



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

**Minutes of the Highways Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 at 7.30pm  
In the Palmer Room, Langton Green Village Hall, Langton Green**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT** Cllrs Norton (Chair), Turner (Vice-Chair), Cleaver, Dooley and Muress, with Mr Langridge.

**BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** There were none.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** There were none.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mrs C Barrett – Assistant Clerk (CB) (minutes).

Cllr Norton opened the meeting by welcoming members. He was especially pleased to welcome Cllr Cleaver as a new member of the committee, and Cllr Muress, who had joined the committee earlier in the year but was unable to attend the previous meeting.

**1. To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting**

The Assistant Clerk recorded the meeting for administrative purposes.

**2. To receive and approve apologies and reason for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Ellery (work).

**3. Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

**4. Declarations of Lobbying**

There were none.

**5. Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Highways Committee meeting dated 7<sup>th</sup> March be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**6. Public Open Session**

There were no members of the public present.

**7. Review of action points**

The action points were reviewed and points 08/23, 11/23, 13/23, 14/23, 15/23, 16/23, 17/23, 20/23, 21/23, 22/23, 23/23, 24/23, 25/23, 27/23, and 28/23, were marked as complete. Points 5/23, 12/23 and 19/23 were still in progress, 26/23 and 30-36/23 were to be actioned, and 29/23 was ongoing.

**8. Review of Highways Committee's Budget** – to review the expenditure to date.

Cllr Norton said that there had been no expenditure since the last meeting and the budget remained healthy with a reserve of £30,000. Cllr Norton reported that there had been a request by the Finance Committee that members consider giving back a portion of this amount, to top up council funds which had been depleted by financial commitments during the past year.

Cllr Norton noted that road safety was a top priority for parish residents, and it was agreed that it was important to have money in reserve for the implementation of traffic calming measures, such as a pedestrian crossing on Speldhurst Road if this was approved by Kent County Council (KCC) Highways.

Members agreed that they would be open to reducing the reserve if needed, so long as this fitted in with the timing of any future highways' expenditures.

**9. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) (including consideration of any new issues by village taking into account correspondence, recent accidents, Speedwatch, and media)**

**a) Ashurst**

- **Hip item A3, A264 into Ashurst:** Cllr Norton said that the Speed Indicator Device (SID) data provided by the clerks had been particularly useful for Ashurst. There were two SID locations in the village, one at the top of the hill facing traffic approaching the village, and one at the bottom of the hill facing traffic coming down the hill.

Between 18<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September, the SID at the top of the hill continually recorded weekly 85th-percentile average speeds over 35-mph. Between 16<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October the SID at the bottom of the hill also recorded consistent average weekly speeds of 35-mph and above. Neither SID recorded average speeds below 35 mph at any time. The speed limit in this area is 30 mph.

It was agreed that these reports would provide KCC Highways with clear evidence of a speeding problem in Ashurst. An action point was set for the Assistant Clerk to ensure that all reports were emailed to the KCC Highways Community Engagement Officer.

Cllr Muress noted that the Police had recently been in Ashurst with their speed radar.

Mr Langridge said that although SID data was a useful reporting method to lobby KCC Highways with, the police tended to go by Speedwatch data when assessing locations for speeding issues because this data was more readily available to them.

Cllr Tarricone had continued with his attempts to set up Speedwatch in Ashurst without success. Mr Langridge and others had offered to join Cllr Tarricone for a Speedwatch session in order to encourage Ashurst residents to become more actively involved. However, the question remained as to whether the council should assist with Speedwatch in Ashurst if residents did not volunteer themselves.

**b) Old Groombridge**

- **HIP item OG5, B211 Groombridge Hill:** Automated Traffic Count (ATC) data had been shared with members and Cllr Norton said that this showed there to be a poor level of compliance with the enforcement threshold. KCC had suggested refreshing the 30 mph roundels, ensuring vegetation was cut back so the 30-mph repeater was visible, and removing any additional sign 'clutter' so that the 30 mph sign made more impact. While it was **RESOLVED** to accept these measures it was agreed that they did not go far enough, and an action point was set for Cllr Norton to ask what else could be done to address the issue. Cllr Norton reminded members that there would eventually be the potential for S106 funding from both Burrswood and the Groombridge Place development, which was due to become a hotel. It would be advisable to have an 'oven-ready' solution in place when the time comes to request S106 funding.
- **Groombridge Place:** ATC data had recorded good overall compliance with the 30-mph speed limit. Cllr Norton commented that the narrow bridge at The Green acted as a natural slowing effect. It was **RESOLVED** to agree to KCC's suggestion that the 30 mph sign be placed higher to link up with Groombridge Hill. An action point was set for Cllr Norton to respond to KCC.

c) **Langton Green**

- **HIP item LG8a, land at Farnham Road under the ownership of Miller Homes/permissive path:** An action point was set for Cllr Turner and Mr Langridge to produce a question-and-answer document that could be used when talking to residents about using the grass verge as an informal pathway. They would email this to members for approval. Cllr Norton added that Miller Homes had been amenable to the proposal of an informal pathway.
- **HIP item LG10, A264 Langton Road layby outside Cheyne House:** Mr Langridge reported that the planters were due to be installed on the pavement shortly. He added that the parking issue in the layby continued, and a traffic warden had recently attended to issue fines, while the DVLA had also clamped an untaxed vehicle.
- **HIP item LG9, Speldhurst Road/Lampington Row/Winstone Scott Avenue:**
  - An ATC had been undertaken on Speldhurst Road and The KCC Highways Community Engagement Officer had reported high 85th percentile speeds in each direction. He had advised that he would investigate traffic-calming measures in addition to the pedestrian crossing the parish council had applied for. An action point was set for Cllr Norton to ask KCC what additional measures were being looked at.  
Cllr Norton commented that he still felt there was some confusion about where a pedestrian crossing should be sited. He anticipated that highways design engineers, who had not been to see the proposed site, would have difficulty visualising it. It was agreed to keep trying to progress this solution with this KCC.
  - The Clerk and Assistant Clerk had held a Teams call with KCC's School Transport Planner, who reported that Langton Green Primary School had decided that making Lampington Row into a School Street – whereby staff from the school would close the whole road for 45 minutes at school drop off and pick up times – was not feasible at the current time. Cllr Lyle, who was a Governor at Langton Green Primary School, had been briefed and would be able to explain in more detail why it was not an option at the current time. The school had submitted the first draft of its Travel Plan and was in the process of addressing feedback from the Transport Planner. The Transport Planner had shared information from a survey which showed that a high percentage of families travelled to school from the east of Langton Green village. This information would support the application for a pedestrian crossing in the proposed location. It was agreed that a fully completed Travel Plan from the school would be essential in helping the parish council succeed with a pedestrian crossing. An action point was set for the clerks to ask Cllr Lyle to encourage this.  
Two further action points were set for the clerks:
    1. To chase up barriers for the pathway that approaches Lampington Row from the recreation ground. A number of children run or scoot straight out onto the road from this pathway, putting themselves at risk from approaching cars.
    2. Ask for confirmation as to whether a public consultation is required for the installation of zigzag lines outside a school. The Travel Planner had suggested they were, however, Cllr Cleaver doubted this was the case.
- The Clerk had circulated an email from a resident regarding the cleaning of the traffic island on the A264. This had now been cleaned by KCC.
- There had been an anonymous complaint about Speedwatch operators not making themselves visible to drivers when undertaking Speedwatch sessions in Langton Green. A response from the Langton Green Speedwatch co-ordinator had been published on the parish council website, and in Langton Life magazine. Two emails from residents supporting Langton Green SpeedWatch had also been received.
- **Damaged Finger Posts – Broom Lane and Burnt House Lane/Farnham Lane:** although not a priority, it was agreed that refurbishment should be investigated, and an action point was set for the clerks to look into the cost of doing so.

**d) Speldhurst**

- **HIP item SP6, Stockland Green Road:** An ATC had recorded good compliance with the 40-mph speed limit. It was agreed to archive this item, which could be re-visited in the future if necessary.
- **HIP item SP7, Barden Road (in the village):** It was agreed that the parish council had taken all possible actions to address the speeding issue on Barden Road. The Assistant Clerk had advertised for more Speedwatch volunteers in Speldhurst with the aim of re-instating Speedwatch sessions. It was agreed to archive this item and re-visit in the future if necessary.
- **HIP item SP11, Barden Road at the Old Dairy:** The Clerk had written to residents earlier in the year asking them to report near misses and accidents to help build up a case for traffic-calming measures. Two residents had since been in contact. One had opposed the idea of a speed reduction to tackle the issue, and the other had shown support for the council's plan to tackle speeding on this stretch of road. It was agreed to keep item SP11 on the HIP for now and monitor the situation.
- **HIP item SP12, Penshurst Road between Northfields and Langton Road:** Cars parked on the bend at school drop off and pick up continued to be an issue. It was agreed that Cllr Dooley, with the clerks, would liaise with Speldhurst Primary School about their Travel Plan once work on parking and speeding issues at Langton Green Primary School had progressed further.
- Cllr Norton had met with Cllrs Curry and Ellery to discuss priorities on the Speldhurst village HIP. Cllr Ellery had said that speeding was an issue on Speldhurst and Etherington Hill and following more than one road traffic accident (RTA), a new SID location had been requested by Borough Cllr Sankey on Etherington Hill. This location would be added to the HIP.

**10. SID Read Outs** – These had been discussed as part of the HIP.

**11. Footpaths/Public Rights of Way (PROW) – To receive an update from the Footpaths Co-ordinator**

Cllr Muress said that the allocation of footpaths to councillors for occasional walking and monitoring was nearly finalized. He added that the aim was to spread the load between several people so that no one had to commit to any more than walking one or two footpaths every few weeks. A piece about the footpaths had gone into the parish magazines.

**12. Items requiring Full Council approval**

There were none.

**13. Items for information**

- [www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem](http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem) - The assistant clerk reminded members to use and share this reporting tool for Highways faults.
- Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Consultation – the consultation is open until 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- Highways Information Pack.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting ended at 9.06 pm.

**Chairman**

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<b>Action Number</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Date created</b>	<b>Status</b>
8/23	Arrange meeting to prioritise items on Speldhurst H.I.P.	Chair	07/03	Complete
11/23	Members of Cttee to patrol LG car park and surrounding roads area in hi-viz jackets at school drop off and pick up times when ever possible during the final days of term.	Highways Committee	06/07	Complete
13/23	Contact Cllr Tarricone re Ashurst Speedwatch.	Clerk	06/07	Complete
14/23	Cllr Norton to write to Cty Cllr Mclnroy and Cc Borough Cllr Sankey.	Cllr Norton	06/07	Complete
15/23	Clerk to provide list of items to include in his email to Cty Cllr Mclnroy.	Clerk	06/07	Complete
16/23	Request update and another face-to-face meeting with KCC and invite Cty Cllr.	Clerk	06/07	Complete
17/23	Include article in Ashurst Broadsheet to seek Speedwatch volunteers – include SID data/ accident data etc).	Asst Clerk (CB)	06/07	Complete
18/23	Asst Clerk to update HIP with crossing as priority and archive SP9, 10 &11.	Asst Clerk (CB)	06/07	Complete
20/23	Cllr Dooley to liaise with Clerk to progress ideas for LG Primary Sch Travel Plan.	Cllr Dooley/Clerk	06/07	Complete
21/23	Chase KCC for update on virtual traffic calming at Groombridge.	Clerk	06/07	Complete
22/23	Request data from LG Speedwatch Co-ordinator at school crossing and request further sessions at school times.	Clerk	06/07	Complete
23/23	Cllr Norton to draft email to Miller Homes suggesting informal path at Farnham Lane.	Cllr Norton	06/07	Complete
24/23	Write to KCC to say, unless we hear otherwise, we plan to put planters in place during August. Residents will take on responsibility for maintenance.	Clerk	06/07	Complete
25/23	Cllr Norton to suggest positioning for ATCs and provide photos.	Cllr Norton	06/07	Complete
27/23	Ask KCC when double yellow lines will be painted at Ferbies/Cobhams.	Clerk	06/07	Complete
28/23	Cllr Norton to meet with Speldhurst Cllrs to discuss HIP priorities.	Cllr Norton	06/07	Complete
5/23	Coordinate volunteers for Ashurst Speedwatch.	Cllr Tarricone	07/03	In progress
12/23	Provide Ashurst SID data to KCC.	Clerk/Asst Clerk (CB)	06/07	In progress
19/23	Provide SID data to KCC to back up HIP priorities.	Clerk/Asst Clerk (CB)	06/07	In progress
26/23	Two Cllrs to meet Asst Clerk/Cllr Norton on site at Northfields/St Mary's Lane- accidents.	Asst Clerk (CB)	06/07	TBA
29/23	Provide SID read-out for Ashurst and Groombridge for next meetings and include photos of all SID sites.	Clerk/Asst Clerk (CB)	06/07	Ongoing
30/23	Respond to KCC regarding ATC outcomes in Old Groombridge and Langton Green.	Cllr Norton	21/11	TBA

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31/23	Produce a Q&A document to use in conversation with Farnham Lane residents about the informal pathway. Get committee approval before approaching residents.	Cllr Turner/Mr Langridge	21/11	TBA
32/23	Liaise with Cllr Lyle about LG primary school Travel Plan.	Clerk/Assistant Clerk	21/11	TBA
33/23	Chase up barriers with KCC and ask zigzag line consultation question regarding Lampington Row.	Clerk/Assistant Clerk	21/11	TBA
34/23	Investigate cost of repairing finger posts.	Clerk/Assistant Clerk	21/11	TBA
35/23	Archive HIP items SP6 and SP7.	Assistant Clerk	21/11	TBA
36/23	Add Speldhurst/Etherington Hill to Speldhurst HIP.	Assistant Clerk	21/11	TBA