

# Speldhurst Parish Council

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

## MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER at 7.30pm IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, SPELDHURST VILLAGE HALL

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

**OFFICER PRESENT:** Chris May, Clerk

County Councillor John Davies

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** There were none.

### 2274 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST:

**Personal** – Cllr Mrs Soyke – Ashurst Village Play Area – resident of Ashurst (1825-3). Cllr Mrs Hull – Sir Thomas Smythe Trust – Candidate is known to her.

**Personal & Prejudicial** – Cllr Mrs Soyke – Appointment of Ashurst McDermott Hall Trustee. Clerk Chris May – approval of overtime to Clerk.

**2275 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING:** No declarations were received

**2276 MINUTES:** The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.

**2277 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION** - The meeting was adjourned. There were no items from the public and the meeting was re-opened.

### 2278 FINANCE COMMITTEE – Report by Cllr Parker

- i) Cllr Parker gave an overview of the need for a new committee to be established with responsibility for monitoring and ensuring that the finances of the Council were maintained correctly and that the Council complies with the Accounts and Audit Regulations. It would ideally consist of four members with experience of figures and the finances of the Council. No decision would be taken at this meeting and it was proposed that the Governance Committee (as it would be known) would start its work in January. He then asked if any members would be interested in sitting on the committee and Cllrs Mrs Soyke and Brown requested more information.
- ii) The Clerk had been in contact with several local Parish Councils for recommendations of an Internal Auditor and Mr John Roberts was recommended by Frant and Wadhurst. His details were circulated before the meeting and it was agreed that he should be approached to be the new Internal Auditor. **The Clerk was asked to contact him.**
- iii) Approval of payment of overtime to the Clerk – The Clerk had submitted his claim to all members for review. He left the room. The Council agreed his claim and he was invited back in to the room.
- iv) The new footpath at Lampington Row had been paid for by KHS, however a grant had been paid to the Parish Council of £5,100 towards this work by KCC. The Clerk had approached KCC via Cllr John Davies and this would be returned in due course.
- v) Cllr Parker then advised members that, in accordance with their Terms of Reference (10), had authorised the following works to be carried out –
  - £350 for cutting back trees and shrubs along A264 Langton Road between Dornden Drive and past Newlands.
  - £95 maintenance of Langton Green Village Sign.
  - £320 to reduce a lime tree on The Green outside Greenholme.
  - £160 to fell and grind out a dead Norway Maple (next to the lime tree)

- To increase the Parish Vision budget by £250 due to additional costs incurred.

The Clerk reported that he had received the Audit Commission report from the External Auditor with his certificate and opinion. The annual return was in accordance with their requirements and no matters came to their attention that gave cause for concern. They did note that the Council had not carried out a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal audit and that the Council had not provided any evidence of an assessment of financial risks.

***The Clerk is to post a notice of conclusion of audit and right to inspect the annual return on the notice boards.***

#### **2279 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – September 2009** – Invoices verified by Cllr Mrs Paulson-Ellis

The following payments had been made and authorisation was requested retrospectively.

The Crown Inn	£ 140.00	Reception for Cllr Stevens	678
Vision Printers Ltd	£ 125.00	Parish Vision printing	679
Tate Fencing	£ 124.20	Mending gate and panel LGRG	680
NALC	£ 808.45	Warwick University Course	681
KCTP	£ 40.00	Power of Well Being course	682
KALC	£ 12.50	Additional Parish News	683
BT	£ 144.96	Internet	684
M R Lawrence	£ 135.00	Hedge cutting	685
M R Lawrence	£ 120.00	Rubbish clearing	686
M R Lawrence	£ 270.00	Grass cutting	687
LGCT	£ 20.12	Hire of Hall	688

**TOTAL** **£1940.23**

#### **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – October 2009** – Invoices verified by Cllr Parker

St John's DCC	£ 20.00	Parish Vision donation re use of Church	689
BT	£ 185.43	Telephone Bill	690
BT	£ 29.04	Mobile phone bill	691
Audit Commission	£ 1,006.25	Annual Audit	692
RIP Cleaning Services	£ 101.20	LG Dog bins	693
Cirrologic Ltd	£ 442.00	Laptop	694
M R Lawrence	£ 180.00	Grass cutting	695
M R Lawrence	£ 80.00	Rubbish clearing	696
Admin & Expenses	£ 2,434.10	Clerk's salary; NI; Tax and expenses	697
			698
			699
Ryman	£ 189.16	Stationery	700
Speldhurst Village Hall	£ 87.00	Hire of Hall	701
Ashurst McDermott Hall	£ 46.00	Hire of Hall	702
Mrs J Podbury	£ 71.90	Parish Vision expenses	703
El Parido Ltd	£ 126.50	Parish Vision printing	704
El Parido Ltd	£ 515.20	Parish Vision printing	705
LGCT	£ 28.75	Hire of Hall	706
St Martin's Church Ashurst	£ 400.00	Grant towards maintenance	707
Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust	£10,000.00	Grant towards extension	708
EDF	£ 103.43	LG Sports Pavillion Electricity	709
Shaw & Sons Ltd	£ 43.39	Minute paper	710

**TOTAL** **£16,089.35**

**2280 COUNCILLOR VACANCIES** – There were four applicants for the two vacancies caused by the resignations of Cllrs Stevens and Colley. A panel of five Cllrs would interview the candidates over two dates starting Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct. The other date would be arranged.

**2281 HIGHWAYS REPORT** - The Clerk had circulated a report to all Councillors prior to the meeting which included updates on a number of Highways issues.

He had received a reply to his letter to Mr Sarrafan, County Transport & Development Manager dated 1<sup>st</sup> October and it was announced that the work on the crossing at the Twitten was to start on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009. The request

for an interactive speed sign (ISS) on the approach to Ashurst did not qualify for funding in 2009/10 because it did not achieve a high enough priority rating, compared to the many other sites that were submitted from across Kent. It will be submitted for potential funding in the 2010/11 financial year along with Groombridge.

**Councillors asked the Clerk to look in to the possibility of the Parish Council funding the ISS.**

- i) The Clerk had again requested KHS for an update on progress on the parking restrictions in Speldhurst. A Police brochure that had been delivered through the doors of residents of the Parish stating that KHS had agreed to mark double yellow lines in the area concerned. **The Clerk would again press KHS for a date.**
- ii) Langton Green crossing at the Twitten - See paragraph above
- iii) 2190 Langton Green – Land outside the old Watson Hall - The KHS has agreed that the Parish Council owns the land and **the Clerk will start the process of advising neighbours and obtaining tenders.**
- iv) 2213 Groombridge Traffic Survey - See paragraph above
- v) Ashurst ISS - See paragraph above
- vi) The Spire Hospital bus stop - It is understood that the commuters have difficulty alighting on the grass/hedgerow opposite the hospital but the Parish Council cannot put pavement down on an area that the KHS have stated has no room for a bus stop.
- vii) Ashurst footpath – **the Clerk will continue to look in to the possibility of member or Parish Council funding.**
- viii) **The Clerk is to attend a training session** by KHS to log problems that occur on to their computer system on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

**2148 PARISH VISION** – The minutes of the meetings held had been circulated and Cllr. Mrs Podbury said that the four Open Days that had been held had been a great success and thanked everybody for attending and helping. The committee had not met since the final Open Day and she thanked Chris Pendleton, the community member of the committee for Groombridge, who had input all the comments on to a spreadsheet that would be analysed when the committee next met.

At the Speldhurst Open Day Carl Adams of ACRK had attended and had been impressed with the layout and attendance. The Langton Green Open Day was attended by KCC Cllr John Davies and his wife, TWBC Cllr Julian Stanyer and TWBC Officers Estelle Hudson, Holly Goring and Daryl Jones.

The committee would meet in the near future and would concentrate on some quick fixes before preparing the questionnaire.

**1825-3 ASHURST VILLAGE PLAY AREA – Registering of Common Ground** – A meeting was held with Wendy Bishop of Donaldson West, Solicitors to establish ownership of the unregistered land on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September at their Crowborough offices. Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys and Soyke and the Clerk attended. Mrs Bishop was to further investigate the ownership of the land and in the meantime she would get some quotes for insuring against future claims on the land. The fees were expected to be in the region of £500-600.

**2028-3 TWBC LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS** – A meeting was held on Monday October 5<sup>th</sup> and attended by 10 Cllrs and the Clerk with Sarah Lewis and Deborah Dixon of TWBC giving a presentation on possible sites for the proposed Parish housing needs. TWBC concentrated only on Speldhurst because there are no LTB in Ashurst or Old Groombridge and the LTB does not separate Langton Green from Rusthall, which is part of Tunbridge Wells. Four sites were suggested in Speldhurst but it was conveyed that this was a Parish wide survey and that not all of the Parish housing could be placed in Speldhurst. This was re-emphasised by email next day. It was decided to set up a Local Housing Needs sub-committee and the following Councillors volunteered – Cllr Mrs Hull, Langridge, Wheeler and Brown. **The Clerk would contact them to set a date for a meeting.**

**2137-4 LAMPINGTON ROW** – A meeting is to be held with the School on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> with the Chairman and Clerk. Cllr John Davies (he is a Governor of the school) said that a new reception entrance area with a new pedestrian gate had been installed at the school.

**2120-6 BEECH TREE ON THE GREEN** – Work is to be completed on the tree on 11<sup>th</sup> November. A letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> Sept had been sent to the owner of Adam Cottage requesting that she refrain from parking her car on Council land or the necessary steps would be taken.

**2257-11 FENCING ON LGRG AND NEW PATHWAY BY LAMPINGTON ROW** – The two companies had not quoted like for like but it was resolved by nine votes to nil (with one abstention) that the footpath by Lampington Row be fenced by Tate Fencing with soft palisade fencing reinforced with 2no galvanised line wires. **It was decided that the Clerk further research before committing to the type of fencing around the “teen area” on the Recreation Ground.**

**2249 PARISH OFFICE** – The Chairman started the discussion of whether in principle the Council wanted to go ahead with obtaining an accurate costing of the project.

Cllr Parker said that the office should be big enough to take meetings of some of the committees. Cllr Brown did not understand why the office was at an angle as this could make it more expensive. Cllr Mrs Hull asked if the Council could afford it – other ways of funding and renting were discussed but it was unanimously agreed in principle to ask the Trustees to obtain accurate costing with the addition of an outside door.

**2281 SIR THOMAS SMYTHE TRUST** – Cllr Mrs Hull had found two potential candidates for the position of trustee for Speldhurst. ***The Council asked that she approach them and identify one so that the Clerk could contact the Trust with the name.***

**2282 BERRY TRUST** – Cllr Mrs Paulson-Ellis advised members that a much used bridle path (WT111) that runs through land owned by the Berry Trust had fallen in to disrepair since the death of Mrs Berry. No maintenance and heavy rain fall last winter, combined with a blocked or broken land drain meant that a “lake” had appeared which was quite deep and dangerous. It is private land but a precedent has been set allowing the public to use it. ***The Clerk was asked to contact the trust to advise them of the potential danger to the public and possible litigation. Cllr Mrs Podbury would contact Jonathan Bibby to investigate.***

**2283 NALC COURSE AT WARWICK UNIVERSITY** – Cllr Mrs Soyke was very enthusiastic about the course and urged all Councillors at some time to attend (preferably on their own rather than with others). The course was only the second that had been run and it emphasised the need to raise awareness of what the Council does.

**2284 ASHURST HALL TRUSTEE** - Cllr Mrs Soyke left the room. The Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust had written to the Parish Council stating that, in accordance with their constitution, all committee members retire at the AGM and requested that the Parish Council appoint a member to the Trust committee. It was resolved unanimously that Cllr Mrs Soyke be re-appointed to the Trust committee to represent the Parish Council. Cllr Mrs Soyke then rejoined the meeting.

**2285 GROOMBRIDGE: CHRISTMAS LIGHTS** – ***The Clerk was asked to contact Mr Kilshaw (proprietor of The Crown Inn, Groombridge) to discuss arrangements for the lights this year.***

**2286 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – The Chairman reported that

- i) The Chairman's meeting had once again been rearranged for 4<sup>th</sup> November and that she was not able to attend and asked Cllr Mrs Soyke if she would deputise for her.
- ii) The cost of Cllr Stevens farewell drinks was to come out of the Chairman's allowance.
- iii) The cost of the wreaths for Remembrance Sunday would also come out of the Chairman's allowance.

#### **2287 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- i) Planning – Cllr Mrs Podbury gave a brief summary of the meetings which had all been minuted and circulated to members.
- ii) Recreation Ground – Cllr Ellis reported that the padlock from the gate in to the main playing field had been missing for two weeks and that he would have to purchase a new one. He advised that there was considerable amount of rubbish appearing at the Recreation ground and ***the Clerk was asked to bring this to the attention of the groundsman.***  
A Recreation Committee meeting was planned to discuss the football fees for the current season. He also expressed concern about water that runs off the tarmac on to the grass car park (land leased by LGCT) because it was eroding the earth on the rubber matting. He had a quote from KCC Landscape services for a gully and this was just under £2k.  
The matter of providing dog bags was discussed but no decision taken.
- iii) Footpaths – Cllr Mrs Podbury reported that  
WT67 – Stile replaced  
WT83 – Gate needs to be reinstated.  
She had contacted the local Guide leader who had recently purchased a container for storage which cost in the region of £2k which could be used for the storage of materials needed for the footpath repairs. ***Cllr Mrs Podbury is to obtain a brochure and prices.***  
There was a need for a member of the footpath team to be trained to use a chainsaw.  
KALC - Cllr Brown had attended the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> Sept at Cranbrook. Cllr Mrs Hull had agreed to join the committee.

**2288 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2009** – There were none.

#### **2289 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**

- i) Audit Commission Report dated 28<sup>th</sup> September

- ii) Sovereign – brochure from supplier of playground equipment – **given to Cllr Mrs Soyke**
- iii) Burrswood – copy of their application for a premises licence.
- iv) Community Safety Newsletter from KCC – a scanned copy has been circulated.
- v) Auto Films Direct – brochure on high quality coating for glass
- vi) Email and subsequent letter from Mr Mortley re the Vacancy process. **Chairman to respond.**
- vii) Letter from KCC re Mobile Library service
- viii) Parish News Newsletters
- ix) Email from Trevor Stevens thanking everybody for his leaving do.
- x) Kent High Weald Partnership newsletter and work programme – **given to Cllr Mrs Podbury**
- xi) Request from David Crundwell for a new memorial bench seat on The Green, Groombridge (copies circulated) – The matter was discussed and permission was granted.
- xii) ACRK Rural News September issue including two circulars on Village Halls - **given to Cllr Mrs Podbury**
- xiii) TWBC email from Martin Vaughan re Sustainability (already circulated by email) – it was decided to use a reply written by Cllr Mrs Soyke.
- xiv) Ahs Ltd – brochure on hardwood chipwood playground chips
- xv) Kent High Weald Project – Kent free Trees Scheme 2009 – **given to Cllr Langridge**
- xvi) Speldhurst Netball Club – thank you for the grant
- xvii) Barclays Bank – introducing a new Local Business Manager
- xviii) Oast to Coast Magazine - **given to Cllr Mrs Podbury**
- xix) HMRC Employer Bulletin
- xx) Open Space Magazine - **given to Cllr Mrs Podbury**

## 2290 DIARY DATES

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> – KHS Training – Clerk – Maidstone

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> – Councillor Vacancy interviews – LGVH 7.30pm

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> - Councillor Vacancy interview – SPVH 4.30pm

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> – Parish Vision meeting SPVH 11am

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Planning Meeting – Ashurst VH 7pm

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Finance Meeting – Ashurst VH (**Note change of venue**) 7.30pm

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> – Meeting with LG Primary School (LJ & Clerk – time tba)

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> – Full Council Meeting – Ashurst VH- 7.30pm**

**2291 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION** – A paper had been emailed to members about the website and a logo for the Council but several members said that they had not received it. The discussion was postponed till next month and the item would be on the agenda and included in the information papers ahead of the meeting.

Cllr Mrs Hull reported that she had been asked whether areas of Roopers, where there are wild orchids, could be mowed only once a year. The matter was noted but no decision taken.

Cllr Mrs Waters said that the feeling was very strong about those who let their dogs mess on the pavements and that the children traipsed it everywhere on the journeys to and from school.

She noted that the bench outside the Church was broken.

Cllr Wheeler said that there had been vandalism in Farnham Lane and PCSO Nuttall was aware of the incident.

Cllr Mrs Paulson-Ellis said that there had been an attempted break in at Broom Farm on Saturday last. She also noted that on WT55 a caravan, which was situated behind a barn, was occupied. There was also an illegal tyre dump there. **The Clerk was asked to advise the Enforcement Officer.**

Cllr Parker noted that the entrance to Dornden Drive (A264) had been repaired.

Cllr Langridge said that the LGRS would again be putting a Christmas tree next to the village sign and would be asking permission.

He said that there were plans next year for an Art & Music festival next year. It would be Parish wide and there could be a request for financial support.

The LGRS Quiz night was on Feb 13<sup>th</sup>

The Clerk said that he scheduled meetings for next year but was only able to use the Speldhurst Hall on two occasions because the committee room was booked every Monday (except half term weeks). **Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys and Podbury would see if there was a way around this problem because it was thought that it was important to be seen in all villages on an equal basis.**

There being nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 10.05pm

CHAIRMAN