



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

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 7th March 2022
at 7.30pm in the Palmer Room at Langton Green Village Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Pate (Chairman), Barrington-Johnson, Curry, Ellery, Mrs Lyle, Rajah, Rowe, Scarbrough, Mrs Soyke and Mrs Woodliffe.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Neve – Clerk and Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE

Borough Cllr Ms Willis was in attendance.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one member of the public present.

22/47 Covid Compliance

Cllr Pate asked members for their views regarding the continuation of safety measures and there was a consensus that facemasks should continue to be worn for now but could be removed when speaking. Ventilation of meeting rooms would also continue and everyone encouraged to take a lateral flow test before attending meetings.

22/48 To enquire if anyone intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting

No-one present intended to film, photograph or record the meeting.

22/49 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Turner for covid-related reasons and Cllr Langridge who was unwell. Apologies had also been received from County Cllr McInroy who was attending another meeting and Borough Cllrs Sankey and Allen due to prior engagements.

22/50 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

22/51 Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

22/52 Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 7th February 2022

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

22/53 Co-option of New Councillor

It was **RESOLVED** that Mr Simon Norton be co-opted onto the Council following recommendation by the working group consisting of Cllrs Ellery and Mrs Lyle. Cllr Norton then took his place in the meeting and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The Chairman welcomed him to the Council and said he looked forward to working together and Cllr Norton replied saying he was looking forward to contributing towards the work of the parish council and hoped that he could add a voice on behalf of Old Groombridge residents. It was agreed that Cllr Norton would join the Planning, Amenities and Highways and leave the Environment Working Groups/Committees.

22/54 Public Open Session

No member of the public present wished to speak.

22/55 Borough and County Councillors' Reports

Borough Cllr Ms Willis reported on the following:

- The TWBC Communications team are running a consultation to give residents a voice regarding their views relating to live, work and visit in the borough. The closing date is 25th March and details can be found on www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planningforthefuture.
- A decision has been made to cancel the Russian State Opera at The Assembly Hall Theatre.
- The Repair Café is back on Saturday 19th March at The Trinity Theatre between 10am-1pm.
- There had been an overwhelming response from the local community towards the Ukrainian crisis who had come together to organise donation collections on an unprecedented scale, including an event organised by the Labour Party at Sankeys.
- The Head of Planning was leaving TWBC.

County Cllr McInroy had sent apologies and had reported the following:

- His predecessor, Alderman John Davies had sadly died on Tuesday. He was a hard-working County Councillor who had served Tunbridge Wells West faithfully for 16 years. Among many responsibilities he took on, John was a past Chairman of KCC, KCC Planning and Applications Committee and of the Rotary Club of Tunbridge Wells. He will be sorely missed.
- Three Highways issues which would be put on the next Highways Working Group agenda

Borough Cllr Sankey had sent apologies and a report which Borough Cllr Ms Willis explained as follows:

- He is assisting residents with broken wheelie bins.
- He is championing a Meanwhile Use policy on the old cinema site which got voted through at a recent TWBC Full Council meeting.

22/56 Review of Action Points

The updated Action Points Table had been shared with councillors and these were reviewed. The newly updated list of action points, incorporating additional actions from this meeting, are shown at the end of these minutes.

22/57 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Ellery

- a) Cllr Ellery reported that there had been no meeting of the Finance Committee since the last Full Council, the next one was planned for 21st March.

- b) **Budget virements:** there were none.
- c) **Interim payments: Unity Bank:** £365 Mulberry & Co – CiLCA mentoring; £71.95 Defib4Life Ltd – Defib Readykits; £1,211 London Hearts – Defibrillator; £4.50 K Christmas – Refund, Mastercard DD £227.22 – to bring balance to zero. **Mastercard:** £18 – 2 name badges; £82.80 petrol for van and tools.

22/58 Accounts for Payment

RESOLVED that the invoices as listed, be paid.

Payee Name	Reference	Amount	Detail
BT PLC	DD	24.72	Mobile
Knockout Print	MT2185	180.00 APM	boards
JS Facilities Management	MT2186	171.00	Pavilion cleaning
Speldhurst Village Hall	MT2187	15.05	PCSO Drop in session
Langton Life	MT2188	300.60	Advertisement
Cloudy IT	MT2189	263.70	Monthly contract
Westcotec	MT2190	486.00	Retro fit data collection
Katie Neve	MT2191	18.45	Expenses
Sygnnet Interactive Ltd	MT2192	120.00	Speldhurst V website
Tivoli	MT2195	120.00	Canine refuse
KCC (KCS)	MT2196	119.95	Photocopier
Langton Life	MT2188	-300.60	Reversal re amount
Langton Life	MT2188	300.00	Reinput with correct amount
Tate Fencing Ltd	MT2197	112.22	Repairs re storm
Employees	MT2193	4,399.43	Salaries
N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	MT2194	394.04	Pension contributions
EDF Energy	DD	362.00	Pavilion – electricity
Veolia	DD	232.55	Monthly waste disposal

Total: **£7,319.11**

22/59 Planning Committee

Cllr Rajah, Chairman of the Planning Committee, reported the following:

- At the meeting on 15th February, 16 applications had been considered by members.
- An objection had been upheld on an application for Pax Cottage.
- The committee had responded to William Benson from TWBC following a disappointing response regarding a letter of objection from SPC to a lack of regard by the TWBC planning committee towards the AONB and the opinions of locals. An equally disappointing reply had been received which would be considered at the next planning committee meeting the following week.
- The Local Plan was undergoing a second round of inspection. The working group had considered the documents in detail and it had been agreed that no benefit would be gained from taking any further action at this stage. Cllr Pate thanked members for the amount of effort they had put into this decision.
- A request for a contribution towards the installation of a road crossing in Langton Green from the developer of Ashurst Place had been rejected. Items for the LGRG were now being considered.

22/60 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)

- a) **Report from the Pavilion Management Working Group:** Cllr Mrs Lyle said that she was organising a meeting of the Pavilion Management Committee to address any current issues which included recruiting a building manager/caretaker for the pavilion. A suitable job description would be drafted. She had been in discussions with the café proprietor regarding a replacement oven and dishwasher. It was

agreed that SPC should purchase a new industrial oven which the café proprietor would be asked to contribute towards and which would be available for use by hirers. The old dishwasher would be removed and not replaced – the industrial dishwasher that the café proprietor had purchased could also be used by hirers of the pavilion.

- b) **Traffic management and installation of grid matting to alleviate parking:** Cllr Mrs Lyle would investigate the options available.
- c) **Improvements to the pathway from Lampington Row to the LGRG:** This matter was under review and being monitored.
- d) **Update on the drainage project:** The swales had been inspected by Cllrs Barrington-Johnson and Mrs Lyle following prolonged periods of heavy rain. They both reported that whilst the swales were full, they were holding the water well and not overflowing. It was however acknowledged that the standing water should ideally be eliminated and the matter would continue to be investigated.
- e) **Approval of SPC Pavilion Ltd accounts:** Cllr Ellery queried a condition in the Articles of Association which stated that the Clerk must be the Company Secretary and Cllr Mrs Lyle agreed to investigate the matter. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the SPC Pavilion Ltd accounts pending resolution of the query relating to the Company Secretary.

22/61 Annual Parish Meeting 2022

The Clerk reported that the meeting planning was progressing well and councillors were asked to advertise the event amongst their communities.

22/62 TW Electoral Review: Warding Arrangements

Cllr Barrington-Johnson explained that proposals would lead to a reduction in borough councillors from 45 to 39 and a change in wards which could see Speldhurst and Bidborough parish split into two which would undermine SPC's principle that when councillors are elected they act for the whole parish. It was **RESOLVED** to delegate a response on behalf of SPC to a working group consisting of Cllr Barrington-Johnson, Cllr Mrs Soyke and one other – either Cllrs Turner, Langridge or Pate by the deadline of 21st March.

22/63 Great British Spring Clean 2022

An invitation had been received from KALC for SPC to pledge a number of hours' worth of participation litter-picking. Cllr Curry queried disposal of accumulated rubbish and the Clerk was asked to investigate this matter. It was **RESOLVED** that pending a suitable method of disposal of the rubbish collected, SPC would support the campaign.

22/64 Subbuteo World Cup 2024

Royal Tunbridge Wells had been selected to host the Subbuteo World Cup in 2024 and had invited SPC to discuss whether and how it might collaborate in capitalising on the event, bearing in mind that the game originated in Langton Green. Cllr Langridge had offered to take the lead on this. It was **RESOLVED** that SPC would support the 2024 Subbuteo World Cup event but not financially.

22/65 Chairman's Report

The Chairman had nothing specific to report.

22/66 Working Groups and other Reports, to include meetings held since the last Full Council meeting, the draft minutes having previously been forwarded to all Members.

- a) **Governance Working Group** – Cllr Mrs Lyle reported that a meeting had been held on 22nd February when amongst other things, several documents had been considered. It was **RESOLVED** that the following documents be adopted on the recommendation of the Governance WG: Governance Committee Terms of Reference. Internal Audit Terms of Reference. Air Traffic Committee Terms of Reference. Standing Orders – Full Council. Equality and Diversity / Disability Discrimination Policy. The Investment Policy would be investigated further to ensure it meets with CCLA regulations and presented at the Finance Committee for consideration.
- Governance checks on payments and bank reconciliations would be undertaken monthly going forward in an effort to resume the good practise which had stopped out of necessity during times of homeworking and lockdowns. The responsibility for the checks would be shared between available councillors who were not signatories.
- SPC's insurers had requested more realistic and up to date valuations of parish council assets. Cllr Mrs Lyle and the Clerk would work together to divide the work required between committees. It was anticipated that one member of each committee would be responsible for assessing that committee's assets and reporting back to the Clerk.
- b) **Highways Working Group** – There had no meeting since the last Full Council meeting.
- c) **Amenities Working Group** – Cllr Rowe reported the following:
- There had been a meeting of the Amenities Working Group on 1st March when the following two documents had been considered and recommended to Full Council for adoption. It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council Guidance for Requesting Permission to Erect Temporary Signs on Council Land and the Draft Policy on Donations of or Bequests for Park Benches be adopted.
- The Groundsman had identified a bench on the LGRG which had fallen into a state of disrepair. The Assistant Clerk had identified the original donator and been in contact with them. They were currently deciding whether they wished to repair, replace or remove the bench and would report back once a decision had been made.
- Approval had been given previously by Full Council for a contractor to be instructed to carry out maintenance works on the playground equipment up to a total value of £4,000. Due diligence had been carried out by the Amenities WG and they believed best value could be achieved by using Capel Groundcare however the quote was for £4,280 and authorisation was being sought to spend the additional £280. Cllr Barrington-Johnson advised that this additional sum could be authorised under delegated authority by the Chairman.
- Discussions had been held regarding a path behind the ball-stop net on the LGRG which would join up the pavilion path and the rear entry to the playground and also a larger path around the perimeter of the LGRG which would tie up all the existing paths, on the request of a local wheelchair user. It had been decided that the perimeter path would not be viable until the issues with the swales had been resolved and the shorter path whilst good to have, was not financially feasible in the current climate.
- For information – it had been agreed in principle that Pocket Park could be made into an area of biodiversity as requested by the Environment WG, subject to further investigations and information.
- d) **Air Traffic Working Group** – Cllr Barrington-Johnson had received an information pack from Gatwick which he would report back on.

- e) **Footpaths/Fire Hydrants** – Cllr Langridge was awaiting further information from the Fire Service regarding the fire hydrants and would report back when known. Good progress was being made in relation to footpaths, particularly in Shadwell Woods.
- f) **Environment Working Group** – A meeting of the Environment WG took place on 22nd February. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the new EWG logo.
- g) **Defibrillator Working Group** – Cllr Curry reported that both new defibrillators were now in the office. Unfortunately, no local electricians had offered to install the equipment as a community gesture so quotations would be obtained for the works to be carried out.
A new maintenance check list had been composed and was in use by the Groundsman which had identified that the Speldhurst defib needed attention.
The Assistant Clerk confirmed that she had registered all the defibrillators with the emergency services and also that the equipment on the side of Groombridge Village Hall had been handed over to Withyham Parish Council.
- h) **KALC** – There was nothing to report.

22/67 Diary Dates

Monday 14th March – Planning Committee
 Monday 21st March – Finance Committee
 Monday 28th March – Annual Parish Meeting
 Wednesday 30th March – Governance WG Meeting
 14th-18th – KN Annual Leave

22/68 Items for Information:

- The Clerk advised that the Consultation on proposed savings for the supported bus services would be available on the SPC website should anyone wish to respond.
- Cllr Mrs Soyke reported speeding by both Groombridge and Ashurst Churches. Cllr Pate confirmed that these matters would be addressed by the Highways Working Group.
- Cllr Ellery advised that the CCTV outside the council office was pointing in the wrong direction and needed rectifying.

There being no further items the meeting closed at 8.46pm.

Chairman

Full Council Action Points

Action No	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
13/21	Scope out what is needed to undertake an accessibility audit.	Clerk: Relates to Pavilion and LGRG only. Advice being sought from KALC. Groundworks to be put on hold whilst issues remain with swales.	4/10	Carry Over
17/21	Raise awareness of LG car thefts and need for Neighbourhood Watch rep across media channels.	Cllr Langridge: Has now heard from NW Liaison Officer. Will follow up and report back.	4/10	Carry Over

20/21	Review grant awarding criteria.	Finance Committee: Being reconsidered at next mtg.	1/11	Carry Over
22/21	Monitor water levels in swales on LGRG, particularly after heavy rainfall.	Cllr Barrington-Johnson and Cllr Mrs Lyle visited following prolonged rainfall and advised swales are holding water and not overflowing.	1/11	Ongoing
31/21	Fire Hydrant Initiative – Investigate logistics of combining hydrant checks with the footpaths volunteers.	Cllr Langridge: Waiting to hear response from Kent Fire & Rescue on when the last checks had taken place	1/11	Carry Over
43/21	Cllrs to visit the Langton Green Village Car Park at weekends to monitor the traffic and parking.	All Cllrs	6/12	Ongoing
11/22	Schedule upcoming working group meetings on Teams.	Clerks' office. Several Teams meetings already taken place reasonably successfully.	7/02	Ongoing
16/22	Inform Clerk of any jubilee celebrations planned in your village.	All Cllrs Groombridge – street party centred around village green. Ashurst - event being organised.	7/02	Carry Over
17/22	Write article for Local Magazine asking parish residents to sign up for an e-newsletter.	Assistant Clerk (CB)	7/02	Carry Over
22/22	Investigate purchase of new oven for Pavilion which will then go on the Finance Committee Agenda.	Cllr Mrs Lyle/Clerk	7/03	
23/22	Investigate Grid Matting for LGRG Car Park.	Cllr Mrs Lyle	7/03	
24/22	Clarification of the Articles of Association regarding who can be company secretary.	Cllr Mrs Lyle	7/03	
25/22	TW Electoral Review – warding arrangements. Respond to consultation by 21 st March.	Cllrs Barrington-Johnson, Mrs Soyke and one other TBC. Delegated authority from FC to respond.	7/03	
26/22	The Great British Spring Clean. Query regarding safe disposal of rubbish collected by litterpickers.	Clerk to investigate		
27/22	Subbuteo World Cup event 2024.	Cllr Langridge to take the lead	7/03	
28/22	Seek delegated authority to approve an additional £280 for the maintenance of the playground.	Chairman, Vice-Chairman Clerk, Asst Clerk, RFO	7/03	
30/21	Fire Hydrant Initiative – obtain exact numbers and locations of hydrants within the individual villages in parish.	Clerk: Awaiting response from Kent Fire & Rescue. Contacted KALC 24 Nov who said they'd follow up. Chased 14/12, 12/1.	1/11	Complete
12/22	Set reminder to review 2023 Pavilion Electricity Contract early in Q4.	Clerk Reminder set	7/02	Complete

13/22	Follow up with Hadene re. Pavilion boiler service and maintenance work.	Clerk/Cllr Mrs Lyle - Hadene had visited again on 18/2/22 and no additional costs were involved	7/02	Complete
14/22	Submit KALC community awards nomination form.	Clerk/Cllr Barrington-Johnson	7/02	Complete
15/22	Provide info (eg. link to road closure application form) for residents to use when organising village jubilee celebrations.	Clerk	7/02	Complete
18/22	Distribute Spring Newsletter.	Assistant Clerk (CB)	7/02	Complete
19/22	Share Commitment to global climate emergency statement via media channels.	Assistant Clerk (CB)	7/02	Complete
20/22	Submit re-worked EWG logo for approval.	Cllr Langridge. Approved at FC 7/3/22.	7/02	Complete
21/22	Pocket Park biodiversity.	EWG to investigate further. Agreed in principle by Amenities.	7/02	Complete