



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

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 4th January 2021 at 7.00pm
Conducted online via Zoom electronic communication

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Barrington-Johnson (Chairman), Mrs Soyke, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Lyle, Mrs Woodliffe, Pate, Ellery, Rowe, Turner, Scarbrough, Rajah, Langridge and Myles

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr C May – Clerk, Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk and Mrs C Barrett – Admin Assistant

IN ATTENDANCE

County Cllr McInroy and Borough Cllr Stanyer were in attendance.
Borough Cllr Ms Willis had sent her apologies.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

21/001 Welcome by the Chairman

Cllr Barrington-Johnson welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished them a happy new year.

21/002 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting

No-one present intended to record the meeting.

21/003 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

There were none.

21/004 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

21/005 Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

21/006 Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 7th December 2020

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

21/007 Borough and County Councillors' Reports

County Cllr McInroy said that a lot had been happening in the county in the last month. Delays in freight crossing at the port of Dover had been cleared by New Years Eve and the plans put in the place by KCC to deal with such a backlog had been tested (Operations Stack). It was anticipated that the situation would get worse again as freight increased in the coming weeks, due mainly to the Brexit transition.

Schools would be learning remotely in the coming weeks.

Essex and Buckinghamshire had both declared a major incident with Covid-19 cases rising rapidly putting severe pressure on the NHS. KCC had been working closely with its partner agencies. Despite this, Kent remained open for business.

KCC had been assisting the opening of a centre in Tunbridge Wells to distribute vaccines to GP surgeries and it was hoped another centre would be opened soon.

The Assembly Hall Theatre was being used for public Covid-19 testing – a link had been shared with the Clerk.

Borough Cllr Stanyer confirmed that 9 GP practices in the borough had access to the Covid-19 vaccines.

Accommodation for the homeless had been provided from March 2020 to March 2021 and additionally grants of £500K had been used to rebuild homes for the homeless in Tunbridge Wells.

Members of his family had received excellent care from the NHS in the past year, including an emergency.

Cllr Mrs Podbury said that Rusthall were opening a community larder which had been organised jointly between the Village Society and Parish Council.

She had been involved in the distribution of a surplus of mince pies from the Spa Valley Railway whose events had been cancelled. They had gone to the Russell Hotel which was housing the homeless and staff at the Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone Hospital.

Some problems had been experienced by residents with bin collections – she asked councillors to let her know of any issues.

21/008 Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present.

21/009 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported the following:

- Edward Pinnell had completed the questionnaire regarding the Community Right to Buy application for the Speldhurst Community Shop and Post Office and this had now been submitted.
- A query had been raised regarding the need for councillors to declare an interest in the Speldhurst Community Shop and Post Office if they were shareholders. This might stop them being able to vote on issues relating to the shop. The Clerk advised that he would make a recommendation to the Governance Committee that the standing orders be changed to enable him to make a pre-determination that a minor stake holding would not affect councillors' right to vote.

21/010 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Mrs Lyle

a) There had not been a meeting of the Finance Committee since the last Full Council meeting.

b) Report on budget virements

There were none however the Clerk reported that he would need to make a virement of £4K into the LGRG section from the contingency account to cover recent works including the new posts outside the Village Hall.

c) Report on interim payments made since the last meeting

Unity Bank current account: £571.23 transfer to Mastercard acct; £1,000 CAB Grant; £600 Porchlight grant; £350.00 WKM grant; £322 EDF pavilion and £29.70 bank charges. The following payments were made by Mastercard: £50.62 Diesel van; £20.80 footpath maintenance*; £13.00 SPC Ltd Annual Companies House statement.

- d) Payments made under delegated authority are starred* above.
- e) Confirmation of signatories on bank accounts

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Rowe and the Clerk, Chris May would replace Rupert Milner and Trevor Parker as signatories for the Cambridge Building Society and Cllr Rowe would replace Rupert Milner as a signatory for the Hampshire Trust Bank

21/011 Accounts for Payment

RESOLVED to pay the invoices as listed:

Payee Name	Ref.	Amount £	Detail
Knockout Print	MT1933	300.00	Highways signs
ALCC	MT1934	40.00	Staff membership
Commercial Services Trading Lt	MT1935	382.45	Groombridge maintenance
Tate & Tonbridge Fencing	MT1936	2,382.74	Steel bollards
Dave's Computer Repairs	MT1937	404.91	Computer repairs/upgrades
EDF Energy	DD	322.00	Pavilion – electricity
N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	MT1938	175.26	Pension contributions
Employees	MT1939	3,802.86	Salaries
Castle Water	DD	30.00	Pavilion – water
Total:		£7,840.22	

21/012 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)

- a) Cllr Mrs Lyle reported on behalf of the Pavilion Management Committee.
The café proprietor had made the decision to close the café until further notice and the PMC had agreed not to charge rent during this time.
- b) Traffic management and parking
The Clerk was investigating various options and would report back once more information was known.
- c) Improvements to pathway from Lampington Row to the LGRG
The Clerk had contacted KCC regarding using planings and been advised that a hardcore base would still be required which made this option too costly and permanent. He was investigating the rental of boards that could be laid on a temporary basis. The school was currently closed to the majority of pupils which would give time to investigate a solution.
- d) Drainage project update
Cllr Barrington-Johnson had visited site following heavy rain and reported that there was a significant amount of water in the top right swale. Cllr Mrs Lyle visited some days later after a wet week (although not immediately after heavy rain) and reported that although the swale in question was muddy and the grass had suffered, there was no water standing in it which seemed positive. Cllr Barrington-Johnson would visit site following the day's heavy and constant rainfall to investigate and report back on his findings.
Update on the Herrington report; the clerk had responded to the company advising that no further action was required by them.

21/013 Parish Council Vehicle

The Clerk had been advised by KCC that SPC were eligible to rent an electric van for an admin fee of £60 for two months however at the time KCC were unable to advise him when it would be. He did however anticipate it to be by the end of March. It was **RESOLVED** that a working group consisting of Cllrs Langridge, Pate and Barrington-Johnson had delegated authority to purchase a suitable petrol van up to a value of £12K which would hopefully include a good warranty. The KCC trial would be pursued and the Clerk was to obtain a date that an electric vehicle would be available to SPC. Both options would be undertaken simultaneously because of probable delays due to the pandemic.

21/014 Planning consultation 20/03364/FULL – Silcocks Farm, Poundsbridge Lane, Fordcombe TN3 0RJ

Proposal: Conversion of redundant agricultural barn to form a four-bedroom dwelling, demolition and relocation of existing garage, provision of associated parking and amenity.

Decision: Remain neutral – leave to Planning Officer.

21/015 Environment Working Group

It was decided the Environment Working Group (EWG) would be reinstated and Cllrs Turner, Scarbrough and Pate agreed to continue their membership. Cllr Langridge said he was a probable. Members of the public who had previously belonged to the EWG would be contacted, along with Judy Price and the Councillors would elect a Chairman.

21/016 Progressing our IT and Communications

The Clerk has consistently said that staff needed IT training and had been contacted recently by an IT company that worked for SLCC. He said that SPC was only optimising a small percentage of the Microsoft 365 package available. The company, “Cloudy IT” would engage with staff and councillors and could increase knowledge and efficiency. It was agreed that Cllrs Myles, Rajah and Mrs Woodliffe would join the Clerk in some initial zoom sessions for further exploration.

21/017 Draft Tunbridge Wells Agreement

It was **RESOLVED** to endorse the TW Agreement revised version which would give parish councils three working days’ notice of a contrary planning application decision.

21/018 Kent Association of Local Council (KALC)’s 2021 Community Award Scheme

Candidates were considered, and a recipient was agreed.

21/019 Government’s Consultation on Night Flights

It was **RESOLVED** to delegate powers to the Air Traffic Committee to respond to the consultation on SPC’s behalf.

21/020 Annual Parish Meeting

Owing to the current uncertainty regarding the format the APM could take due to Government guidelines on social distancing and the restrictions on public gatherings, a working group consisting of Cllrs Lyle, Pate and Langridge was formed to investigate possible content and format which would be reported back to Full Council.

21/021 Chairman’s Report

There was nothing to report.

21/022 Committee Reports to include any Committee Meetings held since the last Full Council Meeting, the Draft Minutes having been previously forwarded to all Members.

- a) **Governance:** It was **RESOLVED** to adopt both the CCTV and Media Policies. The Documents and Correspondence Policy would be considered further and brought to the February meeting for approval.
- b) **Planning:** Cllr Ellery advised that a meeting had been held on 15th December 2020 when 11 applications had been considered – 9 of which SPC remained neutral and 2 were objected to. A consultation to assess the green spaces in the parish was in progress, which will be discussed further in the next planning meeting. Planning meetings will change to Monday nights in 2021.
- c) **Highways:** Cllr Pate thanked Cllr Langridge for his work on improving the signage in the parish, particularly around the primary schools. A meeting was to be held on Monday 11th January at 7.30pm.
- d) **Amenities:** Cllr Rowe said that the next meeting was on 27th January at 7.30pm. He noted that the first batch of trees under the Woodland Trust scheme had been planted on the LGRG. Councillors thanked Cllr Barrington-Johnson for his hard work along with other volunteers planting them.
- e) **Air Traffic:** A meeting would be held on Wednesday 6th January at 10am.

- f) **Footpaths:** Cllr Langridge said that he had reviewed the map of footpaths in the parish and suggested they are divided into five zones with one councillor assigned to each zone. Cllr Myles had agreed to monitor the Ashurst and Old Groombridge area; Cllr Langridge would monitor an area in Langton Green and Cllr Ellery agreed to monitor an area in Speldhurst. Cllr Mrs Podbury suggested Cllr Langridge speak to the various walking groups in Speldhurst and Langton Green and Cllr Mrs Lyle would speak to dog walking friends in Langton Green to try and engage volunteers.
- g) **Environment Working Group** see 21/015.
- h) **KALC** There was nothing to report.

21/023 Diary Dates

Air Traffic Committee – Wednesday 6th Jan 10am

Highways Committee – Monday 11th Jan

Planning Committee – Monday 18th Jan

Governance Committee – Wednesday 20th Jan 10am

21/024 Items for Information

- Cllr Langridge had seen a camper van in the LGRG carpark which looked suspicious and other councillors advised that they had seen it parked at various other locations within the parish. Cllr Pate hoped to be able to speak to the driver.
- Cllrs Mrs Lyle and Soyke both reported fly-tipping in the parish.
- Cllr Mrs Soyke suggested a metal roll-out grid as a solution for parking on the LGRG. Cllr Mrs Lyle would investigate as she knew a contact that might help identify the company which supplied it.

There being no further items the meeting closed at 9.13pm.

Chairman