

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 2nd March 2026 in the Committee Room at Speldhurst Village Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Curry (Chair), Barrington-Johnson, Cleaver, Dickens, Ellery, Leach, Littlefield, Norton and Turner.

OFFICERS PRESENT

K Neve (KN) Outgoing Clerk, S Neve (SN) Deputy Clerk and A Dry (AD) Parish Council Administrator (Minutes).

IN ATTENDANCE

Apologies had been received from County Cllr Moreland and Borough Cllrs Sankey and Sharratt.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was 1 member of the public in attendance from Langton Green Community Sport Association (LGCSA).

40/26 ELECTON OF CHAIR

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Dickens as Vice-Chair of the parish council. Cllr Dickens signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was then countersigned by the Proper Officer.

41/26 TO ENQUIRE IF ANYONE INTENDS TO RECORD THE MEETING

The Chair advised that the Clerk and the Administrator had started audio recordings which would be used to ensure the accuracy of minutes, and that anyone who wished to speak should consider that their voice may be recorded and that the recording could be requested via freedom of information.

42/26 TO ACCEPT AND APPROVE APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Farley (illness) and Tarricone (work).

43/26 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were none.

44/26 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

There were none.

45/26 MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2ND FEBRUARY 2026

It was **RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes, previously forwarded to Members, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

46/26 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

The Chair welcomed the member of the public from LGCSA and brought forward the agenda item on Langton Green Recreation Ground so that they could take part in the discussion.

47/26 LANGTON GREEN RECREATION GROUND (LGRG)

This item was brought forward so that the LGCSA representative could take part in the discussion.

LGCSA reported on the severe deterioration of the recreation ground:

- Leatherjackets (crane fly larvae/Daddy Long Legs) had caused extensive grass loss and presented a serious risk to drainage, flooding and the continued use of the pitches; the issue was widespread, and not unique to Langton Green.
- The problem had been exacerbated by warmer, wetter winters (global warming).
- Infestation would typically occur in **Autumn** and **May**.
- Advice sought from specialists, including the current contractors, Agrifactors, various golf courses including Dale Hill who had had a severe infestation, Tunbridge Wells Lawn Tennis Club, the Football Foundation and NaturePlus; all confirmed severity but there was conflicting advice on timing of treatment.

Treatment options had been discussed with Agrifactors and LGCSA would instruct them to undertake the work, as speed of action was important.

A discussion took place on payment being shared between LGCSA and Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC). This would be further discussed at the Finance and Governance meeting on 9th March. All councillors recognised the immediate need to take action and indicated they would be amenable to sharing the costs.

- **To receive an update on progress of the Independent Review for the Pavilion**

The Chair provided an update and confirmed that expressions of interest were being invited for future use of the Pavilion. The proposed evaluation weighting was 65% social community value, 35% financial value.

- **To consider the issuance of the extension of the short-term hire agreement**

It was **RESOLVED** that the 6-month extension to the short-term hire agreement be issued to the current hirers of the Pavilion.

- **To consider the BID document**

The Chair reported that a draft bid document had been prepared and would be circulated to councillors and LGCSA for consideration and comments. The document covered the following points:

- A short-term (6-month) hire agreement would be offered initially, if a CIC (Community Interest Company) was not yet formed, and if not achieved within the 6-month period, the arrangement would lapse
- Subject to satisfactory progress a longer-term hire agreement would be offered, subject to review.
- The current agreement included provision for withdrawal by either party and had been intentionally kept lightweight, with minimal service level agreements in response of required community activity.
- The current operators had been informed of the process.

Cllr Leach sought an update from LGCSA as to whether there was an update from EON following the energy review. It was noted that now may not be the appropriate time for significant capital expenditure to replace the current boiler system due to cost of treatment for the leatherjackets infestation at the recreation ground. Clarification was sought regarding responsibilities noting that whilst LGCSA had been approached, SPC remained responsible for payment of bills. A shared care approach to the building was referenced. An energy audit had been completed, and it was hoped this would assist in resolving ongoing issues.

The LGCSA representative left the meeting at 7:40 pm.

48/26 BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**County Cllr Moreland had submitted the following report:**

- Progress had been made on the Ashurst Community Bus Service including volunteer recruitment and route mapping. He would continue to assess options whilst looking for more volunteer drivers as the 3 that had come forward had limited availability.
- A request for assistance in identifying a suitable parking location for the minibus was made to Speldhurst Parish Council. The Village Hall car park was suggested for further discussion, subject to conditions.
- Kent County Council (KCC) had approved its proposed budget, including a 3.99% increase in council tax.
- The increase to the highways budget was below the rate of inflation, resulting in a real-terms reduction in funding for road repairs.
- Residents were encouraged to report any roads requiring repair as soon as possible.
- The Police and Crime Panel had approved the Police and Crime Commissioner's request for a £15 increase in the police precept. Approximately 48–52 officers were to be redeployed to neighbourhood policing teams across Kent. These officers were not new recruits but were being reassigned from other teams. There were no plans, nor allocated funding, to recruit additional officers within the next five-year medium-term plan.

Borough Cllr Sankey had submitted the following update:

- The motion to request South East Water to review their position with regard to the local plan had been passed.

49/26 CLERK'S REPORT

- New councillor lanyards had been prepared specifically for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) but should also be worn at committee meetings and when meeting with residents, going forward.
- Meeting publication compliance had been resolved.
- Reports of antisocial behaviour on the Pavilion roof; CCTV was reviewed with no evidence found.
- Exploration was in progress of additional social media channels, including Instagram, to engage younger residents.

50/26 GENERAL MATTERS

The Clerk confirmed that the actionable tasks which did not fall to a committee had either been completed or were in progress.

	Existing	Owner	Created	Status
8/26	Committee Chairs to provide reports for APM to Dep Clerk.	Ctte Chrs/Dep Clerk	05/01/26	Complete
11/26	Offboard Cllr Rowe from all IT platforms.	Clerk/CloudyIT	02/02/26	Complete
12/26	Continue communications re Winstone Scott Avenue.	Deputy Clerk	02/02/26	Complete
13/26	Assess grass roots approach to mobile speed cameras.	Chair	02/02/26	In progress
14/26	Encourage residents to sign up to digital planning notifications.	Admin	02/02/26	Complete
15/26	Complete staff appraisals.	Clerk/Chair	02/02/26	In progress
16/26	Onboard Deputy Clerk and issue contracts for Deputy and Clerk.	Clerk	02/02/26	Complete
17/26	Email list of potential transferred discretionary services to all councillors.	Clerk/Chair	02/02/26	Complete
18/26	Review IT and WhatsApp policies at next Fin & Gov meeting.	Fin & Gov Ctte/Clerk	02/02/26	In progress
19/26	Change WhatsApp settings to 7 days.	Clerk	02/02/26	Complete

20/26	Remove and add bank signatories.	Clerk	02/02/26	In progress
	New	Owner	Created	Status
21/26	Circulate County and Borough Cllr reports and Community Hub update to councillors.	Clerk	02/03/26	
22/26	Confirm extension of short-term hire agreement.	Clerk	02/03/26	
23/26	Progress pitch repair with LGCSA.	Clerk	02/03/28	
24/26	Circulate APM timetable and layout to councillor.	Clerk/Admin	02/03/26	
25/26	Sign lease for Speldhurst Chapel and return to Solicitors.	Clerk/Cllrs Curry/Dickens	02/03/26	
26/26	Publicise the Great British Spring Clean.	Admin	02/03/26	

51/26 COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS (WG) AND OTHER REPORTS

a) Highways Committee

Cllr Norton updated councillors on the meeting held on 23rd February 2026.

- There had been positive progress with Kent County Council (KCC) on the Parish Grant Fund application for highways improvement proposals. Agreement had been given in principle for raised red surfacing at Langton Green and Old Groombridge. The proposals remained within the £25,000 funding limit.
- There continued to be engagement on additional measures, including “Keep Clear” markings at Langton Green Primary School and discussions continued on the cycle and walking route through Langton Green, Rusthall and Tunbridge Wells.
- KCC had confirmed that there was no capability at present to assess Etherington Hill as part of the Parish Grant Fund and although the recent speed checks had shown lower than usual speeds, it was recognised that there was an issue as there had been a large number of collisions in the past. This would be kept on the Parish Highways Improvement Plan.

b) Amenities Committee

Cllr Turner reported that there had been no meeting. The next meeting would be held on 23rd March.

c) Environment Working Group (EWG)

Cllr Turner reported that there had been no meeting. The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 29th April.

d) KALC

The Chair reported that the Local Government Reorganisation consultation was now live and would run until 26th March. As the consultation end date would be before the next Full Council meeting, he encouraged councillors to respond individually.

e) Air Traffic issues

It was agreed that this item would be removed from future agendas until there was anything to consider.

52/26 FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting was due to be held on 9th March 2026.

a) **RESOLVED** to note the detailed budget reports.

b) **RESOLVED** to authorise the following interim payments made since the last meeting:

Unity Trust Account:

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount paid £	Transaction Detail
03/02/2026	Veolia	DD	289.08	waste and recycling

03/02/2026	KALC	MT3130	360.00	Training for CiLCA
03/02/2026	3 Counties Grounds Maintenance	MT3131	486.00	Grounds work
10/02/2026	Capel Groundcare	MT3132	567.11	Playground Equipment Repair
10/02/2026	Kidman's Ltd	MT3133	52.45	Grounds Equipment
10/02/2026	Groombridge Magazine	MT3134	20.70	Village Magazine
10/02/2026	Speldhurst Lunch Club	MT3135	242.55	Speldhurst Lunch Club Grant
10/02/2026	PCC of Speldhurst, Ashurst & G	MT3136	1,000.00	Grant for Tree Works
11/02/2026	N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	DD	989.61	Staff Pensions
16/02/2026	Unity Trust Mastercard	Crdt Card	1,624.44	Bring balance to zero
17/02/2026	Castle Water	DD	55.81	Pavilion Water
17/02/2026	EDF Energy	DD	0.25	Final Bill
20/02/2026	Employees	MT3137	7,198.29	Salaries
28/02/2026	KCC (KCS)	DD	126.95	Photocopier
28/02/2026	Unity Trust Bank	DD	10.35	Bank Charges
23/02/2026	Capel Groundcare	MT3138	276.00	6-month service

Unity Trust Mastercard

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount paid £	Transaction Detail
02/02/2026	Unity Trust Bank	DD	9.00	Monthly Credit Card Charge
03/02/2026	Camden Road Locksmiths	MC522	*7.00	Lock for Pavilion
03/02/2026	Keysafe	MC524	*75.94	Key Safe for Pavilion
09/02/2026	Lidl	MC523	*11.49	Office Kettle
11/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC528	*70.31	blue badge signs
12/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC529	*7.51	Plexiglas Speldhurst
13/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC530	*16.14	Goggles
13/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC531	*28.55	ear defenders
23/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC532	*12.38	WD40
23/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC533	*6.99	Stationery
24/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC534	*20.49	White board
24/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC535	*7.98	SPC logo stickers for jacket
24/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC536	*24.49	Hi-Vis Jacket
24/02/2026	Amazon Business	MC537	*10.40	Door mat
24/02/2026	Langton Green Service Station	MC538	*25.75	Petrol for Van

c) **RESOLVED** to note decisions made under delegated authority which are starred above.

53/26 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

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

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction Detail
02/03/2026	KALC	MT3151	144.00	Data Protection Training HC

03/03/2026	Michelmores LLP	MT3142	420.00	Legal services for SP chapel
03/03/2026	Performance Fire Protection Ltd	MT3141	161.40	Service/supply of equip
03/03/2026	K Neve	MT3143	54.90	Travel Expenses
03/03/2026	KALC	MT3144	60.00	Training
03/03/2026	Tivoli	MT3145	162.20	Dog waste
03/03/2026	Knockout Print	MT3147	216.00	APM posters
03/03/2026	JLM Pest Control	MT3148	200.00	Pest Control
03/03/2026	IKEA	MT3149	1,232.00	Furniture for Pavilion
03/03/2026	Majestic	MT3150	350.50	Refreshments for APM
10/03/2026	KCC (KCS)	DD	32.80	Photocopier
20/03/2026	HMRC	MT3146	2,474.84	tax and NI
28/03/2026	Hugo Fox	DD	11.99	Website sub

54/26 UPDATE ON VACANCIES ON THE COUNCIL

There was nothing new to report although leads were being followed.

55/26 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2026

The Parish Council Administrator confirmed that plans for the event on Monday 13th April were progressing well. Promotion had commenced via social media, the Parish Council website (news item), and the village magazines. Advertising banners were scheduled to be erected throughout the parish and further social media posts are planned to highlight participating charities and community groups.

Event Format

- Doors would open at 6.30pm and refreshments would be served on arrival (tokens issued for 1 drink per person)
- The Chair would formally open proceedings at 7.00pm and introduce Happy Me Dance who would give a short performance.
- Borough and parish councillors would stand near the two TV screens displaying a rolling presentation, enabling informal discussion with residents.
- A draft PowerPoint presentation had been circulated to Councillors for comment.
- A timetable, layout and list of participants would be circulated to councillors in advance.

55/26 SPELDHURST CHAPEL

- **To consider authorising the execution of deed on behalf of Speldhurst Parish Council**
RESOLVED To authorise the execution of the relevant deed on behalf of the Parish Council.
- **To consider resolving to have the deed re-signed by two councillors and those signatures witnessed by the Proper Officer, as provided for by the standing orders as the correct method of execution of legal deeds**
RESOLVED that the deed be signed by two councillors and witnessed by the Proper Officer.

56/26 GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN 2026

The Clerk reported that the Great British Spring Clean for 2026 would take place from 13-29 March. It was **RESOLVED** to provide information on the Great British Spring Clean to residents via social media, including offering the use of SPC's litter picking equipment to encourage individual participation and request photographs for village magazines.

57/26 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cllr Curry reported that a meeting had been held on 16th February 2026 and the minutes had been circulated. One application had been referred to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Planning Committee for consideration and had been approved.

58/26 DIARY DATES

The following meeting dates were noted:

- 16th March - Planning Committee
- 9th March - Finance & Governance Committee
- 23rd March - Amenities Committee
- 7th April - Full Council (**TUESDAY**)
- 29th April - Environment Working Group (**WEDNESDAY**)

59/26 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Councillors noted the following correspondence:

- Independent Advisory Group (IAG) TW District Meeting Update, Minutes and Agenda
- KALC News February 2026
- MP Newsletter

The Clerk confirmed that this was her last Full Council meeting but she would be attending the Finance & Governance Committee meeting on Monday 9th March as the incoming Clerk was on annual leave.

The meeting ended at 8.35pm.

Chair