



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

**MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 7th February 2011 at 7.30pm
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, LANGTON GREEN VILLAGE HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys (Chairman), Mrs Hull, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Brown, Ellis, Langridge, Milner, Parker and Pendleton

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs M Flemington – Assistant Clerk

KCC Cllr Mr Davies and 5 members of the public present.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Cllr Mrs Paulson-Ellis (prior engagement), Cllr Wheeler (prior engagement), Chris May - Clerk (Holiday)

11/009 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST:

Personal & Prejudicial Cllr Mrs Soyke – 6ii) Consideration of a grant to St Martin of Tours Church, Ashurst. She is a member of the PCC.

11/010 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING: Cllr Mrs Hull – she has been presented with a petition regarding the salt bin in Furzefield Avenue, Speldhurst

11/011 MINUTES: The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on **10th January 2011**, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.

11/012 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION:

The meeting was adjourned.

Mr Critchlow referred to the letter he had received from Greg Clark MP regarding Broadband and he urged the Parish Council to consider putting in a business case prior to the 31st March 2011 deadline. County Councillor John Davies reported that he had been involved in Bidborough's application. He also advised that this year's funding is already allocated so the 31st March 2011 deadline is not relevant. He will find out if there is to be funding for 2012/2013 together with the deadline for applications so the matter can be considered further.

Cllr Mrs Soyke stated that she supports the campaign as does her son-in-law who runs an IT business locally. It was **AGREED** that there is a need to raise awareness of this matter within the Parish.

Two representatives of Speldhurst School PTA – Mr Waters, Treasurer and Mrs Peat – advised that the quotation for the outdoor classroom had increased from £8,000 to £11,676, and requested that SPC consider granting the full amount allocated earlier in the year of £3,500. This would leave a shortfall which might affect their ability to complete the project in time for some use in the summer term.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys spoke of the benefits of the project. Cllr Mrs Podbury spoke of its eco-benefits and that it assists in resolving playground issues.

The meeting was reopened. Cllrs agreed to bring forward item 12 on the agenda – Local Schools

11/013 LOCAL SCHOOLS

Cllr Pendleton said the Parish Council should consider an increased amount. Mr Waters confirmed that the outstanding amount to enable them to commission the work is £1,200. Cllr Mrs Soyke considered the amount should remain at £3,500 and asked if they had asked local businesses for support. Cllr Brown asked if they considered asking parents for loans to bridge the shortfall. Mrs Peat stated that they feel the parents have already been asked to support the project a great deal. Cllr Milner asked if any approaches had been made to residents of Speldhurst who do not have children at the school. Cllr Mrs Podbury reminded Councillors that there will be a request for grant funding for the improvements to Speldhurst Recreation Ground children's playground in the near future. Cllr Parker asked about deadlines for raising funds and commissioning the work. He suggested that the grant remain at £3,500 at present but that if after exploring all other means of raising funds before the deadline there is still a shortfall the school may re-approach the Parish Council at that stage. This was **AGREED**.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys drew attention to the fact that Speldhurst School have had their capital budget cut by 80%. As a result they are asking for an additional grant towards the outdoor canopy. This will be considered at the Finance Committee meeting on 21st February.

The assistant clerk reported that the roadworks in Northfields are due to be completed in two weeks. Kent Highways have said that they will not put traffic lights in place as they do not consider it a solution to the problems but they have agreed to put signs outside the village warning drivers to avoid the village if possible. Mr Critchlow reported that a disabled parking space in Barden Road has been put out of use as a result of the roadworks. **The assistant clerk to investigate.**

11/014 FINANCE COMMITTEE – Report by Cllr Parker

- i) Cllr Parker reported that there had been four email decisions by the Finance Committee. A payment of £119.00 for the subscription to the Planning Journal used by the Planning Committee was approved. The cost of £180.00 for three Councillors to attend the KALC Planning Conference on 12th March and £70.00 for one Councillor to attend the KCC Listening to Communities Conference on 25th February were both approved. The Committee has also authorised overtime by the assistant clerk while the clerk is on holiday up to a maximum of £400.00.
The assistant clerk spoke about the problems with the laptop. It has been restored but currently no data can be retrieved and it may need a new hard drive.
- ii) Consideration was given to the request for an increased grant towards fencing the perimeter of the churchyard of St Martin of Tours Church, Ashurst. Before Cllr Mrs Soyke left the room Cllr Parker asked her how much the Church are asking for. She advised that they are not specifying a sum. Cllr Langridge asked her if the Church has applied for Diocesan funding of any sort. She replied that she did not know. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys pointed out to Councillors that the Church can at any time ask for the Parish Council to take responsibility for this maintenance. Cllr Mrs Hull stated that in her opinion the fence may not be necessary. Cllr Pendleton questioned how many quotations they had sought. Despite additional information having been provided by the Treasurer it was felt that it was still unclear and there was still insufficient information on which to base a decision. Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys and Mrs Podbury suggested that the Church Treasurer should attend the Finance Committee meeting on 21st February at which further questions could be put to him directly and a decision made. **The assistant clerk to establish whether the Treasurer can attend the Finance Committee meeting on 21st February and if not the Full Council meeting on 7th March.** Cllr Mrs Soyke rejoined the meeting.
- iii) Cllr Parker recommended acceptance of the grounds maintenance costs from KCC Landscape Services for 2011/2012 for Langton Green and Old Groombridge. This was **AGREED**.
- iv) Cllr Langridge showed an example of the election poster to be produced. After discussion it was **AGREED** that fourteen posters should be printed. Cllr Langridge advised that the cost of this would be in the region of £35-£40 and certainly not more than £50. This was **AGREED**.
- v) The assistant clerk reported that Barclays Bank have failed to complete the mandates for the changes in signatories but that they will be processed before the next Full Council meeting. It was **AGREED** that Cllrs Parker and Milner will replace Cllrs Ellis and Mrs Waters as signatories on the account in addition to Cllr Mrs Jeffreys.
- vi) Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee have asked if they can re-allocate £766.00 of the grant given by the Parish Council for phase 1 and 2 of the Pavilion refurbishment into phase 3 of the project. This was **AGREED**.

11/015 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – Invoices verified by Cllr Mrs Podbury

Prestige Web Marketing	£20.00	Feb and March 2011 website updates
Haymarket Publishing Services	£119.00	Planning publication annual subscription
Kent County Council	£70.00	Listening to Communities Conference
Len Cooper	£100.00	Groundsman's invoice
C May	£1,073.32	Salary
C May	£140.00	Expenses
M Flemington	£386.50	Salary
M Flemington	£91.20	Expenses
BT PLC	£30.78	Mobile phone
TOTAL	£2,030.80	

11/016 HIGHWAYS REPORT

- i) The Terms of Reference were **APPROVED** and **ADOPTED**
- ii) Cllr Langridge showed examples of the signs that could be produced by the Parish Council and erected on private land to discourage speeding. Cllr Pendleton reminded Councillors that speeding traffic was the biggest single issue to come out of Parish Vision. Mrs Buckley asked about ISSs for Langton Green and Speldhurst and Cllr Mrs Jeffreys confirmed that this would be under the remit of the Highways Committee. County Cllr John Davies said he liked the design of the signs but urged the Parish Council not to use too many as it can minimise their impact. It was **AGREED** that the signs would be produced and that the Highways Committee will deal with all further details.
- iii) Cllrs Langridge and Milner reported that they had heard from Kent Police today that three Speed Watch locations in the Parish (one each at Langton Green, Ashurst and Old Groombridge) have been approved. They are still trying to establish a suitable site for Speldhurst.

11/006 ENHANCEMENT OF THE LAND OUTSIDE THE OLD WATSON HALL

Monson Engineering have quoted £500.00 for managing the tender process and £700.00 for project managing the work. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported that the clerk strongly recommends that Monson Engineering project manage the work on behalf of the Parish Council. Both figures were **AGREED**. Cllr Brown stated that he was not in favour of expediting the works but Cllr Pendleton reminded Councillors that this work is urgent on health and safety grounds. It was **AGREED** by a vote of 9:1 that Cllr Mrs Jeffreys and Cllr Parker can take the decision to accept a quotation for the work to go ahead up to a maximum of £10,000.00.

There was a discussion about the lockable posts that had been requested. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys has been in correspondence with a number of the residents and Steve Welling has agreed to investigate sourcing the posts so that costings can be obtained. This will be passed to the Finance Committee. Cllr Pendleton expressed concern that the Parish Council should not be liable in connection with any such posts.

10/008 PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE:

There had been no meeting of the working party but the website continues to be updated by Prestige Web Marketing. Cllr Pendleton reported that Prestige Web Marketing consider that the monthly sum of £10.00 for updates should be increased because of the current volume of updates. Any additional cost and the question of whether the Parish Council clerks should be trained to do the updates will be on the Agenda for the next Finance Committee meeting.

2249 PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE:

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys referred to the minutes of the Transfer of Land Committee meeting held on 3rd February. A significant number of alterations are required to the legal documents and these have been referred back to the Parish Council's Solicitor. She also advised that the Trustees now wish to delay the signing of these documents because a decision on their further funding grants from KCC and TWBC has been deferred until March and they will not be in a position to sign the building contract until the grant funding is in place. This matter will therefore be reviewed at the Full Council meeting on 7th March.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys referred to a telephone call with Trevor Palmer, a Trustee in charge of the building project, who advised that the cost of the Office will increase to approximately £76,000 (ex VAT) because the depth of foundations is greater than was anticipated by the builders, and the detail of the roof trusses is greater. She

advised that she would speak to KALC regarding the Public Works Board loan. The loan will be considered at the Finance Committee meeting on 21st February.

11/017 DAMAGE TO VERGES IN ROOPERS

An email has been received from one of the residents. **The clerk to ask Martyn Lawrence to look and advise on the method and cost of reinstatement of the ruts.** Cllr Milner offered some tree stumps he has to be put in place to deter vehicles from driving on the verges.

11/018 CONSULTATION OF THE SA/SEA SCOPING REPORT FOR THE TUNBRIDGE WILLS BOROUGH CORE STRATEGY REVIEWS, TOWN CENTRES ACTION PLAN, ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES DPDS

Cllr Mrs Soyke stated that she thinks this is an excellent document. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys supported this view and asked if Councillors had any comments on the document. There were none.

11/019 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported that she had received thanks from the Mayor's Parlour for the Parish Council's support of the Charity Quiz which had raised £1,200.00 for the Mayor's Charity

11/020 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- i) Governance Committee – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported that there had been no meeting since the last Full Council meeting. A meeting will be held soon.
- ii) Planning – Cllr Mrs Podbury referred to her report that was given out detailing the revised proposals for dealing with the trees in Roopers, Speldhurst
- iii) Parish Vision – Cllr Mrs Podbury reported that a Committee meeting is to be held on 24th February. The Revised Terms of Reference were **AGREED** and **ADOPTED** (subject to Terms of Reference being written in full and not referred to as TOR).
- iv) Recreation Ground – Cllr Ellis reported that there had been a leak in the Pavilion which the Football Club had mended. The lock on the ladies toilet was broken – Mr C Worcester has attended to this.
- v) Footpaths – Cllr Milner referred to his report and thanked Councillors and Volunteers for their help in clearing the tree guards from Shadwell Wood. There is a fallen tree obstructing the path beyond Barrow Lane, Langton Green which he has referred to Holmewood House School as the tree root is on their land. Hedge cutting debris from Broomhill Farm is blocking the adjoining path and drain, which Ron Fisher will speak to them about.
- vi) KALC – Cllr Mrs Hull reported that she had attended a meeting on 7th February regarding restructuring to save money and the Big Society.
- vii) Local Needs Housing – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys in the absence of Cllr Wheeler confirmed that the Open Day will be held on 16th February in Speldhurst Village Hall. Cllr Wheeler would like members of the Committee to attend to assist and urges all Councillors to visit at some stage during the day. Cllr Mrs Hull reported that there is already considerable interest from Speldhurst residents. She also reminded Councillors that the scheme would mean a loss of Green Belt for Speldhurst village and that although 50% of the housing is initially ring-fenced for Speldhurst residents the Parish Council may have to be vigilant to ensure it stays so.
- viii) Environment – Cllr Brown reported that a Committee meeting had been held on 26th January. The Committee is discussing with local schools the environmental actions that they and their pupils take.

11/021 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 10th JANUARY 2011

The new salt bins in Northfields, Speldhurst and Stone Cross are now in place. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys thanked John Davies for his role in obtaining the bins.

Cllr Mrs Hull reported that she had been given a petition regarding the salt bin in Furzeffeld Avenue which she had passed to the assistant clerk. **This will be on the Agenda for the Finance Committee meeting on 21st February** John Davies advised that he does have some available budget if the Parish Council consider a salt bin to be necessary in Furzeffeld Avenue

Cllr Milner reported that the bus is still parking regularly in Ferbies. **The clerk to investigate**

11/022 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- i) Letter from the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells thanking supporters of the Christmas Toy Appeal.
- ii) Hospice in the Weald Winter News 2011 – given to Cllr Langridge
- iii) St Martin of Tours Church Ashurst Quinquennial Report – given to Cllr Parker
- iv) Letter from BTCV regarding the Kent Heritage Trees Project – given to Cllr Milner
- v) KCC Community Unit Newsletter October 2010

- vi) Letter from The Kent Men of the Trees regarding the 'Trees in the Village Competition 2011' – given to Cllr Milner
- vii) Letter from Waldon Telecom Ltd acting on behalf of Vodafone and Telefonica O2 UK Limited regarding proposals for a base station at Peacock Farm, Lower Green Road, Rusthall – given to Cllr Mrs Podbury
- viii) Letter from Greg Clark MP regarding funding for better broadband service
- ix) Letter from the Treasurer of Speldhurst CEP School PTA regarding the outdoor classroom (see agenda item 12 and clerk's notes)
- x) Letter from Barclays Bank stating that they have not processed the mandates for changes of signatories on the Bank Account
- xi) Invitation to join Action With Communities in Rural Kent – to be put on Finance Committee agenda

11/023 DIARY DATES

- i) Wednesday 16th – Local Needs Housing Open Day – Speldhurst Village Hall 2.30pm – 7.30pm
- ii) Monday 21st – Finance Committee Meeting – 7.30pm Committee Room Speldhurst Village Hall
- iii) Tuesday 22nd – Parish Council Chairmen's Meeting
- iv) Clerk holiday 26th January – 10th February
- v) **Monday 7th March – Full Council at Ashurst Village Hall**

11/024 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

Cllr Brown had received a summary of the Community Safety Partnership Strategy for 2011. He was asked by the Chairman to circulate a précis of summary document.

Cllr Pendleton advised that work being carried out on Old Groombridge Church is involving scaffolding and lorries parking on Groombridge Hill which is dangerous. **The assistant clerk to investigate with Kent Highway Services.**

Cllr Parker reported that the hedge between Salisbury Road and the Butchers has now been cut back.

Cllr Mrs Soyke advised that there have still been problems with distribution of the Civic Complex Consultation document. As a result the deadline has been extended to 14th February 2011.

Cllr Milner said there is a significant new entrance being constructed from the highway in Barden Road Speldhurst. He will provide the address so **the assistant clerk can investigate with TWBC Planning Department.**

Cllr Mrs Podbury raised the matter of reinstatement of the damaged grass verges in Furzeffield Avenue. Linda Meads has advised her that the Developers of The Grove do not intend to do this work. **The clerk to investigate.**

Cllr Langridge advised that the person who cuts the grass opposite The Old Watson Hall has asked whether the Parish Council would do so. **The matter will be passed to the Amenities Committee.**

The assistant clerk reported that an email has been received from Kent Highway Services stating that the extension of the guardrails outside Speldhurst School has been added to the list of works to be carried out in the next financial year. **The assistant clerk will advise the school.**

Cllr Ellis reported experiencing an unpleasant attitude from a member of the Langton Green Football Club last weekend.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported that Cllr Ellis is stepping down from being a Parish Councillor. She thanked him for his contribution to the Parish Council over seven years as a Councillor and prior to that attending meetings and helping out and for his 49 years of service (to date) to Langton Green and its Village Halls. She gave him everyone's best wishes and presented him with a card and an engraved tankard.

There being nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 9.43pm

CHAIRMAN