

Speldhurst Parish Council

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

**MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 18th MAY 2009 at 7.45pm
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, LANGTON GREEN VILLAGE HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs. Mrs Jeffreys (Chairman), Mrs Hull, Mrs Paulson-Ellis, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Mrs Waters, Colley, Ellis, Parker and Stevens

OFFICER PRESENT: Pauline Lambell - Clerk

County Councillor John Davies

2198 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Cllr. Mrs Soyke proposed that Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys continue as Chairman. This was unanimously agreed. Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2199 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys proposed that Cllr. Mrs Soyke continue as Vice Chairman. This was unanimously agreed.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. Brown – holiday
Cllr. Langridge – holiday
Cllr. Wheeler – business meeting

2200 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS :

Personal

Cllr. Mrs Soyke – Ashurst Village Play Area – resident of Ashurst
Cllr. Mrs Waters – 20mph Outside our Primary Schools – children attend primary school
Cllrs. Stevens – 20mph Outside our Primary Schools – child attends primary school

Personal & Prejudicial

Cllr. Mrs Podbury – Parish Council Representative on Speldhurst Village Hall – Trustee
Cllr. Mrs Waters – Public Right of Way, Wallers – resident of Wallers

2201 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING : No declarations were received

2202 MINUTES: The Minutes of the Meetings held on **16th March 2009** and **20th April 2009**, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.

2203 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION - The meeting was adjourned. There were no items from the public and the meeting was re-opened.

It was unanimously agreed that Item 9 of the Agenda be moved to the end of the meeting.

2204 Appointment of Committees including KALC Representative

Cllr. Mrs Podbury had made a previous request to the Chairman to re-join the Finance Committee. Cllr. Mrs Hull made a request to join the Planning Committee. Both Councillors also wished to remain on the Planning and Finance Committees.

Cllrs. Mrs Paulson-Ellis had informed the Chairman that due to family commitments she would no longer be able to Chair the Planning Committee but wished to continue as a member.

Cllr. Stevens advised the Council that there was a possibility that he would be moving out of the area in July. The Clerk suggested that the Footpaths Committee should be re-named Public Rights of Way as this would save a lot of confusion.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllrs. Mrs Podbury and Mrs Hull join the Finance and Planning Committees respectively. The Footpaths Committee would be re-named Public Rights of Way and that Cllr. Mrs Podbury would join this Committee, taking over as Chairman should Cllr. Stevens leave the Council. See attached list of Committees for 2009/10.

2205 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr. Mrs Soyke

An Internal Finance check had been carried out on 12th May 2009 by Cllrs. Mrs Soyke and Colley.

The Clerk (RFO) requested that a monthly check of invoices takes place and suggested that this should be carried out by Councillors in alphabetical order (excluding cheque signatories), each Councillor meeting the Clerk fifteen minutes prior to Full Council Meetings. This was unanimously agreed.

2205 Accounts for Payment – April 2009

1.	M.R. Lawrence	£	80.00	Rubbish Clearing LGRG
2.	RIP Cleaning	£	126.50	Canine Refuse
3.	Signs of Style	£	192.00	6 x posters
4.	C. Worcester	£	45.00	Replace hinges – notice board
5.	Speldhurst Village Hall	£	80.00	Hire of Hall (agreed grant)
6.	KALC	£	1,173.00	Annual Subscription
7.	Administration and Expenses :	£	1,829.89	
8.	Teabase	£	114.96	Stationery (computer cartridges)
9.	A.C. Rollings	£	168.00	Engineering Advice
10.	South East Water	£	8.51	Water supply – LG Pavilion
11.	BT Payment Services Ltd	£	196.82	Telephone / Fax
12.	EDF Energy	£	164.17	Electricity LG Pavilion
13.	C. Worcester	£	400.00	Benches, railings, bus stop and capping pillar
TOTAL		£	4,578.85	

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – May 2009

1.	Southern Water	£	25.53	Waste water - Pavilion
2.	M.R. Lawrence	£	60.00	Digging out and turfing around drain Cover in Play Area
3.	M.R. Lawrence	£	60.00	3 x visits clearing rubbish LGRG
4.	M.R. Lawrence	£	180.00	2 x grass cutting Roopers
5.	M.R. Lawrence	£	180.00	3 x grass cutting Roopers
6.	Speldhurst News	£	8.00	Yearly subscription
7.	Joy Podbury	£	46.00	Wine for Annual Meeting
8.	Langton Green CT	£	5.75	Hire of hall
9.	Teambase	£	83.93	Stationery
10.	RIP Cleaning	£	101.20	Canine Refuse
11.	Action with Communities in Kent	£	35.00	Annual subscription
12.	Administration and Expenses :	£	2,027.09	
TOTAL			£ 2,812.50	

April and May Invoices verified by Cllr. Colley

2207 Interim Internal Audit Report dated 5th March 2009 and Annual Report for the Internal Auditor (Section 4 of the Annual Return)

Councillors noted the comments of the Internal Auditor in his report dated 5th March 2009 and queried the following with the Clerk :

Checking of the pay roll – the Clerk confirmed that the Council had previously agreed that this would be carried out on a quarterly basis.

Backing up of the computer – suggestions were made that this should be carried out on a daily basis. The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor was quite happy that weekly backups were sufficient and that an additional weekly back up was taken and kept at a different location. The Clerk suggested that if the Council were unhappy with this procedure it should be discussed with the Internal Auditor at the meeting in June.

2208 – Annual Governance Statement (Section 2 of the Annual Return)

The Clerk had tried, unsuccessfully, to discuss this section further with the Internal Auditor. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the Monitoring Officer at the Borough Council for clarification on her concerns.

2209 Agreement of Council to the signing of the Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2009

An Extra Ordinary Meeting of the Council would be arranged once the Clerk had spoken to the Monitoring Officer to enable the Annual Return to be signed off.

2187 Highways Report

The Clerk had circulated an update to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

Cobhams - It was **RESOLVED** that no further action should be taken on the tarmacing over of the grassed areas either side of Cobhams entrance.

It was further **RESOLVED** not to take the request for a junction sign on Speldhurst Hill directing to Barden Road (near to the George and Dragon) further.

Cllr. Mrs Waters asked if KHS could clear the siding along Speldhurst Hill.

2188 Groombridge Bus Stop and Overgrown Hedges – nothing to report

The Clerk was asked to request updates from KHS for the June meeting.

2148 Parish Vision (formerly Parish Plan)

The Parish Vision Committee had held their first meeting and Minutes had been distributed to all Councillors prior to this meeting.

- i) Your Parish Council – printing costs of £250 were agreed.
- ii) Committee Terms of Reference – it may be necessary to increase the number of public committee members should a lot of interest be shown. The Committee should also bear in mind a representation of public members over the villages.
- iii) Various suggestions to changes in the letter; active participants, Your Parish Needs You.
- iv) Initial expenditure of £1,000 was agreed.

Cllr. Mrs Podbury (Committee Chairman) asked for comments on the logo and it was suggested that perhaps a tree and house could be used instead of the bird and church.

1825-3 Ashurst Village Play Area / Registering of Common Ground

It was agreed that the Ashurst village committee should go ahead with a village consultation (open morning) before the summer and report back to the Council.

2028-3TWBC Affordable Housing Needs Survey

Most of the Affordable Housing Reports had been given out to Councillors – discuss June meeting.

2137-4 Lampington Row

- i) Street enforcement, resident parking permits or restricted parking – put on hold pending feedback on the new crossing and letter sent to parent.
- ii) Letter to parents of Langton Green Primary School expressing concerns of parking in Lampington Row and encouraging parking in the Recreation Ground – letter sent to parents.

2190 Land in front of the former Watson Hall – in the ownership of the Parish Council

Cllr. Langridge and the Clerk had met with one of the owners of the properties in the former Watson Hall who had suggested extending the raised grassed banks. Councillors felt that this was a good suggestion which would also enhance the area. The Clerk was meeting Brian Hayward (TWBC) the following day to discuss. Cllr. Ellis would also attend this meeting.

2152-6 Ferbies Twitten – TWBC had advised that regular sweeps of this footpath were undertaken even though it was not officially maintained by TWBC. Cllr. Stevens had ascertained that this footpath was not a public right of way. It was agreed that as the Parish Council had removed the barrier Cllr. Stevens would arrange to have it replaced.

Cllr. Mrs Podbury left the room for the next Agenda item and rejoined at the end of the discussion and decision.

2210 Appointment of Cllr. Mrs Podbury as the Parish Council Representative on the Management Committee of Speldhurst Village Hall – this was unanimously agreed.

2211 Extension to the Langton Green Village Hall – subject to agreement of by the Trustees to the payment of the Council's legal fees, it was agreed to instruct the Council's solicitors to proceed with the Lease extension.

Cllr. Mrs Waters left the room for the next Agenda item and rejoined at the end of the discussion and decision.

2212 Suggestion to consideration to a Public Right of Way from Wallers to Langton Road – suggestion by Cllr. Mrs Hull.

The Clerk had circulated an aerial view showing the proposed footway. Cllr. Stevens suggested that it may be better to cut through at a closer point, rather than extending to the existing public footpath, and he agreed to contact the house owner.

2213 Groombridge Village Traffic Survey – it was agreed to ask KHS to carry out this survey.

2214 20mph outside our Primary Schools – a discussion took place and it was suggested that cars parking outside Speldhurst School act as traffic calming and that the danger areas are on the surrounding roads. It was agreed to ask KHS for consideration to 20mph zone areas in Speldhurst village and also along Speldhurst Road (around the areas of Lampington Row and the Recreation Ground). Further meetings to be arranged with the two primary schools.

2215 Marchiennes – the future – Cllr. Colley (Marchiennes Co-ordinator) felt that the various groups worked well arranging their own social events and there was no need for a co-ordinator. Cllr. Colley suggested that he prepare a report for the next meeting.

2216 Additional Dog Bin (the pathway leading from Barden Road to the Village Hall). The Clerk would contact Ron Fisher for approval to the placing of the bin. The cost of purchasing one bin and the weekly emptying expense was agreed.

2217 Parish Council Surgery – 6th May – Speldhurst Village Hall. Cllr. Mrs Podbury, Colley and the Clerk attended – no members of the public. It was agreed to reduce the timing of the surgeries by half an hour and also consideration to joining the Speldhurst Library session on a Monday afternoon.

Cllr. Mrs Soyke felt that there was no need for a surgery to be held in Ashurst.

On Duty Surgery Councillors 9th June 2.30pm – 3.30pm Langton Green Village Hall - Cllrs. Mrs Podbury and Parker.

2218 Langton Green Recreation Ground Play and Teen Facility – evaluation request by TWBC / Big Lottery Fund.

TWBC and Emma from Big Lottery Fund had visited the area and were very impressed. TWBC would carry out an evaluation by way of a questionnaire. No further action by the Parish Council at this time.

2219 Matters for Updating from the Minutes dated 16th March 2009

The Annual Parish Meeting was good with excellent feedback and support from the residents present. The Clerk had written a thank you to County Councillor Keith Ferrin.

2120 Correspondence and Telephone Calls Received – April and May 2009

1. KALC Councillors` Information Day – Saturday, 20th June 2009. Cllrs. Langridge and Wheeler have already expressed an interest. Anyone else interested please let the Clerk know.
2. Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee – expressing appreciation for the help given by the Parish Council to work on the Pavilion – new shower facility and flooring.
3. Article in the Speldhurst News from the Village Hall Committee, thanking the Parish Council for the grants of £1,800 towards the kitchen island and the £5,000 towards the new entrance doors.
4. Article in the Speldhurst News from St Marys Church, thanking the Parish Council for their grant of £10,000 towards the Church roof repairs.
5. Resident of Roopers requesting new road name plate at the entrance of Ferbies to include Roopers (currently says Ferbies leading to Dene Way). Also a sign designating that Roopers is a cul de sac. Clerk would contact TWBC.
6. Beech tree on The Green (on Parish Council land). Resident has requested that this is cut back so as not to damage her property. The Trustees of Langton Green Charitable Trust had commissioned a tree report in August 2008 which stated that the tree was safe. The report suggests that an aerial inspection would detect more. The Clerk had asked Dan Docker to take a look at the tree and had also forwarded a copy of the report to him. Following any further comments from Dan Docker, the Clerk was asked to obtain a quotation for an aerial inspection.
7. Owner of a house on land owned by the Parish Council on The Green expressing concern that dustbins are being left outside properties which is making it difficult when reversing from driveways. The Clerk was asked to write to all householders.
8. Resident of Homewood Road, Langton Green concerned with the state of the entrance to the road from Stonewall Park Road. KHS Homewood Road is a private and unadopted therefore there is nothing that they can do. They have inspected and have commissioned the following works to the entrance; install a bund to hold back the stone and mud which will divert water to neighbouring verges. They will also put in carriageway edging at the entrance to Homewood Road.
9. Owner of Kent House, Barden Road concerned with drainage outside his property. KHS have taken a look from Furzefield Avenue to Shaw House which includes Kent House. They had checked gully to gully and could find no problem with the drainage or any excessive conditions to allow water to build up. This could be a land drainage problem in which case this would be the land owner`s responsibility.
10. Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys had received a copy of the Standards Board Annual Report.

2221 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning – Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis reported on the four meetings of the Planning Committee held on 25th March, 14th April, 27th April and 12th May 2009, the Minutes having previously been forwarded to all Members. The Committee had been made aware of a complaint made against them by Mr Levett (the applicant of the Quinces planning application) but that they had made no comments. Members of the Committee had attended a very interesting meeting with Andrew Taylor at TWBC.

Recreation Ground – Nothing to report. Cllr. Ellis advised that a Committee Meeting was arranged for 20th May at 7.30pm in Langton Green Primary School.

Footpaths – Cllr. Stevens advised that in his role as the Parish Tree Warden he had been contacted about a tree that had fallen in Speldhurst Churchyard.

He asked if the Clerk could chase Borough Councillor David Jukes on the conifer trees at Aysgarth Farm.

As a result of an article in the village magazines nine new volunteers had come forward.

It was agreed that Cllr. Mrs Hull should liaise with the Scout Leader regarding the plastic covers on the trees in Shadwell Woods. As this land is not owned or maintained by the Parish Council the work would not be covered under the Parish Council's public liability insurance.

AGM on 27th May at 2pm – all welcome.

KALC – Nothing to report. Next meeting 16th June 2009.

2222 DIARY DATES

3rd June – Standards Committee Training and Development

9th June – Parish Council Surgery – Langton Green Village Hall 2.30pm – 3.30pm

20th June – KALC - Councillors Information Day 10am – 4pm.

22nd June – Meeting with Internal Auditor – 7.30pm Committee Room - Langton Green Village Hall

2223 Items for Information

Cllr. Mrs Soyke advised that County Councillor John Davies had assisted in the funding for the extension to Ashurst Village Hall.

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys suggested that it may help to speed up proceedings if the Footpath and Recreation Ground reports could be circulated to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

The Clerk advised that she was now circulating all Agendas to Councillors to keep everyone informed on the activities of the Council.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm

The meeting re-opened for the following items.

- 2224** i) **Clerk's Hours** – to consider a request from the Clerk to an increase in contracted hours – this request is received outside of the negotiations on the Contract of Employment

The Clerk was asked to make comment and explained that although she had requested in January for consideration to be given to an increase in her contracted hours, four months on this still had not been resolved. She had submitted time sheets and an account to the Council for additional hours worked over the previous four weeks.

The Clerk was asked to leave the meeting and the Council would be in contact.

ii) **Clerk`s Contract of Employment** including :

Retrospective agreement by Council to the following :

- a) **The revised Contract of Employment**, which has previously been distributed to all Members
- b) **To Adopt the Staff Disciplinary Procedure and Staff Grievance Procedure** which have previously been distributed to all Members
- c) **The revised Contract of Employment, Staff Disciplinary Procedure and Staff Grievance Procedure being discussed by the Working Group with the Clerk**

On the 19th May the Clerk received an email from the Chairman stating that :

2224 Agenda Item 9 i) Clerk`s Hours a formal response to the request for increased hours would be in the post the next morning.

2224 Agenda Item 9 ii)

a) and b) - the draft contract and Grievance and Disciplinary procedures were agreed at the meeting

The meeting closed at 11pm.

CHAIRMAN

Speldhurst Parish Council

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

COMMITTEES 2009 / 10

Finance Committee

Gerry Colley
Rosemary Hull
Trevor Parker
Joy Podbury
Julia Soyke
Charlotte Waters
Richard Wheeler

Planning Committee

Peter Brown
Ron Ellis
Rosemary Hull
Ed Langridge
Jennie Paulson-Ellis
Joy Podbury
Trevor Stevens
Richard Wheeler

Public Rights of Way

Trevor Stevens (Chairman)
Joy Podbury

Recreation

Ron Ellis
Trevor Parker
Jennie Paulson-Ellis
Charlotte Waters

KALC Representatives

Gerry Colley
Peter Brown

Transfer of Land

Lynn Jeffreys
Joy Podbury
Charlotte Waters

Parish Vision

Gerry Colley
Ed Langridge
Joy Podbury (Chairman)
Julia Soyke