



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

Minutes of a Planning Committee Meeting held at 7.30pm on

Monday 16th June 2025 in the Palmer Room, Langton Green Recreation Ground

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Curry (Chair), Cleaver, Leach and Tarricone.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk (AC).

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: There were no members of the public present.

1. **To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting.**
The AC was recording the meeting on her laptop to assist with accuracy of the minutes. The recording would be deleted in line with the recording of meetings policy.
2. **To receive and approve apologies and reasons for absence**
Cllrs Littlefield (personal reasons), Norton (holiday) and Dickens (work commitments)
3. **Disclosure of Interests**
There were none.
4. **Declarations of Lobbying**
Cllr Curry had been lobbied regarding application 25/01292/FULL for Ingleside, Ferbies, Speldhurst. It was noted that one of the objectors to this application was Cllr Rowe.
5. **Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12th May 2025**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12th May 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.
6. **Public Open Session**
There were none.
7. **Planning Appeals**
Millford House, Penshurst Road, Speldhurst – Appeal dismissed.
High View, Langton Road, Langton Green – Appeal dismissed or notice upheld.
The Beacon Hotel, Tunbridge Wells – still undecided.

8. Planning Applications for consideration

25/01292/FULL – Ingleside, Ferbies, Speldhurst

Proposal: Erection of 4 no. detached dwellings with associated car barns, new access and landscaping, following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings.

Decision: Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) is not opposed the general idea of developing this site – the need for additional housing in the village has been raised to us on several occasions. This application proposes changes to the Langton Road, adjacent, specifically with the addition of two-way chicanes.

SPC has previously been told that traffic calming for the village gateway area would not be possible without lighting, and Speldhurst is currently an "unlit" village. Therefore, we're concerned that this detail, should it be proposed and adopted by Kent Highways, could introduce an undesirable side-effect of the first installed street lighting, which we would imagine warrants a much wider conversation – it would certainly spur a lot of debate within the village.

SPC has therefore asked our Borough Councillors to call in this application to committee, and have posed a series of questions through them to try and seek clarity about the process by which this road modification would actually come to fruition – who pays for it – who approves it – does it have any side-effects like lighting – and what does the road scheme proposed in this application cause for the core application itself, if rejected by Kent Highways?

Until we know these details, we can't determine this application. Unfortunately for the applicant, this is the first application of this type we have encountered, so we need to seek advice.

Regarding the application outside of the highways question, SPC would comment the following:

- Four houses on this plot seems overly dense. We feel the plot could comfortably sustain two or three small houses; that said, we are quite used to developers looking to maximise their land usage, this doesn't come as a surprise. We would ask that the scheme is scaled back in this regard.
- One comment from a member of the public proposes that all houses have their road access via Ferbies; we think this is an idea with merit, and quite achievable with a three-house configuration. It would avoid all of the uncertainty and concern around having access directly to Langton Road.
- A note in the Design and Access Statement says: "The scheme will provide a passive charging point capacity per dwelling plus two visitor charging stations as shown on the proposed site plan. All subject to sufficient infrastructure being available at viable economic rates in the location."
 - We cannot find where these visitor charging stations are on the site plan, or where space for these would generally be provided. We would encourage this provision but fear this statement may have been an error.
 - We do not agree that the idea that EV chargers would only be implemented if the "infrastructure are economically viable". They should be required if the planning decision is based off their presence, not optional.

25/01262/TCA – Court Lodge, Groombridge Road, Groombridge

Proposal: Trees in a Conservation Area Notification: 2no. Oak (T1 & T2) – reduce crown by 2-3m height & width; Ash (T3) – fell.

Decision: We oppose this application due to lack of information; SPC is pleased to see that this application to fell a tree is from a licensed arborist, though with little accompanying information. However, we would encourage more information to be sought about the confirmation of ash dieback, rather than "the appearance of", to be confirmed, before we lose a mature Ash tree. We defer to the Tree Officer.

25/01224/FULL – Pokehill Farm, South Farm Lane, Langton Green

Proposal: (Self-Build) Change of use of former stable to 2 x residential units with small extension.

Decision: SPC has observed no correspondence regarding this application, or indeed this site in some time, and the application looks to be in keeping with the surroundings. Remain neutral, defer to Planning Officer.

25/001179/FULL – Manor Court Farm, Ashurst Road, Ashurst

Proposal: Variation of Condition 2 of Planning Permission 23/01949/FULL – addition of orangery on plot 5.

Decision: Remain neutral, defer to Planning Officer.

25/00995/FULL – Manor Court Farm, Ashurst Road, Ashurst

Proposal: New access serving farm, with new section of farm track to link access with existing farm track.

Decision: As this application is technical in nature with regards to road safety and visibility splays, we ultimately must defer to Kent Highways, who appear to have concluded that this application is unsatisfactory.

25/01171/TPO – Little Court Nursing Home, 26 Roopers, Speldhurst

Proposal: TREES: MAPLE (T1) - Reduction by 30%; MAPLE (T2) - Reduction by 30%; BEECH (T3) - Reduction by 30%; MAPLE(T4) - Reduction by 30%; BIRCH (T5) - Reduction by 40%; FALSE ACACIA (T6) - Reduction by 30%; DAWN (T7) - Reduction by 30%.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Tree Officer.

25/01070/FULL – Speldhurst Bank, Barden Road, Speldhurst

Proposal: Single storey extension and replace gable to hip roof on the single storey southern extension.

Decision: This site is tucked away from the road and should offer no negative change to the amenity of the area; remain neutral, defer to Planning Officer.

25/01053/FULL – 1 Widbury, Langton Green

Proposal: Dormer window to rear elevation and 4 no. rooflight windows to front elevation.

Decision: Remain neutral, defer to Planning Officer.

25/00905/FULL – 1 The Old Dairy, Barden Road, Speldhurst

Proposal: Replace kitchen windows with black bi-fold doors.

Decision: Seeing as there is an existing French door just to the side of the proposed addition, no visual amenity should be harmed; remain neutral, defer to Planning Officer.

25/00936/FULL – Maplefield, Ewehurst Lane, Speldhurst

Proposal: Retrospective outbuilding and proposed outbuilding link.

Decision: We appreciate the quality technical notes accompanying this application and providing context. Remain neutral, defer to Planning Officer.

9. **Planning Committee Terms of Reference Review**

All Terms of Reference will be reviewed in accordance with the council's Schedule of Policies. It was **RESOLVED** that a recommendation would be made to Full Council to update the Planning Committee's Terms of Reference to specify a review is now required every three years, rather than annually.

10. Compliance Issues

17a Holmewood Ridge: unauthorised boundary extension into nearby Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – Application granted, the delegated report was circulated.

11. Items for information

- Date of next Planning Committee meeting: Monday 14th July 2025, Palmer Room, LGVH.
- Planning training for councillors: The AC had been in contact with KALC (Kent Association of Local Councils) regarding planning training and she would circulate dates once they had been organised.
- Consideration was given to using the July Planning Committee meeting as an opportunity to provide training for councillors on chairing meetings. The Chair noted that there are various compliance-related scenarios that, while rarely encountered, councillors should still be aware of. He agreed to give further thought to how best to approach and deliver this training.
- The AC had prepared information outlining the difference between pre-disposition and pre-determination when attending meetings.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.06 pm.

Chair