



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

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL'S OPEN MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015 AT 8.00PM  
IN SPELDHURST VILLAGE HALL**

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**PRESENT:** Cllr Neil Barrington-Johnson - Chairman, together with eleven Parish Councillors and 25 parishioners.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr C May – Clerk

**BOROUGH COUNCILLOR:** Cllr Stanyer

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs Woodward and Allen, County Councillor John Davies and Assistant Clerk Mrs Flemington sent their apologies.
2. **Chairman's Introduction** – Cllr Barrington-Johnson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He said the meeting was timed to coincide with preparations for next year's budget and this was an opportunity for members of the public to advise the Council of their concerns. He said he had some subjects in mind for discussion but if some points were not addressed then matters could be raised.
3. **Defibrillators** – The Chairman said that Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) had installed three defibrillators so far throughout the Parish. The last one to be installed was in Speldhurst at the Village Hall and the reason it had been held up was because the wall was south facing and the defibrillator should be sheltered from direct sunlight. There was a general discussion on the subject and Steve Benbow, a local resident, volunteered to run a series of defibrillator (AED) training sessions for people of the parish. SPC will contact him when training is being set up to arrange suitable dates.
4. **Road Safety** – Cllr Milner addressed the meeting; he is the new chairman of the Highways Committee which is comprised of four councillors and four public members, one from each village. He spoke of the current main aims which the committee was focussing on which are to install 20mph outside the two primary schools and to install Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) around the parish at certain locations.  
Mr Pierce, a resident who lives on Speldhurst Road near the junction of Burnt House Lane, reported an accident the previous week and highlighted the unrestricted speed limit from the junction to the village. He also mentioned overgrown hedges, narrow footpaths due to lack of maintenance and blocked gulleys along the road.  
Mr Norton asked how many penalties for speeding have been issued from the camera in Langton.  
Mr Barton said that SIDs that said "Thank you" if you were adhering to the limit should be used.  
Mr Steibelt also mentioned overgrown footpaths in Speldhurst – he will send details to the Clerk.  
Several people volunteered for speedwatch.  
Mrs Buckley commented on the lack of cycling facilities.  
Ken Howes (Chairman of the Parish Plan Working Group) said that Highways issues was the biggest issue to date to come from the public meetings.

Cllr Barrington-Johnson advised those present of the KCC Highways Street Lighting survey and urged those present to complete it.

5. **Parish Plan** – Ken Howes addressed those present and gave a comprehensive report on the progress to-date of the community-led working group. He spoke of the survey that was to be delivered to every household during November and the Lottery grant of £5,750 that had been awarded to pay for an independent analysis. He emphasised the importance that the surveys were completed because a high response rate would mean the issues raised would be taken more seriously. He called for volunteers to help with distribution and collection.
6. **CCTV** – Cllr Barrington-Johnson introduced Peter Brown, who is a regional co-ordinator for Neighbourhood Watch. He spoke of the reductions in the Police manpower and he said there were more cuts to come. He said that he, and many people, felt that there was a need to monitor sensitive areas by introducing CCTV to help police them. He quoted how effectively this had worked in Goudhurst which had reduced petty crime in the village centre. He said that any CCTV that was introduced would only be reviewed retrospectively after an incident and those who had access would be “screened” by the Police. It could also be used for traffic management/regulation. The survey that was being delivered in November had a section on CCTV and he urged everyone to add their views.  
CCTV was a very emotive subject and there were strong views on both sides of the issue. There was much discussion of the matter but it was summarised by the Chairman, Cllr Barrington-Johnson, who said that Mr Brown was making an independent report and SPC would give it consideration in due course. He said that installation of CCTV within the Parish was not Council Policy and there were many issues that needed to be investigated.  
Peter Brown then promoted a smart phone app called “Country Eye” which records and disseminates information using the camera and GPS settings. With it, residents can report information such as fly-tipping quickly and efficiently.
7. **Air Traffic** – Cllr Barrington-Johnson reported that air traffic noise remains an important issue within the Parish and the Council continues to play a very active part in attempts to alleviate this. He reported that at a recent meeting with the Gatwick Airport CEO, NATS (air traffic controllers) CEO and the Head of Airspace at CAA there was a marked change in their approach. He said that local concerns were now being listened to and he was more optimistic that they being taken seriously. Having said that he added that the matter of airport expansion was still an issue despite the Davies Commission’s strong recommendation of Heathrow. He said that Ministers representing the south west area of London and the surrounding counties were a strong lobby within the Government so Gatwick is still in the frame. He asked all residents to voice their opinion, and showed leaflets printed by the High Weald Councils Aviation Action Group (HWCAAG), of which SPC was a member, encouraging residents to keep complaining.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

CHAIRMAN