



Speldhurst Parish Council

Working for the whole community

NEWSLETTER

How will SPC spend the Parish Precept in 2020?

The precept is the amount you, the Parish householder, pay as part of your Council Tax. This year, we raised the precept by 4.9% to £155,250 from £148,000. This is the first increase we have made for two years. So, what do you get for this?

- We spend just over half on running the council's business, including implementing decisions, liaising with KCC, Kent Highways and Kent Police, training for staff and Councillors, insurance and audits. Other overheads include salaries, NI and pensions for four part-time staff (Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Admin Assistant and Groundsman). This amount also covers repayment of the loan taken out for the build of the office in 2011.
- We spend around £25k maintaining land owned by the Council. This includes

Langton Green Recreation Ground, the Green at Groombridge, Pocket Park (and other small parcels of land) in Speldhurst, and areas in the Boundary, Langton Green.

- We continue to allocate funds for highways improvements; £10k is budgeted for this year.
- We have allowed £20k for grant applications. We also maintain an annual contingency of between £15k-£25k. Previously, this has been used to support, for example, Speldhurst village shop, and additional tree maintenance arising from the Ash Dieback threat.
- We carry over monies not spent or use reserves to pay for items like playground equipment.

New play equipment at Langton Green Recreation Ground



Did you know, SPC is responsible for maintaining play equipment at Langton Green Recreation Ground? We regularly inspect the playground and the older children's area and, following a recent

safety assessment, felt it necessary to replace the Bicycle Mill. Due to its popularity, Councillors agreed a new version of the same thing be installed again. Installation, equipment and new flooring for this piece cost £13,000, paid for out of SPC reserves. We also replaced and repaired flooring in other parts of the playground. Users suggested

we install additional equipment in the older children's area, which we will explore when we budget for 2021.

Speedwatch Update



Volunteers in Langton Green and Speldhurst have now carried out Speedwatch sessions to monitor and record driver speed at various sites in the two

villages. Details of any vehicle traveling over the speed limit are sent to a central database; if that vehicle is then recorded to be speeding on a further two occasions, they will receive a letter from the Police. Thank you to all who have ventured out in this winter weather – just the sight of volunteers in their hi-vis jackets makes an excellent speed deterrent. We still need people to undertake Speedwatch in Ashurst and Groombridge, where speeding is a real concern. If you can spare some time every few weeks, do consider volunteering.

Parking on the School run

Before Christmas an incident took place, which resulted in a Langton Green resident complaining to Langton Green Primary School about the parking habits of parents in Lampington Row. Thoughtless parking on the school run does not just happen in Langton Green – it is an issue for residents living near Speldhurst Primary School too. If you drive your children to school, please be considerate to others and respectful of resident access.

Meanwhile in Langton Green, the council is investigating ways to make crossing the road to school safer, which we hope will encourage more families to walk.

Langton Green Recreation Ground drainage project update

Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA) have reported a considerable delay to works as a result of rain last Summer and Autumn, meaning that the ground could not be seeded before the colder weather set in. Seeding and final groundworks, together with the installation of a ramp from the pavilion down to pitch level, will now have to wait until April at the earliest. The new grass then needs to settle and establish, so the rec is likely to remain out of action until October. LGCSA say that while this is a blow for users, it is unavoidable, and should not lead to cost overruns.

LGCSA continue to meet with their contractors Agrifactors to discuss the effects of the recent severe weather, and discussions are ongoing as to whether further remedial measures are necessary. This winter has been exceptionally wet, with heavy rainfall on already saturated ground leading to widespread flooding. The situation will be the subject of close review. Contact Guy Lambert at LGCSA on 07860 293184 or email guylambert@msn.com with any questions.

Anti-Idling campaign

TWBC Environmental Protection Team are running an anti-idling campaign, encouraging drivers to reduce exhaust emissions by switching off their engine when stationary. Banners have now gone up in key locations around the parish, where drivers queue or park with their engine running when they could easily be switched off. These eye-catching signs have been produced by schools across Kent. We hope they act as a reminder to do your bit for air quality in Speldhurst Parish.



Be the first to hear what's happening at Speldhurst Parish Council



You may have seen our recent vacancy for a Parish Councillor, which we advertised on our website, www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk, through Facebook and on our Parish Noticeboards. To keep up with other developments like this, sign up for news alerts on our homepage and follow us on Facebook – search 'Speldhurst Parish Council.' From road closures to dates for

your diary, we share relevant and useful news for the parish and surrounding areas as soon as we hear about it.

While we will continue to send our newsletter by post on request, this edition is also available to view online. So why not take a tea break and explore our site?

A date for your diary

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

We will hold our Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 20th April at Speldhurst Village Hall. All residents are welcome for drinks from 7.30pm – the meeting will begin at 8pm. An agenda can be viewed in advance on our website and Parish noticeboards, and we will have a Guest Speaker on Climate Change. Do take this opportunity to get to know your Parish Council.

FOR REGULAR UPDATES ON ALL OUR ACTIVITIES GO TO OUR WEB SITE
www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

Speldhurst Parish Council

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Julia Soyke
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This newsletter will be available, as will future issues, on the Parish Council web site.

All enquiries to the Parish Clerk; Chris May on (01892) 862927 or at clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk