



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

**MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 2ND MARCH 2020 IN THE GALLERY ROOM,
LANGTON GREEN VILLAGE HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Barrington-Johnson (Chairman), Milner, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Mrs Lyle, Mrs Woodliffe, Ellery, Turner, Pate and Scarbrough

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr C May – Clerk and Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE: Borough Cllr Stanyer

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were seven members of the public present.

20/46 TO ENQUIRE IF ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING: No-one present intended to film, photograph and/or record the meeting.

20/47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received from Cllr Rowe (prior engagement). Apologies were also received from Borough Cllr Ms Willis and County Cllr McInroy – both prior engagements.

20/48 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS: Both the Clerk and Assistant Clerk declared an interest in item 20/63a)i – approval of salary increases.

20/49 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING: There were none.

20/50 MINUTES: It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on **3rd February 2020** be approved as a correct record with the correction of “different” being changed to “difference” in item 20/37. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman

20/51 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR: Mr Kim Rajah was co-opted onto the Council. Cllr Rajah then took his seat with Councillors and signed the declaration of acceptance of office. The Chairman welcomed him to the council and said he looked forward to working together.

20/52 BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS: Borough Cllr Stanyer reported the following:

- A new ‘Webinar’ camera system at the Town Hall was in operation. It was hoped it would allow members of the public to stream council meetings live on their home screens in the coming months.
- The budget had been passed with an increase in Band D Council Tax of £5 which equates to 2.8%.

- Opposition Councillors were now attending TWBC meetings which had so far resulted in them lasting much longer.

20/52 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION: Mr Duncan Crundwell and Mrs Ruth Ritson, residents of Leggs Lane, spoke about severe flooding over the past four months in Mrs Ritson's gardens and outbuildings. They believed that the drainage works on the LGRG were a major contributory factor to the flooding. Mr Crundwell said he had lived in his property for thirty years and had never experienced flooding to the same extent before the drainage works were undertaken. Mr Ben Ferry, also a local resident said that his land had also been flooded in the past months and he too believed it was largely due to the works on the LGRG. They all acknowledged that there had been unprecedented rainfall in recent months. Mr Guy Lambert, Chairman of the LGCSA said that he, and the contractor, had attended site immediately they heard about the flooding that had taken place. He was sympathetic to the residents however the sports club had obtained professional advice on the plan of works to be carried out which had been approved by TWBC planning officers. All the works had been carried out in compliance with the professional advice received. Mr Chris Allen of LGCSA, pointed out that there had been the same amount of rainfall falling on the LGRG, it had just been diverted around the edge of the playing fields and held in a soakaway at the bottom of the fields.

Cllr Pate said that in his own opinion, the best solution would be to obtain the advice of an independent consultant and this was endorsed by Cllr Ellery who said it was important to employ a consultant who was completely independent because a contractor would not admit liability for his own workmanship. Mr Lambert proposed waiting until the project was finished (all works had been halted due to the rainfall) before an opinion on the effectiveness of the drainage could be made. The expert employed had been approved by TWBC. Cllr Scarbrough said it was imperative to check the drains regularly to ensure they are not blocked. Cllr Ellery said it would also be cheaper to carry out any improvements before the seeding was done. Cllr Turner said it was important to address what to do in the event of the flooding reoccurring. The Chairman said that SPC would arrange a meeting of councillors to discuss the best way forward. Mr Lambert advised that no further works could be carried out on the project until the weather changed, and it was therefore agreed this timeframe would be used to investigate.

20/53 FINANCE COMMITTEE: Cllr Mrs Lyle reported the following: -

- There had been a meeting of the Finance Committee on 27th February 2020, the minutes having been circulated.
- Budget virements: RESOLVED** to approve a virement from contingency to EMR for £10,000
- Interim payments made since the Finance Committee meeting:** none
- Payments made under delegated authority:** there were none.
- Grant request from All Saints' Church, Langton Green for churchyard maintenance. RESOLVED** to grant All Saints' Church £1,000
- Finance Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) – **RESOLVED** to approve the change to the TOR

The clerk advised that the felling of tree was necessary in LGRG which had been discovered to be rotten. The cost would be £940.

20/54 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT: Invoices verified by Cllr Turner

To authorise the payment of invoices as listed

Payee Name	Reference	Amount £	Detail
BT Plc	DD	9.60	Mobile
Paddock Wood TC	MT1747	54.00	Legionella Course
Langton Life	MT1748	250.00	Media pages
Paul Cheater	MT1749	112.00	Pavilion Cleaning
Mr L Cooper	MT1750	30.24	Expenses
Catherine Barrett	MT1751	21.60	Expenses

KALC	MT1757	144.00	Planning Conference
Viking Direct	MT1758	116.96	Pavilion – supplies
Castle Water	DD	262.87	Pavilion monthly water
EDF Energy	DD	357.00	Pavilion monthly electricity
C May	MT1753	1,566.87	Salary
Kate Harman	MT1754	749.67	Salary
Mr L Cooper	MT1755	640.88	Salary
Catherine Barratt	MT1756	423.37	Salary
N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	MT1760	115.97	Pension payment
HMRC	MT1752	2,377.46	Tax and NI

£7,232.49

It was **RESOLVED** to pay the invoices listed above, authorise the electronic payments and sign the cheques drawn on Unity Trust Bank.

20/55 LANGTON GREEN RECREATION GROUND (LGRG): Cllr Mrs Lyle reported the following:

- Report from the Management Committee of the pavilion – Cllr Mrs Lyle had been working on the Terms & Conditions for hiring the pavilion with the café owner, which would include a £60 cleaning fee. She updated the Council that the boiler room pump was no longer working and needed replacing and the water heater in the café had flooded the kitchen, cancelling the community lunch and this would also need to be replaced.
- Update on the progress of traffic management and parking: Still awaiting to hear from TWBC re planning consent.
- Drainage project: see 20/52: There was some more discussion which included Agrifactors suggestion of soakaways and the need for independent assessment.
- Recycling: The new contracts for recycling had started with the delivery of bins for bottles and cardboard.

20/56 TWBC PLANNING DEPARTMENT'S DRAFT LOCAL PLAN: It was noted that the comments had now been published and were available to read online. It was suggested that the next phase of the plan will be delayed due to the weight of comments. The Planning Committee asked all councillors to make themselves aware of the results of the consultation to base SPC's response to the next phase.

20/57 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: RESOLVED that the meeting will have Cllr McInroy as a speaker on what KCC are doing to promote advice about climate change; that a speaker from another organisation like Friends of the Earth speak as well and that side stalls about local practical efforts attend also.

20/58 NEWSLETTER: The opening should include the fact that this was the first increase in the precept for 2 years. To include a full stop at the bottom of page 1. With these changes the newsletter was approved.

20/59 VE DAY: The Clerk reported that both churches had agreed to sound the bells to celebrate VE Day. Langton Green Primary School had declined an offer to fund a celebration due to a clash in the academic calendar and Speldhurst School had not replied.

20/60 GEORGE AND DRAGON PUB, SPELDHURST: New owners had invited the Parish Council to discuss the future of the pub. It was agreed that Cllr Milner would organise a meeting and Speldhurst Councillors would canvass local opinion as to the kind of local pub the village would like.

20/61 THE GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN: The Chairman said that Langton Green, through the Village Society, conducts regular litter picks throughout the year. He felt that the focus was on the other villages. Cllrs Mrs Podbury and Soyke to organise with assistance from advertising in the media.

20/62 CHAIRMAN’S REPORT: The Chairman advised he had a confidential item he wished to discuss with Councillors which would be held over until the end of the meeting and minuted separately.

20/63 COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a) **Governance** – Cllr Milner reported that a meeting of the Governance Committee had been held on 12th February 2020, the minutes having previously been circulated to councillors. In summary:
- i. Recommendation of approval of the staff salary increases. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk left the meeting whilst these discussions took place and re-joined the meeting at the end. **RESOLVED** to grant the staff salary increases as recommended.
 - ii. **RESOLVED** that the **Financial Standing Orders** reviewed by the Committee be adopted.
 - iii. **RESOLVED** that the following **Terms of Reference**, reviewed by the Committee be adopted:
 - Governance Committee
 - Internal Audit
 - iv. **RESOLVED** that the following **Council Policies**, reviewed by the Committee be adopted except for the Governance Policy which should be amended to include “That no payments of a grant to an organisation should go into an individual’s bank account”.
 - Complaints Policy
 - Grants Policy
 - Grants Template
 - Financial Control
 - Co-option Policy
 - IA Review
 - Code of Conduct for Employees
 - Freedom of Information
 - Signs on Council land
 - Lone Worker
 - Budget Virement Policy
 - Investment Policy
- b) **Planning** – Cllr Ellery said that eleven applications had been discussed at the planning committee meeting on the 17th February 2020 - councillors remained neutral on nine and supported the Speldhurst Community Shop’s most recent application for small amendments and SPC’s application for additional parking on the LGRG.
- c) **Highways** – Cllr Pate said that there had been a meeting of the Highways Committee on 10th February 2020 when the issues at Groombridge had been discussed. Following the meeting with Kent Highways it had been agreed not to pursue employing a consultant at the present time and another meeting would be arranged in March to ensure the issues are considered as quickly as possible. Cllr Mrs Soyke said that she had a list of ongoing Highways issues at Ashurst which she would pass to Cllr Pate.
- **RESOLVED** that the Highways Committee **Terms of Reference** be adopted as recommended by the Highways Committee.
- d) **Amenities** – The Assistant Clerk said that the erosion of Groombridge Green was being investigated. Cllr Pate asked if the Amenities Committee could work with the Highways Committee on this matter.
- e) **Air Traffic** – No meeting of the committee had taken place. Cllr Barrington-Johnson noted that a decision on HWCAAG membership was still pending a decision by HWCAAG on the new Gatwick NMB.
- f) **Footpaths** – Cllr Milner gave a brief update on the current situation with fallen trees due to the recent severe weather conditions. The insurance side of footpath maintenance was being clarified.
- g) **Environment Working Group**
- h) **KALC** – Cllr Barrington-Johnson said that he would provide a report for the next Full Council meeting following the KALC meeting.

It was RESOLVED that the meeting could proceed beyond 9.30pm.

20/64 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 3RD FEBRUARY 2020: there were none.

20/65 CLERK'S REPORT: there was nothing to report.

20/66 DIARY DATES:

Monday 2nd – Full Council Meeting at 7.30pm, Gallery Room at Langton Green Village Hall

Wednesday 18th – Planning Meeting

All meetings are in the office and start at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated

Speedwatch

Friday 20th – Speldhurst Speedwatch session

Training & Conferences

Friday 13th – Kate Harman and Catherine Barrett, KALC Annual Planning Conference

20/67 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

- Cllr Mrs Soyke said that Ashurst residents were objecting to the new parking charges that had been introduced at Ashurst Railway Station.
- Cllr Milner reported that he had recently attended a KALC Health & Wellbeing conference on behalf of SPC which had been extremely informative. The Clerk would keep the information from the event in the office.

There being no further items the meeting closed at 9.34pm

Chairman