



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

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on
Monday 1st November 2021 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room at Speldhurst Village Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Pate (Chairman), Barrington-Johnson (7.35pm), Curry, Ellery, Langridge, Rajah, Rowe, Scarbrough and Mrs Soyke.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Neve – Clerk and Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE

Borough Cllr Allen was in attendance. Apologies had been received from County Cllr McInroy and Borough Cllr Ms Willis.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Garry Saunders was in attendance.

21/208 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting

No-one present intended to record the meeting.

21/209 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Mrs Lyle (holiday), Mrs Woodliffe (work commitments), and Turner (covid-related reasons).

21/210 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

21/211 Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

21/212 Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 4th October 2021

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

21/213 Public Open Session

No members of the public present wished to speak.

21/214 Borough and County Councillors' Reports

Borough Cllr Allen reported the following:

- The Communities & Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board had resolved to furnish 3 x 2-bed, 3-person flats and 1 x 1-bed, 2-person flat in the new development on Homewood Road in Langton Green to provide housing for some of the town's most vulnerable residents.
- A TWBC by-election would be held on 25th November 2021 when Ms Rowena Stanyer would be running as the Conservative party candidate.

21/215 Review of Action Points

The updated Action Points Table had been shared with councillors. There was nothing to report.

21/216 Committees and Working Groups

Cllr Myles had offered his resignation from SPC with effect from 31st December and the Chairman thanked him for the valuable input he had made during his time with SPC and said he was sorry he had decided to leave. A new Chairman of the Defibrillator Working Group (DWG) and a replacement councillor member therefore needed to be found. Cllr Curry volunteered to chair, and Cllr Langridge agreed to join the working group. Cllr Pate thanked both members for volunteering. Cllr Myles would stay on the DWG as a member of public.

21/217 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Ellery

- a) There had been a meeting of the Finance Committee on 18th October which had been well attended, the minutes of which had been circulated. The current budget was examined to ensure all expenditure was essential, to assist in the preparation of the 2022/23 budget and precept calculation. Cllr Ellery advised that regretfully, an increase in the precept was inevitable particularly as no increase had been made for the current year and many expenses for the following few years were unknown. Examples of the precepts of other comparable parish councils around the country were provided by the RFO which illustrated that SPC provided good value. The general feeling amongst councillors was that the percentage increase in the precept should be sufficient to ensure the books were balanced and the contingency fund was not used. A further meeting of the Finance Committee would be held to finalise the precept figure for recommendation to Full Council in January 2022.

A grant of £5K had been awarded to Speldhurst Village Hall towards their toilet refurbishment.

Cllr Pate said that bearing in mind the unknown costs for the coming years, expenditure needed to be kept to a minimum. He asked that the criteria for awarding grants be reviewed by the Finance Committee to ensure that grants were only given to organisations which supported the communities within the parish.

- b) Budget virements: A virement of £6.5K into 'Salaries' was agreed - £1.5K from 'Footpaths' for the additional work carried out by the Groundsman recently clearing pathways and £5K from 'Contingency' for the additional expenses in the handover of the Clerk's role.
- c) Interim payments made since the last meeting: Unity Bank: BT DD for mobile phone £25.08
Mastercard: Kick plates for the doors at the pavilion £127.66*.
- d) Decisions made under delegated authority are starred above.
- e) Grant application for Age UK Lunches: A grant application form had not been received in time for the meeting.

21/218 Accounts for Payment

RESOLVED that the invoices as listed, be paid.

Payee Name	Reference	Amount	Detail
Sunstone	MT2101	702.00	CCTV Installation deposit
SLCC	MT2102	154.00	CB Membership
SLCC	MT2103	144.00	KH Membership
SLCC	MT2104	208.00	KN Membership
KALC	MT2105	60.00	Training - Finance Conference
KALC	MT2106	360.00	Training – Intro to Planning
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2107	40.38	Meeting Rooms
Knockout Print	MT2108	86.40	Standing water signs
Performance Fore Protection Ltd	MT2109	214.50	Pavilion – Annual Fire Service
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2110	420.24	Office electricity Jan-Oct
M R Lawrence	MT2111	380.00	Maintenance for LG & SP
Streetlights	MT2112	26.52	Maintenance contract
Speldhurst Village Hall	MT2113	5,000.00	Grant re toilet refurbishment
Katie Neve	MT2114	23.85	Expenses
Kate Harman	MT2115	25.00	Expenses
Catherine Barrett	MT2116	27.00	Expenses
Langton Life	MT2117	300.00	Advert LL
NEST Pension Scheme	MT2118	394.04	Pension contributions
Employees	MT2119	4,399.43	Salaries
EDF Energy	DD	362.00	Pavilion – monthly electricity
Castle Water	DD	5.00	Pavilion – water

Total: **£13,332.36**

21/219 Planning Committee

Cllr Barrington-Johnson reported that a Planning Committee meeting had taken place on 11th October and referred to the minutes which had been circulated prior to the meeting. A strongly worded email had been sent to KCC Highways regarding the current land-grab on Little Mallett in Langton Green which the committee had been following up under 'Compliance' for over a year.

21/220 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)

- a)-d) Report from the Pavilion Management Working Group: in the absence of Cllr Mrs Lyle, this item was deferred.
- e) Drainage Project update: Mr Guy Lambert had emailed SPC regarding finances for the drainage project and the Chairman advised he would respond. The email included references to financial support provided by SPC to the project. It was pointed out at the meeting that this financial support was higher than suggested – a £12,500 grant for the ground works, rather than £9,000 he referred to and the forgoing of ground rent for 30 years had not been mentioned. He asked Cllr Barrington-Johnson to monitor the level of water in the swales particularly, following heavy rainfall.

21/221 Annual Parish Meeting

The Chairman asked the Clerk to finalise the date of the spring meeting, based around the availability of the Crime Commissioner. The location would be whichever was considered the most covid-secure.

21/222 December Full Council Meeting

Councillors discussed the options for the traditional Christmas drinks reception following the December meeting which were explained by the Clerk. Councillors considered it important to take the opportunity to thank all the volunteers who contributed to the work of the parish council throughout the year, particularly as a reception had not been held in 2020. Bearing in mind costs and covid safety, the following was **RESOLVED**:

- Invitations would be restricted to Councillors, Borough and County Councillors and members of the working groups only;
- Sharing platters would not be ordered by SPC leaving individuals to organise their own food;
- There would be a free bar, paid for as usual by the Chairman out of his annual allowance;
- The Clerk would check with The Hare to make sure SPC could still have an exclusive area bearing in mind food platters would not be pre-ordered.
- If The Hare were unable to provide SPC with an exclusive area, the Clerk would organise a drinks reception in one of the meeting rooms at the LGVH.

21/223 Office Hours over the Christmas Period:

RESOLVED that the SPC offices would be closed from 24th December 2021 to 3rd January inclusive, reopening on 4th January 2022. Staff would monitor emails during the closure period.

21/224 Chairman's Report

The Chairman said he had attended his first KALC Chairmen's meeting as well as the Joint Transport Board (JTB) meeting – see item 21/225 b) below.

21/225 Working Group and other reports to include any Meetings held since the last Full Council Meeting, the Draft Minutes having been previously forwarded to all Members.

- a) **Governance Working Group** – there was nothing to report.
- b) **Highways Working Group** –
 - TRO Groombridge and Ashurst – the Chairman had spoken on behalf of the parish council at the JTB zoom meeting on 18th October when it was resolved to make a recommendation to KCC Highways that the TRO goes ahead. KCC Highways had now approved the works.
 - Speedwatch – The Clerk had joined a Speedwatch session in Langton Green that morning. Cllr Ellery said that permission was being sought from a resident of Penshurst Road in Speldhurst to hold Speedwatch sessions at the end of her drive. The Clerk confirmed that consent had been received and Cllr Ellery said he would follow this up with an official application to the police.
- c) **Amenities Working Group** – There was nothing to report.
- d) **Air Traffic Working Group** – Cllr Barrington-Johnson reported that he was drafting a response on behalf of the Air Traffic Working Group (ATWG) objecting to the consultation on the conversion of the second Gatwick runway to regular use. A formal resolution had previously been made by SPC opposing the expansion, delegating a response to the ATWG. A public meeting regarding the consultation was being held in Penshurst at 8pm on 9th November.
- e) **Footpaths** – Cllr Langridge reported that the handrail along the footpath in Farnham Lane, LG had replaced.
- e) **Environment Working Group** – an application had been submitted for an EV charger in the LGRG carpark. It was hoped that a decision would be received by the end of November.
- f) **KALC** – Cllr Myles attended the KALC meeting on behalf of SPC and the Chairman thanked him for doing so. The meeting minutes had been circulated.

21/226 Diary Dates

15th November – SPC Planning Committee Meeting

14th November – Remembrance Sunday Services

6th December – Full Council Meeting **7pm** start followed by a Christmas Reception

13th December – SPC Planning Committee Meeting

21/227 Items for Information:

- KFRS/KALXC Fire Hydrant Initiative: The Clerk asked councillors if SPC wished to support the campaign, the aim being to ensure all fire hydrants are kept in a serviceable condition. It was agreed that SPC would support the campaign and the Clerk was asked to find out how many fire hydrants were within the parish and their locations. It was decided that the best way to divide up the inspections logistically was within the village footpath teams. Cllr Langridge agreed to investigate the matter further and report back.
 - The Clerk advised that the Clerk at Rusthall had been taken seriously ill and was unlikely to return to the office for several months. Rusthall's Assistant Clerk was new to the role and not aware of how the parish council office was run. The Finance Officer had been spending time in the Rusthall Office overseeing matters and giving advice where necessary as well as making sure their finances were kept up to date. The Chairman said that it was important to be compassionate and support Rusthall if possible and asked that the Finance Officer let him know if any problems arise.
 - The Queen's Green Canopy: Specimen trees had been chosen for each of the villages within the parish and consideration was given to their locations as follows:-
 - Groombridge: The Lower Green
 - Langton Green: The Recreation Ground – Cllrs Barrington-Johnson and Langridge would investigate an exact location.
 - Speldhurst: Pocket Park – The Chairman was meeting Mr Alan Ford to obtain advice.
 - Ashurst: SPC do not own any land in Ashurst however Cllr Mrs Soyke suggested a location east of the Village Hall and offered to check permission with the Trustees.The Clerk advised that several saplings could also be ordered to be planted within the parish and Cllr Mrs Soyke suggested a location within Ashurst. She would investigate the necessary permissions and report back to the Clerk.
- The Clerk asked councillors if they would like commemorative plaques for the trees and it was agreed to purchase 4 plaques at a total cost of £150.
- The Clerk was asked to respond to TWBC regarding the saplings and order the plaques and provide an update on the project to councillors via email.

There being no further items the meeting closed at 20:50.

Chairman

Action Number	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
1/21	Produce a policy on recording meetings.	Clerk	4/10	TBA
8/21	Lay Remembrance Day wreaths in each village.	Chairman Cllrs Barrington-Johnson and Langridge Cllr Soyke Cllr Myles	4/10	TBA
9/21	Draft a piece about the precept for new year's newsletter in time for January full council meeting.	Chairman & Cllr Ellery	4/10	TBA
10/21	Draft new year's newsletter for January full council meeting.	Assistant Clerk (CB)	4/10	TBA
13/21	Scope out what is needed to undertake an accessibility audit.	Clerk	4/10	TBA
15/21	Initiate a catch up with PROW Officer about footpath issues.	Assistant Clerk (CB)	4/10	TBA
17/21	Raise awareness of LG car thefts and need for Neighbourhood Watch rep across media channels.	Assistant Clerk (CB)	4/10	TBA
19/21	Organise first meeting of the Defib working group.	Assistant Clerk (KH)	1/11	
20/21	Review grant awarding criteria.	Finance Committee	1/11	
21/21	Respond to email from Guy Lambert re drainage project.	Chairman	1/11	
22/21	Monitor water levels in swales on LGRG, particularly after heavy rainfall.	Cllr Barrington-Johnson.	1/11	
23/21	Finalise date of APM in liaison with Crime Commissioner.	Clerk	1/11	
24/21	Finalise location of APM.	Clerk	1/11	
25/21	Finalise location of Christmas drinks reception.	Clerk	1/11	
26/21	Send out invitations to Christmas drinks reception.	Clerk	1/11	

27/21	Advise residents of Christmas opening hours – noticeboards, website and social media.	Assistant Clerk – CB	1/11	
28/21	Submit request to police to use location on Penshurst Road for Speedwatch.	Cllr Ellery	1/11	
29/21	Draft and get approved by Air Traffic WG response to Gatwick consultation on second runway.	Cllr Barrington-Johnson	1/11	
30/21	Fire Hydrant Initiative – obtain exact numbers and locations of hydrants within the individual villages in the parish.	Clerk	1/11	
31/21	Fire Hydrant Initiative – Investigate logistics of combining hydrant checks with the footpaths volunteer groups.	Cllr Langridge	1/11	
32/21	The Queen's Green Canopy – order saplings for Ashurst.	Clerk	1/11	
33/21	The Queen's Green Canopy - Obtain permission for planting of saplings in Ashurst.	Cllr Mrs Soyke	1/11	
34/21	The Queen's Green Canopy – agree exact location of tree on LGRG.	Cllrs Langridge and Barrington-Johnson	1/11	
35/21	The Queen's Green Canopy – agree exact location of tree in Pocket Park, Speldhurst.	Cllr Pate (with Alan Ford)	1/11	
36/21	The Queen's Green Canopy – agree exact location and obtain necessary permission for tree to be planted in Ashurst.	Cllr Mrs Soyke	1/11	
37/21	The Queen's Green Canopy - Order 4 commemorative plaques.	Clerk	1/11	
38/21	The Queen's Green Canopy - Update Cllrs on progress via email.	Clerk	1/11	