



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

## **Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 7.30pm in the Committee Room at Speldhurst Village Hall**

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### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllrs Curry (Chair), Barrington-Johnson, Ellery, Langridge, Norton, Pate, Rowe, Scarbrough, Mrs Soyke and Mrs Woodliffe.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mrs K Neve, Clerk and Mrs K Harman, Assistant Clerk (minutes).

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Apologies had been received from County Cllr McNroy and Borough Cllrs Allen, Sankey and Ms Willis, all of whom had prior engagements.

### **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were four members of the public present.

### **22/133 Covid Compliance**

It was agreed that those in attendance should be free to decide whether to wear a mask according to their own wishes.

### **22/134 To enquire if anyone 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 August Full Council meeting.

### **22/135 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Mrs Lyle and Turner (Covid-related) and Rajah who had a prior engagement.

### **22/136 Disclosure of Interests**

Cllr Pate advised that he is currently working for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for the Ukrainian support effort and therefore had an interest in item 11e) on the agenda.

### **22/137 Declarations of Lobbying**

There were none.

### **22/138 Minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes, previously forwarded to Members were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **22/139 Public Open Session**

Three representatives from Groombridge Place were attending the meeting – the Estates Manager, Head Gardener and Finance Officer - regarding their recent application for a premises licence application which they had withdrawn following strong opposition. They wanted to introduce themselves to open dialogue and start to build a good working relationship with both residents of Groombridge and SPC. The Estate Manager explained that Groombridge Place had undergone a long period of decline over past years and the new owners had now started a thorough restoration project restoring fences, livestock, gardens and hedges with the ambition of recreating an English country estate. They were keen to work with villagers to make Groombridge Place an asset to the village and said that they would be pleased to hear from anyone who had any queries regarding the restoration or who would like a tour around the estate to see the works being done. The Assistant Clerk had invited them to the planning committee meeting when the new licence application would be discussed.

Cllr Pate said that SPC represents the community and would always put their interests first and the most important thing the new team could do is to reassure the residents of Groombridge that their quality of life will not be adversely affected by the changes being made to the estate and the events it was anticipated would be held.

Cllr Norton said that due to the underhand behaviour of the previous owners who had railroaded unsociable events through which had caused misery to residents of Groombridge village, they were rightly now very suspicious of any changes being made to the estate and the impact this may have on their lives. He went on to say that the community want Groombridge Place to be successful and to become an asset to the village and are very keen to work with the new owners to make sure everyone's interests are being considered.

Cllr Ellery asked the Estates Manager if the allotments, which are part of the Groombridge Place estate, would be remaining and he confirmed that they would be.

### **22/140 Borough and County Councillors' Reports**

No reports had been received.

### **22/141 Review of Action Points**

All the action points were ongoing, in progress or complete. The Chair had, in liaison with the Clerks, discussed incorporating the list of action points into the main body of future agendas, rather than being a list at the end of the minutes. This and a few other minor suggested changes would be trialled from the August meeting.

### **22/142 Appointment of Committees**

Following the review of status at each working group/committee as instructed at the last Full Council meeting, the following was confirmed:

Highways will continue as a working group with a review in six months' time. Cllr Pate would continue as Chair and Cllr Langridge as Vice-Chair.

Amenities will continue as a working group with a review in six months' time. Cllr Mrs Lyle will assume the role of Chair and Cllr Rowe would take a step back to Vice-Chair.

The Chair thanked councillors for their commitment to the various working groups/committees.

**22/143 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Ellery**

- a) A meeting of the Finance Committee had been held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June, the minutes of which had been circulated. Cllr Ellery gave a brief outline of some of the decisions made at the meeting and the discussions held.
- b) **Report on budget virements:** There were none.
- c) **Report on interim payments made since the last meeting:** There were none.
- d) **To consider renewal of the council's insurance:** The insurance is due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> August and the Clerk had only recently been advised by the broker that the existing supplier, Military Mutual Limited, had withdrawn their council product. It was agreed that the Finance Officer (who had been on leave) would be asked to investigate alternative providers as a matter of urgency and a Finance Committee meeting would be held to resolve a new provider. Cllrs Rowe and Pate voiced concern regarding leaving a decision on the matter too close to the renewal date which could leave SPC unprotected and this could not be allowed to happen under any circumstances. Councillors queried why the broker had not given advance warning of the existing product's removal.
- e) **To consider the use of SPC's van for Ukrainian Support:** Cllr Pate explained that the van could be used to transport donated household items from the co-ordination hub TN2 to Ukrainian families and their hosts on days when it was not being used by SPC's groundsman. Councillors generally welcomed the opportunity for SPC to be able to make a useful contribution towards the support effort but were concerned about logistical matters as well as the possible risks to the van's value. Cllr Ellery said that he agreed to the suggestion on the condition that no other suitable vehicle was available for use belonging to TWBC. The Chair said he was concerned about the knock-on effect on SPC's insurance, should a claim need to be made, and that he would instead prefer to see a set grant made to the cause. The Clerk advised that SPC's current insurers had confirmed the van could be used for this purpose and it was suggested one day a week on a trial basis. The Chair asked Cllr Pate to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding which clearly outlined a strict protocol for the van's use to help the charity. It was **RESOLVED** that a Memorandum of Understanding for the use of SPC's van for the Ukrainian Support effort be drawn up by Cllr Pate and approved by Full Council before the van is used for this purpose. Additionally, the Clerk was asked to check with the new insurance company to make sure use of the van for the Ukrainian relief effort is covered under the new policy.

**22/144 Accounts for Payment**

**RESOLVED** to pay the invoices as listed.

Payee Name	Ref.	Amount £	Detail
Parish Online	MT2262	240.00	Annual subscription
Sparkie James Services Ltd	MT2263	600.00	Defib installs
JS Facilities Management	MT2264	201.90	Pavilion cleaning
Knockout Print	MT2265	42.00	Stationery
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2266	36.13	Meeting rooms
Franklin & Franklin Ltd	MT2267	420.00	Franklin & Franklin Ltd
Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd	MT2268	4,966.00	Ground maintenance
BeSure	MT2269	48.00	Pavilion Maintenance
BeSure	MT2270	84.00	Pavilion maintenance
Speldhurst Village Fete	MT2271	223.23	Grant re insurance
St Martin's Church, Ashurst	MT2272	1,000.00	Churchyard maintenance grant
St Martin's Church, Ashurst	MT2273	300.00	Grant re broadsheet
RBS Software Solutions	MT2274	731.04	Annual subscription
Speldhurst Village Hall	MT2275	30.10	Meeting rooms

Langton Life	MT2276	300.00	Advertisement
M R Lawrence	MT2277	320.00	Mowing and strimming
Kidman's Ltd	MT2278	564.00	Stihl Combi engine
Kidman's Ltd	MT2279	11.98	Maintenance
Sunstone	MT2280	1,875.66	Balance fee new installation
Cloudy IT	MT2281	263.70	Monthly support & 365
JS Facilities Management	MT2282	150.00	Pavilion cleaning
HMRC	MT2261	1,143.19	NI & Tax
Employees	MT2283	5,111.99	Salaries
EDF Energy	DD	537.00	Pavilion electricity
Castle Water	DD	50.63	Pavilion water

**Total: £19,250.55**

## 22/145 Planning Committee

In Cllr Rajah's absence, Cllr Barrington-Johnson reported on the meeting which was held on 20<sup>th</sup> June. Two main applications were both objected to by members: The Beacon in Tunbridge Wells where the applicant was hoping to build a wellness suite, guest accommodation and part-retrospective permission for an amphitheatre and a premises licence application for Groombridge Place.

## 22/146 Langton Green Recreation Ground

- a) **To receive a report from the Pavilion Management Working Group:** In Cllr Mrs Lyle's absence, no report was received however she had provided some background information ahead of the meeting. The Chair of LGCSA had asked SPC to inspect the condition of the brickwork around the Pavilion to make sure it remains safe. SPC will inspect and monitor the brickwork paving as part of its ongoing management of the premises.
- b) **To consider the purchase of a replacement boiler for the Pavilion Café:** Problems were being experienced with the existing boiler switching itself off, leading to a lack of hot water in the kitchen. Prestige Plumbers had been asked to quote for remedial works and their quote for £1,600 had been circulated. Councillors asked the Clerk to go back to Prestige Plumbers to obtain further information and clarification to make sure the most cost effective and environmentally friendly option, taking into account both running costs as well as installation costs, was chosen and the decision was delegated to the Pavilion Management Committee. Solar power was suggested, as a longer-term option and the Chair offered to forward information regarding a grant which may be utilised to this end to the Pavilion Management Committee to investigate.
- c) **To consider paying for the services of a manager for the Pavilion:** Cllr Mrs Lyle had not yet received a response from the proposed candidate – this item would be deferred to the August meeting.
- d) **To consider the proposed repairs for the emergency lighting at the Pavilion:** A quotation had been received from Fuzion, the current service provider, for £2,346 following a routine maintenance check for additional works they deemed necessary. The Clerk was in the process of obtaining a second opinion and quotation. It was **RESOLVED** to authorise expenditure on additional lighting in the Pavilion up to the value of £2,346 on the condition that a comparative quotation was first obtained.

## 22/147 Chair's Report

The Chair reported that he had attended his first KALC meeting which was very informative.

## 22/148 Working Group Reports

- a) **Governance WG** – There had been no meeting since the last Full Council.
- b) **Highways WG** – A meeting had been held on 14<sup>th</sup> June, the minutes of which had been circulated. Cllr Pate said an on-site meeting was being held in August with KCC.

- c) **Amenities WG** – A meeting had been held on 27<sup>th</sup> June, the minutes of which had been circulated. The working group had made recommendations for expenditure to Full Council as follows:
- Consent to replace rotten wooden posts in the LGRG carpark at a cost of approximately £400 – **RESOLVED.**
  - Consent to cease provision of dog waste bags on the LGRG when existing supplies run out, in an effort to reduce overheads – **RESOLVED.**
- d) **Air Traffic WG** – There had been no meeting since the last Full Council. Cllr Barrington-Johnson had attended a Gatwick consultants update briefing on flight paths. After consultation with parish councils, 70 flights were being investigated in more detail. Members of the public were being encouraged to respond individually to the consultation on concentrated flight paths being introduced to overcome current problems in the industry. A link to the consultation would be put on the SPC website.
- e) **Footpaths** – Cllr Langridge reported that they had been very busy clearing footpaths and twittens which had become overgrown.
- f) **Environment** – Cllr Langridge reported that an interesting meeting had been held at Pocket Park with Alan Ford who was extremely knowledgeable regarding nature and biodiversity.
- g) **Defibrillators** – Cllr Curry reported that the go-ahead had been given to re-site the defib which was currently on the wall of the parish council office to Ashdene House in Langton Green. All the signage would be updated accordingly.
- h) **KALC** – see Chair's Report.

#### 22/149 Diary Dates

The Clerk flagged up that the office staff had holidays booked in July and August. Two members of staff would be covering the office at any one time, but councillors were asked to bear in mind it would be busy.

- Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July – Planning Committee – 7.30pm (LGVH)
- Monday 1<sup>st</sup> August – Full Council (Ashurst Village Hall)
- 11<sup>th</sup> July – Environment Working Group (TBC)
- 8-22 July – Katie Neve (Clerk) Annual Leave
- 25 July-5 August – Kate Harman (Assistant Clerk) Annual Leave
- 3-17 August – Catherine Barrett (Assistant Clerk) Annual Leave

#### 22/150 Items for Information:

- The Clerk said that the first results for the 2021 census had been received.
- There had been an issue with a local Langton Green resident who required urgent intervention from Kent Police.
- Notes from the Parish Chairmen's meeting were on file.
- Volunteers were being sought to work with the Headmaster of Langton Green Primary School to tackle some of the current issues with the carpark. Cllrs Langridge and Barrington-Johnson volunteered.
- Cllr Barrington-Johnson had carried out a Speedwatch session at 6am on The Green that morning. They had registered 65 vehicles out of 250 which were speeding at over 35mph.

There being no further items the meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

**Chair**

**Full Council Action Points**

<b>Action No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Date created</b>	<b>Status</b>
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
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
43/21	Cllrs to visit the Langton Green Village Car Park at weekends to monitor the traffic and parking.	All Cllrs	6/12	Ongoing
17/22	Write article for Local Magazine asking parish residents to sign up for an e-newsletter.	Clerk	7/02	In progress – awaiting TWBC
27/22	Subbuteo World Cup event 2024.	Cllr Langridge to take the lead	7/03	Ongoing
30/22	Progress purchase of new office equipment.	Clerk	04/04	In progress
39/22	Look for new Internal Auditor and write to David Buckett expressing thanks for his work.	Clerk/RFO	09/05	In progress
40/22	Include agenda item to decide on future meetings of air traffic, amenities, highways and governance working groups	Clerks	06/06	Completed
41/22	Update website with committee membership changes	Assistant Clerk (CB)	06/06	TBA
42/22	Request LGCSA reimburse parish council for Pavilion café rent rebate of £233	Cllr Mrs Lyle	06/06	TBA
43/22	Action Pavilion café rent rebate of £233	Clerk/Finance	06/06	TBA
44/22	Invite resident to speak at environment meeting regarding glyphosate usage	Assistant Clerk (CB)	06/06	Complete
45/22	Insurance renewed	Finance Officer to investigate quotations.	04/07	In progress
46/22	Finance committee meeting to resolve insurance renewal to be arranged	Clerk/Assistant Clerk KH/Finance Officer	04/07	In progress
47/22	SPC van used for Ukrainian relief support – Memorandum of Understanding to be drafted	Cllr Pate	04/07	In progress
48/22	Clerk to check with new insurance company to make sure SPC van can be used to assist TWBC Ukrainian relief effort.	Clerk	04/07	

49/22	Brickwork surrounding Pavilion to be inspected as part of general maintenance	Pavilion management committee	04/07	In progress
50/22	Pavilion boiler issues to be resolved – Clerk to go back to Prestige for further info.	Clerk	04/07	In progress
51/22	Once further information received from Prestige, Pavilion Management Committee to make decision and recommendation to Finance committee members.	Pavilion Management Committee	04/07	In progress
52/22	Pavilion emergency lighting upgrades. Second quotation to be obtained.	Clerk	04/07	In progress.
53/22	Provision of dog waste bags to cease. Sign to be put on bins advising residents	Assistant Clerk KH	04/07	In progress
54/22	Link to air traffic consultation to be put on SPC website	Assistant Clerk CB	04/07	In progress
55/22	Defib notices to be updated and registrations made once final installation carried out	Assistant Clerk KH	04/07	In progress
56/22	Meeting with Cllrs Barrington-Johnson, Langridge and Mr Cornelius regarding LG carpark issues to be organised for once schools had broken up.	Clerk/Assistant Clerk	04/07	In progress