display until end of year)

17th

Over 60's Social Club
12pm – 1.30pm

Leigh Community Centre

Book in advance,
includes lunch & activity,
from £2

19th

Leigh Farmers' Market
9am – 1pm

Leigh Community Centre

26th

Southend YMCA

Teenage Kicks Open Mic

Night

6.30pm – 9pm

Leigh Community Centre

26th

Leigh Floral Group

7.30pm

Highlands Methodist Church

welcoming new members
to learn how to make floral
arrangements
Call 07819431552 for more
information

28th

Council Litter pick

9am – 11pm

All equipment provided,
check website for location

27th

St. Clement's Craft Fair

St. Clement's Church

28th

Winter Craft Fayre

11am – 4pm

Leigh Community Centre

DECEMBER

1st

Over 60's Social Club
12pm – 1.30pm

Leigh Community Centre

Book in advance,
includes lunch & activity, entry
from £2

1st

Martin McNeil Blues
Night

7.30pm start

**Leigh Community Centre
Café**

£5 on the door

8th

The Listening Room

Poetry & Open Mic Night

7.30pm – 9.30pm

**Leigh Community Centre
Café**

entry by donation, bar available

9th

Youth Forum

5pm – 6pm

Leigh Community Centre

11-18 yr olds, guest speakers,
free entry and refreshments

11th

Christmas Event

Leigh Library Gardens

11th

Leigh Rock Band Night

Slade 70's Party Night

7.30pm

£12 in advance/£15 on door

15th

Over 60's Social Club
12pm – 1.30pm

Leigh Community Centre

Book in advance, includes
lunch & activity, from £2

17th

Southend YMCA

Teenage Kicks Open

Mic Night

6.30pm – 9pm

Leigh Community Centre

18th

Christmas Farmers'

Market

9am – 1pm

Leigh Community Centre

18th

Southend Drama

Society – Cinderella

Pantomime

12pm & 4pm

St Cedd's,

Bridgewater Drive,

Tickets £5

call 07871 645962 to book

23rd

Stud 100 Christmas

Party

7.30pm – late

Leigh Community Centre

24th

Community Centre

Closed for Christmas

reopens 3rd January



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council's
YOUTH FORUM

Do you want your voice heard about local issues that affect you? And have the power to help make positive changes?

MONTHLY MEETINGS
 @ LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE | 5PM - 6PM

FREE REFRESHMENTS

LEARN NEW SKILLS THROUGH OUR MONTHLY GUEST SPEAKERS

- 9th September 2021
- 8th October 2021
- 11th November 2021
- 9th December 2021

For further information contact :
 07786 023941 or cllrforde@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk



THE LISTENING ROOM POETRY NIGHTS

FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS
 PLUS: OPEN MIC FOR POETRY, MUSIC, READINGS, STORIES, COMEDY AND MORE

2ND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
 7.30PM - 9.30PM
 LORNA & LOTTIE'S CAFE AT
 LEIGH COMMUNITY CENTRE, ELM ROAD, LEIGH

BAR/CAFE OPEN

PAY WHAT YOU CAN
 PROFITS GO TOWARDS LTC'S
 CHAIRMAN'S CHARITY SOUTHEND PHAB

RUN BY LEIGH-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL ARTS GROUP
 COUNCIL: 01702 716288 / COUNCIL@LEIGHONSEATOWNCOUNCIL.GOV.UK
 BOOKINGS MANAGED BY MADDI CREASE
MADDICREASEPOET@OUTLOOK.COM

SOUTHEND SOUTHEND

HALLOWEEN PARADE

SATURDAY 30TH OCTOBER
SOUTHEND SEAFRONT

visitsouthend.co.uk

SOUTHEND TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

Southend Community Events

southend of sea

LEIGH-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL'S
Over 60's Social Club

The first & third Wednesday of the Month
 12pm - 1.30pm at Leigh Community Centre
 £5 entry includes lunch, activity and unlimited hot drinks
 (£2 entry if not having lunch)

About the Club

Please book in advance on 01702 716288 if having lunch with us. Activities include talks, crafts, gentle exercise, quizzes or games. Unfortunately we are unable to provide transport to the centre

2021 Autumn/Winter Dates

15th September, 6th & 20th October,
 3rd & 17th November, 1st & 15th December

Leigh Community Centre,
 Elm Road Leigh-on-Sea
 01702 716288



Christmas in Leigh!

Sunday 28th November
Winter Fayre | 11am - 4pm
Leigh Community Centre

1st - 20th December
Christmas Lighting Display
Leigh Library Gardens

1st - 15th December
Santa's Post Box
Leigh Library Gardens

Saturday 11th December
Festive Event from 5pm
Leigh Library Gardens

Saturday 18th December
Christmas Farmers' Market
Leigh Community Centre



All events provided by Leigh-on-Sea Town Council
For more information visit our website or contact us at
council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk | 01702 716288
www.leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk