



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

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 1st February 2021 at 7.30pm
Conducted online via Zoom electronic communication

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Barrington-Johnson (Chairman), Mrs Soyke, 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

Borough Cllr Ms Willis was in attendance.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

21/025 Welcome by the Chairman

Cllr Barrington-Johnson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

21/026 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting

No-one present intended to record the meeting.

21/027 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Cllr Mrs Podbury (previous engagement).
County Cllr McInroy also sent his apologies

21/028 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

21/029 Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

21/030 Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 4th January 2021

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

21/031 Borough and County Councillors' Reports

Cllr Ms Willis noted that Covid-19 numbers were decreasing in Kent, asymptomatic Covid-19 testing at the Tunbridge Wells Assembly Hall was going well, and the vaccination centre at the Masonic Hall was now fully operational.

An application for a new cricket pavilion in Bidborough had now been withdrawn. A planning application for assisted living apartments at Burrswood had been submitted. Cllr Willis had been preparing for an extraordinary meeting addressing pre-submission of the Tunbridge Wells local plan.

Elections were still scheduled to go ahead in May.

Cllr Mrs Soyke confirmed that the planning application for a new cricket pavilion in Bidborough had been withdrawn because the applicants had not followed correct procedures.

21/032 Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present.

21/033 Clerk's Report

The clerk reported on the busy month of January which had eight meetings. Earlier that day a video meeting had been set up with the IT company which was attended by four councillors and two clerks. A recommendation would be made to the Finance Committee regarding costs.

21/034 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
Cllr Mrs Lyle requested approval of a virement to cover recent works including an annual contract for pest control and new posts outside the Village Hall. **RESOLVED** to transfer £4,000 from contingency to the LGRG Maintenance budget account, which is where the costs had been met from.
- c) Report on interim payments made since the last meeting:
Unity Bank current account: £93.42 transfer to Mastercard acct; £500.00* Van deposit; £11,011.60* Van balance (note this includes VAT); £393.30* Van insurance (we will get money back when lease van is returned), £202.90 Veolia and £25.99 mobile. The following payments were made by Mastercard: £9 bank charges; £40* Kate's membership of ALCC; £97.20* new Minute Book, £370.98* Spare laptop for councillor use as required, currently with the vice chairman, £267.50 Tax for van.
- d) Payments made under delegated authority are starred* above.
- e) To consider the purchase of Speedwatch equipment
The Clerk reported that Speedwatch sessions had increased in Speldhurst and Langton Green before lockdown, and he anticipated a renewed effort from volunteers once restrictions were lifted. There was a need for an additional speed measuring device. After some discussion it was **RESOLVED** to purchase a second hand Suresight speed measuring device for £2100, which would be paid from the Highways budget.
- f) To consider the repairs to the gravel path at The Green, Langton Green as recommended by the Amenities Committee. The assistant clerk reported that she was in the process of getting costings for the repairs. There was no budget allocated for this and it would need to come from contingency.

21/035 Accounts for Payment

RESOLVED to pay the invoices as listed:

Payee Name	Ref.	Amount £	Detail
Sac-O-Mat UK Ltd	MT1943	488.83	Dog bags
Hadene	MT1944	876.96	Pavilion boiler maintenance
Treework	MT1945	1,368.00	Tree maintenance
David Buckett	MT1946	436.90	Internal Audit
KALC	MT1947	60.00	Training
KALC	MT1948	60.00	Training
Langton Life	MT1949	300.00	Advertisement
Mr JA Young	MT1950	100.00	Pavilion rental refund
Commercial Services Kent Ltd	MT1951	397.82	Van Lease
Employees	MT1952	3,736.30	Salaries
N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	MT1953	167.98	Pensions
Castle Water	DD	30.00	Pavilion water
Total:		£ 8,022.79	

21/036 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)

- a) Cllr Mrs Lyle reported on behalf of the Pavilion Management Committee. A new occupational license would be needed for Mrs Howden, although the café remained closed for now. Hadene had submitted their bill for maintenance of the boiler. There had been a provisional booking request for May 2022.
- b) Update on the progress of traffic management and the installation of grid matting to alleviate parking: The clerk reported that there were possibly three more companies to consider for quotes but progress had been halted by the lockdown. Cllr Mrs Lyle confirmed that she would be happy to meet with the contractors.
- c) New wooden posts had been installed on land adjacent to Lampington Row to stop vehicles reversing onto the grass; however, it then became clear that this land was owned by Town and Country. It was agreed that the clerk would notify Town and Country about the posts. Cllr Mrs Lyle would meet contractors as above to discuss possible solutions for the mud alongside the narrow path.
- d) Update on the drainage project: Cllrs Barrington-Johnson and Mrs Lyle had made several visits to the LGRG to witness how the swales were coping since the heavy rain in January. Water had gathered in the swales nearest to the car park, and once pooling had also occurred in the far North West corner of the recreation ground. Mrs Lyle said it would be helpful to have input from any contractors visiting to provide quotes re b) and c) as to how to fix this problem. Cllr Mrs Woodliffe reported that Mr Lambert from Langton Green Charitable Sports Association had concerns about the warranty for existing works if new works were then undertaken by SPC. Cllrs Mrs Woodliffe and Mrs Lyle said that it was hoped that any further works would avoid the area covered by the previous works, and that the Council would contact LGCSA with more information once a course of action had been identified.

21/037 Parish Council Vehicle

The clerk advised that the vehicle purchased by SPC had now arrived. Councillor Langridge added that it was a three-year-old Peugeot Partner petrol van in good condition, which had done 19,000 miles. The clerk advised that VAT had been paid on the vehicle but would be claimed back in line with tax regulations for parish councils. The lease van would be returned the following week.

21/038 Advertising for the Clerk's position

It was **RESOLVED** to delegate responsibility for the recruitment of a new clerk to the Governance Committee. This would include costs of up to £2000 to advertise the position online and in print. Cllr Rajah suggested LinkedIn as an effective recruitment portal. Cllr Ellery asked if the new Clerk would have their Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA), and Cllr Barrington-Johnson advised that the successful Candidate would be qualified or

need to obtain this qualification within 2 years of employment. It was also agreed that IT proficiency would be an essential competency.

21/039 Annual Parish Meeting

This would be a virtual event and Cllrs Barrington-Johnson, Langridge, Mrs Lyle, and Pate were in the process of agreeing a meeting date to discuss further.

21/040 Chairman's Report

There was nothing to report.

21/041 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:** Cllr Mrs Lyle advised that a meeting had been held on 20th January where the 6 monthly internal audit had been reviewed, and it had been **RESOLVED** to add a Covid-19 Impact item to committee and Full Council meeting agendas going forward.
Cllr Mrs Lyle reported that changes had been made to the Standing Orders to give the clerk and/or Full Council the ability to make dispensations. The Grants policy was amended making it compulsory for returning applicants to complete a form before their application could be considered. These changes were approved.
The following were also approved: Governance Terms of Reference (TOR); Internal Audit TOR; Financial Control and Investment policies.
- b) **Planning:** Cllr Ellery advised that a meeting had been held on 18th January where 13 applications had been considered – all of which remained neutral. One appeal was considered, to which an objection was made. The TOR were updated with new wording to accommodate changes to the Tunbridge Wells Agreement. These changes were approved. Cllr Barrington-Johnson had written a report on Local Green Spaces; unfortunately, the submission deadline had expired.
Cllr Ellery said that one Member of Public had spoken of his concerns about site allocation in the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan. Mr Larkin cited the TPO's on the proposed site behind Ferbies and asked for feedback on the grasslands report. Cllr Ellery advised that the report did not find much ecological value in the site.
- c) **Highways:** Cllr Pate advised that a meeting had been held on 11th January. This was followed by a meeting between Cllr Pate, the clerk and KCC Highways representatives on 27th January. The meeting had been productive and KCC agreed to review costings for speed reductions on Groombridge Hill and the A264 approaching Ashurst. Cllr Pate said it could be concluded that KCC have resumed working with SPC, and that a small amount of funding may be available from them towards certain work.
Cllr Pate advised that he was currently updating the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) for the next Highways meeting. He thanked Cllr Langridge for his work installing traffic signs around the parish. The Barden Road traffic count report was now available, and Cllr Pate asked the clerk to share the findings.
- d) **Amenities:** Cllr Rowe advised that a meeting had been held on 27th January. The traffic islands opposite the Green at Langton Green had been discussed because one of these islands had been turned into a flower bed by a resident. The Committee had asked that it be returned to its original state. The situation was further complicated by the discovery that these islands had initially been part-funded by TWBC who had asked that they be sown with wild grass. Cllr Rowe would update accordingly.
There had been an application for a clothes recycling bin at LGRG carpark which had been approved in principle and the Committee were awaiting further information. There had also been a request to carry out metal detecting which had been refused.
- e) **Air Traffic:** Cllr Barrington-Johnson advised that meetings had been held on 6th January and 26th January, where the TOR and agreement on final version of SPC response to Night Flight Consultation had been updated. These were approved and Cllr Barrington-Johnson advised that the response had been submitted. Cllr Barrington-Johnson had attended a Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) meeting the previous week and meeting slides were now available. GACC had drafted an initial response to the Gatwick consultation, which was similar to SPC's response in its message but more strident in its tone.

- f) **Footpaths:** Cllr Langridge presented his idea for splitting the maintenance of parish footpaths by village. Cllr Mrs Soyke volunteered to oversee Ashurst and Cllr Rajah Speldhurst North. Cllr Langridge suggested a reporting system, whereby residents could email or call a dedicated number to report footpath issues. Cllr Myles suggested using labels with a QR code to do this. Cllr Langridge had been in contact with Jonathan Bibby at KCC, who advised that anyone undertaking footpath repairs should be registered with the Countryside Access Wardens.
- g) **Environment Working Group:** Cllr Turner advised that a meeting had been held on 25th January. The previous meeting notes from October 2018 had been reviewed, together with a recent environmental briefing from KCC, with a view to deciding the Group's remit and priorities over the next year. Cllr Turner had subsequently updated the TOR, which would be finalized and presented to Full Council at the next meeting.
- h) **KALC:** The Clerk had attended a recent meeting where William Benson, Chief Executive, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council had emphasised the importance of regular Covid-19 testing at the Assembly Hall. Mr Benson had also asked attendees to send him examples of the benefits of remote meetings. This would demonstrate that democracy was being upheld during lockdown while face-to-face meetings could not take place. Cllr Barrington-Johnson said he would put together a response.

21/042 Diary Dates

Finance Committee – Wednesday 10th Feb

Planning Committee – Monday 15th Feb

Governance Committee – Wednesday 24th Feb 10am

21/043 Covid Compliance

Cllr Mrs Lyle would be working with the bookings manager for the pavilion (Emma Howden) to update information and documentation to take into account covid-related regulations and guidance for hirers.

21/044 Items for Information

- Cllr Turner praised the information given on Greg Clark's website regarding Covid-19 vaccinations and recommended it be shared on SPC's website and social media pages. Mrs Barrett confirmed that this had been done. Cllr Myles agreed to look into the information available to Old Groombridge residents visiting the Dr's Surgery in Groombridge.
- Cllr Mrs Lyle had inspected the exit from the LGVH car park following a resident complaint discussed at Amenities committee about drivers who exited LGVH carpark without giving way to cars coming from Winstone Scott Avenue. She reported that there were already clear markings on the road, confirmed by Cllr Barrington-Johnson and the Clerk who had ordered them to be painted a few years previously, but it was obviously not enough to make drivers sufficiently aware. It was agreed that extra signs should be installed to raise awareness of the danger.
- Cllr Mrs Soyke asked if interested members could attend the Burrswood information meeting.
- Cllr Rowe noted that the George and Dragon pub in Speldhurst was under new ownership.

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

Chairman