



Local Government for Langton Green, Speldhurst, Ashurst and Old Groombridge

**Minutes of a Planning Committee Meeting held at 7.30pm on
Monday 11th November 2024 in the Palmer Room, Langton Green Recreation Ground**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Cleaver (Chair), Curry, Leach, Littlefield and Norton

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk (AC).

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: There were 17 members of the public present.

1. To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting

The AC was recording the meeting on her laptop to assist with accuracy of the minutes. The recording would be deleted in line with the recording of meetings policy.

2. To receive and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Cllrs Dickens and Davies gave apologies due to family commitments and Cllr Tarricone due to illness.

3. Disclosure of Interests

Cllr Curry has shares in the Speldhurst shop and post office.

4. Declarations of Lobbying

Cllr Norton said that he had spoken to representatives of Home Grown Hotels and The Pig in addition to residents of Groombridge regarding the applications for Groombridge Place.

5. Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14th October 2024

RESOLVED That the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14th October 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

6. Public Open Session

Members of public were invited by the Chair to make their representations under the appropriate planning application.

7. Planning appeals - for information only.

Millford House, Penshurst Road, Speldhurst.
High View, Langton Road, Langton Green.
The Beacon Hotel, Tunbridge Wells.

8. Planning Applications for consideration

24/02714/FULL – Groombridge Place, Groombridge Hill, Groombridge

Proposal: Change of use & refurbishment of buildings to hotel, restaurant & spa; construction of yoga pavilion, restaurant & associated store, guest huts, sauna huts, & hydro pool; extensions to main barn & courtyard stables & covered walkway between buildings; relocation of owl & raptor centre; construction of car parking, footpaths, substations, plant stores/decks & bin store, boardwalk & jetty; erection of polytunnels, glasshouse & compost bays; landscaping; & ancillary development.

Tom Ross, CEO and Paul Collins, Development Director of Home Grown Hotels (The Pig's parent company) were attending to give a presentation on their proposals for Groombridge Place:

The Pig's brand ethos:

- 'Restaurants with rooms'.
- 25-mile menu – food sourced where possible from local suppliers;
- Kitchen garden to supply the restaurants;
- Sustainability – B Core certified;
- Community – they aim to integrate into their community, involving locals in their activities, providing employment opportunities and supporting a local charity and projects;
- The grounds are open to members of the public to enjoy, not just their guests;
- Pig people – a fundamental part of the business is providing local apprenticeships and career opportunities with many employees remaining with the brand long-term.

It was proposed that Groombridge Place would provide:

- 56 en-suite bedrooms and suites
- 2 restaurants: 120 covers in the barn, a restaurant terrace, private dining room plus a vineyard restaurant.
- Formal gardens.
- Vineyard producing their own wine.
- Wellness facilities which would be sympathetic to the local amenity.
- A low-level traffic footprint.
- Sustainable energy initiatives
- Employment for approximately 100 members of staff, mainly from the local area.

The plan is to sensitively restore the historic house, gardens and the whole site bringing their previous experience of listed properties and gardens to the project. It was hoped the facilities will open in 2026.

The footpath running through the site will be maintained by The Pig and will remain open to members of the public.

The Pig's plot does not include the allotments in Langton Green.

A plan to manage the many deer on site was under consideration.

Cllr Leach made a comment in jest, which both Cllrs Norton and the Chair advised was not appropriate.

Decision: We strongly support this well considered and comprehensive application to restore Groombridge Place and create a sustainable future for this historic house and estate.

24/02715/LBC - Groombridge Place, Groombridge Hill, Groombridge

Proposal: Listed Building Consent - Change of use & refurbishment of buildings to hotel, restaurant & spa; extensions to main barn, courtyard stables, covered walkway between buildings & associated development.

Decision: We strongly support this well considered and comprehensive application to restore Groombridge Place and create a sustainable future for this historic house and estate.

24/02792/TDD – Court Lodge, Groombridge Road, Groombridge

Proposal: Dead, Dying or Dangerous Tree Notification: APPLE: Fell.

Decision: Application approved.

24/02591/TCA – Court Lodge, Groombridge Road, Groombridge

Proposal: Trees in a Conservation Area Notification: 3 No. Eucalyptus (T1-T3) – reduce crown by 30%.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Tree Officer.

24/02683/TPO – 16 Roopers, Speldhurst

Proposal: Trees: LIME (T1) – Cut back from Oak trees by 1.2m.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Tree Officer.

24/02670/FULL – 11 Hither Chantlers, Langton Green

Proposal: Replacement front window, new portico and bay windows.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

24/02664/FULL – 3 Bradleys Cottages, Speldhurst Hill, Speldhurst

Proposal: Erection of outbuilding.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

24/02650/FULL – 21 Newlands, Langton Green

Proposal: Erection of dwellinghouse and associated landscaping.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

24/02601/TPO – Cedars, Hither Chantlers, Langton Green

Proposal: TREE: OAK (T1) - Reshape by 3-4 feet and remove any deadwood; COPPER BEECH (T2) - Reduce height by 3-4 feet; LIME (G1) - Pollard back to previous points.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Tree Officer.

24/02490/FULL – The Barn, Pokehill Farm South, Farm Lane, Langton Green

Proposal: Self-Build – Change of use of agricultural building to dwelling.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

24/02097/FULL – Speldhurst Chapel & Mission Hall, Northfields, Speldhurst

Proposal: Change of use of chapel building for use as village shop and other associated community uses, extension to south-west.

Decision: This application has our support as we have an interest in the project.

9. Compliance Issues

- 17a Holmewood Ridge: continue to monitor.

10. Items for information

- Date of next Planning Committee meeting: 9th December 2024, Palmer Room, LGVH.
- 2 Oak Villa, Langton Green: The committee agreed to stand by their original comments.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.31 pm.

Chair