

NEWSLETTER



Speldhurst
Parish Council

Working for the
whole community

How will we spend the precept in 2022?

Each year the Parish Council is required to review the amount, called the 'precept', that it will require from householders in the parish. The precept is a small component of the Council Tax you pay to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, which they collect on our behalf. We use this money to provide services that neither the Borough nor Kent County Council provide, to maintain a number of community assets and green spaces, and to support local groups, organisations, churches and charities that keep the heart of our community beating. Councillors, of course, continue to give their time for free.

The Council regularly review our diverse range of costs and the grants that we provide, ensuring that we provide the best value to the community. Minutes of our meetings can be found on the website www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

Speldhurst Parish Council has a strong history of keeping tax low. Last year, recognising the hardship the pandemic was causing to many in our community, we froze the precept. At the Full Council meeting this January, Councillors agreed an uplift in the precept for the 2022/23 year. The decision to increase charges at a time when most households are experiencing higher costs of living has not been taken lightly, but we are already seeing increases in the cost of the services we provide and anticipate this worsening. The band D household rate will increase from £65.59 to £69.11 (5.4%), but this is still very competitive compared to many local parishes who charge over £100.

Speldhurst Parish Council continues to look for ways to operate efficiently, focusing where practicable on environmental sustainability. To find out more, do come along to our Annual Parish Council Meeting (more info. on the right).

Highways & footpaths faults

How do I report this? When will someone fix it? What can be done? These are the most common questions you ask us about highways faults in the parish.

Often, the answer is found at www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem. This online reporting tool covers every type of carriageway fault you can imagine, from dangerous potholes to overgrown pavements. KCC advise that they can schedule works more efficiently when residents report problems using this tool, so while you might think getting hold of a name or telephone number will see your complaint dealt with more quickly, the feedback we receive is that online reporting really is the speediest way to get things done. If you do not have access to the internet and no one to do it for you, our clerks will help.

As for the network of public footpaths around Ashurst, Langton Green, Old Groombridge and Speldhurst, if you notice a problem with a stile, gate or overgrown vegetation, please use the markers posted along the footpaths to let us know. We will work with local Landowners to find a solution, or report the problem to KCC's Public Rights of Way Officer.

Going for a walk? 3 ways you can help look after our parish

- ✓ Keep secateurs in your pocket ready to prune minor overhanging foliage.
- ✓ Take a folded-up plastic bag with you in case you spot any litter.
- ✓ Report any issues you see; we want to work WITH you to keep our parish tidy.



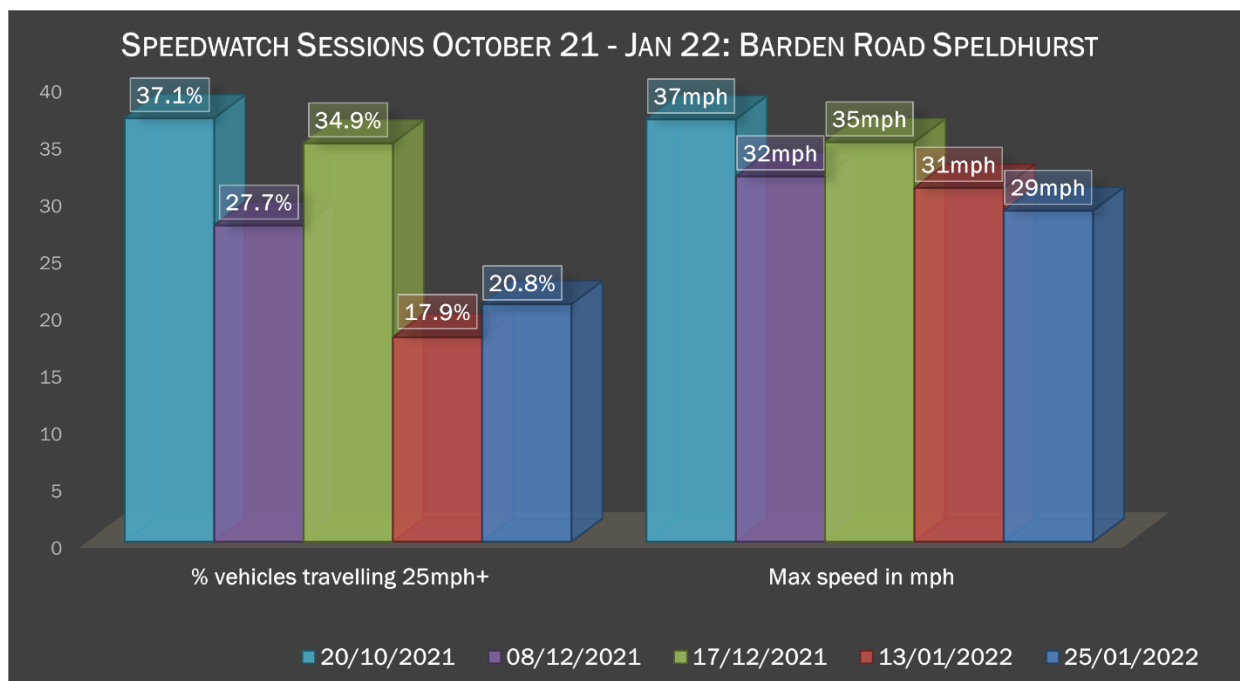
Diary Date We plan to hold our Community Policing themed Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 28th March at 7.30pm, Langton Green Village Hall. Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Scott will be our Guest Speaker. If you'd like to attend this important meeting, please book your place via the council office (contact details at the end of this newsletter).

Thanks to Trevor Myles for all his hard work during his time as a Parish Councillor, particularly with Highways and Planning. Trevor has now resigned and we are co-opting a new Councillor. More news on this soon.

This Newsletter can be viewed on our website; hard copies will be distributed at local shops. Get in touch if you'd like an emailed copy.

Follow us on Facebook for tips on easy ways to save money *and* the environment this spring.

Search 'Speldhurst Parish Council' to find us.



Speedwatch gathered pace in 2021. Together with our volunteers we added more Speedwatch sites and operated several times a week in the summer months. The graphic above shows data we captured over 5 sessions in Speldhurst. We're cautiously optimistic that a regular Speedwatch presence has led to a decrease in speeding.

We also worked with the Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Unit to establish a joined-up approach to speed-monitoring sessions between ourselves and the Police. Consequently, there is a greater police presence on our roads.

Thanks to all who continue to volunteer with Speedwatch, especially our village Coordinators. The more data we capture, the more we can use when lobbying KCC Highways for traffic calming measures. And after making a successful case to the Joint Transportation Board for reducing the speed limit on the B2110 Groombridge Hill, and the A264 from Langton Green to Ashurst last year, we feel positive about achieving more.

There is something for everyone at **Langton Green Recreation Ground**. Langton Green Village Society recently planted many new trees for visitors to enjoy. Meanwhile, the pavilion café goes from strength to strength. Open Tuesday - Saturday, it's a great option for families thanks to the toys and welcoming staff.

Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA) use the rec for football training and matches. Two years ago, the Football Association awarded a grant via LGCSA to improve pitch drainage, meaning play can continue during the winter. We hope other users have begun to feel the improvement underfoot too.

We provide play equipment and fitness facilities in two areas. We make regular inspections and repairs, buying new items if needed. Do use the equipment respectfully – it's expensive to maintain. If you see a problem, tell us asap. Any thoughts? We are always open to suggestions about how to improve the space.

Many in our parish serve their community and undertake inspiring charity work. In 2021 we recognised the following:

- ✓ Roger Mallett, Kent Association Local Councils (KALC) Community Award 2020 for over 25 years of service to Langton Green. Member of the fete committee and Chairman of the village hall committee.
- ✓ Edward Pinnell, KALC Community Award 2021 for heading up the establishment of a community shop in Speldhurst.
- ✓ Charlotte Ward, parish council Jubilee Award for Olympic Spirit. Former Speldhurst pupil Charlotte campaigns for climate change.
- ✓ Jacob Lawton, parish council Jubilee Award for Olympic Spirit. Langton Green pupil Jacob raised £555 for The British Heart Foundation.

Defibrillators We are in the process of installing new life-saving community defibrillators at strategically important locations in the Parish. With the generous offer of external wall space and electricity from The Crown in Groombridge, we will focus on this site first. Budget is now secured, and we look forward to having the equipment commissioned soon.

We're also seeking a qualified electrician to install this life-saving equipment. If you can help, please email: asst.clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk