

Speldhurst Parish Council

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

MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 7th SEPTEMBER at 7.45pm IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, LANGTON GREEN VILLAGE HALL

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

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris May, Clerk

County Councillor John Davies, Borough Councillor Julian Stanyer.
Richard Larkin

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllrs Mrs Paulson-Ellis, Parker and Colley (all holiday)

2239 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST:

Personal – Cllr Mrs Soyke – Ashurst Village Play Area – resident of Ashurst (1825-3). Cllr Mrs Waters - 20 mph zones outside Primary School (2214) and Speldhurst Hill extension to pathway and clearing of siding.

Personal & Prejudicial – Cllr Mrs Soyke – Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust – extension to Hall – Grant request. Cllr Mrs Waters – Baby sitting fees. Clerk Chris May – approval of overtime to Clerk.

2259 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING: No declarations were received

2260 MINUTES: The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on **20th July 2009**, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.

2261 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION - The meeting was adjourned. There were no items from the public and the meeting was re-opened.

2262 FINANCE COMMITTEE – Report by the Cllr Mrs Soyke including the meeting held on 27th August.

- i) Direct Information Service (DIS) reports – Cllr Mrs Soyke summarised the reports and the costs. It was unanimously agreed that the Council did not need the additional information that these reports provided.
- ii) Internal Auditor – It was explained that the Internal Auditor Mr Funnell had only responded to one email and had ignored many other attempts to communicate with him, despite the offer of half-days advice to the Clerk. ***It was agreed that the Clerk would attempt to find a new auditor and report back.***
- iii) Mileage – This was an information only item advising Cllrs that if they only claimed 40p per mile no tax was payable. If the full 60p was claimed – the difference was taxable.
- iv) Delegated Powers of the Clerk – The Chairman recommended changes to the Standing Orders – Financial Regulations 3.2(1-3) to include, firstly, delegated spending powers for the Clerk of up to £100, and secondly, revision of the figure for expenditure considered to be necessary without prior authorisation from £200 to £500, which was felt to be a more practical figure. This was unanimously agreed by the Council.
- v) Approval of payment of overtime to 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.
- vi) Parish Council laptop and mobile – The Finance committee asked for Full Council approval as this was (in the case of a dongle and blackberry) a continuing expense. The costs were explained and approval was given to proceed.
- vii) Baby-sitting fees – The Full Council unanimously approved the payment of £5 per hour be given to Cllrs requiring a baby-sitter – an invoice to be submitted to the Clerk.
- viii) Electrical work at the Langton Green Sports Pavillion – Council was advised that the work had been carried out.

- ix) Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust, extension to hall, grant request. After a brief explanation Cllr Mrs Soyke left the room. Cllr Mrs Soyke had requested that the Finance Committee consider allocating some money towards the extension because it was unlikely that the playground project would be started in this financial year. The Finance Committee recommended a grant of £10,000 and this was unanimously approved. Cllr Mrs Soyke rejoined the meeting.
- x) The Speldhurst Netball Club had been granted £357 to pay for their affiliation fees.

2263 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – August 2009 – Invoices verified by Cllr Mrs Podbury

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

KALC	£ 59.00	Local Council Administration Book	654
Ashurst McDermott Hall	£ 94.80	Hire of Hall	655
M R Lawrence	£ 80.00	LGRG rubbish clearing	656
M R Lawrence	£ 180.00	Grass cutting Roopers	657
EDF	£ 94.05	LG Sports Pavillion Electricity bill	658
Craigdene Ltd	£ 149.50	Annual Playground Inspection	659
Cheque Cancelled			660
BT	£ 54.44	Set up Business Phone	669
Mrs J Soyke	£ 27.00	Clerks reception	661
Mrs J Podbury	£ 25.00	Display Materials	662
RIP Cleaning	£ 101.20	Canine Refuse July	663
LGCT	£ 17.24	Hire of Hall	664
Administration and Expenses	£2422.29	Clerk's salary;NI;Tax and expenses	665
			666
			667
TOTAL	£3304.52		
Cheque Cancelled			668
Speldhurst Netball Club	£ 357.00	Affiliation Fees	670
Cllr Mrs J Podbury	£ 24.69	Parish Vision Stationery	671
Admin and Expenses	£ 2,552.68	Clerk's salary;NI;Tax and expenses	672
			673
			674
Ryman	£ 156.37	Stationery	675
PF Turner	£1,246.60	Electrical Work LG Sp Pav	676
RIP Cleaning Services	£ 126.50	LG Dog bins	677
TOTAL	£4,463.84		

2264 RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR STEVENS – The Chairman said it was with deep regret that she had accepted the resignation of Cllr Stevens and paid tribute to his work as Tree Warden before he joined the committee and for his enthusiasm in looking after the footpaths. Cllr Mrs Podbury would take temporary control of the Footpaths Committee.

The Clerk explained that a notice would be posted next day advising of Cllr Stevens resignation and that a 14 day period (not including weekends) would be required before it was clear if a by election was needed. If not the co-option process would be put in to place.

2244 CLERK'S JOB DESCRIPTION – The Chairman and Cllr Mrs Soyke had written a description and this had been previously circulated for discussion. It was unanimously agreed to delete the need to post minutes on the notice boards, it was thought that the website was adequate. Otherwise the description was agreed. Cllr Langridge advised that Agenda should be delivered 3 days before a Full Council meeting and 5-7 days before an AGM. The Clerk said that this would be the case in the future. The Job Description was adopted by Council and it was to be reviewed annually.

2265 HIGHWAYS REPORT - The Clerk had a meeting with Kent Highways Services (KHS) on Wednesday 2nd September at their offices in Maidstone. Present were Louise Codman, Sue Bickerstaff (both Liaison) Susan Laporte Highways Engineer and Malcolm Appleby Transportation Engineer. He summarised his report which had previously been circulated.

- i) 2214 20mph zones outside our Primary Schools – it was very unlikely that 20mph zones will be implemented in rural areas. All zones would have to be self-policing with special lighting and this was unlikely to be accepted.
- ii) Speldhurst Village Traffic Survey – KHS appear to be analysing the data that has been collected despite our advice that the data was incomplete. The Council expressed reservations on how effective the survey would be.
- iii) Speldhurst Hill extension to pathway and clearing of siding – The pathway will not be taken any further because there is not enough room. The siding has been cleared.
- iv) Speldhurst Parking restrictions – in progress. Advertising will be done soon and then forwarded to JTB – not likely until 2010. Cllr Mrs Podbury said that the area around the bus stop was urgent and it was agreed months ago. **Clerk will make further enquiries.**
- v) Speldhurst/Langton 60-40mph – speed data request has been made by KHS and they are waiting to be advised when results are available.
- vi) Langton Green crossing at the Twitten – this has been passed to County Wide Improvements for implementation in this financial year. County Cllr John Davies had chased this matter.
- vii) 2190 Land outside the old Watson Hall – this was notified to them as very urgent because of the danger of cars cutting in and possible accident now that schools are back. The KHS notified the Clerk that according to their records the land belongs to KCC. A meeting has been set up for Sept 18th to meet on site to discuss the issue. KHS were again warned by email of the imminent danger.
- viii) 2252 Langton Green The Hare junction – KHS reported that it is unlikely that the usage level would warrant a formal controlled crossing but a minimal width centre island crossing point may be possible. The scale of work will require a bid to be put together under the LTP bid process as all funding for DDA compliance has been allocated for this year.
- ix) Langton Green/ 2188 Groombridge overgrown hedgerows – Groombridge hedgerow has been cut back. Langton Green in progress.
- x) 2213 Groombridge Traffic Survey – KHS said that the County wide speed review would take this road in to account and further data was needed. Clerk has asked KHS for this to be considered more urgent and a speed survey be implemented as soon as possible.
- xi) Ashurst interactive speed sign – KHS were to revert with more information.
- xii) Ashurst Safe pedestrian pathway beside A264 – funding yet to be resolved. **Clerk to investigate the possibility of SPC funding.**
- xiii) Fordcombe Spire Hospital bus stop – KHS have advised us that the strip of land is too narrow.

The signs at Ferbies were being investigated by TWBC but a sign indicating that the Little Court nursing home was at the end of the road would need to be put up by them with TWBC approval. **Clerk to write advising them. The Clerk would monitor all the above issues advising Council at the October meeting of any progress (to include the issue of dropped kerbs).**

2148 PARISH VISION - Cllr. Mrs Podbury had prepared an update for September and this had been circulated to all Members. She emphasised how busy the committee had been and paid tribute to Cllr Mrs Soyke for her diligence in completing the grant on time and Cllr Langridge for his industry producing professional posters. She advised the Council of the Road Show dates and asked if Councillors would take some time to visit the shows.

- Groombridge – Saturday 19th 11am – 2pm – now being held in the Church
- Ashurst – Saturday 26th 11am – 2pm – Village Hall
- Speldhurst – Saturday 3rd October – 11am – 3pm - Village Hall
- Langton Green – Saturday 10th – 11am – 3pm - Village Hall

Cllr Langridge added that three members of the public from Langton Green, Ashurst and Groombridge had joined the committee and it was hoped that one from Speldhurst would join soon. This would help the project be community led.

1825-3 ASHURST VILLAGE PLAY AREA – Registering of Common Ground – A meeting had been set up with Donaldson West, Solicitors to establish ownership of the unregistered land on Thursday 24th September at their Crowborough offices. Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys and Soyke and the Clerk would attend.

2028-3 TWBC AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY – The meeting was scheduled for Monday October 5th at LGVH at 7.30pm. Eleven Councillors indicated that they would attend. **The Clerk to contact Sarah Lewis of TWBC to confirm meeting.**

2137-4 LAMPINGTON ROW – It was decided to invite the school to the Parish Vision Road Show. **The Clerk to write requesting a meeting.**

2216 ADDITIONAL DOG BIN – The clerk had met PCSO Ray Nuttall and had walked the footpath. He then emailed Ron Fisher to ask where the local residents wanted the bin. It transpires that they cannot decide where they would like it to be sited. It was decided to close the item and wait for the residents to decide.

2120-6 BEECH TREE ON THE GREEN – The Clerk had received another quote for the work from Treefellas but it was not as competitive as Treework. Treework have been authorised to carry out the pruning. The resident of Adam Cottage is parking her car on Council land and has reported that the debris from the tree is damaging her property and car. ***The Clerk to contact Treework regarding pruning back overhanging branches***, however the situation is complicated because KCC are claiming ownership of the land.

2257-11 FENCING ON LGRG AND NEW PATHWAY BY LAMPINGTON ROW – the Clerk met with Ian Richards of Richards Fencing to establish more information about the quote July 15th. The quotes were to replace a fence alongside the teen play area and a new fence along the new pathway by Lampington Row. The Clerk asked Tate Fencing to also quote but it seems they are quoting for different materials – ***further enquiries were needed and the Clerk would report back to the Council***. The Clerk had given Tate authority to mend the broken panel and the gate in the LGRG Play Area because this was considered urgent.

2249 PARISH OFFICE – The Chairman reported on the meeting in August with Joyce & Partners regarding the plans for the extension to the Village Hall which would include the Parish Office. The sketch proposals were received and were shown to Council. The next step is for the Trustees to apply for planning permission. The Council was advised that more storage room would be necessary because the wood and spiles stored at Broomlands needed to be moved in the near future and plans for the storage must be considered.

2234 PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH EAST – Cllr Mrs Soyke had produced an information paper which had been circulated to members.

2266 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – The Chairman reported that

- i) She had received two glowing references for the Clerk.
- ii) There was an October Chairman's meeting and the focus was on planning.
- iii) The Council would receive a rebuke from the Audit Commission because it had not performed a review of our Internal Audit procedures. ***The Clerk would timetable and a Sub-Committee would be formed to perform a review.***

2267 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- i) Planning – Cllr Mrs Podbury gave a brief summary of the meetings which had all been minuted and circulated to members. She noted that the application by The Groombridge Farm Shop had been withdrawn.
- ii) Recreation Ground – Cllr Ellis reported that he had temporarily mended the broken panel on the LGRG play area. He also reported that new bollards had been installed.
- iii) Footpaths – Cllr Stevens gave his last report
WT65 – Barden Hill. Old damaged stile replaced with new one including a dog door.
WT73 – Lower Green Road to Broomhill Road. Whole length of path cleared of overhanging trees and vegetation.
Jonathan Bibby (West Kent Public Rights of Way Officer) advises that it is now KCC's policy to replace broken stiles with galvanised iron gates where possible. There are several small ongoing jobs that he will hand over to Cllr Mrs Podbury. He thanked all adopters and especially the volunteers for all their help and support. ***The Clerk to send out the adopt a footpath letters.***
- iv) KALC - There was a KALC meeting on September 10th. ***Cllr Brown to liaise with Cllr Colley regarding attendance.***

2268 PCSO RAY NUTTALL – There were rumours that he might be retiring at the end of September. The Chairman described what a valued asset he had become for the community and it was thought that the very least the Council should do would be to write thanking him for the conscientiousness and diligence he had shown in carrying out his duties during his time as our Support Officer.

2269 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 20TH JULY 2009 – There were none.

2270 REQUEST BY CLLR WHEELER THAT ALL MEETINGS START AT 7.30PM – Cllr Wheeler gave a brief summary of the reasons for his request and it was unanimously voted that in future all meetings would start at 7.30pm

2271 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- i) Email from Pauline Lambell dated 20th August advising that she had written to the Monitoring Officer before she left expressing her concerns regarding certain matters but would be taking no further action on the matter. **Clerk to file.**
- ii) St Thomas Smythe's Charity dated 3rd September regarding a vacancy as Trustee and asking for a recommendation. **Cllr Mrs Hull to investigate the charity and candidates to be sought.**
- iii) KCC re Kent Minerals and Waste Development Framework dated 1st September.
- iv) KALC Parish News and new website password.
- v) TWBC re BT invitation to adopt a Communities Red Telephone Kiosk (Cost £1)
- vi) Craigdene – Annual Playground Inspection Report. **Cllr Ellis to review and return to Clerk for filing.**
- vii) Email from Countryside Alliance re Awards for local shops etc
- viii) Email from KCC re Small Grant Scheme to promote voluntary organisations
- ix) Email from Kent Adult Education Service 200809 re advertising on our website – **it was decided that a link would be suitable.**
- x) Letter from Eibe re playground equipment – **given to Cllr Mrs Soyke**

It was requested by Cllr Wheeler that the correspondence be included with the Agenda. **Clerk to instigate. The Clerk was asked to request 13 copies of Parish News from KALC.**

2272 DIARY DATES

Thursday 10th September - Planning Meeting – SPVH
Tuesday 15th – Website Training Day – Clerk – Maidstone
Friday 18th – Meeting with KHS – Old Watson Hall Land
Saturday 19th – Groombridge Parish Vision Road Show
Monday 21st – Cllr Stevens leaving drinks – The Crown, Groombridge
Wednesday 23rd – Parish Vision Meeting
Thursday 24th – Meeting with Donaldson West re Ashurst common ground
Saturday 26th – Ashurst Parish Vision Road Show
Wednesday 30th – Meeting with Monitoring Officer – LGVH
Saturday 3rd October – Speldhurst Parish Vision Road Show
Monday 5th – Meeting with TWBC reAffordable Housing LGVH
Saturday 10th - Langton Green Parish Vision Road Show
Saturday 17th – KALC Finance Training Day
Monday 19th – Full Council Meeting – SPVH

It was decided by Council that beginning next year the date of the meeting would be the first Monday of the month rather than the third Monday. This was to help with publishing reports in the Village newsletters.

2273 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION - Cllr Mrs Hull reported that there was a thank you in the Speldhurst News from Rev Douglas Wren regarding the grant. It was Ron Fisher's 80th Birthday party on October 10th.

Cllr Mrs Podbury reported the increase aircraft noise and that there is a new campaign to fight this. **The Clerk was asked to find out more about the campaign.**

Cllr Langridge said that contrary to The Courier report The Spar was not shutting. The Rural Society had received an invitation to attend a reception for the Middlefield development. He also reported that he had been asked to help with fund raising for the Langton Church due to the serious shortfall in funds. Cllr Langridge thanked the Council for allowing the Rural Society to use the Recreation Ground for their summer party, he reported that it had been a successful community event. The Chairman said that she had enjoyed it- especially the firework show.

Cllr Stevens thanked his colleagues on the Council and said he looked forward to having a drink with them on Monday 21st.

There being nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 10.35pm