



Speldhurst Parish Council

Working for the whole community

NEWSLETTER

MAKE A CHANGE BECOME A LOCAL COUNCILLOR



Newsletter

As we explained in the last issue, this newsletter will not be delivered to your door, but we can send it to you by email. You can easily request this by signing up for them on our new website. Hard copies will be available from village halls, the pavilion at the recreation ground, local pubs and some shops.

If you do not have access to a computer you can register by phone on 01892 862927 or in writing to the Clerk, Speldhurst Parish Council, Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground, Speldhurst Road, Langton Green, Kent, TN3 0JJ and we will send a copy to you. Please print a copy for a neighbour who does not have access to a computer.

Website and Social Media

The website is by no means complete but we have decided to release it with the basic information. The website has the same address: www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk and it has updates on road closures and the latest planning applications in our parish and those who sign up for electronic news can also be alerted to other news affecting the community.

We are also issuing updates via Facebook and we hope this will appeal to some members of the community.

Elections

Elections are held every four years and occur at the same time as other elections. The next one is due on Thursday 2nd May. These may not be memorable events to residents because elections are only held if the number seeking election exceeds the

number of thirteen seats available. This has not happened in recent times. Should you wish to know more about what being a councillor entails or would like to become a councillor please see our website for more details or contact the Clerk to find out.

Planning

As you are probably aware Tunbridge Wells Borough Council stopped sending out automatic planning notifications to neighbouring properties in 2017. You now need to register with TWBC via their website to receive notifications (<http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-application-search/sign-up-for-planning-application-notifications>) or you can use a new facility on our new website that shows all current and new applications in our parish.

Finance

Precept – this is the amount of tax raised to run the parish and is part of your council tax that you pay to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. This year Speldhurst Parish Council agreed to keep the precept unchanged at £148,000.

A grant of £15,000 was made to support the Community Benefit Society in their taking over and management of the Post Office and shop in Speldhurst.

Diary date

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The meeting will be held on Monday 29th April and is a meeting for residents of the parish. This year our speaker will be Gary Stevenson, Head of Environment and Street Scene at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), who will talk about the new waste service coming into effect this year. It will be held in the Langton Green Village Hall and there will be the normal refreshments prior to the meeting at 7.30pm for 8pm start.

Village walk

The next walk will take place in the spring. Keep an eye on our website or social media for more news.

Council matters

In the last half of the year there were two resignations from the Council: Harry Allen and George Mercieca, both from Langton Green. Alan Round from Langton Green (pictured below) was co-opted to the Council in November but we will now operate with a reduced number of twelve councillors until the election in May.

The present Clerk, Chris May, who will have been in the post for ten years this summer, has asked to reduce his hours from the present 30 per week to 25. This has been agreed and the Council decided to employ an Administrative Assistant on a part-time basis of 10 hours per week. Her name is Catherine Barrett from Speldhurst (pictured below) and she starts on March 4th and part of her role will be keeping the website and social media updated with relevant information.



Highways

20mph

We are aware of reports from some residents in Speldhurst that some motorists are not adhering to the new speed limit. We have met with the Police and asked them to support us by holding speed sessions.

The 20mph advisory speed limit in Langton Green, which will operate at school pick up times is still not working at the time of writing this article. This is extremely frustrating for us considering the signs were installed at the end of November. New units need to be fitted and we are chasing Highways to complete this as soon as possible.

60 mph to 40 mph

The speed limit on Speldhurst Road from Burnt House Lane to Langton Green has been reduced from 60mph to 40mph and was long overdue. This was a Parish Council funded initiative.

Pot Holes

You can now use a link on our website or go direct to www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem. It is important that you do so because the number of complaints contributes to the amount of funding that KCC disperse to various areas

and this year Tunbridge Wells received a considerable sum.

Accidents

Reporting accidents is becoming more important as we seek improvements and speed reductions because official records of accidents are not always up-to-date or correct. If we have statistics that prove otherwise it will strengthen our case.

Please remember to notify the Parish Council if you see an accident.

Speedwatch

There has been a lull in Speedwatch sessions and we will be looking to re-establish regular activity in the late spring. We have village co-ordinators for Speldhurst and Old Groombridge and we are still looking for someone to take responsibility for Langton Green and also someone for Ashurst.

Reporting Problems

Don't forget that you can report potholes online at www.kent.gov.uk (search for potholes) and many other forms of problems e.g. dead animals on the road; damaged bus shelters; drainage and flooding; damage to footpaths and pavements; damage to signs and empty salt bins at www.kent.gov.uk/ report or track a fault.

Air traffic

Much has happened since our last update. Gatwick has published its draft Masterplan, developed without any consultation with local communities even though this includes conversion of its exiting emergency runway to a full normal operation runway raising capacity from 40 million passengers per year to over 70 million (about the same size as Heathrow!). Pressure from local communities over aircraft noise led to the "Independent Arrivals Review" which in turn resulted in the creation of the "Noise

Management Board" (NMB) which included some community group participation but chaired by a Gatwick appointee and industry-dominated. Despite having operated now for two and a half years the NMB has achieved exactly nothing and community group frustration with the NMB and Gatwick Airport has reached crunch point. A review of the NMB make-up and role was provoked by pressure from the community group members but the report has been repeatedly delayed (it was initially

scheduled for early December, delayed to mid-March and now indications are nothing will be presented in March either). We (the community groups) went into the NMB in the hope that it would make a difference and with a will to make it work. It has proved the opposite and our momentum for change has been stifled by creation of the NMB. It is time for us to re-think our position and approach.

FOR REGULAR UPDATES ON ALL OUR ACTIVITIES GO TO OUR WEB SITE
www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

Speldhurst Parish Council

Neil Barrington-Johnson
(Chairman)
Richard Ellery
Lynn Jeffreys
Katrina Lyle

Rupert Milner
(Vice Chairman)
David Pate
Joy Podbury
Judy Price

Alan Round
Alan Rowe
Julia Soyke
Millie Woodliffe

This newsletter will be available, as will future issues, on the Parish Council web site.

All enquiries to the Parish Clerk; Chris May on (01892) 862927 or at clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk