



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

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Held at 7.30 pm on Monday 7th September 2026 in Speldhurst Village Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllr Curry (Chair), Dickens (Vice-Chair), Bains, Cleaver, Ellery, Farley, Leach and Littlefield.
H Chater (Clerk) and S Neve (Deputy Clerk – Minutes).

IN ATTENDANCE

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Councillor Sharratt was in attendance.
Apologies were received from Kent County Council (KCC) Councillor John Moreland, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) Councillor Standing and Councillor Sankey

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was 1 member of the public and 1 representative from Langton Green Community Sports Association.

153/26 TO ENQUIRE IF ANYONE INTENDS TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chair advised that an audio recording had been started by the Clerk which would be used to ensure accuracy of minutes. Anyone who wished to speak should consider that their voice may be recorded and the recording could be requested via Freedom of Information.

154/26 TO ACCEPT AND APPROVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Turner (holiday) and Cllr Barrington-Johnson (holiday) and Cllr Norton (illness).

155/26 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk noted their interest in agenda item 14d.

156/26 DECLARATION OF LOBBYING

There were none.

157/26 MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 3RD AUGUST 2026

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes, previously forwarded to members, be confirmed as a correct record and to be signed by the Chair after the meeting.

158/26 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A member of the public raised concerns regarding a number of overgrown hedgerows within the Parish. The member was advised that the Parish Council would investigate the locations identified and consider whether any further action was required.

159/26 BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Councillor Sharratt

Reported that, as no Borough Council meetings had taken place in during August, there were no significant updates from TWBC.

She advised that the proposed Local Government Reorganisation has been paused. No additional information is currently available.

Cllr Sharratt also advised that Southern Water is currently coming under increased scrutiny and invited councillors to submit any questions by Friday so they could be raised on the Council's behalf.

It was further reported that Cllr Sharratt had attended the Walking, Wheeling and Cycling drop-in session. The project is being funded through Active Travel England, and councillors were invited to contact her with any related questions or comments.

Kent County Council Councillor Moreland

KCC Councillor Moreland was absent from the meeting but had provided a written update.

He advised that he continues to monitor developments relating to the Burrowswood development and expressed his thanks to Cllr Norton for keeping him informed.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Councillor Standing

TWBC Councillor Standing had forwarded a report referring to members to the circulated report and highlighted that the Electrical Safety Fund is currently open for applications. He also reported on his attendance at the Walking, Wheeling and Cycling drop in event.

160/26 CLERKS REPORT

The Clerk reported:

- More wasp nest activity.
- Information for councillors regarding elections. SPC staff will complete all paperwork required for election. Councillors were asked to advise if they did not plan to stand.
- Admin and Communications Co-ordinator has attended a social media messaging course.
- The Digital Champions workshop had to be postponed due to no champion available from KCC.
- Notice that we don't have a representative on the Ashurst Village Hall Committee.
- KCC have approached SPC regarding running a Mature Drivers and Passengers course in the Pavilion.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the submission of an application to the Unity Trust Bank grant scheme and to authorise the Clerk to complete and submit the application on behalf of the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the expenditure of £370.00 plus VAT for the installation of a replacement gate post at Langton Green Recreation Ground.

161/26 GENERAL MATTERS

The Clerk reported that the actionable tasks which did not fall to a committee had been completed or were near completion.

162/26 APPOINTMENT OF CLLR BAINS TO COMMITTEES

It was agreed that Cllr Bains would join the Planning Committee, Highways Committee and the Langton Green Recreation Ground Working Group.

163/26 CO-OPTION TO FILL PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

Mr Butcher left the room.

It was **RESOLVED** to co-opt Cameron Butcher as a new councillor after successful interview which had already taken place. Mr Butcher came back into the room and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by Mr Butcher, and he joined the remainder of the meeting as a Councillor.

164/26 PLAYGROUND MATTING NATIONAL LOTTERY AWARD: CONSIDERATION OF EXPENDITURE PROPOSALS

Councillors considered a report circulated prior to the meeting detailing quotations received from five suppliers for the provision and installation of playground safety matting, including associated costs and an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal. Councillors also noted the National Lottery grant award secured towards the project.

Following consideration of the information provided, it was **RESOLVED** that Abacus Playgrounds Ltd. be appointed as the preferred contractor and that the associated expenditure be approved.

165/26 COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUP (WG) AND OTHER REPORTS

a) Highways Committee

It was reported that there had been no meeting since the last Full Council meeting.

Cllr Curry provided an update on the Langton Green section of the Walking, Wheeling, Cycling route.

Councillors were advised that proposals included improvements to the tarmac and the installation of a new pedestrian crossing.

b) Planning Committee

• 26/01785/PIP – Land North of Hither Chantlers, Langton Green

Proposal: Permission in principle for 2 dwellings.

Decision: This application appears to only stand a fighting chance on strictly technical decision making in Planning legislation around Grey Belt land, based on some shifting parameters around this allocation. The neighbours have made strong points refuting the methodology the applicant has elected to use, and the decision from TWBC will have to be solely on technical merit. On the face of it, SPC would also challenge the Grey Belt designation based not only on the historical rejections, but on the housing supply for the area not meeting the threshold to suit this reclassification. SPC are sympathetic with the view of neighbours who suggest the applicant should establish access across their own land rather than on to Hither Chantlers.

- An update was provided regarding the Burrowswood site. Members of the council are due to attend the open day. Cllr Norton has also been engaging with local residents to gather views on the proposal and relay feedback to the Council.
- Councillors were advised of forthcoming changes to the planning system due to come into effect in November. Further information will be circulated to Councillors when available.

c) Amenities Committee

There has been no meeting since the last Full Council meeting.

- It was **RESOLVED** that the Deputy Clerk submit an application to the Parish Bus Stop Shelter Grant for the replacement of the Bus Shelter adjacent to The Hare, Langton Green.
- It was **RESOLVED** to approve the installation of a new dog waste bin to be installed in Ashurst behind St Martins church near the Village Hall.

d) Environment Working Group (EWG)

There has been no meeting since the last Full Council meeting.

e) Langton Green Recreation Ground Working Group (LGRG WG)

Cllr Farley provided a report on the background and development of the Working Group, outlining the discussions that have taken place to date and noting the consensus that improvements to the recreation ground should be explored.

One option under consideration is the provision of an All Weather Pitch (AWP). Members noted that such a facility could provide mutual benefits to both Speldhurst Parish Council and Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA), while broadening sporting opportunities for residents of all ages within and beyond the Parish.

It was noted that LGCSA would seek funding through the Football Foundation should the project progress.

Cllr Farley advised that a public consultation would be undertaken at the appropriate stage once developed proposals are available. It was acknowledged that community support would be a key factor in determining the viability and future progression of any proposal.

Councillors were encouraged to submit their views to the Working Group for further consideration. Cllr Ellery highlighted the importance of involving the Environment Working Group in future discussions. It was agreed that all Councillors would be invited to attend the next meeting of the LGRG WG.

- It was **RESOLVED** to approve the new Irrigation Risk Assessment.
- It was **RESOLVED** that the Working Group continue in their current form.
- It was **RESOLVED** to approve that Speldhurst Parish Council become members of ACRE Kent for the cost of £600, noting that the fee includes two hours of consultancy support.

f) Pavilion Working Group

- Cllr Curry reported on the outcome of the Community Interest Company (CIC) operator selection process and advised that the decision had been to continue with the current operators.
- It was **RESOLVED** that delegated authority be granted to the Pavilion Working Group to finalise and sign the hire agreement. The draft hire agreement had been circulated to the Councillors prior to the meeting.

g) KALC

Cllr Curry provided a report on recent KALC communications, noting discussions concerning the pause to Local Government Reorganisation proposals. Members were advised that any significant developments would be reported to the Council in due course.

166/26 FINANCE AND GOVERNANC COMMITTEE

There has been no meeting since the last Full Council meeting.

a) To note the detailed budget reports.

Councillors noted the detailed budget report in the folder.

b) To note cashbook transfers.

Councillors noted the transfer from CCLA to Unity.

c) To note interim payments and delegated authority decisions since the last meeting:

Report on interim payments made since the last meeting. Councillors noted the payments and it was **RESOLVED** to approve them:

Unity Trust Bank:

Payee Name	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
Salaries	£6,011.58	Employee salaries
Agrifactors	£420	LGRG Maintenance
Speldhurst Village Hall	£5,000	Grant
Nourish	£750	Grant
S. Neve	£33.16	Expenses
Ashurst Village Hall	£37.50	Meeting room hire
Tate Fencing	£32.68	Concrete for bench installation
PPL	£774.21	Music licence for Pavilion
Elm Fencing	£1,256.64	Bollards at Old Groombridge Green
Elm Fencing	£2,466	Path to basketball court
Hopkins	£80.64	Defibrillator pads
Barnard Environmental	£90	Wasp nest removal
Kidman's	£18.60	Secateurs and oil

Mastercard:

Payee Name	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
Timpson's	£50	Van key
KALC	£84	Finance seminar
Amazon	£179.81	Weed killer
Amazon	£5.99	Packaging tape

d) National Join council (NJC) Pay Award.

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk left the meeting for the duration of this item and the recording was paused.

Following consideration of the National Joint Council (NJC) pay award, it was **RESOLVED** to implement a 3.5% pay increase for the staff, with the increase to be backdated to 1st April 2026. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk returned to the meeting.

- e) Accounts for Payment – to authorise the payment of September invoices.

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the payment of invoices presented for approval having been reviewed and verified by Cllr Farley.

- f) Audited AGAR 2025-26 – to note completion letter and notice

Councillors were advised that two matters had been raised during the audit process. These have now been addressed and corrected. The Council is currently awaiting receipt of the External Auditor's Completion Letter and Notice of Conclusion of Audit, which are expected by the end of September.

- g) To consider the reappointment of the Internal Auditor.

It was **RESOLVED** to reappoint April Skies Accounting Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditor.

167/26 Remembrance Sunday – to appoint councillors to lay wreaths on behalf of Speldhurst Parish Council.

Councillors considered arrangements for Remembrance Sunday commemorations across the Parish.

It was agreed that four Councillors would represent Speldhurst Parish Council by laying wreaths at the respective remembrance services held at St Martin's Church, Ashurst; St Mary's Church, Speldhurst; All Saints Church, Langton Green; and St John's Church, Old Groombridge. The names of the appointed Councillors were noted.

168/26 Annual Parish Assembly 2027 – To consider arrangements for the Annual Parish Assembly.

Members were advised that the Annual Parish Assembly had been provisionally booked to take place on 19 April 2027 at Langton Green Pavilion.

Councillors were also informed that the Annual Statutory Parish Meeting had been booked at Langton Green Village Hall on Tuesday 4th May. It was noted that this arrangement remains subject to review and may be amended should Members wish to consider an alternative venue or date.

The dates were noted.

169/26 DIARY DATES

- 21st September – Planning Committee meeting.
- 30th September – Finance and Governance meeting.

170/26 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- Cllr Curry advised that succession planning arrangements are being progressed in preparation for his eventual departure from the Council.

Chair closed the meeting at 20:41pm

Chair