



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

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
held on Monday 1st August 2022 at 7.30pm at Ashurst Village Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Curry (Chair), Barrington-Johnson, Ellery, Langridge, Mrs Lyle, Norton, Rajah, Rowe and Mrs Soyke

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Neve, Clerk and Mrs C Barrett, Assistant Clerk (minutes)

IN ATTENDANCE

There were no County or Borough Cllrs in attendance.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one member of the public present.

22/151 Covid Compliance

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

22/152 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 September Full Council meeting.

22/153 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Pate, Scarbrough, Turner (Covid-related) and Mrs Woodliffe, together with County Cllr McNroy, and Borough Cllrs Allen, Sankey and Willis due to prior commitments.

22/154 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

22/155 Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

22/156 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 4th July 2022

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

22/157 Public Open Session

No member of the public present wished to speak.

22/158 Borough and County Councillors' Reports

Borough Cllr Allen had submitted his report advising that there was a 4-week consultation relating to parking charge increases available on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) website for residents to add their views.

Borough Cllr Sankey had submitted his report as follows:

- **Parking Consultation** – As detailed above.
School Bus Success – AutoCar had confirmed that the 230 bus service that transports pupils from both Bidborough and Speldhurst to the Tonbridge schools has been saved but currently only for the academic year 2022/23. The bus services were in doubt due to a reduction in funding from Kent County Council (KCC). This matter was discussed under agenda item 22/166.
- **Cabinet on Tour** – The Borough Partnership had changed the time of their cabinet meetings from 10.30am to 6.30pm and would be hosting them “on tour” across the borough. He had submitted an application to have this hosted here in the ward of Speldhurst & Bidborough and would update Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) once a date had been confirmed.

22/159 Chairman's Report

- Cllr Curry was delighted to present Ellie Lissenden and Daisy Bell with the parish council's Jubilee Award for Olympic Spirit at the Speldhurst Primary School Leavers' Assembly. They raised £607.06 for the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal by making badges to sell and organising a Ukraine-themed non-uniform day. Congratulations to them both for their hard work and selfless acts.
- Cllr Curry said he would welcome feedback from councillors on the new agenda format, which incorporated action points from the previous meeting as an agenda item.
- There were two emails be sent to KCC, one relating to funding for Ukrainian students at Speldhurst Primary School, and the other relating to the 230 school bus route. Cllr Curry would draft these communications and send to councillors for review.

22/160 Clerk's Report

- **External Auditor Report 2021/22:** The Clerk had received confirmation from the Auditors that the parish council have a clear report. The completion letter and notice of conclusion of audit had been circulated.
- **Interim Appraisals:** The Clerk was in the process of carrying out interim appraisals and would present a report to the next Governance Working Group.
- **Contact with the Office:** In the last month there had been a lot of contact between the public and the office on a range of issues, including glyphosate usage, parking, road closures, school buses and use of toilets. The Assistant Clerk confirmed that it had felt busier than usual.
- **Staffing:** The Clerk advised that the office was in the middle of a six-week staff holiday period. Councillors should note that there may be only one person working in the office over the next few weeks.
- **Office Configuration** Once all staff had returned from holiday the office would be reconfigured to accommodate the new workstations. Cllr Barrington-Johnson offered to help with this task.

22/161 General Matters

New - Items arising since last Full Council meeting				
	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
45/22	Insurance renewal	RFO	04/07/22	Complete
46/22	Finance Committee meeting to resolve insurance renewal to be arranged	Clerk/Asst Clerk KN/RFO	04/07/22	Complete
47/22	SPC van used for Ukrainian relief support – Memorandum of Understanding to be drafted	Cllr Pate	04/07/22	No longer necessary
48/22	Clerk to check with new insurance company to make sure SPC van can be used to assist TWBC Ukrainian relief effort. <i>Insurance company confirmed anyone authorised by SPC can drive the van.</i>	Clerk	04/07/22	No longer necessary
49/22	Brickwork surrounding Pavilion to be inspected as part of general maintenance <i>This would be added to the Groundsman's duties.</i>	Pavilion Man Cttee	04/07/22	Ongoing Closed
50/22	Pavilion boiler issues to be resolved – Clerk to go back to Prestige for further info.	Clerk	04/07/22	Complete
51/22	Once further information received from Prestige, Pavilion Management Committee to make decision and recommendation.	Pavilion Man Cttee	04/07/22	Complete
52/22	Pavilion emergency lighting upgrades. Second quotation to be obtained.	Clerk	04/07/22	Complete
53/22	Provision of dog waste bags to cease. Sign to be put on bins advising residents <i>Current supply being used up.</i>	Assist Clerk KH	04/07/22	In progress Closed
54/22	Link to air traffic consultation to be put on SPC website <i>Cllr Barrington-Johnson said the current consultation was not relevant.</i>	Assist Clerk CB	04/07/22	In progress Closed
55/22	Defib notices to be updated and registrations made once final installation carried out.	Assist Clerk KH	04/07/22	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/Assist Clerk KH	04/07/22	In progress
57/22	Write letter to KCC/MP re funding for Ukrainian pupils at Speldhurst Primary School.	Chair/Clerk	03/08/22	TBA
58/22	Write letter to County Cllr re bus service.	Chair/Clerk	03/08/22	TBA
59/22	Check Veolia invoices for refuse collections over the football fiesta weekend and ask LGCSA for contribution.	RFO/Clerk	03/08/22	TBA
60/22	Respond to LGCSA re £233 reimbursement to Pavilion Manager.	Pav Man Cttee	03/08/22	TBA
61/22	Accept boiler quotation and book work for August.	Clerk	03/08/22	TBA
62/22	Check recent meter readings for Pavilion.	Clerk	03/08/22	TBA
63/22	Write to Pavilion Manager to inform her of significant future rent increase due to increase in energy prices.	Pav Man Cttee	03/08/22	TBA

64/22	Respond to KCC consultation re footpath WT109 in Old Groombridge by 5/8/22. Cllrs to provide evidence of use to Assistant Clerk (CB).	Cllr Langridge/ Asst Clerk CB/ Clerk/Cllrs	03/08/22	TBA
Ongoing				
	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
17/21	Raise awareness of LG car thefts and need for Neighbourhood Watch rep across media channels. <i>Cllr Langridge has now heard from NW Liaison Officer. Will follow up and report back.</i>	Cllr Langridge	4/10/21	Closed
22/21	Monitor water levels in swales on LGRG, particularly after heavy rainfall. <i>Cllrs have visited following prolonged rainfall and advised swales are holding water and not overflowing.</i>	Cllr Barrington-Johnson Cllr Mrs Lyle	1/11/21	Closed
43/21	Cllrs to visit the Langton Green Village Car Park at weekends to monitor the traffic and parking.	All Cllrs	6/12/21	Closed
17/22	Write article for Local Magazine asking parish residents to sign up for an e-newsletter.	Clerk	7/02/22	Complete
27/22	Subbuteo World Cup event 2024. <i>Cllr Langridge reported that there was a mini launch at the Forum on 18th September and a plaque was being made for the building where it started in Langton Green.</i>	Cllr Langridge	7/03/22	Ongoing
30/22	Progress purchase of new office equipment.	Clerk	04/04/22	Complete
39/22	Look for new Internal Auditor and write to David Buckett expressing thanks for his work. <i>Letter to David Buckett sent. Contacted neighbouring parishes.</i>	Clerk/RFO	09/05/22	In progress
40/22	Include agenda item to decide on future meetings of air traffic, amenities, highways and governance WGs	Clerks	06/06/22	In Progress
41/22	Update website with committee membership changes	Assistant Clerk (CB)	06/06/22	Complete
42/22	Request LGCSA reimburse parish council for pavilion café rent rebate of £233. <i>Request declined.</i>	Pav Man Cttee	06/06/22	Complete
43/22	Action pavilion café rent rebate of £233	Clerk/RFO	06/06/22	N/A
44/22	Invite resident to speak at environment meeting regarding glyphosate usage	Assistant Clerk CB	06/06/22	Complete

22/162 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Ellery:

- a) Report by the Chairman including any Committee Meetings held since the last Full Council meeting. A meeting had been held on 20th July and the minutes had been circulated. Cllr Ellery reported that the annual insurance had been renewed with Zurich Insurance on a 3-year Long Term Agreement at an annual cost of £2,875.48. A grant request had been submitted by Speldhurst Primary School in support of their additional costs towards Ukrainian children. Further information had been requested because it was evident that some County Councils were fronting the funding of the pupils (but not KCC). Funding had not been awarded on this occasion and it was agreed that SPC should lobby their County Councillor and Member of Parliament regarding funding for the school. A grant of £1,750 had been awarded to Hospice in the Weald towards a CuddleCot.

- b) **Report on budget virements and request that the virements listed be approved.** None.
- c) **Report on interim payments made since the last meeting.** Since Finance Meeting: **Unity:** £25.92 mobile. **Mastercard:** Petrol £83.47; Maintenance tools: £42.94; Engraving school awards £98.71; Badge £10.50; Keys cut £12.00.
- d) **To consider apportioning the recycling invoice for June which included Football Fiesta waste.** The minutes of the Finance Committee dated 20th July. Veolia had been asked for a clearer breakdown of usage of the relevant time period so that evidence could be provided that the extra cost was as a result of the football fiesta during the Jubilee weekend. **RESOLVED** that a letter be sent to Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA) asking for a contribution towards the cost of refuse collection during the football fiesta weekend, if this can be evidenced.

22/163 Accounts for Payment – RESOLVED that the invoices as listed, be paid.

Payee Name	Ref	Amount £	Detail
KCC (KCS)	DD	74.15	Photocopier
RBS Software Solutions	MT2287	68.40	Councillor access Rialtas 3
PKF Littlejohn LLP	MT2288	480.00	Annual External Audit
Hospice in the Weald	MT2289	1,750.00	Grant
M R Lawrence	MT2290	320.00	Mowing & Strimming
Mr L Cooper	MT2291	24.00	Expenses
Viking Direct	MT2292	225.54	Pavilion toilet paper/stationery
Katie Neve	MT2293	59.40	Expenses
JLM Pest Control	MT2294	230.00	Quarterly Pest Control
Kate Harman	MT2295	21.60	Expenses
KALC	MT2296	120.00	Training: Clerk Conference
Play Inspection Company Lt	MT2297	186.00	Annual Play Inspection
Commercial Services Trading Lt	MT2298	2,276.04	Groombridge Maintenance
Commercial Services Trading Lt	MT2299	1,092.48	LGRG/LG Maintenance
Mold PAT Testing	MT2300	146.00	Pavilion: PAT Testing
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2301	38.25	Meeting Rooms
m:power accounting	MT2302	48.00	Monthly Payroll invoice
Tate Fencing Ltd	MT2303	128.55	LGRG repair of fence
Cloudy IT	MT2306	277.38	Monthly Support and 365
ICO	DD	35.00	Annual Data Protection fee
HMRC	MT2304	1,526.10	Tax & NI
N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	DD	501.88	Pensions
Employees	MT2305-09	4,812.69	Salaries
EDF Energy	DD	537.00	Pavilion: Electricity
Castle Water	DD	50.63	Pavilion: water
Total:		£15,029.09	

22/164 Planning Committee – report by Cllr Rajah:

- Cllr Rajah reported that a meeting had been held on 18th July and the minutes had been circulated. Councillors had considered eleven applications and had remained neutral on all of them.
- There had been no movement to relocate the trees which had been planted on the border of the Green at Langton Green. The Conservation Officer at TWBC had been approached for advice on this point.

22/165 Langton Green Recreation Ground – report by Cllr Mrs Lyle:

- a) To receive a report from the Pavilion Management Working Group. Cllr Mrs Lyle reported that the Pavilion was currently closed as the Pavilion Manager was on holiday. The request to Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA) for reimbursement of £233 had not been accepted. A response would be sent conveying councillors' disappointment. A review of the contract was due in November.

- b) **To consider paying for the services of a manager for the Pavilion.** Cllr Mrs Lyle was awaiting a response from her email to the prospective manager and would update councillors at a future meeting.
- c) **To consider a request from Langton Green Primary School to hold a firework display on the recreation ground.** The school have subsequently decided to hold their event on school grounds.
- d) **To consider the options for a replacement boiler.** See Finance Committee minutes dated 20th July when the matter was last considered. After a lengthy discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation by Prestige Plumbing and Building Services of £1,600 plus an additional £250 +VAT for insulation.

22/166 School Bus Service to Tonbridge

Cllr Curry said that SPC had been lobbied by residents regarding the removal of the 230 school bus service from Speldhurst to the Tonbridge schools. Since this initial contact, Cllr Sankey had reported that the service had been saved, but possibly only for one year, and had requested that the parish council discuss a backup plan should Kent KCC remove the bus service once the year was up.

Cllr Curry said he would be drafting an email to County Cllr McNroy requesting that he apply pressure at county council level for the continuation of the bus route. It was agreed to decline County Cllr McNroy's request that the parish council consider operating the bus route themselves.

KCC had confirmed that another school bus service covering Langton Green and Speldhurst, the 286, was operated under contract to KCC, and the current contract with Arriva was expected to continue until April 2024. It was used sufficiently well that it was not being considered for withdrawal at present, so (subject to funding continuing to be available) should be retendered by KCC for a new contract to begin after Easter 2024.

22/167 Working Group Reports

- a) **Governance WG** – Report by Cllr Mrs Lyle: There had been no meeting since the last Full Council.
- b) **Highways WG** – Report by Cllr Pate: There had been no meeting since the last Full Council.
- c) **Amenities WG** – Report by Cllr Mrs Lyle: There had been no meeting since the last Full Council.
 - To consider a request to use the Langton Green Village Hall car park by a film company in August. The filming had subsequently been cancelled.
- d) **Air Traffic WG** - Report by Cllr Barrington-Johnson: There had been no meeting since the last Full Council. Cllr Barrington-Johnson had attempted to attend a virtual briefing session between Gatwick Airport and local parish councils but had been unable to do so as had not been sent joining instructions. He had now been sent the briefing pack and would debrief councillors once he had reviewed the contents.
- e) **Footpaths** – Report by Cllr Langridge:
 - Cllr Langridge said he had enjoyed pro-active contact with the owners of Shadwell Woods relating to repairs and the clearing of fallen trees. This underlined the importance of having contact details for local landowners, and Cllr Langridge and the Assistant Clerk (CB) planned to carry out land registry searches for areas of land that were crossed by numerous footpaths.
 - The Assistant Clerk (CB) had held a positive meeting with the KCC Public Rights of Way Officer relating to clearing overgrown footpaths.
 - After some discussion councillors **RESOLVED** to approve a response in support of the claimed footpath adjoining WT109 in Old Groombridge. There was a consultation in process as to whether this footpath should become an official footpath. It was agreed that the footpath had been used for many years by walking groups and residents, including Cllr Mrs Lyle and Cllr Norton who were regular users. The Assistant Clerk (CB) asked councillors to email any evidence they had of consistent use of the footpath.

- f) **Environment WG** – Report by Cllr Turner:
- Councillors **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations made by the Environment Working Group (EWG) on the use of pesticides by the parish council. It was agreed that the EWG would spend a period of approximately three months reviewing alternative products and methods of weed control to glyphosate, before reporting their findings to Full Council.
 - Councillors **RESOLVED** the proposed draft
 - policy for use of pesticides, subject to minor amendments.
- g) **Defibrillator WG** – Report by Cllr Curry: Cllr Curry was awaiting information on the installation of the defibrillator at its new location in Langton Green.
- h) **KALC** – Report by the Chairman: Cllr Curry had requested that KALC put glyphosate usage on the agenda at its next meeting. Cllr Barrington-Johnson recommended requesting an agenda item on the same topic at the next Parish Chairman's meeting.

22/168 Diary Dates

- 25 July-5 August – Assistant Clerk (KH) Annual Leave
- 3-17 August – Assistant Clerk (CB) Annual Leave
- 15th August – Planning Committee Meeting
- 5th September – Full Council – LGVH
- 12th September – Planning Committee Meeting
- 20th September – Highways Working Group Meeting
- 26th September – Amenities Working Group Meeting
- 3rd October – Full Council - SPVH
- 11th October – Finance Committee Meeting
- 17th October – Planning Committee Meeting

22/169 Items for Information:

- The Clerk reported that Langton Green Village Hall Trustees had decided to introduce a temporary supplement of 75p per hour for all Hall users with effect from 1st October 2022, as a result of the increase in energy prices.
- The Clerk reported that SPC's refuse contractor, Veolia, had informed SPC of a temporary fuel surcharge that will be added to future bills due to rising prices while fuel prices remain volatile.
- The Clerk reported that TWBC would be holding two briefings for councillors on the Local Government Boundary Commission Electoral Review Warding Consultation – 12th August at 10am or 18th August at 6pm.

There being no further items the meeting closed at 8:52pm.

Chair