



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

**Minutes of an Online Planning Committee Meeting held at 7.30pm on
Wednesday 10th June 2020
Applications for Consideration and Discussion via Electronic Communication**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Ellery (Chairman), Barrington-Johnson, Rowe, Scarbrough, Rajah and Turner

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs Kate Harman – Assistant Clerk and Mrs Catherine Barrett – Administrative Assistant

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: There were two members of the public present, both objecting to the proposals for Lower Church Farm, Speldhurst Hill, Speldhurst.

1. **Welcome by the Chairman:** Cllr Ellery welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting:** No one present intended to record the meeting.
3. **Disclosures of Interests:** Cllr Rajah advised the committee that he was friends with the owners of Danemore Park – application 20/01257/FULL.
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** All members had received a letter from Mr Roger Johnson objecting to application no. 20/01115/FULL – Lower Church Farm, Speldhurst Hill, Speldhurst.
5. **Minutes: RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 17th February 2020 and 13th May 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
6. **Matters Arising:** there were none.
7. **Public Open Session** – the meeting will be adjourned to give members of the public an opportunity to raise with the Committee any items of interest or concern. If members of the public are attending regarding a specific planning application on this agenda the Committee Chairman may bring this application forward under item 9 below. **Members of the public are NOT permitted to participate in the meeting after this agenda item without prior invitation from the Chairman. Anyone is welcome to stay for the entire meeting and**

observe but cannot take part. The public open sessions may be limited to a time to be determined.

- Mr Roger Johnson of Lower Church Farmhouse spoke first objecting to application no. 20/1115/FULL. He advised that many other residents were also objecting to the proposals. His main objections were:
Over the years several buildings had been erected on the farm without consents and there was a covenant stating the land could only be used for agricultural purposes.
- Traffic down the narrow lane was already beyond capacity with non-residents visiting stables, sewerage lorries and SE Water vans. This is in addition to the vehicles belonging to the five other properties in the farmstead. Conversion of the barn would lead to an inappropriate and unacceptable increase in traffic, unsuitable for the road.
- The junction with Speldhurst Hill and Barden Road was already dangerous but with the increase in traffic ingressing and egressing the junction it would drastically increase the danger to both motorists and pedestrians.
- The proposals are within the AONB and contravene the guidelines.
- Previous attempts at a barn conversion had been rejected.
- TWBC have refused to remove an existing agricultural consent on a farm building- it therefore makes no sense to erect a new building without agricultural consents. Removal of the consents could additionally set a precedent for the conversion to residential of other farm buildings.

Mr Michael Rendall, also a resident of the Lower Church farmstead spoke next. He agreed with the objections made by Mr Johnson and reiterated that the restrictions of the AONB apply and must be adhered to. He was also concerned that permission to the proposals could encourage further conversions of farm buildings into residential.

8. **Planning Appeals:** there were none.

9. **Planning applications for discussion and decision:**

20/01115/FULL

Location: Lower Church Farm, Speldhurst Hill, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0NJ

Proposal: Removal of existing outbuilding; Conversion of agricultural barn C to residential use; Conversion of part existing barn A to residential use; proposed alteration to existing stable building B.

Decision: We object to the proposal by reason of the alternations to Barns A and C and the associated parking/access/garden areas which would result in an urbanising development that would be harmful to the rural character of the existing building and to the wider countryside. It would also lead to light pollution creating lighting disturbance to protected species. We are concerned about the loss of active agricultural buildings that support the agricultural condition on the existing residential property. A loss of the buildings may result in additional structures with further impact on the openness of the AONB. If Barn A is converted it should have an AOC applied. We are concerned that the development will result in additional traffic ingressing and egressing onto an already dangerous junction at Barden Road/Speldhurst Hill. Please note the considerable local opposition to this development.

The Assistant Clerk was asked to contact Borough Cllrs Ms Lucy Willis, Mrs Soyke and Stanyer to request the application is called-in.

20/01071/FULL

Location: Pax Barn, Stockland Green Road, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0TU

Proposal: Erection of an extension, while also creating a new living area; Relocation of the entry door and providing an open porch.

Decision: Remain neutral – leave to Planning Officer.

20/01173/FULL

Location: Ground Floor Flat, Holland Croft, Langton Road, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0EG

Proposal: Minor Material Amendment (Variation of Condition 2 – approved plans) in relation to 19/01945/FULL: New timber front window to former shop front and new uPVC front door.

Decision: Remain neutral – leave to Planning Officer.

20/01223/OUT

Location: Land Adjoining, Pax Cottage, Stockland Green Road, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Proposal: Outline (Landscaping Reserved) – Demolition of existing prefab garage block and replacement with Oak framed replacement garage block.

Decision: Remain neutral – leave to Planning Officer.

20/01282/TPO

Location: 75 The Boundary, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0YA

Proposal: Trees: OAK 1 - Prune two 5 metre overhanging branches back to the trunk; OAK 2 - Prune one 6 metre overhanging branch back to the trunk; ALDER - Fell; BEECH - Prune two overhanging branches back to the trunk and reduce three other branches.

Decision: We object. We are concerned that the trees are not on the applicant's land and there is no indication of the owner's permission. There is no arboricultural report to support the application.

20/01257/FULL

Location: Danemore Park, Langton Road, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0JP

Proposal: Creation of an outdoor sand school, 40 metres by 30 metres within the curtilage of Danemore Park.

Decision: Remain neutral – leave to Planning Officer.

10. Compliance Issues –

- a) Great Footway – residents had queried the height of the newly erected fence at the bottom of gardens on the boundary of Speeds Farm development. TWBC Enforcement Officers were to investigate and request reduction in fence height if applicable. To be monitored.
- b) Little Mallett, Langton Road – a resident had extended their plot to incorporate KCC land. The Assistant Clerk had written to KCC Enforcement several times over the past year however no response had yet been received. It was agreed that KCC

Enforcement should be chased and the Assistant Clerk should report back at the next meeting.

11. **TWBC Draft Local Plan** – Councillors agreed that it would be beneficial if a working group were formed to keep abreast of the Draft Local Plan documentation and any implications for SPC. Cllrs Rajah, Rowe and Turner agreed to form the TWBC Draft Local Plan working group. A letter had been received from TWBC inviting SPC to attend a meeting with them to discuss the plan and it was agreed that this would be discussed at Full Council. The working group would attend the meeting with TWBC along with two other councillors not necessarily on the Planning Committee. It was noted that there is a revised timetable for the Plan.

12. **Items for Information** –
 - a) The Assistant Clerk said that an email had been received from a Groombridge resident copying an email sent to the new owners of Burrswood.
 - b) Cllr Ellery asked if Councillors agreed to recommence site visits where appropriate. It was agreed that members could resume visits, without engaging with members of the public, if they felt comfortable and it was appropriate for them to do so.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting finished at 9.10pm.

Chairman