



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

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2025

IN THE PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE, LANGTON GREEN RECREATION GROUND, LANGTON GREEN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Norton (Chair), Cleaver and Farley with Mr Myles and Mrs Dooley.

BOROUGH COUNCILLORS PRESENT: There were none.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Attendees were Alex Cornelius, Head of Langton Green Primary School (LGPS); Ben Tidman, a LGPS parent; Terri Knowles, a Langton Green resident; and Stuart Smith, Co-ordinator of Langton SpeedWatch (arrived at 8.36pm).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs K Neve – Clerk, and Mrs A Dry – Parish Council Administrator (Minutes).

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm with the Chair welcoming attendees.

1. TO ENQUIRE IF ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING

The Chair advised that the Clerk had started an audio recording which would be used to ensure the accuracy of the minutes and be deleted after the minutes had been agreed.

2. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Littlefield (holiday), Cllr Turner (holiday) and Mr Langridge (prior appointment).

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

Cllr Norton confirmed that he had been lobbied about deer generally and over the gullies in Bird in Hand Street, Groombridge.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22ND SEPTEMBER 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes, previously distributed to all Members, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

LANGTON GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL (LGPS)

Mr Cornelius, Head Teacher of LGPS, spoke about long-standing road safety issues highlighted by a recent incident. There were difficulties crossing at two key pinch points:

1. The Rectory → Lampington Row
2. Village Hall car park → twitten opposite.

These were exacerbated by unsafe driving at peak school times. There were also problems for pedestrians at the junction by The Hare and secondary school bus stops.

The school would like to see

- Traffic-calming measures
- A formal Pedestrian crossing
- A reinstated crossing patrol (no applicants so far, despite the school's efforts and Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) sharing the recent advert).

The Administrator noted that approximately 15 years ago Kent County Council (KCC) had narrowed the road opposite the village hall car park following similar parental concerns. At the time KCC said installing a full pedestrian crossing would require much more evidence.

Cllr Norton referred to a recent productive meeting with KCC which had identified an opportunity to enable a full pedestrian crossing by creating pavements on both sides, using a small section of SPC-owned land. SPC would pursue this, although it would take time to deliver for a number of reasons, including the need to reduce average vehicle speeds beforehand. Electricity supply for the lighting required should not be a problem given the nearby location of Electric Vehicle chargers. A full crossing would be expensive, with further work and community engagement required.

In the meantime, SPC was looking at further traffic calming measures using the Borough Council's Rural Parish Grant, had secured the installation of railings near the school entrances and arranged for SpeedWatch to run targeted sessions. Tunbridge Wells' Active Travel Plan for pedestrian and cycle routes into Tunbridge Wells also offered possible longer-term improvements.

He urged Mr Cornelius to encourage the wider school community to become more involved in improving the road safety of their children. Finding crossing patrol staff wasn't easy, but the school could call on a community of hundreds when parents, grandparents and carers were taken into account. Finding one crossing person (or even better a group of parents who could share the job) should be possible if approached in the right way. Following a suggestion from Cllr Farley, Mr Cornelius said he would contact his opposite number at Speldhurst Primary School to see if there were lessons from their successful crossing patrol.

A parent and local resident expressed his strong concern about the current situation. It was frustrating that progress had been slow, and he asked who could be approached to secure further action. Councillors suggested KCC and Kent Police, with our local County Councillor being John Moreland and our MP Mike Martin.

Cllr Norton explained that SPC had no responsibility for highways (KCC), traffic offences (Kent Police) or parking enforcement (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council). The Parish Council knew road safety was important to residents so would continue to be proactive on highways in lobbying and advocating for improvements. However, to deliver real change would require everyone to play their part, including parents and the wider school community. Each of our four villages faced significant highway problems, but SPC remained committed to pushing for a crossing and other safety measures in Langton Green.

Mrs Dooley thanked SPC for its sustained efforts. These had contributed to recent progress, including the new railings.

The 20 mph flashing lights were not operational because there was no current crossing patrol. The Clerk undertook to establish if there was a way for the lights to be activated by the school.

It was confirmed that the SPC Groundsman had cut back vegetation impeding school walking routes.

SPEEDWATCH

Mr Myles noted that some villages were more active than others.

- The resident said they had completed training but not been asked to participate yet
- The Langton Green group hoped to increase activity near the school, weather permitting
- The Clerk confirmed that data was shared with Kent Police (first offence – recorded; second – warning letter; third – fine)
- Merging groups and rotating locations was discussed, but co-ordination would be a challenge
- The Clerk noted that Withyham organises on a parish wide basis which could serve as a model. It was noted that Groombridge could hold joint sessions with Withyham
- Past experience showed:
 - Langton Green – strong participation
 - Speldhurst – reduced activity recently
 - Groombridge – reduced activity recently
 - Ashurst – yet to start, despite frequent attempts
- The office would follow up with Ashurst volunteers.

Cllr Norton advised that SPC's proposal for a mobile, police-operated speed enforcement unit for local villages had previously been put to KCC, with support from Mike Martin MP. The idea was rejected by the previous KCC administration, but he believed we should continue to advocate it.

THE GRANGE PARKING ISSUES

A resident of The Grange outlined residents' concerns about long-running parking problems, which they had raised with Mike Martin MP and County Cllr Moreland. Residents were disheartened by the lack of progress.

The core issue concerned parked vehicles blocking access to the 18 properties of the Grange. Many of the vehicles belonged to customers of the Blue India. This affected:

- elderly residents
- families with young children
- access for ambulance
- delivery vans and service vehicles.

They had 21 photographs showing double-parked vehicles obstructing access. Previous requests for double yellow lines had failed, but she believed the new owners of the Blue India would *not* object to them. When residents approached restaurant customers about parking problems, they had sometimes experienced aggressive responses in person or via social media, which had left them frightened.

It was noted that new double yellow lines required statutory consultation and KCC authorisation, which would be lengthy and expensive. Cllr Cleaver advised that in the short term, “Keep Clear” markings might be a quicker way forward and should be raised with KCC.

Cllr Farley had visited the site and observed pavement parking blocking the footpath. He noted parking within 15 metres of a junction can constitute an offence and that Police could act on dangerous parking. Enforcement was often a problem, however. TWBC Parking Wardens could also attend but often arrived after vehicles had gone.

It was agreed to flag the issues with both enforcement teams and KCC. However, concerns were raised that double yellow lines or keep clear markings may simply displace vehicles onto the main road.

Cllr Farley encouraged contacting the Police over any alleged threats. The Clerk advised that dangerous parking could be logged online with TWBC enforcement for an immediate response.

Cllr Norton thanked the resident for bringing the matter forward and confirmed SPC would do all it could to assist. The residents left at 8.26pm.

7. REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS

It was agreed that the Action Points for each village would be discussed alongside the Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) below.

8. REVIEW OF HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE’S BUDGET

The Clerk reported that, subject to Full Council sign off, a further £15,000 was being considered for next year’s budget in addition to the rolled forward Earmarked Reserve. This would be used alongside the £25,000 Parish Road Safety Grant.

The timescales for Parish Road Safety Grant projects were confirmed as:

- SPC had submitted its HIP proposals by end of October deadline
- KCC would complete costing, planning and design by end of December
- Final sign off expected in February

Although KCC anticipated progressing one scheme per parish, SPC believed two schemes might be achievable as several parishes had not advanced their submissions.

9. HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP) (INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF ANY NEW ISSUES BY VILLAGE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT CORRESPONDENCE, RECENT ACCIDENTS, SPEEDWATCH, AND MEDIA)

a) Langton Green

HIP Item – Langton Green Primary School

This item remained the number one HIP priority and Cllr Norton provided an update during the public open session (see item 6 above).

Non-HIP Issues

- **Road Safety Incident – Langton Green Primary School** – Discussed in the public open session.

- **To consider the purchase of road safety figures** – There was discussion on the life-size figures that the Clerk had received a quotation for. It was agreed to put this to the Amenities Committee as they would have to be placed on SPC land. Cllr Farley suggested the figures be moved occasionally so drivers did not get overfamiliar with them.
- **Correspondence Dangerous Parking at The Grange, Langton Green** – This was discussed in the public open session (see item 6 above).
- **A264 Langton Road** – Cllr Norton had received correspondence from a Rusthall resident requesting the parish council's support in their campaign to lower the speed limit on Langton Road/Rusthall Road. An item would be included on the January Full Council agenda to seek councillors' views.

Groombridge

HIP Item – B2110 Groombridge Village and Bird in Hand Street

It was noted that excessive speeds continued on Bird in Hand Street and Groombridge Hill as vehicles entered the village. KCC was currently reviewing improved road markings, treated surfaces and clearer signage to encourage slower speeds. Cllr Cleaver noted that planning applications sometimes included requests to limit large HGV usage which could be requested by the Planning Committee but could not be a required condition.

Non-HIP Issues

- KCC had recently installed deer-warning signs on Groombridge Hill and weight and width limit signage for HGVs on Bird in Hand Street. Some HGV access was still necessary for deliveries.
- Gullies had been repeatedly blocked in Bird in Hand Street. The gullies had now been cleared but would fill again due to erosion. A recent contactor issue was flagged to KCC's Highways Drainage Manager regarding inefficient use of public funds over abortive visits to clear the gullies.
- Court Lodge works continued to add pressure to Bird in Hand Street.

b) Speldhurst

HIP Item – Etherington Hill / Speldhurst Hill

- Cllr Norton, Borough Cllr Sankey and County Cllr Moreland had recently met with KCC Highways to review safety concerns. Cllr Sankey's preferred option – junction remodelling – had been deemed too costly.
- Reinforcing speed signage on Etherington Hill was being considered. Although recent automatic traffic count (ATC) results had shown that average speeds were not high, the location had a history of collisions, particularly in icy conditions. KCC remained willing to take action provided the issue stayed on the HIP.
- Cllr Cleaver stressed the need to ensure measurable improvements, noting five recent crashes in a short period.

c) Ashurst

There were no Ashurst items on the HIP.

Non-HIP Issues

It was noted that the Ashurst Speedwatch team had not yet completed their initial training, which must take place before their first session. The clerks would follow this up in the New Year.

10. FOOTPATHS/PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)

The Administrator had produced a spreadsheet of completed and ongoing footpath issues since October which had been previously circulated to councillors. It was agreed that she would update this on an ongoing basis.

11. ITEMS REQUIRING FULL COUNCIL APPROVAL

The Clerk would raise the issue of the A264 at the next Full Council Meeting on 5th January 2026.

12. ISSUES FOR COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC

- It was agreed that there should be a Speedwatch Volunteers campaign.
- The proposed zig zag lines in Lampington Row needed to go out to informal consultation before Christmas. The Clerk and Administrator would progress this.

13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem
- Road Safety & Active Travel Newsletters
- Meeting dates for 2026:
 - Monday 23rd February
 - Monday 29th June
 - Monday 26th October

With nothing further to discuss the meeting ended at 9.05pm.

Chair

ACTION POINTS

01/25	Contact KCC re school 20mph lights and use of “key”.	Clerk	08/12/25	
02/25	Request Langton Green SpeedWatch to carry out sessions at school drop off and pick up times.	Clerk	08/12/25	
03/25	Contact Speldhurst Primary School and ask about their crossing patrol.	Alex Cornelius	08/12/25	
04/245	Contact TWBC regarding parking issues at The Grange and investigate “keep clear” signs.	Clerk	08/12/25	
05/25	Send resident contact link for reporting parking violations.	Clerk	08/12/25	
06/25	Request item on Amenities Committee to discuss road safety figures on parish council land.	Clerk	08/12/35	
07/25	Include item on January FC agenda to seek parish council view on response to lowering speed limit on A264.	Clerk	08/1/25	
08/25	Request Planning Committee to include condition where relevant “not to be used by HGVs” on planning applications.	Clerk/Cllr Norton	08/12/25	
09/25	Follow up Ashurst SpeedWatch.	Administrator	08/12/25	
10/25	Include items in parish magazines regarding SpeedWatch volunteers.	Administrator	08/12/25	
11/25	Contact Withyham SpeedWatch and put in touch with Groombridge SpeedWatch.	Clerk	08/12/25	
12/25	Discuss Footpath Allocations with Speldhurst Councillors.	Administrator	08/12/25	
13/25	Complete Informal Consultation on School Keep Clear signs on Lampington Row.	Clerk/ Administrator	08/12/35	