

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

MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 10th MAY 2010 at 7.30pm IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, LANGTON GREEN VILLAGE HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs. Mrs Jeffreys (Chairman), Mrs Soyke, Cllr Mrs Paulson-Ellis, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Hull, Brown, Ellis, Langridge, Milner, Parker, Pendleton and Wheeler

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris May, Clerk

County Councillor John Davies
Borough Cllrs David Jukes (left meeting at 9pm) and Julian Stanyer
Mrs Liz White –resident of Langton Green
Mr Anthony Bartlett – resident of Speldhurst
Mr Mike Wheeler – resident of Ashurst (arrived after the meeting started)
Mrs Ruth Guerrier – resident of Ashurst (arrived after the meeting started)

10/051 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Cllr Mrs Soyke proposed that Cllr Mrs Jeffreys continue as Chairman. This was unanimously agreed. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

10/052 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys proposed that Cllr Mrs Soyke continue as Vice Chairman. This was unanimously agreed. Cllr Mrs Soyke said that this would be her last year as Vice Chairman.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Mrs Waters (family engagement)

10/053 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST:

Personal & Prejudicial – Cllr Mrs Soyke – Ashurst Village Common Land (1825-3) and Dog bins in Ashurst (10/065). The clerk - approval of his overtime; consideration of a pay rise; payments while abroad (10/059iv) and amendment to clerk's contract (10/063). Cllrs Brown, Langridge and Parker – request from LGRS for permission to use the LG Recreation Ground car park for the annual fete (10/066). Cllrs Ellis and Parker – decision on grant request from LGCT towards Village Hall extension (10/059ii)

10/054 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING: No declarations were received

10/055 MINUTES: The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on **1st March 2010**, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.

10/056 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION – The meeting was adjourned. Mr Bartlett referred to a planning application for the redevelopment of Bradleys Mill, Speldhurst that is due to be discussed at the next planning meeting and he

said that on the application it referred to discussions with Speldhurst Parish Councillors. Cllr Mrs Podbury confirmed that there had been no discussions with the applicant by any Councillor.

Cllr David Jukes advised that there had been an exercise undertaken called "Total Place" where all Government agencies (TWBC, KCC, KHS and Police) could be under one roof. He confirmed that no decision had been made by TWBC to relocate to Hawkenbury and in all 38 sites were being considered, including the redevelopment of the present listed building. Matters were still in the feasibility stage. He was questioned by Cllr Mrs Hull about the cinema site which he said was a different issue; however he agreed with her that he would not be happy with a second derelict site.

Cllr Julian Stanyer and Cllr John Davies had no items.

Mrs Liz White introduced herself. The meeting was re-opened.

10/057 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES INCLUDING KALC REPRESENTATIVE

Cllr Mrs Podbury said that the Environment Committee was not needed as a separate committee at this time. The feedback from the Parish Vision project had not given it a high enough priority and she said that it could become a sub-committee of Parish Vision.

Cllr Brown said that he was prepared to commit more time to the environment issues and less time to planning. He would stay on planning and would ensure there was a quorum but would not attend every meeting.

All other Councillors indicated that they were happy to continue in their present roles.

It was **RESOLVED** that the environment committee would be incorporated in Parish Vision and that Cllr Brown would join the committee and would attend meetings that involved environmental issues.

10/058 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - Report by Clir Jeffreys

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that the Committee had not met since the last Full Council meeting. A meeting was planned for Thursday May 20th and its main priority would be to ensure the Annual Return was completed.

10/059 FINANCE COMMITTEE - Report by Clir Parker

- i) Cllr Parker referred to the minutes of the Finance meeting and the discussion on the precept. He acknowledged that there was a lot of ill feeling and anger at the APM and that the Parish Council could have done more to prevent this by being more open and advising the Parish before the precept was published. A six monthly newsletter has been suggested to keep residents better informed. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys recommended that there would be an Open meeting in the autumn before the precept is decided to gather ideas from residents this was agreed.
- ii) Cllr Parker referred to the minutes of the meeting held on Friday May 7th and gave an overview of the plans for the Village Hall extension outlined by Trevor Palmer at that meeting. The current hall was at 98% occupancy and the extension would be in 3 phases depending upon funding. The planning application is to be made in the name of the Parish Council at a cost of £8,003. The total cost of the project will be £341,160 (including VAT at 20%) and other estimates would be sought. The Parish Office part of the build would be £90,069 (including planning application costs) however there may be an opportunity to reduce costs if the Parish Council commission phase 1 and can reclaim VAT. This will be thoroughly investigated before any commitment is made. Grants are being sought from Borough and County Councils and other sources and the worst case scenario could mean a shortfall of £37,384 in which case phase 3 would be delayed. It was not anticipated that any building would start until April next year. The Finance Committee recommended that a letter be written undertaking to guarantee any shortfall on the project up to a maximum of £15,000.

Cllr Pendleton said that with a change in government we should be prepared for a change in VAT rules. Cllr Mrs Soyke said that the plans did not show the play area and they should do so. It was **RESOLVED** by a vote of 10-0 to issue the letter and underwrite any shortfall up to a maximum of £15,000. Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee had submitted a detailed application requesting a grant towards the refurbishment of the pavilion. The amount requested was £18,638 which was the largest amount sought. The Finance Committee had discussed the application in detail and recommended to Full Council that a sum of £18.638 be granted for the project. It was **RESOLVED** by 12-0 to grant the sum of £18.638.00

The Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust had written requesting a grant towards the clearing and fencing of the unregistered land but the Finance Committee considered that unless the land was insured that the Parish Council should not grant any money.

iii) EDF had written to customers last autumn advising that they were changing their pricing policy and would in future be charging for unmetered supply. This letter had been sent to the old clerk's address and consequently the Parish Council was unaware of the change. This would mean an increase to approximately £500pa. The first guarter's invoice had to be paid but the Finance Committee recommended

that we change supplier as soon as was practical. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the clerk should investigate and change electricity supplier as soon as possible.

A new notice board had been budgeted for and Speldhurst had requested a new one. When the site was agreed with the Speldhurst Village Hall Trustees it would be ordered. Cllr Mrs Podbury was to advise the clerk when this had been agreed.

The Finance Committee had authorised the payment of £750 to the LGRS toward their annual insurance.

iv) The clerk left the room. It was **RESOLVED** that the clerk's salary rise by one spinal point to LC2 31 (£26,276 pro rata). Continuation of overtime for a period of three months had been **AGREED** by the Finance Committee and overtime payments for the period since the March meeting were **AUTHORISED**. The clerk rejoined the meeting.

10/060 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT -March 2010 - Invoices verified by Cllr Wheeler

The following payments had been made and authorisation was requested retrospectively

Mr C May	£283.65	Expenses	809
HMRC	£593.00	Employer's/Employee's NI/Tax	810
Mr C May	£1,165.50	Salary	811
KALC	£1,223.50	Annual Membership	812
BT PLC	£30.02	Mobile phone bill	822
Stuart Page Architects	£3,577.93	St John's Groombridge Prof fees	814
Rymans	£124.97	Stationery	815
SE Water	£18.00	LG Rec Pavilion	816
Speldhurst Village hall	£51.00	Hall hire	817
Viking Direct	£94.96	Stationery	818
El Parido	£470.00	Printing	819
RIP Cleaning Services	£132.19	Dog Bins	820
Direct Technical Services	£20.35	Light Maintenance	821
Void			813

Total £7,785.07 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – April-May 2010 – Invoices verified by Cllr Langridge

EDF Energy 1 Ltd	£126.44	Street Lighting	823
ACRK	£35.00	Annual Membership	824
M R Lawrence	£180.00	Roopers mowing	825
EDF Energy Customers PLC	£130.49	LGRG Pavilion lighting	826
Southern Water	£20.93	LGRG Pavilion water	827
BT PLC	£29.90	Mobile phone	828
BT Payment Services Ltd	£100.85	Office phone	829
LGCT	£18.00	Hall hire March	830

M R Lawrence	£120.00	LGRG Rubbish Clearing	831
Kall Kwik	£300.80	Headed paper; slips and cards	832
RIP Cleaning Services	£105.75	Dog bins LG	833
Mr C May	£1,254.12	Salary	834
Mr C May	£173.40	Expenses	835
HMRC	£650.43	Employers NI/Employees NITax	836
LGRS	£750.00	Annual Insurance	837
Mrs R Hull	£21.93	Refreshments APM	838
Premiere Digital Ltd	£217.38	Precept Leaflet	839

Total £4,235.42

10/061 HIGHWAYS REPORT – The clerk had attended a meeting with Kent Highways Services on 17th March at their offices in Maidstone with Steven Noad who is the newly appointed area engineer. A number of outstanding issues were discussed and he was invited to come to the Parish and see some of the problems for himself. There was a further meeting April 7th when the clerk gave him a tour of the Parish and outlined the need for action on the outstanding issues including the parking restrictions in Speldhurst, the Ashurst ISS and the problems at Groombridge. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys asked Cllr Davies if there were other opportunities for funding the ISS's and he confirmed that there was the Member's Highways fund. There would be further discussions on this at a later date. At this point Cllr Mrs Jeffreys referred to Chris Ponsford's email dated May 1st 2010 when she asked Councillors to consider traffic policies adopted in Kensington and Chelsea where they "taken down signs, barriers and road markings to encourage pedestrians and motorists to take responsibility for their own behaviour". The idea was rejected by Councillors because Parish Vision had told the Parish Council that speeding through villages was the number one concern and that the reason ISSs were being considered was that drivers were not acting responsibly. Cllr Davies was also asked about the speed camera in Langton Green which did not appear to be working. He would investigate this with the Camera Partnership and report back to the clerk.

Cllr Mrs Podbury asked if she could represent the Parish Council at the meeting to be held on June 2nd because she felt that certain issues needed to be raised. The Council agreed that both she and the clerk should try and attend

2190 Langton Green – Land outside the old Watson Hall – The clerk had met Alan Legg, the Conservation Officer who said that TWBC were keen to be involved in the project and had drawn up another plan. He also confirmed that TWBC had funds available. The clerk would continue with the project as soon as possible.

10/008 PARISH WEBSITE – Cllr Pendleton confirmed that the Parish Council's new web address would be www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk and this had been registered. A meeting would be held soon and he was confident that the new website could be active in four weeks.

1825-3 ASHURST VILLAGE PLAY AREA – Registering of Common Ground – This subject was discussed under Finance. The insurance issue had to be resolved before any progress could be made.

2249 PARISH OFFICE - This subject was discussed under Finance.

10/062 ASSISTANT CLERK INCLUDING A DECISION ON THE CONTRACT – The interviews for the post had been delayed until Thursday 13th May and Cllr Mrs Jeffreys requested that the interview committee be given the power to appoint so that she can start work before the next meeting where she would be introduced to Council. This was unanimously **AGREED.** The Finance Committee had decided that the monthly office allowance would be £25pm and that the wording regarding her holiday would be the same as the clerk's contract. It was **RESOLVED** that there would be no sick pay during the probationary period.

Cllr Brown asked if the new contract was numbered and he requested a copy which Cllr Mrs Jeffreys confirmed she would send in the post.

10/063 AMENDMENT TO CLERK'S CONTRACT – This matter was discussed when the clerk had left the room for 10/059iv). It was **RESOLVED** to amend the clerk's contract at paragraph 9a) to read "You are entitled to 5.6 weeks leave per year in accordance with the Working Time Regulations".

10/064 APPOINTMENT OF A TRUSTEE TO SPELDHURST VILLAGE HALL – CIIr Mrs Podbury requested that her name be put forward and left the room. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that CIIr Mrs Podbury be the Parish Council's appointed Trustee. CIIr Mrs Podbury rejoined the meeting. She said that a letter would be required confirming the appointment.

10/010 INSTALLATION OF WIFI IN PARISH VILLAGE HALLS – Following the results of Parish Vision the Trustees of Speldhurst Village Hall had decided to install wifi and would be paying for the installation themselves. If this was successful other Trustees could do the same. It was therefore decided to take this item off the Agenda.

10/065 DOG BINS IN ASHURST – The clerk read out an email from Mr & Mrs Pallas requesting that dog bins be installed in certain areas of the Village to encourage dog owners to use them and control the amount of dog mess that is being left on the ground. Cllr Mrs Soyke then left the room. There followed a discussion on the pros and cons of dog bins and Mr Mike Wheeler and Mrs Ruth Guerrier, both residents of Ashurst, were opposed to the idea because the bins were no guarantee that owners would use them (as is the case at the Langton Green Recreation Ground), they were ugly and would urbanise the village. After deliberating Councillors felt that they would wait for the results of the Parish Vision survey to see if it was a priority with other residents and then make a decision, possibly at the June meeting. Cllr Mrs Soyke re-joined the meeting.

10/066 REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM LGRS TO USE THE LG RECREATION GROUND CAR PARK FOR THE VILLAGE FETE – Clirs Parker, Brown and Langridge left the room. It was unanimously **AGREED** to allow the LGRS use of the LG Car Park on Saturday 3rd July 2010. Clirs Parker, Brown and Langridge re-joined the meeting.

10/067 NOMINATION OF A "LOCAL HERO" FOR "LOVE WHERE WE LIVE AWARDS" – It was proposed that the Parish Council nominate PCSO Ray Nuttall who announced that he was retiring next month. This was unanimously **AGREED** and Cllr Langridge would submit the forms on behalf of the Council. He asked for Councillors to let him have their reasons over the next few days. It was also **AGREED** that the Parish Council should write a letter of thanks to him for his outstanding work during his time as our PCSO. Cllr Brown would enquire about a replacement.

10/068 CONSIDERATION FOR AN ADDITIONAL MEETING IN MARCH – The meeting in May had been the first meeting since March 1st and this had been a gap of ten weeks where the Council has not been able to make or take decisions. This was considered too long and it was proposed that if the gap in future years was similar that another meeting be held at the end of March to make payments and make decisions only. It was **RESOLVED** that a judgement would be made on a year to year basis if the meeting was necessary.

10/069 TWBC DECISION TO RELOCATE TO HAWKENBURY – This had been covered under 10/056 Public Open Session.

10/070 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys had nothing to report.

10/071 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- i) Planning Cllr Mrs Podbury referred Members to the Minutes and had nothing further to add to them. She asked Cllr Stanyer about a meeting that he had attended with Cllr Jukes with the heads of TWBC Planning Dept regarding clarification of "calling in", especially when public clamour demanded issues to be considered rather than on planning issues. He reported that the meeting had been satisfactory and that there seemed to be a slightly more relaxed attitude to the issue now. Cllr Mrs Podbury also asked if the Borough Councillors could intervene regarding the TWBC Planning website which was being upgraded, but progress was very slow, and consequently the old site was being left which was making it very difficult for users. He was told that staff at TWBC Planning were extremely helpful and supportive despite these problems.
 - Cllr Mrs Podbury then asked for the new Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee, which had been previously circulated to Councillors to be adopted. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to adopt the new Terms of Reference.
- ii) Parish Vision Cllr Mrs Podbury said that ACRK were still working on inputting the results of the questionnaires and only had the results back from Speldhurst. Langton Green was to be finished this week and the others to follow.
- iii) Recreation Ground Cllr Ellis said that dog mess was still a problem despite dog bins being on the recreation ground. He advised the Council that he had been unsuccessful in getting anybody interested

- in the grounds man's job. He advised the Council that three of the trees that had been moved because of the cricket netting had died and would need replacing in the autumn. The clerk was asked to contact the Tree Officer about a very large dead tree on the recreation ground. The clerk advised the Council that he had made more investigations and had been quoted £8-10,000 per pitch for drainage. He would make further enquiries and get more details before submitting the information to Councillors.
- iv) Footpaths Cllr Milner had written a detailed report for Council which had been circulated to Members. He had made further investigations in to the purchase of the container and if the Council wanted a new one (which in the long run would be more economical) it would cost slightly more than had been set aside in the budget. It was **RESOLVED** by a vote of 11-1 to purchase a new container from Boxtainers in Grays at a cost of £1,805.00 and to increase the budget accordingly. He would also look into the need for a Decision Notice and if it was necessary he would make the application.

 The clerk said that he had arranged a meeting with KCC representative Jonathan Bibby on Tuesday 18th May to ask his advice about the access to Breakstones Lane (The Twitten). Cllr Milner would join the meeting.
- v) KALC There was nothing to report. The next meeting June 9th.
- vi) Environment Cllr Mrs Podbury and Cllr Brown would attend a Community Climate Change Conference in June. In future this sub-committee report would be incorporated in Parish Vision.
- vii) Local Needs Housing Cllr Wheeler reported that TWBC had rejected three of the brown field sites. One land owner had reacted positively and that was being pursued. A walkabout in Langton Green was scheduled for 18th June.

10/072 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 1st MARCH 2010 - There were none.

10/073 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- i) Notification of road closures on Sunday May 9th for the Speldhurst Pram Race from TWBC
- ii) Open Spaces Society requesting contributions towards keeping public footpaths open.
- iii) CPRE "Countryside Voice" Magazine
- iv) ACRK letter re Kent Village of the Year 2010 application pack.
- v) 9 copies of "Explore" Magazine free from KCC
- vi) Letter from Signal UK Ltd offering printing services (Rusthall based)
- vii) Letter from Penshurst Parish Council advising that they have been unable to solve the issue of the bus stop
- viii) Consultation on KHS Winter Service Policy and Plan document from Nick Chard proposing consultation on improving the winter service Cllr Davies said that £2.5million additional funds had been allocated to KHS to tackle the problem of potholes. Cllr Brown said that if the roads had been in good condition before the frosts of the winter, with no cracks or damage, and a sealed surface, frost does not cause a pothole.
- ix) Weald Wise Newsletter from Kent High Weald Partnership
- x) Fieldwork Magazine from CPRE
- xi) Invitation from LGRS to attend their AGM on May 11th
- xii) Letter from Kent Audit offering an internal audit service. This is a KCC company based at County Hall and audit 12 of Kent's parish councils.
- xiii) Camp Beaumont multi-activity day camps for children at Kent College Pembury from 19th July to 20th August
- xiv) Kent Voice magazine from CPRE
- xv) Newsletter from West Kent Mediation
- xvi) Letter from Jenny Fitzsimmons thanking SPC for the £100 donation toward the microphone for the Smiley Faces Toddler Group
- xvii)Email from Mayor advising that the Mayor's Civic Service will be held on Sunday 4th July at King Charles the Martyr Church
- xviii) ACRK march letter regarding proposing Rural Community Retailer of 2010
- xix) Letter dated March 4th from TWBC regarding South East in Bloom (deadline May 14th)
- xx) KHS letter Mar 9 re potholes
- xxi) Audit Commission letter dated March 9 advising that Wayne Rickard is now our external auditor.
- xxii)Email dated March 10th from Tony Brown Griffin thanking us for the bollards on the car park at LG Rec
- xxiii) Email from Deborah Hargreaves owner of Hollonds Farm introducing herself and her husband James Abbott and advising us of their basic plans.
- xxiv) Oast to Coast magazine
- xxv) Phone call from David Burbage, Chairman of LG Allotments to Chairman, to say thank you for the generous grant (sadly thieves are stealing copper water pipes)
- xxvi) Email from KALC new Power of Well Being course at Sevenoaks Town Council Offices on Monday 24th May

- xxvii) Email from Kent County Agricultural Society requesting funds to continue their work raising children's awareness of the rural and agricultural lives. (They are co-sponsors of Best Kept Village Competition with ACRK)
- xxviii) Email from TWBC Cllr Charles Mackonochie requesting that a representative from each Parish Council be present to discuss improving relations between KHS and the Parishes. Meeting proposed on June 2nd. He would like to know who will attend. It was **RESOLVED** that the clerk would ask if the Council could send two representatives (see 10/061)
- xxix) Magazine from Kompan Playgrounds and recreation company
- xxx) Invitation to attend a meeting of Protect Kent (CPRE) TW District at Matfield Village Hall on Friday 8th June at 8pm
- xxxi) Letter from St Mary's Church Speldhurst acknowledging receipt of the £500 grant and thanking the Parish Council. Also thanking us for the £100 grant to the toddlers group.
- xxxii) Email from Chris Ponsford dated May 1st regarding public money and traffic signs.
- xxxiii) Brochure from Record RSS Ltd for play equipment.
- xxxiv) Email from Malcolm Dowd noting that the new tarmaced footpath from Asher Reeds to Speldhurst Road is becoming infested with weeds. Could the Council organise spraying to get rid of them? Cllrs Langridge and Milner to investigate.
- xxxv) Email from Micky Sandall of Went Farm House regarding problems on footpath WT77. Cllr Milner has referred this to KCC.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED REGARDING THE PRECEPT

- xxxvi) Chris Ponsford, 4 Upton Quarry various emails
- xxxvii) Janice Chambers, Furzefield Ave xxxviii) Martin Atkinson, 17 Dornden Drive xxxix) Michael Bright, Stonewall Park Road
- xl) Robert Neville, by email
- xli) Paul Harvey, St Mary's Lane
- xlii) Ian Brooker, Newlands
- xliii) Alan Baker, Hither Chantlers
- xliv) Alan Passmore, Roopers
- xlv) Peter Mitchell, Stonewall Park Road
- xlvi)Tim Morrison, Roopers
- xlvii) Chris Mann, Dene Way
- xlviii) Dr Lee, 8 Upton Quarry
- xlix)Ken Howes, by email
- I) Malcolm Dowd, The Boundary

10/074 DIARY DATES

Tuesday 11th May - Langton Green Rural Society AGM at LG Village Hall 7 for 7.30pm

Thursday 13th May – Interviews for Assistant Clerk Ashurst

Friday 14th May – Funeral of Toby Crundwell 2.30pm All Saints Langton Green

Monday 17th May – Planning meeting LGVH

Thursday 20th May – Governance meeting Ashurst

Monday 24th May - KALC Power of Well Being Sevenoaks Town Council

Monday 7th June – Full Council meeting Ashurst

10/075 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION – Cllr Langridge had had some examples of badges made up that included the logo and would identify the Parish Council with projects that were funded by them or that they were involved in. He said that was having a meeting with KHS regarding the entry statements planned by LGRS.

Cllr Mrs Hull said that Groombridge Green needed repairing because a lorry had encroached on it and rutted it and two posts were down. Cllr Pendleton would investigate it and give details to the clerk.

Cllr Parker said that maintenance on the village sign had proceeded and a crack in the post had been put right. Cllr Podbury had received a message via PCSO Nuttall that the fixings that were still on the floor where the bench has been outside the church in Speldhurst were causing a health and safety concern. She would contact Nick Burgess.

There being nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 10.00pm