



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

**Minutes of the Amenities Committee Meeting
held on Monday 30th October 2023 at 7.30pm
In the Palmer Room, Langton Green Village Hall, Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Lyle (Chair), Rowe (Vice-Chair), Norton and Turner

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk

1. **To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting**
The Clerk would be recording the meeting for the purpose of accuracy of the minutes. The recording would be deleted once the minutes had been signed off at the next meeting.
4. **To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence**
Apologies had been received from Cllr Leach for childcare reasons.
5. **Disclosures of Interest**
There were none.
6. **Declarations of Lobbying**
There were none.
5. **Minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 22nd May 2023**
RESOLVED that the minutes, previously forwarded to Members were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
6. **Public Open Session**
There was one member of the public present – Mr James Hartnell was attending to seek permission to bring his ice cream van to the LGRG weekly on Thursdays from March to September between 3-3.45pm to serve soft- whip ice creams. His main points were:
 - There is no conflict of interest with the Pavilion café because he is selling soft- whip whereas the café sells frozen packaged items and he does not sell drinks or any other snacks.
 - As a gesture of goodwill, he would be prepared to contribute 10% of sales to the parish council towards maintenance of the area or to a charity of its choosing.Cllr Rowe said that the carpark is private and the current Policy on the Use of Council Land does not allow food vans supplying to general members of the public in exchange for money. If this and other vans are to be permitted to use the carpark in the future, the policy would need to be changed. Cllr Lyle said that there was also a safety angle that needed to be considered with regards to children surrounding the van close to the carpark. It was also noted that a change in the policy to allow the ice cream van would set a precedent

for other possible users of the carpark in a similar way. It was **RESOLVED** that the existing Policy for Use of Council Land would be reviewed via email during November by committee members to compose alternative wording. This would be put to December's Full Council meeting for consideration.

7. **Review of Terms of Reference**

The existing Terms of Reference were reviewed and the following changes suggested. The revised draft document would be recommended to Full Council.

- Items 1 and 3: To add "Vice-Chair" following "Chair".
- Item 7c): Remove existing and replace with "To work with the Environment Working Group in relation to the land and assets of Speldhurst Parish Council".
- Item 10: To remove the word "annually" and replace it with "in accordance with the council's schedule of policies".
- To remove the final paragraph regarding the authority of the working group in addition to the two *'s in the document.

8. **Review of Action Points**

The Assistant Clerk (AC) ran through the action points grid providing updates, all of which were either complete or would be discussed at a later point in the meeting.

9. **Financial Review**

The finance sheets were noted and the following queries raised:

- Why has there been no expenditure under 'CCTV' in the past six months?
- To note that the £1K budgeted for EV chargers was unused. Some of this may be used to provide signage for the chargers.

The AC would speak to the RFO and report back to members.

10. **Bins**

The Assistant Clerk advised that currently there were no problems with the bins or invoicing from Tivoli. Bearing this in mind, it was **RESOLVED** that all existing items on Bins could be removed from future agendas and monitored for the time being and continue to be monitored and raised again if any issues arise.

11. **Parish Council Land:-**

a) **Langton Green Recreation Ground including car parks (LGRG)**

- **To consider repairs to the junior playground and nursery school courtyard fences at a cost of £351 in addition to considering a longer-term maintenance and replacement schedule.**

The fences required some maintenance to bring them up to an acceptable safety standard. The Groundsman had provided a quote for materials required to carry out immediate repairs of £351. It was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council that the Groundsman should proceed with these repairs. Members also considered a longer-term plan for the fences which would need full replacement in the coming years and agreed that recycled plastic was the preferred option bearing in mind it comes with a 25 year guarantee.

- **To note the current repairs being undertaken by the Groundsman to the posts in the carpark (under delegated authority) and to consider a longer-term maintenance and replacement schedule.**

The AC had provided quotes for various replacement options, supply only, which were considered by members who agreed the posts in the front carpark (in the first instance) should ideally be replaced with a more substantial alternative which could not be knocked over by motorists. The AC was asked to obtain quotations for supply and installation of concrete-filled steel posts (similar to those directly in front of the village hall) in tranches of 10 posts at a time in an effort to manage costs. It was agreed

that the posts in the strip down the centre of the carpark should ideally be replaced as soon as possible for safety reasons with the remainder of the carpark posts being replaced during a period of three years.

The AC was asked to provide a briefing note for the Finance Committee asking for £30K to be available to the Amenities Committee in 2026 to carry out both the carpark posts and fence replacements.

- **To consider selling a strip of land, adjacent to 10 Winstone Scott Avenue, to the resident.**

The Assistant Clerk had been contacted by the residents of 10 Winstone Scott Avenue, Langton Green, enquiring if SPC would be prepared to sell them the strip of land adjacent to their property. It was **RESOLVED** that SPC's existing policy not to sell any of its land should be adhered to and the AC was asked to respond to the resident declining their offer. It was noted that previous enquires from residents of a similar nature had been declined and it was important to set a clear precedent.

- **To consider a request for an ice cream van to regularly visit the carpark.**

Discussed under Item 6 – Public Open Session.

- **To note actions arising from the recent playground inspection report.**

The AC had prepared and circulated a table of results from the report which showed any works required. The following was discussed:

1. All the items raised in the inspection report were low risk.
2. The majority of the playground equipment is now 15 years old and would need replacement in the coming years. There was financial provision for this in the budget.
3. The rubber matting in the junior playground had become extremely worn, providing trip hazards and would need replacement in the near future either with rubber matting or an alternative surface.
4. The AC would invite Capel Groundcare to site with Cllrs Rowe and Turner to discuss options for replacement flooring and equipment.
5. The AC would action any repairs highlighted in the inspection report, either with the Groundsman or Capel Groundcare.

- **To consider booking a playground inspection to be carried out in 2024 at a cost of £170.**

It was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council for an inspection to be carried out in 2024 at a cost of £170.

- **To consider repairs to the rear path and step from the Main Hall, Langton Green Village Hall.**

The AC provided photos to members of the area in question and, given this new information, members agreed that the rear path and step were an integral part of village hall which would have been built as part of the fabric of the whole building. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council that the previous decision that the rear path and step were the responsibility of SPC be reviewed.

b) **The Green at Langton Green**

To consider planting the replacement cherry tree at an approximate cost of £585.50.

Members considered the quote for the replacement cherry tree expensive. Cllr Turner suggested that a native tree such as a crab apple would perhaps be more suitable. It was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council that the AC purchase a crab apple tree up to a maximum value of £150 to be planted on The Green by the Groundsman.

c) **The Boundary, Langton Green**

To consider delaying investigations into maintenance works to the pond.

It was **RESOLVED** to put any works to the pond on hold until workload and budget allow.

d) **The Green at Groombridge**

Cllr Norton reported that the less frequent mowing schedule for the lower part of The Green had received general village approval. Lessons had been learned and it was hoped this approach could be built into next year's mowing schedule.

c) **Pocket Parks at Speldhurst**

- **To consider a general tidy up of Pocket, Orchid and Oak Tree Parks to include removing the brambles and off-shoots from trees.**

The AC explained that she had visited the parks with the Groundsman and it had been agreed he would carry out a general tidy up of the smaller Orchid and Oak Tree Parks. It was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council for the maintenance contractor to carry out a general tidy up of Pocket Park. The AC would meet him on site to obtain a quote ahead of the Full Council meeting.

- **To consider a revised proposal of works from the Environment Working Group for Pocket Park in 2024 which it is hoped will be funded via a grant.**

Cllr Turner had circulated an updated schedule of works which could be carried out at anytime until March 2024. The decision from Sussex Lund regarding a grant for the works was hoped in January 2024. There was also some funding available from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

13. **Items for Information**

There were none.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting finished at 9.09 pm.

Chairman