

Local Government Act 1972



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

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

Held on Monday 3rd July 2023 at 7.30pm in Ashurst Village Hall, Ashurst

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors Curry (Chair), Lyle (Vice-Chair), Cleaver, Dooley, Ellery, Leach, Rowe, Tarricone and Turner. The Chair welcomed back Cllr Turner to his first in person meeting after a period of absence.

OFFICERS PRESENT

K Neve, Clerk and K Harman, Assistant Clerk (KH) (minutes).

IN ATTENDANCE

Apologies had been received from County Cllr McInroy and Borough Cllr Sankey.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were two members of the public present.

23/147 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting

The meeting was recorded by the Clerk for accuracy of the minutes. The recording will be deleted once the meeting minutes are signed off at the next Full Council meeting.

23/148 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Muress (holiday) Norton (family funeral) and Scarbrough (work commitment).

23/149 Disclosure of Interests

Cllrs Ellery and Rowe and K Harman all declared an interest in agenda item 15 as shareholders in the Speldhurst Community Shop Ltd.

23/150 Declarations of Lobbying

Cllr Curry had been lobbied on both the Langton Green Pavilion and the Speldhurst Chapel Project.

23/151 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 5th June 2023 and the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on 15th June 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the 5th June 2023 Full Council Meeting and the 15th June 2023 Extraordinary Full Council Meeting, both previously forwarded to members, were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

23/152 Co-option of new Councillor

Cllr Lyle said that the panel had interviewed some excellent candidates and wished they had more vacancies available. One of the candidates would be invited to join the Highways Committee as a member of public as it was felt she could make a valuable contribution and encouraged to put her name forward again should another councillor vacancy arise. Cllr Lyle then made a recommendation on behalf of the Co-option Working Group that, Caroline Davies be co-opted as a councillor in her absence. It was then **RESOLVED** to co-opt Caroline Davies on to the Council. The declaration of acceptance of office would be signed on a separate occasion later that week.

23/153 Public Open Session

There were two members of the public present. Garry Saunders did not wish to speak. Julia Soyke asked about the responsibility for servicing the Defibrillator on the Ashurst recreation ground. The Assistant Clerk (KH) advised that the unit was purchased from Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) on behalf of ABSA (Ashurst and Blackham Sports Association) who managed the recreation ground at the time because the parish council (SPC) were able to secure a reduced price; however, responsibility for any maintenance or servicing was handed over to ABSA when they purchased the unit from SPC immediately afterwards. Consideration would be given to the Groundsman adding the unit on to his monthly defibrillators' checks.

23/154 Borough and County Councillor's Reports

There were none.

23/155 Chair's report

The Chair said that there was nothing to report that wasn't already covered in other items.

23/156 Clerk's Report

The Clerk had provided a briefing note containing a summary of recent communications and events including:

- SPC had carried out maintenance work to the trees on the Green, Langton Green which had received one note of thanks and one complaint.
- The Chair and Clerk would be presenting the Jubilee Awards for Olympic Spirit at both Speldhurst and Langton Green Primary Schools' leavers' services.
- A request for feedback on the APM.
- Nursery school workers had received damage to their cars in the carpark which was not covered by CCTV. The situation would be monitored.
- The Assistant Clerk (KH) was working on producing lanyards for representatives of SPC to wear when on duty.
- Thank you to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Cllr Rowe for all the hard work and long hours they had put into working on the Pavilion and Speldhurst Chapel project so far this year.
- Cllr Dooley was working with Langton Green Primary School staff, parents and residents to try and resolve their parking concerns.
- A warning of unauthorised encampments of travellers had been received from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

23/157 General Matters – Actionable tasks which do not fall to a committee.**Ongoing**

	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
89/22	Confirm appointment of Pavilion Building Manager.	Pav Man Cttee	04/11/22	Closed
9/23	Trial weed control April-Sept without use of glyphosate.	Env WG	09/01/23	In progress
27/23	Set up Cllr Ellery as a bank signatory.	RFO	03/04/23	Complete
32/23	Dissolve SPC Pavilion Ltd.	Cllr Lyle	03/04/23	In progress
33/23	Update and publish Spring Newsletter.	Asst Clerk (CB)	03/04/23	In progress
38/23	EV Charging WG to meet to discuss EV charging contract.	EV Charging WG	03/04/23	Complete
43/23	Pay LGVS a grant of £1,000 towards the TW Fringe Festival Clerk/RFO explaining that it does not set a precedent.		09/05/23	Complete

45/23	Commence process for PWLB in liaison with KALC.	Clerk/RFO/Chair	09/05/23	In progress
51/23	Advertise for Co-option and arrange interviews with prospective candidates.	Clerk	05/06/23	Complete
52/23	Update Website with new committee membership.	Clerk	05/06/23	Complete
53/23	Request Speldhurst Village Fete to submit a formal grant application plus invoice for the actual cost of insurance.	Clerk	05/06/23	Complete
54/23	Include item on Finance Cttee re: transfer of funds from Unity Bank Trust to Hampshire Trust in line with FSCS.	Clerk	05/06/23	Complete
55/23	Submit comments on planning applications to TWBC.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/06/23	Complete
56/23	Submit annual accounts for SPC Pavilion Ltd and include item on AGM at next FC to dissolve the company.	Clerk/RFO	05/06/23	In progress
57/23	Accept quote for Dynorod for drainage repairs at LGRG.	Clerk	05/06/23	Complete
58/23	Accept quotation for Capel Groundcare to replace springs in spring snail at LGRG.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/06/23	Complete
59/23	Update Winter Weather Policy on website.	Clerk	05/06/23	Complete
New – Items arising since last Full Council Meeting				
	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
60/23	Confirm co-option of Caroline Davies and arrange signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office.	Clerk	03/7/23	
61/23	Update committee membership and circulate to Cllrs.	Clerk	03/7/23	
62/23	Confirm and pay grant to Speldhurst Primary School.	Clerk/RFO	03/7/23	
63/23	Update Financial Regs & upload onto website/Cllrs' folder.	Clerk	03/7/23	
64/23	Invite Cllrs Leach and Davies to next Chapel Project Mtg.	Clerk/Asst Clerk (CB)	03/7/23	
65/23	Respond to Sevenoaks DC on planning application.	Asst Clerk (KH)	03/7/23	
66/23	Invite Cllr Davies to join Pavilion Review Panel.	Clerk	03/7/23	
67/23	Purchase Pavilion Booking System.	Asst Clerk (KH)	03/7/23	
68/23	Accept quotation for electrical testing and boiler service.	Clerk	03/7/23	
69/23	Provide Cllrs with update on energy usage.	Chair	03/7/23	
70/23	Pass on Cllrs' appreciation to Mr Myles & request photos.	Asst Clerk (KH)	03/7/23	
71/23	Purchase replacement bins for LGRG.	Asst Clerk (KH)	03/7/23	
72/23	Cllr Tarricone to liaise with Neil Barrington-Johnson regarding Air Traffic Committee.	Cllr Tarricone	03/7/23	

23/158 Appointment of committees

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Davies would join both the Planning and Finance Committees. The Clerk would update and circulate the committees list.

23/159 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Ellery

- A meeting of the Finance Committee had been held on the 26th June, the minutes having been circulated to members. Cllr Ellery ran through the list of grants approved during that meeting.
- There had been no budget virements.
- Interim payments made since the last meeting:
 - Unity Acct:** £70.54 BT DD
 - Mastercard:** £10.99 Amazon for Mobile Phone Case*; £79.55 Jaycee Trophies for 4 x Jubilee Trophies for Schools*.
- Expenditure starred above * was made under delegated authority.
- It was **RESOLVED** to grant £10,000 to Speldhurst Primary School towards their new school kitchen on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

f) It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following amendments to the Financial Regulations on recommendation of the Finance Committee:

- The limit for delegated authority for all three (Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk) be raised from £2,000 to £5,000.
- The limit of expenditure that the Finance Committee can approve without referral be raised from £5,000 to £7,500.
- The wording in the Financial Regulations be changed from “when it was desirable or necessary” to “when it was necessary”.

23/160 Accounts for Payment

It was **RESOLVED** that the invoices as listed below and checked by Cllr Leach, be paid.

Date	Payee Name	Reference	Amount £	Detail
04/07/2023	NBB Recycle Furniture	MT2497	3,030.00	Benches
04/07/2023	Paul Curry	MT2500	40.30	Travel Expenses
04/07/2023	KALC	MT25001	60.00	Dynamic Cllr Training
04/07/2023	Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2502	58.50	Room Hire
04/07/2023	Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd	MT2505	1,260.00	Pitch Maintenance
04/07/2023	Dyno Rod	MT2507	3,597.60	Drainage Repairs
04/07/2023	The Living Forest	MT2508	534.00	Tree Works
04/07/2023	Katie Neve	MT2509	42.30	Expenses
05/07/2023	Southpoint Electrical Ltd	MT2506	354.00	Dishwasher for Pavilion
10/07/2023	HMRC	MT2499	1,181.21	Tax and NI
10/07/2023	Parish Online	MT2503	240.00	Digital Mapping (annual)
20/07/2023	Employees	MT2498	5,369.79	Salaries
20/07/2023	EDF Energy	DD	1,721.00	Pavilion Energy
28/07/2023	Castle Water	DD	50.63	Pavilion Water
	TOTAL PAYMENTS		£17,539.33	

23/161 Speldhurst Chapel Project – an update

The community consultation was discussed in great detail with all councillors wanting to ensure that any consultation would be fair and a true representation of all four villages within the parish. It was **RESOLVED** to continue with a community consultation on whether the parish council should proceed with an application for a Public Works Loan, based on the current valuation of the Speldhurst Chapel and that the results of the consultation be considered fully at the September Full Council meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to give delegated authority to the working group for the Speldhurst Chapel Project to agree the contents and layout of the consultation document.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Davies, Ellery (optional member) and Leach would join the working group for the Speldhurst Chapel Project.

23/162 Planning Committee

A meeting of the Planning Committee had been held on 12th June and draft minutes had been circulated. Cllr Rowe reported that twelve planning applications had been considered and members had remained neutral on all but one application for Holmewood Ridge which they objected to on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site.

- Draft Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 and Draft Kent Mineral Sites Plan** – Regulation 18 Public Consultation June 2023: On the basis that previous consultation submissions had been ignored and the plans were considered irrelevant to the parish, it was **RESOLVED** to abstain from commenting on this occasion.
- To consider planning application 23/01473/FULL** – Land South of Hallborough, Poundsbridge, Penshurst TN11 8AS. Whilst being just outside the parish boundary, because of the proximity to Speldhurst and the resulting impact the proposal could have on residents, councillors recognised the importance of SPC commenting on this application.

Proposal: Erection of a forestry and wood workers’ workshop with solar arrays. Hardstanding and landscaping.

Decision: Councillors objected to the application on the grounds of unsuitability of the site and location, lack of overall consultation and also the impact on Speldhurst village. A response to the application was delegated to Cllr Rowe to write and the Assistant Clerk (KH) to submit the following day.

23/163 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)

a) **Update on the Pavilion Review** Cllr Lyle reported that a new three-month hire agreement had been issued to the Pavilion Café Manager and the Heads of Terms had been signed by all three parties. There was a lot of work to do before the three-month hire agreement expires including building cupboards (The Langton Green Village Society (LGVS) would be asked to try and source a carpenter) and ordering new stackable tables and chairs. It was noted that the LGVS had offered financial support. The importance of ensuring the new agreement does not form a tenancy was noted. A solicitor would be instructed to clarify the parties' respective rights in relation to the management of the Pavilion. Whether the Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA) has an overall precedence in booking the Pavilion was the primary question LGCSA said they wanted answered, although this was not the question that had been agreed in the Heads of Terms. Cllr Davies would be invited to join the Pavilion Review Panel.

b) **SPC Pavilion Ltd AGM.**

Cllr Lyle explained to councillors the matters under consideration and that the purpose of the actions involved was to dissolve SPC Pavilion Ltd.

- **RESOLVED** to amend the articles of the Company by special resolution to remove the requirement for the secretary of the Company to be the Clerk for the time being of Speldhurst Parish Council.
- **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Lyle as the new secretary of the Company and authorise the directors to inform Companies House of the change in secretary.
- **RESOLVED** to approve the annual accounts of the Company for submission to Companies House and HMRC.
- **RESOLVED** to dissolve the company once the above actions have been completed.

c) **Pavilion Booking System**

It was **RESOLVED** to purchase the Hallmaster booking system up to a maximum expenditure of £300. The Assistant Clerk (KH) would look into whether the system could take a damage deposit from hirers.

d) **Facilitation of external bookings for the Pavilion**

Cllrs Curry, Dooley, Leach and Lyle agreed to be on the Pavilion contact list to show hirers around the building before use.

e) **Electrical testing of the Pavilion**

It was **RESOLVED** to instruct Bright Sparks to carry out the electrical testing of the Pavilion on the recommendation of George Mercieca who was providing technical advice to the parish council. Cllr Curry would circulate an update on the Pavilion's energy consumption since the modifications to the boiler had been made.

23/164 Committees and Working Groups (WG) and other Reports: to include any meetings held since the last Full Council meeting, the draft minutes having previously been forwarded to all Members.

a) **Governance Committee** – A meeting is scheduled to be held on 10th July.

b) **Highways Committee** – The meeting had been rescheduled to 6th of July.

- It was **RESOLVED** to place planters on the pavement by the layby on Langton Road in an effort to prevent inconsiderate parking.
- It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Dooley would rejoin the Highways Committee.

c) **Amenities Committee** – Report by Cllr Lyle. There had not been a meeting since the last Full Council.

- It was noted the delegated action taken to accept the quotation from Capel Groundcare.
- It was noted that Trevor Myles would be renovating the benches outside The Crown Pub on Groombridge Green. Councillors asked for their appreciation to be passed onto Mr Myles.

- **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of two replacement bins on the Langton Green Recreation Ground at a maximum cost of £800.
 - Cllr Tarricone said that he would be following up on the request to the Village Society for help clearing the pond on The Boundary and would report back.
- d) **Air Traffic Committee** – There had been no meeting. Cllr Tarricone would speak to Neil Barrington-Johnson to organise a handover.
- e) **Environment WG** – Report by Cllr Turner. The next meeting was scheduled for 18th July.
- The contract for Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers had been put back to Kent County Council (KCC).
 - An interim update would be given to Full Council in August on the trial using glyphosate-free weedkilling methods for the last three months.
- f) **KALC** – The Chair reported on the recent meeting he had attended.
- KALC were taking on board feedback from members regarding their conferences following disappointing attendance at events and their Annual General Meeting (AGM). They were attempting to make events more appropriate and responsive.
 - A new website was being launched with a search function.
 - A cost of living grant of £300,000 was available with only £49,000 being claimed in the last round of applications. Member councils were being encouraged to submit grant requests in response to further information being circulated on the application criteria.
 - The Boundary Commission Report, which joins Speldhurst and Rusthall parishes together into one new ward, was being laid and prayed upon.
 - The TN2 Centre had been renamed Kent Relief.
 - Four Refuse Centres in the county were being closed and the Chair asked councillors if they wished to get involved supporting KALC with pressure to prevent the closures. Councillors agreed they would be interested to hear more information on the matter which would be brought to a future Full Council meeting by the Chair.
 - Cllr Turner said that he had attended an excellent KALC Climate Change webinar.

At 9.29pm it was **RESOLVED** to extend the meeting as necessary beyond 9.30pm.

23/165 Diary Dates – The following dates were noted:

6th July – Highways Committee (rescheduled date)

10th July – Governance Committee

17th July – Planning Committee

18th July – Environment Working Group

7th August – Full Council

14th August – Planning Committee

23/166 Items for Information:

There were none.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 9.31pm.

Chair