



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

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
held on Monday 6th June 2022 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room at Speldhurst Village Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Curry (Chair), Barrington-Johnson, Ellery, Langridge, Mrs Lyle, Norton, Pate, Rajah, Rowe, Scarbrough, Mrs Soyke and Mrs Woodliffe.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk, (KH) and Mrs C Barrett (CB) – Assistant Clerk (minutes).

IN ATTENDANCE

Borough Cllr Ms Willis was in attendance.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were three members of the public present.

Before the meeting opened, the Chairman asked Cllr Langridge to lead the presentation of a posthumous Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) Community Award to Mr Trevor Parker. Cllr Langridge paid tribute to Mr Parker's 40 years of service to the Langton Green community, which included roles as parish councillor, village hall trustee, member of the rural society and member of the village fete committee. Cllr Langridge added that Mr Parker would be greatly missed. Mr Parker's daughter Mrs Alison Guckian accepted the award on her father's behalf and thanked Cllr Langridge for his kind words. Mrs Guckian and her husband, Mr Mike Guckian, then left the meeting.

22/112 Covid Compliance

It was agreed that those in attendance should be free to decide whether to wear a mask according to their own wishes.

22/113 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting

The meeting was recorded by the Assistant Clerk (KH) for administrative purposes.

22/114 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Turner (Covid-related).

County Cllr McInroy and Borough Cllrs Allen and Sankey also gave apologies due to prior engagements.

22/115 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

22/116 Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

22/117 Minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting held on 9th May 2022

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

22/118 Public Open Session

No members of the public present wished to speak.

22/119 Borough and County Councillors' Reports

Borough Cllr Ms Willis advised the following:

- Black bin collections had been missed on Holmewood Ridge.
- The Tunbridge Wells Anti-Aircraft Noise Group (TWANG) were looking for new members.
- Cllr Pate asked about progress in finding homes for Ukrainian refugees. Cllr Ms Willis said that the matching process was not always easy. There were also difficulties with allocating schools for children because many schools were over-subscribed. There would be a briefing the following week and Cllr Ms Willis would send an update afterwards.

22/120 Review of Action Points

All the action points were ongoing, in progress or complete. The newly updated list of action points, incorporating additional actions from this meeting, are shown at the end of these minutes.

22/121 Future meetings of the Council

- There was some discussion about the best way to apply the advice given by Greg Clark MP, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) and Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) regarding a return to face-to-face meetings. It was **RESOLVED** that the Air Traffic, Amenities, Highways and Governance working groups would include an agenda item at the beginning of their next meeting to decide whether to resume committee status and face-to-face meetings or defer for another six months. The exception was the Environment Working Group which would remain as a working group dedicated to a series of projects for the rest of 2022. Cllr Mrs Lyle recommended that the Environment Working Group should aim for committee status and face-to-face meetings at some point in 2023.
- It was **RESOLVED** to waive attendance at council meetings for Cllr Turner for a period of six months, as he was required to continue to shield for covid-related reasons. This dispensation would be reviewed at Full Council in December.

22/122 Appointment of Committees

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following changes to committee membership for the year 2022-23:

- Cllr Curry to replace Cllr Pate on the Governance Working Group.
- Cllr Pate to replace Cllr Mrs Soyke on the Finance Committee.
- Cllr Barrington-Jonson to replace Cllr Curry on the Highways Working Group.
- Cllr Mrs Lyle to become Chairman of the Amenities Working Group and Cllr Rowe to become Vice-Chairman, subject to Amenities Working Group approval at the next meeting on 27th June.

22/123 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Ellery

a) A meeting of the Finance Committee was scheduled for Monday 13th June.

b) Report on budget virements: There were none.

c) Report on interim payments made since the last meeting:

Unity Trust Bank (UTB): £63.67 to pay off the Mastercard account; the transfer to Nationwide £50,000; £25.92 BT mobile and £81.25 Pavilion water. Mastercard: £140.94* Weedkiller; £17.00* office expenses and £964.48 computer upgrade for Assistant Clerk including monitor.

*Payments made under delegated authority.

22/124 Accounts for Payment

RESOLVED to pay the invoices as listed.

Payee Name	Ref.	Amount £	Detail
Cloudy IT	MT2242	263.70	Monthly IT services
Langton Life	MT2243	300.00	Bi-monthly LL issue
M:Power accounting	MT2244	168.00	Payroll set up
M:Power accounting	MT2245	48.00	Monthly payroll
KALC	MT2246	42.00	Training
KALC	MT2247	42.00	Training
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2248	19.13	Meeting rooms
David Buckett	MT2249	436.90	Internal Audit
JLM Pest Control	MT2250	350.00	Pavilion - proofing
Trevor Myles	MT2251	0.00	Trevor Myles
JS Facilities Management	MT2252	154.50	Pavilion - cleaning
James Playfoot Fencing	MT2253	1,660.50	Groombridge Sleeper posts
M R Lawrence	MT2254	485.00	Strimming and mowing
M R Lawrence	MT2255	200.00	Mowing & Strimming
M R Lawrence	MTMT2255	120.00	Mowing & strimming
The Living Forest Ltd	MT2256	612.00	Treework at LGRG
Glass Supplies	MT2257	116.81	Balance glass door
Knockout Print	MT2258	300.00	Environment signs
Capel Groundcare	MT2259	916.08	Repair and service zipwire
Trevor Myles	MT2251	13.32	Defibrillator plug
HMRC	MT2238	1,252.19	Tax & NI
BT PLC	DD	174.72	Broadband and telephone
KCC (KCS)	DD	143.35	Photocopier
Employees	MT2260	4,433.91	Salaries
N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	DD	415.89	Pensions
EDF Energy	DD	537.00	Pavilion - electricity
Castle Water	DD	81.25	Pavilion - water
Total:		£13,286.25	

22/125 Planning Committee

Cllr Rajah reported that a meeting had been held on 16th May. Several applications were considered, on which the committee remained neutral, except for an application to replace PVC window frames with wooden ones in a listed building, which they supported.

22/126 Langton Green Recreation Ground

a) To receive a report from the Pavilion Management Working Group.

- Cllr Mrs Lyle reported that a meeting of the Pavilion Management Working Group had been held on 23rd May. The working group had agreed that the appointment of a Pavilion Manager to undertake maintenance and administrative duties was the best way to manage the day-to-day running of the pavilion and recommended that this matter be progressed. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Mrs Lyle would have further discussions with the potential candidate for the role and report back at the next Full Council. Benches had been chosen for installation outside the pavilion. The final details were still under consideration.
- Cllr Mrs Lyle reported that the football fiesta had been a success, with 750 matches played by 224 teams numbering 1800 children over 3 days. This included a full day dedicated to girls' football. Parking in a field at Ashurst Place had gone smoothly under supervision of parking marshals. There had been a sewage issue with the pavilion toilets, and after an inspection by the parish council Groundsman, LGCSA had called on Dynorod to clear the blockage. LGCSA would be asked to hire Portaloos for the next fiesta to avoid a repeat incident.

b) **SPC Pavilion AGM**

- To approve an amendment to the articles: Since the Clerk would no longer be Company Secretary, it was **RESOLVED** by special resolution to amend the articles of the Company to remove the requirement for the secretary of the Company to be the Clerk for the time being of Speldhurst Parish Council.
- To appoint a secretary: It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Mrs Lyle as Company Secretary.
- To approve the annual accounts: It was **RESOLVED** to approve the accounts.

With no further business to discuss, the SPC Pavilion AGM ended.

c) **To consider a rate reduction for the Pavilion Café to offset its sole use by LGCSA for the football fiesta:**

- It was **RESOLVED** to reduce the Pavilion Café Manager, Mrs Howden's rent by £233 as compensation for the business days she had missed due to the football fiesta. It was agreed that this should not set a precedent, and in parallel, Cllr Mrs Lyle would ask the LGCSA to reimburse the parish council for this amount.
- Cllr Mrs Lyle said that as the contract between the parish council and LGCSA would need to be amended when a Pavilion Manager was appointed, this would offer an additional opportunity to agree contractual amendments relating to LGCSA's sole use of the Pavilion Café during future fiestas.

22/127 Use of Glyphosate

The parish council had been approached by a resident regarding its use of glyphosate. The resident had asked the council to cease use with immediate effect. Councillors reviewed the council's position on the use of glyphosate and were satisfied that at the current time, it followed best practice in line with that of TWBC. They **RESOLVED** to agree that the Groundsman should resume using glyphosate in those locations where there was no equally effective alternative, under the controlled conditions he had been trained to apply.

Since the resident had offered to help the council find alternatives to glyphosate, it was **RESOLVED** that the Environment Working Group would consider the use of glyphosate further at their next meeting on 11th July. The working group would invite the resident to send her suggestions for alternative weedkillers and to speak at the meeting.

22/128 APM Debrief

To consider whether to organise an Autumn Open Meeting: Since attendance had been low at the Annual Parish Meeting it was **RESOLVED** that the Autumn open meeting would not go ahead.

22/129 Chair's Report

Cllr Curry reported that he had attended the opening of the Groombridge Men's Shed along with Cllrs Langridge and Norton. All agreed it was an excellent resource.

22/130 Working Group Reports

- a) **Governance** – There had been no meeting since the last Full Council.
- b) **Highways** – A meeting was scheduled for 14th June. Cllr Pate and the Clerk would meet with KCC Highways prior to the meeting to raise issues listed on the Highways Improvement Plan (H.I.P.)
- c) **Amenities** – A meeting was scheduled for 27th June. Cllr Rowe reported that after ongoing issues, the pedal roundabout in the Langton Green playground would be replaced by the supplier with a spinning discus at no cost to SPC.
- d) **Air Traffic** – There had been no meeting since the last Full Council. Cllr Barrington-Johnson was due to attend a meeting on airspace changes at Gatwick Airport and would report back at the next Full Council.
- e) **Footpaths** – Cllr Langridge reported that more landowners had been contacted. There were the usual seasonal reports from residents regarding overgrowth obstructing pavements and footpaths. He would re-visit the standard letter to residents who were failing to keep their hedges under control.
- f) **Environment** – An extra meeting was scheduled for 8th June to decide whether to apply for funding from Sussex Lund to progress the working group's biodiversity efforts. The 2022 deadline for applications was 17th July. This funding would be available again in 2023 if it was decided the current deadline was too soon.
- g) **Defibrillators** – Cllr Curry reported Cllr Langridge had identified a new site in Langton Green for the spare defibrillator and was investigating further.
- h) **KALC** – There was nothing to report.

22/131 Diary Dates

- Monday 13th June – Finance Committee – 7.30pm – Gallery Room, LGVH
- Tuesday 14th June – Highways Committee – 7.30pm – TBC
- Saturday 18th June – Speldhurst Village Fete
- Monday 20th June – Planning Committee – 7.30pm – LGVH
- Saturday 2nd July – Langton Green Village Fete
- Monday 4th July – Full Council – 7.30pm – LGVH
- Mon/Tues 11th or 12th July – Environment WG – 7pm

22/132 Items for Information:

- There had been an increase in hall hire costs for Speldhurst Village Hall. Since parking continued to be an issue at Speldhurst meetings, Cllr Curry requested that the Clerk investigate using Ashurst Village Hall as an alternative location on some of the scheduled dates.
- Cllr Norton had canvassed Old Groombridge residents about reduced mowing on the Green. There had been a strong response in favour. Cllr Norton would investigate ways of doing this and liaise with the Amenities Committee and Environment Working Group.
- Cllr Ellery had attended the Speldhurst Recreation Ground committee meeting, where it was reported that year-end balances were declining. Some money had been raised through a crowdfunding campaign, but although the village fete would return this year, it was anticipated it would bring in less revenue due to inflation rates.

There being no further items the meeting closed at 9.07pm.

Chairman

Full Council Action Points

Action No	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
17/21	Raise awareness of LG car thefts and need for Neighbourhood Watch rep across media channels.	Cllr Langridge: Has now heard from NW Liaison Officer. Will follow up and report back.	4/10	Carry Over
22/21	Monitor water levels in swales on LGRG, particularly after heavy rainfall.	Cllr Barrington-Johnson and Cllr Mrs Lyle visited following prolonged rainfall and advised swales are holding water and not overflowing.	1/11	Ongoing
43/21	Cllrs to visit the Langton Green Village Car Park at weekends to monitor the traffic and parking.	All Cllrs	6/12	Ongoing
17/22	Write article for Local Magazine asking parish residents to sign up for an e-newsletter.	Clerk	7/02	In progress – awaiting TWBC
27/22	Subbuteo World Cup event 2024.	Cllr Langridge to take the lead	7/03	Ongoing
30/22	Progress purchase of new office equipment.	Clerk	04/04	In progress
39/22	Look for new Internal Auditor and write to David Buckett expressing thanks for his work.	Clerk/RFO	09/05	In progress
40/22	Include agenda item to decide on future meetings of air traffic, amenities, highways and governance working groups	Clerks	06/06	TBA
41/22	Update website with committee membership changes	Assistant Clerk (CB)	06/06	TBA
42/22	Request LGCSA reimburse parish council for pavilion café rent rebate of £233	Cllr Mrs Lyle	06/06	TBA
43/22	Action pavilion café rent rebate of £233	Clerk/Finance	06/06	TBA
44/22	Invite resident to speak at environment meeting regarding glyphosate usage	Assistant Clerk (CB)	06/06	TBA

23/22	Investigate Grid Matting for LGRG Car Park.	Cllr Mrs Lyle	7/03	Complete
33/22	Display Public Inspection Notice of AGAR on 9th June.	Clerk	09/05	Complete
34/22	Increase SPC's contribution to LGCSA pitch maintenance contract by 5%.	RFO	09/05	Complete
35/22	Add to next FC agenda - to consider rent relief to café proprietor.	Clerk	09/05	Complete
36/22	Add to next FC agenda - the consideration of future meetings and seek guidance from Greg Clark MP, TWBC Legal Dept and KALC.	Clerk	09/05	Complete
37/22	Add to next FC agenda and formally invite the late Trevor Parker's daughter to receive the KALC Award.	Clerk	09/05	Complete
38/22	Add to website the following updated documents: Statement of Internal Control, Employee Code of Conduct, Env WG & Highways WG Terms of Reference.	Clerk	09/05	Complete
40/22	Remove Fire Hydrants from Agenda and inform KALC/Fire Services of decision.	Clerk	09/05	Complete