

**Local Government Act 1972**



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

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**

**Held at 7.30 pm on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 in the Palmer Room, Langton Green Village Hall**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllrs Curry (Chair), Lyle (Vice-Chair), Cleaver, Ellery (7.37pm), Norton and Turner.

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Borough Cllr Sharratt was in attendance.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the public present.

**25/43 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 wishes to speak should consider that their voice may be recorded and the recording could be requested via Freedom of Information.

**25/44 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence.**

The Chair announced that he had received Caroline Davies' resignation with immediate effect. Councillors expressed their appreciation of her work on the parish council and were sorry to lose her and wished her all the best.

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Tarricone (health reasons); Rowe (holiday); Littlefield and Dickens (work commitments); and Leach (family commitment).

Apologies were also received from County Cllr McInroy and Borough Cllr Sankey.

**25/45 Disclosure of Interests**

Councillors' ongoing disclosures were noted:

Cllrs Curry, Ellery and Rowe have shares in the Speldhurst shop and post office.

**25/46 Declarations of Lobbying**

The Chair had been lobbied on both the Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG) 3G pitch application and the pavilion.

**25/47 Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 – RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes, previously forwarded to Members, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**25/48 Public Open Session**

There were no members of the public present.

**25/49 Borough and County Councillors' Reports****Borough Cllr Sharratt**

- The Strategic Plan which through to 2032 had been passed at last week's Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) Full Council meeting. This may be updated due to the Local Government reorganisation which was looming large and likely to absorb a lot of staff and councillors' time. Kent had not been accepted onto the accelerated scheme which meant that local county council elections would take place in May.
- She had been invited to a walk at the River Grom in March to consider pollution.
- Please contact Cllr Sharratt if you have any questions.

**25/50 Clerk's Report**

- **Langton Green Village Hall (LGVH) / Little Birches Nursery** - following complaints from LGVH hirers having difficulty accessing the rooms they had booked and some feeling vulnerable when locking up after evening bookings, a decision was taken by the Trustees to leave the front door unlocked at all times. This contravened the safety regulations which the nursery school are obliged to follow and as a result, complaints had been received from parents/carers. The Trustees were meeting to discuss. For information only.
- **Kent County Council's (KCC) Parish Council Support Scheme £1,000 Application** - this had been successful on the basis that free mental health training sessions were hosted in the pavilion. All funds would be put towards pavilion running costs.
- **Kent Minerals & Waste Local Plan 2024-39 – Publication of Inspector's Report** – circulated.
- **Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy Public Consultation** - running until 12<sup>th</sup> March.
- **Devolution/Local Government Reorganisation/Society of Local Councils (SLCC) – Establishing a New Local Council** – briefings circulated.
- **Police Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Winter Newsletter** – circulated.
- **Castle Water and BT price increases** – information circulated.
- **Speldhurst Nursery and Dragonfly Farm** – The Clerk had introduced Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) to both and extended an invitation to attend the Annual Parish Open meeting.

**25/51 General Matters** – Actionable tasks which do not fall to a committee.

Ongoing				
	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
20/24	Contact TWBC Licensing regarding alcohol licence for the Pavilion. <i>Closed pending review. TWBC have information.</i>	Clerk	06/02/24	Closed
80/24	Draft email regarding Emirates flight pattern.	Cllr Tarricone/Clerk	02/09/24	Complete
01/25	Notify TWBC of precept.	Clerk	06/01/25	Complete
02/25	Article on precept for Website, Newsletters and Social Media.	Cllr Rowe/Asst Clerk (CB)	06/01/25	Complete
03/25	Include item on Governance Agenda re data on SPC activities.	Clerk	06/01/25	Complete
04/25	Confirm nomination for KALC Community Award.	Clerk/Asst Clerk (CB)	06/01/25	Complete
05/25	Follow up with interested residents for councillor vacancy.	Clerk	06/01/25	Complete
06/25	Contact new Chair of LGCSA to request a meeting and follow up with Working Party. (Cllrs Curry, Davies, Dickens, Leach & Lyle)	Chair	06/01/25	Complete
07/25	Include approved policies on website: cyber security, employee code of conduct and Kent code of conduct for members.	Clerk	03/02/25	Complete

08/25	Confirm appointment of Mulberry and Co as the new Payroll Provider.	Clerk	03/02/25	Complete
09/25	Instruct AJL Roadmarking to carry out repairs to and relining of LGRG car park.	Asst Clerk (KH)	03/02/25	Complete
10/25	Instruct The Living Forest to carry out maintenance works to the Pond at The Boundary and tree works at Roopers.	Asst Clerk (KH)	03/02/25	Complete
11/25	Set up meeting with the Community Hub and following that with LGCSA to discuss the Pavilion.	Clerk	03/02/25	Complete
	<b>New</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Created</b>	<b>Status</b>
12/25	Purchase new SID batteries.	Clerk/Chair	03/03/25	
13/25	Include EWG Terms of Reference and Weed Control Trial on next FC agenda.	Clerk	03/03/25	
14/25	Include a post on SPC website and social media asking residents to report low flying planes.	Chair/Asst Clerk (CB)	03/03/25	
15/25	Confirm renewals of canine waste contract.	Clerk	03/03/25	
16/25	Ask each Committee Chair to provide a summary for the APM.	Clerk	03/03/25	
17/25	Circulate Community Hub update to councillors.	Clerk	03/03/25	
18/25	Write to LGCSA regarding Management Agreement and Fundraising.	Chair	03/03/25	
19/25	Include renewal of Community Hub lease on next FC agenda.	Clerk	03/03/25	
20/25	Remove existing nappy bin collection at Pavilion and request users to take their nappies home and not put in the general waste bin.	Clerk	03/03/25	
21/25	Advertise the Great British Spring Clean on social media and offer use of SPC litter picking equipment and ask for photographs for newsletter.	Asst Clerk (CB)	03/03/25	

**25/52 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** – Cllr Lyle, Governance Chair: There had been no meeting.

- It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Transparency Code and give delegated authority for the Finance and Governance Committees to review the contents of the Code in more detail at the relevant meetings.

b) **Highways Committee** – Cllr Norton, Highways Chair: A meeting had been held on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

- The committee was trying to make a big impact on one or two of the larger items in the HIP (Highways Improvement Plan) for example mobile speed enforcement cameras which it was hoped would be championed by Mike Martin MP, as well as pushing progress forwards on some of the smaller priorities for example those affecting the primary school.
- Groombridge residents had recently put a huge amount of work into getting their village gullies unblocked.
- Cllr Curry had attended an encouraging meeting with TWBC regarding proposals for a cycle path between Langton Green, Rusthall and Tunbridge Wells. Borough Cllr Sharratt confirmed that the cycle path was in the recently passed Strategic Plan.
- It was **RESOLVED** to purchase two new Speed Indicator Devices (SID) batteries on the recommendation of the Highways Committee at a maximum cost of £180. Cllr Curry would investigate purchase options.
- An Informal Consultation on yellow lines outside the LGRG and “School Keep Clear” marking on Lampington Row would soon commence.

- The insurance claim for the SID post on Groombridge Green had been mostly paid by insurers. The Clerk said she would accept the underpayment and bring the matter to a close.
- c) **Amenities Committee** – Cllr Lyle, Chair: There had been no meeting; the next was scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> March. Cllr Norton gave his apologies.
- d) **Environment WG (EWG)** – Cllr Turner, Chair: There had been a meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February which had been lively and positive.
  - Suggestions on changes to the Terms of Reference were discussed which would be tabled at the next Full Council meeting. It was agreed in principle that the EWG would be able to input into any large-scale planning applications, starting with a three-month trial period when the planning clerk would flag up possible applications to the EWG. The logistics of how the EWG's comments could be fed into the planning committee's decisions would be considered further.
  - Natural Roundup/Glyphosate alternative: A decision on whether to continue with natural Roundup would be considered at the next Full Council meeting.
  - EV (Electric Vehicle) Charger feedback had been received from KCC which indicated an average of ten users a month, a couple of which being longer charges.
  - The works in Pocket Park were now complete. Grants applied for would pay for the works in full.
- e) **KALC (Kent Association of Local Councils)** – Cllr Curry advised there was nothing to report.
- f) **Air Traffic Issues** – Cllr Curry reported a response to SPC's letter had been received from NATS (National Air Traffic Services) requesting further information on the precise identity and height of the planes in question. It was suggested that a post be put on socials asking residents to report any low-flying planes they see on a plane-identification app. A decision had not been made regarding alignment with a campaign group.

**25/53 Finance Committee** – Report by the Clerk in Cllr Rowe's absence. There had been no meeting – the next one was scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> March.

- a) Report on interim payments made since the last meeting.
 

**Unity Trust Bank:** £45.13 Langton Green Village Hall Room Hire; £230 JLM Pest Control; £1,329.66 KCC for Replacement SID Post; £38.22 Unity Trust Bank Credit Card; £22.17 DD Castle Water for Pavilion Water; £350.44 Veolia for Waste and Recycling Removal; £11.10 Unity Trust Bank Charges; £31.92\* Tate Fencing for Postmix; £440.55 N.E.S.T. Pension.

**Mastercard:** £9 DD card charge; £29.22\* Langton Green Petrol Station for Fuel for Van; £16.95\* Amazon Rear Number Plate Light Lamps for SPC Van. £55.31\* Langton Green Petrol Station for Fuel for Van.
- b) To note decisions made under delegated authority. Items are starred.
- c) **RESOLVED** to approve the renewal quotation from Tivoli for canine waste removal of £135.17 per month (excl. VAT).

#### 25/54 Accounts for Payment

**RESOLVED** that the invoices as listed below and checked by Cllr Turner be paid.

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction Detail
03/03/2025	BT PLC	DD	69.42	Office Phone & Broadband
04/03/2025	Catherine Barrett	MT2902	49.50	Mileage Claim
04/03/2025	Kate Harman	MT2903	61.90	Expenses
04/03/2025	Katie Neve	MT2904	39.85	Expenses
04/03/2025	Capel Groundcare	MT2905	240.00	Playground Inspections
04/03/2025	The Living Forest Ltd	MT2906	504.00	Emergency Treework

04/03/2025	Viking Direct	MT2907	116.36	Toilet Roll and Stationery
04/03/2025	Brooklynn Monk	MT2908	40.00	Pavilion Cleaning
04/03/2025	Performance Fire Protection Ltd	MT2909	69.00	Fire Extinguisher Service
04/03/2025	Cloudy IT	MT2910	268.32	Monthly IT Contract
04/03/2025	Tate Fencing Ltd	MT2913	155.62	Wooden Posts for Groombridge
10/03/2025	Unity Trust Mastercard	Credit Card	81.26	To bring balance to zero
10/03/2025	N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	DD	701.73	Pensions
10/03/2025	BT PLC	DD	26.93	Office Mobile
14/03/2025	KCC (KCS)	DD	68.56	Photocopier - Printing
14/03/2025	Hugo Fox	DD	11.99	Monthly Website
20/03/2025	Employees	MT2911	5,302.88	Salaries
20/03/2025	EDF Energy	DD	595.71	Pavilion Energy
20/03/2025	HMRC	MT2912	1,545.06	Income Tax and NI
31/03/2025	Unity Trust Bank	DD	11.25	Bank Charges

**25/55 Update on Vacancy on Council**

There had been no further interest. Caroline Davies had resigned from her position as councillor with immediate effect, leaving two vacancies.

**25/56 Annual Parish Meeting (APM) 2025**

Each committee Chair was asked to provide a very brief summary for the presentation at the APM with the main focus being on the guest speakers.

**25/57 Speldhurst Chapel Project**

There was nothing new to report.

**25/58 Planning Committee – Report provided by Cllr Cleaver, Planning Chair:**

A meeting had been held on 12<sup>th</sup> February and the minutes circulated. A letter had been sent to TWBC Planning supporting the Groombridge Place application being dealt with promptly and in a constructive manner.

**25/59 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG) and Pavilion**

- An update on the Community Hub would be circulated.
- Shared matters with Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA): The Pavilion WG had held meetings with all the major stakeholders as well as regular in-house meetings to discuss how best to increase the pavilion's income streams – the deficit was significant and needed to be addressed. To be discussed further at the April Full Council meeting.
- It was **RESOLVED** to remove nappy bin disposal facilities from the pavilion. This decision was in an effort to reduce the regular additional charges imposed by Veolia for heavy and contaminated waste. It would be made clear to all users that in future all nappies must be taken home by parents/carers and not put into the general waste bins.

**25/60 Great British Spring Clean 2025**

It was **RESOLVED** to provide information on the Great British Spring Clean to residents via social media, including offering use of SPC's litter picking equipment to encourage individual participation and request photographs for village magazines.

**25/61 Chair's Report**

The Chair reported that he had secured savings in fees by moving the parish council's domain name from CWS (CompuWeb Communications Services Limited) to Hugh Fox.

**25/62 Diary Dates** – The following dates were noted:

- 17<sup>th</sup> March - Planning Committee
- 10<sup>th</sup> March – Finance Committee
- 24<sup>th</sup> March – Amenities Committee
- 7<sup>th</sup> April – Full Council – Ashurst Village Hall

**25/63 Items for Information**

There were none.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.49pm.

**Chair**