

Local Government Act 1972



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

**Minutes of a Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held on  
Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 at 7.30pm in the  
Parish Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground**

---

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllrs Rowe (Chair), Cleaver, Curry, Ellery and Tarricone.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the public present.

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mrs K Neve – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

**1. To enquire if anyone present intends to record the meeting:**

The meeting was recorded by the Clerk for accuracy of the minutes. The recording would be deleted once the meeting minutes are signed off at the next Finance Committee meeting.

**2. To receive and approve apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Turner (away).

**3. Disclosures of Interest**

Councillors' ongoing disclosures were noted:

Cllrs Ellery and Rowe have shares in the original Speldhurst shop and post office.

**4. Declarations of Lobbying**

There were none.

**5. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, be approved and signed as a correct record.

**6. Public Open Session**

There were no members of the public present.

**7. Review of Action Points**

The Clerk reported that most action points had been completed or were in progress.

## 8. Finance Items

### a) Interim Payments

**Unity Trust Bank:** £92.50 Glasdon UK Ltd for dog bin mounting; £539.78 for NEST pension; £1045.25 WJ Sunstone for balance of replacement CCTV installation at Pavilion; £1,260.00 Agrifactors for LGRG pitch maintenance; £380.00 MR Lawrence for mowing and strimming; £76.92 Kidman's Ltd for oil/spark plug/trimmer line; £33.62 Unity Trust Mastercard; £11.45 Castle Water for pavilion water; £3,714.41 for salaries; £270.54 Veolia for waste and recycling; £12.30 Unity Trust Bank Charges; £0.60 Unity Trust Bank Charges (cheques).

**Mastercard:** £9 Monthly Credit Card Charges; £58.74\* Langton Green Service Station for fuel; £26.00\* Sainsbury's for garden sacks; £144.00\* SLCC for ILCA registration.

Starred items were made under delegated power.

### b) Financial position to review expenditure vs budget (including Pavilion) at 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Councillors noted the summary sheets and detailed reports which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

### c) Budget Virements

Cllr Rowe noted that the recently purchased defibrillators should have been funded from the Ear Marked Reserve (EMR). The Clerk confirmed that she would make the necessary amendment. It was agreed that an EMR be set up for Computer Capital Spending and that £2,500 be transferred into it.

The Clerk was asked to compile a list of underspends for possible virement into EMRs for consideration at the next meeting.

### d) Banking and reserves – to consider the present banking arrangements.

- **To note the bank reconciliations, balances and current bank interest rates** – The Clerk confirmed that all the bank reconciliations had been checked and signed by a councillor, in line with financial procedures. Councillors noted the balances and current bank interest rates. The Clerk reported that the transfer of funds to CCLA had been a very straightforward and easy process and suggested transferring funds in this account when necessary. The Clerk had prepared a summary of savings accounts available to parish councils. Cllr Rowe requested that the Unity Trust Bank savings account be investigated, as it may facilitate easier transfer of funds.

### e) Committee and Working Group expenditure

- The Clerk reported that the Highways Committee may consider contributing some of their EMR towards the Highway Improvement Fund (HIP) and the Parish Grant Fund grant application projects. The second phase of replacement bollards for the car park, previously approved, was included on the agenda for approval to proceed with ordering (see item below). Cllr Rowe requested that each committee be asked to submit any future funding projects in time for the next meeting, when the budget would be discussed.

### f) Grant requests

- **Baby Umbrella – RESOLVED** that a grant of £200 be paid to Baby Umbrella for parenting support within Speldhurst parish.
- **All Saints' Church, Langton Green – RESOLVED** that a grant of £1,000 be paid to All Saints' Church, Langton Green for the purposes of annual churchyard maintenance.

- The Clerk reported that she had also received a grant application from St John's Church, Groombridge for churchyard maintenance which she would include on the agenda for the November Finance and Governance Committee meeting.
- g) **Update on the Speldhurst Chapel PWLB** – Councillors noted the repayment schedule. Cllr Rowe advised that the revaluation on Speldhurst Chapel had been carried out and the insurance company would need to be notified which may mean an increase in premium but this would be reimbursed by the Speldhurst Community Shop. It was agreed that this item could be removed from future agendas.
- h) **Budget 2025/26** – Councillors noted the figures presented by the Clerk to consider the precept for 2025/26. The final budget would be decided at the next meeting.
- i) **To consider the renewal of the electricity contract – RESOLVED** to renew the electricity contract as soon as possible to lock in the rate quoted for a 2 year term starting on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026. Cllr Curry will approach Octopus Energy to ascertain whether their quote can be confirmed now to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 as the preferred supplier. If not possible then renew with EDF via Energy Pal. To be finalised by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October. If the contract is with Octopus Energy then notice will need to be given to the current provider.
- j) **To consider quotations for the second phase of replacement bollards at the Langton Green Recreation Ground Car Park** – The Clerk presented quotations received for the second phase of replacement bollards at the Langton Green Recreation Ground Car Park which included an additional 6 bollards to complete the proposed area. The previous contractor was no longer trading. The two best quotations were identical in cost, and it was agreed that the contract would be awarded to a local company subject to confirmation of a warranty. The quotation represented a decrease in cost compared to 2024. **RESOLVED** – That the contract for replacement bollards be awarded to Elm Fencing at a cost of £6,591 + VAT.

## 9. Governance Items

- a) **Governance Checks** – The Clerk reported that the monthly checks were up to date. Cllr Rowe had carried out the September check. The Clerk would contact councillors to arrange the following months' checks.
- b) **Internal Auditor (IA)**

The Clerk reported that the next Internal Audit visit would be on 26<sup>th</sup> November.
- c) **External Audit (Forvis Mazars LLP)** – The Clerk reported that she had now received the completion notice for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). There were no issues arising.
- d) **Insurance Policy** – The Clerk reported that the insurance policy had been successfully renewed with Zurich Municipal.
- e) **Review of Fixed Asset Register** – The Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor had recommended that fixed assets valued under £500 did not need to be included in the Fixed Asset Register. The register would be updated when time allowed in advance of the next audit.
- f) **Photographic record of assets** – There was nothing new to report.
- g) **Councillor Vacancies** – The Clerk reported that two candidates would be recommended for co-option at the next Full Council meeting. This left two vacancies in which interest had been expressed which the Clerk would follow up.

- h) **Committees** – Cllr Turner had advised that he would be discussing at the forthcoming Amenities and Environment Working Group whether the committee should remain as a single entity or be separated again.

i) **Policies**

**Internal Financial Control System** – The Clerk reported that the Internal Financial Control System was due for review. Amendments had been made to take account of merging of the Finance and Governance Committees; to include Savings Accounts under Bank Accounts and increase VAT claim frequency to quarterly. Councillors therefore **RESOLVED** – to recommend to Full Council the approval of the amended Financial Regulations.

j) **Staff Members**

**Staff Vacancies** – The Clerk reported that the new Deputy Clerk had started on 8<sup>th</sup> September. The new Parish Council Administrator would start on 13<sup>th</sup> October. Councillors reviewed the contracts and it was **RESOLVED** that the probation period would be 3 months for both candidates and that the notice periods would be 6 weeks.

Councillors discussed staff pay rates. Confirmation of pay increases for 2025/26 for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was awaited before finalising the pay awards for this period.

**Staff Training** – The following training was noted:

- **Clerk** – Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) Finance Conference on 12<sup>th</sup> September, Kent Highways Autumn Seminar on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, Scribifest Conference on 9<sup>th</sup> October, SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) Local Government Review on 29<sup>th</sup> October and Clerk's Conference on 13<sup>th</sup> November.
- **Deputy Clerk** – KALC Nuts and Bolts of Parish Clerking on 16<sup>th</sup> September, Introduction to Planning on 16<sup>th</sup> October, SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) Local Government Review on 29<sup>th</sup> October and ILCA (Introduction to Local Council Administration) course.

Cllr Curry suggested staff undertake training to cover FOI (Freedom of Information) and SAR (Subject Access Request).

k) **Section 123, Local Government Act 1972 in relation to hiring of the Pavilion**

Councillors noted, in response to the recent FOI request, that Section 123 of the Local Government Act was not applicable as the matter concerned only the disposal of a lease. A longer-term lease could not be offered to a CIC, rendering the space commercially unviable.

**10. Items for Information**

- CCLA Monthly Updates
  - LG Pay Claim 2025-26
  - Payroll Comparison – we have only just change our payroll provider so not currently in a position to change
  - Dates of forthcoming meetings:
    - Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025
- Suggested dates for 2026
- Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January
  - Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March
  - Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April
  - Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July
  - Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September
  - Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November
- Cllr Curry asked the Clerk to arrange a meeting of the Pavilion Review Working Group.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 9.13pm.

**Chair**

**Finance Committee Action Points**

Action Number	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
6/25	Explore the following training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict Resolution</li> <li>Website Accessibility Refresher</li> <li>Cyber Security</li> </ul>	Clerk	10/03	In progress

**Governance Committee Actions**

Action No.	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
17/24	Book onto data protection refresher training course. <i>TWBC too busy but have given link to free ICO training.</i>	Clerk	22/04/24	In progress TWBC not possible
12/25	Book onto cyber security training.	Clerk	28/04/25	TBA

**Finance and Governance Committee Action Points**

Action Number	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
	<b>NEW</b>			
1/25	Arrange withdrawal of £5,000 from CCLA.	Clerk	21/07	<b>Complete</b>
2/25	Process the purchase of 3 new defibrillators.	Asst Clerk	21/07	<b>Complete</b>
3/25	Pay grants to the following: St Mary's Church, Speldhurst and St Martin's Church, Ashurst. Notify Air Ambulance their grant application was unsuccessful.	Clerk	21/07	<b>Complete</b>
4/25	Arrange the following Governance Checks: July – Cllr Rowe, August – Cllr Turner, September – Cllr Cleaver	Clerk	21/07	In progress
5/25	Confirm acceptance of insurance policy with Zurich.	Clerk	21/07	<b>Complete</b>
6/25	Review fixed assets to remove those items under £500 and include in an inventory list.	Clerk	21/07	TBA
7/25	Confirm acceptance of replacement CCTV cameras with WJ Sunstone.	Clerk	21/07	<b>Complete</b>
8/25	Update Financial Regulations and Standing Orders on website and in councillors' folder.	Clerk	21/07	<b>Complete</b>
9/25	Amend payment for defibrillators to be funded from the Ear Marked Reserve (EMR).	Clerk	01/10	
10/25	Investigate the Unity Trust Bank savings account.	Clerk	01/10	
11/25	List underspends for possible virement into EMRs for next meeting.	Clerk	01/10	
12/25	Set up EMR for computer capital spending and transfer £2,500 into it.	Clerk	01/10	
13/25	Requested each committee to submit any future funding projects in time for the next meeting.	Clerk	01/10	
14/25	Confirm and pay grants to Baby Umbrella and All Saints' Church, Langton Green.	Clerk	01/10	
15/25	Notify Insurance Company of Revaluation of Speldhurst Chapel and seek reimbursement from Speldhurst Community Shop if necessary.	Clerk	01/10	

16/25	Confirm preferred Electricity provider for the renewal of the Contract and make recommendation to Full Council. Give notice on the current contract.	Clerk/Cllr Curry	01/10	
17/25	Confirm the contract for the replacement bollards.	Dep Clerk	01/10	
18/25	Book onto training for FOI and SAR.	Clerk	01/10	
19/25	Include Internal Financial Control System on next Full Council agenda.	Clerk	01/10	
20/25	Confirm staff contracts.	Clerk	01/10	
21/25	Arrange meeting of the Pavilion Review Working Group.	Clerk	01/10	