



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

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 2nd November 2020 at 7.30pm
Conducted online via Zoom electronic communication

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Barrington-Johnson (Chairman), Mrs Soyke, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Lyle, Mrs Woodliffe, Rowe, Ellery, Turner, Scarbrough, Rajah and Langridge

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr C May – Clerk, Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk and Mrs C Barrett – Admin Assistant

IN ATTENDANCE

County Cllr McInroy and Borough Cllr Ms Willis were in attendance.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were two members of the public present.

20/198 Welcome by the Chairman

Cllr Barrington-Johnson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

20/199 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting

No-one present intended to record the meeting.

20/200 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Pate who was unable to attend due to broadband issues.

20/201 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

20/202 Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

20/203 Minutes of the Full Council meeting and confidential meeting held on 5th October 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes, previously forwarded to Members were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20/204 Borough and County Councillors' Reports

County Cllr McInroy advised that he had received a briefing from Roger Gough, KCC Leader, regarding the latest lockdown restrictions confirming that the following would remain open: waste disposal sites; social care; schools; bus services and country parks. Weddings were not permitted during the lockdown. KCC had extended its financial support of the Covid-19 Business Helpline by adding £100,000 - details could be found on the KCC website.

The Culverden Down 20mph scheme had been approved and was welcomed by residents and it was hoped it would be extended to other roads in Tunbridge Wells by Christmas. Bidborough were starting consultations with residents regarding a 20mph zone.

County Cllr Ms Willis said that the old cinema site was for sale again. She had received a call from a resident whose dog had been attacked on the Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG).

Cllr Podbury noted that her mayoral term was not as she had anticipated due to Covid-19 restrictions however she had been busy with engagements recently. She had visited Porchlight Head Office and was saddened by the hardship some residents were finding themselves in following loss of employment due to the pandemic.

20/205 Public Open Session

Mrs Ruth Ritson was attending to hear the update regarding the drainage project and Mr Garry Saunders was attending for a general parish update.

20/206 Clerk's Report

The Clerk said that the Tunbridge Wells Agreement would be discussed at both the KALC and Parish Chairmen's meetings when a unified approach would be agreed as to how best to use the additional three days' notice when planning applications are approved against the community's advice.

Cllr Rowe and Rupert Milner had met with Anu Aaron regarding the Parish Council's Community Right to Bid application for the Speldhurst Community Shop and Post Office. The Clerk was asked to email Ms Aaron to advise her that an application would be submitted in the near future and asking her to get in touch if she had any further concerns she wanted to discuss.

20/207 Election of a Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Cllr Pate was voted in as Vice-Chairman of Speldhurst Parish Council in his absence with immediate effect, his consent having previously been indicated to the Clerk.

20/208 Co-option of a Councillor

The Clerk advised that he had received notification from TWBC that the co-option process could be commenced. **RESOLVED** that the Chairman, Cllr Mrs Lyle and Cllr Pate form an interview panel to select an applicant on behalf of the parish council.

20/209 Committees

RESOLVED that Cllr Scarbrough move from the Planning Committee to the Finance Committee.

RESOLVED that Cllr Mrs Lyle be appointed Chairman of the Governance Committee. Note: these items were discussed under item 20/207.

20/210 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Mrs Lyle

- a) A meeting of the Finance Committee had been held on Monday 19th October; the minutes having been circulated. The 2021/2022 budget had been discussed in some detail and the Clerk was preparing precept calculations ahead of the meeting on the 30th November when it was anticipated a small increase would be agreed. A contingency for community causes had been included bearing in mind the current environment.
- b) Report on budget virements
RESOLVED: Transfer £3,500 from Capital Grants: Sports Clubs to contingency as per draft Finance Minutes.
- c) Report on interim payments made since the last meeting

Unity Bank current account: £324.52 EDF Pavilion Electricity (refund of £913 due to SPC); £24.00 BT mobile and £30.00 to Castle Water Pavilion water. The following payments were made by Mastercard: £125.00 poppy wreathes; £11.34* petrol; £9.99* hand gel; £140.00 Assistant Clerk membership to SLCC and £70.32 weed killer. It was noted a refund had been received from EDF Energy for £913.63.

- d) Payments made under delegated authority are starred* above.
- e) Councillors **RESOLVED** to increase the donation to £200 to the Mayor’s Christmas Toy Appeal in this difficult time.
- f) **RESOLVED** that Cllr Rowe become a signatory on all bank accounts to replace Rupert Milner.

20/211 Accounts for Payment

To authorise the payment of invoices as listed:

Payee Name	Ref.	Amount £	Detail
Viking Direct	MT1894	116.96	Pavilion toilet paper
Paul Cheater	MT1895	308.00	Pavilion cleaning Sept
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT1896	50.00	Office Underlease
Knockout Print	MT1897	185.00	Newsletter
PKF Littlejohn LLP	MT1898	480.00	External Audit
Archer Signs & Panels Ltd	MT1899	162.12	LGRG Car Park signs
SLCC	MT1900	202.00	Annual membership C May
Commercial Services Trading Lt	MT1901	764.90	Groombridge maintenance 3 mths
Commercial Services Trading Lt	MT1902	828.65	LGRG maintenance 3 mths
St John's Church, Groombridge	MT1903	1,000.00	Churchyard maintenance grant
M R Lawrence	MT1904	160.00	Mowing and strimming
Langton Life	MT1905	300.00	Bi-monthly advert
Kidman's Ltd	MT1906	63.71	Maintenance
Commercial Services Kent Ltd	MT1907	795.64	Van rental 2 months
Mr L Cooper	MT1908	13.91	Expenses
Kate Harman	MT1912	19.96	Stationery
M R Lawrence	MT1913	160.00	Mowing and strimming
EDF Energy	DD	300.00	Pavilion electricity monthly
N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	MT1909	172.53	Pension contributions
Employees	MT1910	3,777.90	Salaries
Sunstone	MT1911	2,015.48	Annual CCTV Service contract
UK Debt Management Office	DD	2,684.07	PWLB
Castle Water	DD	30.00	Pavilion water

£14,590.83

20/212 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)

- a) Cllr Mrs Lyle reported on behalf of the Pavilion Management Committee:
Under the new lockdown restrictions, the café proprietor would try to remain open serving takeaways. It had been agreed to suspend the rental for November and review it at the end of the month. The Clerk was to advise the cleaners of the reduced cleaning requirements.
- b) Traffic management and parking:
The Clerk had obtained a second quote for the grid matting installation which was slightly higher than the first but included an ‘A1’ base. The quotes would be reviewed at the next appropriate meeting.
- c) Drainage project update:
It was noted that water was pooling in the swales, but was a lot less than last year, which was encouraging and in some areas it was draining away. The grass was currently too wet to mow.

d) Update on the Herrington report:

The report had been supplied however it was felt there was still some misunderstanding regarding the chronology of events. A meeting was being arranged to discuss and clarify the matter further.

20/213 Parish Council Vehicle

The Chairman had prepared a spreadsheet report comparing the costings that Cllrs Pate and Langridge had compiled of the different options of purchasing or leasing, however he was awaiting further information before the report was complete. He would circulate the report when the additional information was received and asked councillors to review the document, once finished, and decide which option they thought was best so that a decision on how to proceed could be made at the December Full Council meeting. The Chairman was thanked for producing the report.

20/214 Remembrance Sunday

Limited services were being held in the parish however the importance of laying a wreath on behalf of SPC by representatives was agreed as follows: The Chairman: Langton Green; David Crundwell: Groombridge; Cllr Pate: Speldhurst; Cllr Mrs Soyke: Ashurst.

20/215 Dates of Meetings 2021

The list of dates for 2021 was agreed and the necessity to remain flexible regarding the Open Meetings and current restrictions noted.

20/216 Newsletter

The clerk commended the Admin Assistant for her work on the current newsletter which was now on the website and Facebook and she will leave copies in local shops/cafés for residents to pick up. The Clerk went on to say that the Admin Assistant had attended various webinars on social media and had recommended using e-newsletters which was promoted by Breakthrough Communications. The clerk had attended a further meeting with the company and they both suggested that SPC could promote relevant business to residents in a more professional and attractive manner. The cost to engage the organisation was £395 which covered start up and GDPR advice. After much discussion it was **RESOLVED** by majority vote to engage Breakthrough Communications and councillors were invited to attend the free webinars provided by the company during November to get a feel for the services provided. The Admin Assistant would circulate details to councillors.

20/217 Chairman's Report

The Chairman advised that he had successfully used Microsoft 365 for SPC work and that he found it very straightforward. He reminded councillors of the necessity under GDPR legislation not to use their own personal email addresses for parish council matters. He also reiterated that councillors should not attempt to reset their password when using Microsoft 365.

20/218 Committee Reports

To include any Committee Meetings held since the last Full Council meeting, the Draft Minutes having previously been forwarded to all Members

- a) **Governance:** The next meeting is on Monday 9th November at 1.30pm.
- b) **Planning:** Cllr Ellery advised that a meeting had been held on Wednesday 21st October when 14 applications had been discussed and councillors remained neutral for 10; objected to 3 and supported 1. He went on to say that the committee had agreed not to respond to the Government's Planning White Paper consultation because it was felt no value could be added to TWBC's response given the very technical nature of the paper and not wishing to detract from that response.
- c) **Highways:** The Clerk reported that Speedwatch was growing within all villages in the parish in terms of both volunteers and sessions which was encouraging. The next meeting is on 16th November.
- d) **Amenities:** Cllr Rowe advised that a meeting had been held on Tuesday 13th October when it had been agreed to postpone any works to Groombridge Green until further information was known regarding the development at Burrswood. It had also been agreed not to pursue any grants towards electric charging

points until demand had increased. This matter had been passed to the Highways Committee to take forward if they considered it appropriate. Cllr Rowe thanked the Langton Green Village Society for their tree planting initiative which it was hoped would be carried out imminently – Government restrictions allowing.

- e) **Air Traffic:** There was nothing to report.
- f) **Footpaths:** The Clerk advised that a tree had fallen in Shadwell Woods. It was agreed that the Groundsman would attend site to clear the obstruction.
- g) **Environment Working Group:** There was nothing to report.
- h) **KALC:** There was nothing to report.

20/219 Diary Dates

Governance Meeting – Monday 9th 1.30pm

Highways meeting – Monday 16th

Planning Committee – Tuesday 24th

Internal Audit – Thursday 26th

Finance meeting – Monday 30th

20/220 Items for Information

Cllr Langridge enquired regarding a motorbike/karting racetrack which had been created using tyres close to the River Grom and which residents considered an eyesore. The Clerk advised it was part of Adamswell Scout Group and that he had been in communications previously with the Warden. It was also noted there was an archaeological exploration being carried out in the area.

20/221 Confidential Item: TWBC Local Plan

This was minuted separately

There being no further items the meeting closed at 9.09pm.

Chairman