



Speldhurst
Parish Council

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

**Minutes of a Highways Committee Meeting held in the Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground
on Thursday 7th November 2013 at 10.00am**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Podbury (Chair), Mrs Horne, Parker, with Mrs Norton and Mr Wheeler

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris May – Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: Jonathan Dean, Steward KCC Highways & Transportation

1. **To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence:** Cllr Langridge and Mrs Waters (both prior engagement)
2. **Disclosure of Pecuniary or Other Significant Interests:** There were none.
3. **Declarations of Lobbying:** Cllr Mrs Podbury was contacted on various issues
4. **Minutes: RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting dated **5th September 2013** which have previously been distributed to all members, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
5. **Matters Arising and Correspondence:**
 - Speeding traffic at Lower Green Road – an email from Mrs Foster of Rusthall had been received regarding the speed of traffic approaching Rusthall along Lower Green Road asking if SPC could work in conjunction with Rusthall Parish to slow the traffic down. The clerk had spoken to KCC prior to the meeting who confirmed that there was no accident record in the area and would therefore take no action. The clerk suggested measuring the speed of traffic by having KCC install a count to create a database. This evidence can then be used to substantiate further action. Any data collection would have to be commissioned by the Parish Councils and **the clerk was asked to contact Rusthall PC to determine whether they would consider this approach or whether they have any other data from this area such as speed checks. He will communicate with Mrs Foster updating her on the action to be taken.**
 - Overgrown hedge in Barden Road outside Holly Cottage – KCC have written a new notice to the owner asking for the hedge to be cut back further.
 - Cllr Mrs Podbury said that the Highways Seminar had been useful and informative. She summarised some of the topics – KCC is looking at 20mph zones which will have to be self-policing and based on a crash record; the problem of HGVs on inappropriate country lanes was a county wide problem and KCC are trying to guide large lorries away from narrow lanes; KCC are looking in to rural caretakers/lengthsmen and there was the offer to visit the Highways Operations Centre at Aylesford which Cllrs Mrs Podbury, Horne and Mrs Norton will consider.

- Cllr Mrs Podbury complimented KCC on the reaction to the storm damage in the parish
- Cllr Mrs Podbury and the clerk had recently completed a KCC Highways survey* .

6. Public Open Session: There were no members of the public present.

7. Monitoring of recent accidents in the Parish – The list of accidents in 2013 has been updated and circulated. Recent accidents had all occurred in Langton Green and particular concern was noted at the number of accidents in the area of the junction of the A264 and B2110 near The Farm Shop. The survey* asked what roads or junctions could be improved and this junction was requested to be assessed by KCC. It will continue to be monitored.

He advised the committee that the recent change in PCSO had resulted in a reduction in information exchange, especially concerning accident data.

8. Standard reply – the clerk had circulated a finalised version of a standard reply, which is to be used as the basic response to enquiries on highways issues, and this was approved by the committee.

9. Maintenance

- a) Over-grown hedges – the clerk produced a copy of a letter used by another Council that was a dual approach from County and Parish which was a “polite” request and could be used as an initial approach to landowners. The clerk was requested to produce a version so that KCC and the committee could review it.
- b) Potholes and drains – Flooding at Stone Ness was still a major issue and had not been resolved by the recent works by KCC. Cllr John Davies has escalated the problem to the District Manager. The flooding at Smallbrook/Lower Green Road was still happening and the Highways Steward will investigate and report. Cllr Parker advised of a blocked drain on Langton Road outside the Texaco garage. There still pot hole issues in Stockland Green Road which the Steward will look in to and report back.
- c) It was reported that the seasonal problem of leaves blocking drains was occurring. The Steward said that TWBC was responsible for road clearance.

10. Outstanding issues by village:

The clerk has not made any further progress regarding the “gate” system. He would endeavour to make further enquiries.

a) Speldhurst

- Barden Road – traffic mounting the pavement. There had been some letters regarding the plan and further explanations had been provided at the Open Meeting and the November edition of the Speldhurst News. This would be installed in December
- Speldhurst Hill –Jonathan Dean advised that SE Water had fixed the leak.
- Re-lining – the clerk would ensure that the double yellow lines in Barden Road would be re-painted when the new scheme was implemented.
- Parking – TWBC confirmed that Speldhurst was patrolled by traffic wardens and it varied between 1-2 visits per week. Two tickets had been issued in three months.

b) Langton Green

- Cllr Mrs Podbury discussed the school expansion and the recent email sent by the school to parents and the request for statistics and speedwatch volunteers was welcomed. She mentioned an email from Cllr Mrs Soyke who had minuted a request that Kent Highways assess the Speldhurst Road to see if they would allow a 20 mph limit being put on it near the school. Cllr Mrs Soyke said that various members had asked for schools in their area to be assessed, and a list in order of priority will be drawn up. Funding will almost certainly have to come from KCC members.
- Re-surfacing of certain roads – there was nothing further to add at this stage. The survey* completed by the SPC highlighted the poor state of some residential roads and country lanes.
- Erosion of grass verges at The Green - this work will not go ahead until SE Water had finished.

- The clerk met Earl Bourner, KCC District Manager, to discuss the road/path outside the cottages. The service road is a KCC adopted road and therefore no gravelling would go ahead. Further improvements (pot holes and resurfacing) would be possible but not until the new financial year. A contribution by the SPC to these works would ensure this work be done as it was not safety critical.
 - There was nothing further to report on the parking at The Hare junction.
- c) **Ashurst**
- Ashurst Hill – speeding traffic – the clerk has had no further correspondence from KMSCP – he will continue to ascertain the possibility of a speed camera
 - Flooding near Stone Ness – see 9b)
- d) **Groombridge**
- Groombridge Hill – speeding traffic - see Ashurst hill. There was also a problem of mud on the road and Mrs Norton would provide more details to the clerk.
 - **The clerk was asked to investigate the purchase of stone blocks for The Green**

11. Speed Watch – The clerk had contacted PSE Rollinson since the last meeting and he was prepared to come to the parish to do training which would take between 1-1.5 hours. He will review the places for using the equipment at the same time and required about two weeks' prior notice. Mrs Podbury reiterated her desire to stand down on speed watch and unless a councillor came forward the sessions would not go ahead.

12. Review of Highways Committee's budget – The clerk produced reports and said that the only expenditure expected in this financial year was for the Barden Road works which would be offset by the money for the fingerposts. A full budget of £20,000 has been reinstated for the year 2014-15.

13. Items for Information

- Mrs Norton said that no Speldhurst news had been included in the Groombridge November magazine. The clerk had spoken to Rev Sharon Francis about this and it was an unfortunate error because the vacancy had not been advertised.
- Cllr Parker had been approached about the continual problem of exiting from Stonewall Park Road on to the A264.
- A copy of the Ward Walks report was given to everyone and these were to be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting.
- The clerk suggested that a "Highways" page on the website might improve communication and he was requested to proceed with obtaining costings for approval.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.20am

Chairman