



Speldhurst Parish Council

Working for the whole community

NEWSLETTER

Gatwick debate hotting up!

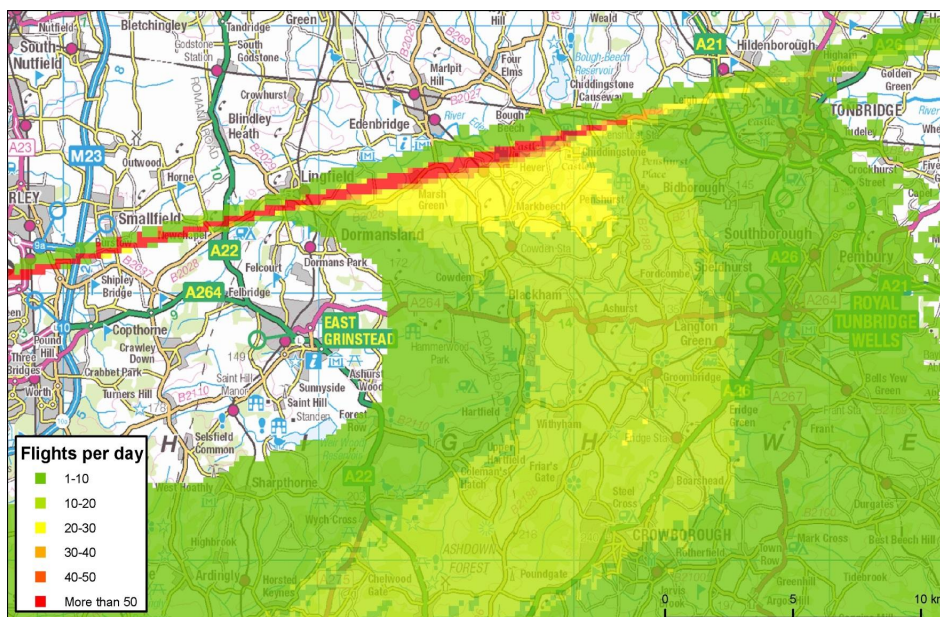
There have been several developments on Gatwick since our last newsletter. Both Kent County Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council both now formally oppose a second runway development, the cessation of night flights and the cessation of the concentrated flight paths which have recently blighted our Parish. The Airports Commission consultation closed on 3rd February and Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) submitted a firm response as did the High Wealds Aviation Action Group (HWCAAG) of which SPC is a member, as did many other Councils and Groups and, we hope, many residents. We now await the commission's recommendation although nothing will happen until after the General Election – and then who knows what?!

In the meantime, we need to keep the battle going on flight paths as this is an issue hurting us now. Despite earlier repeated assurances from Gatwick that 'nothing has changed', in an interview on Radio Kent on January 8th, a Gatwick representative stated that they have been trialling new approaches, in complete contradiction to their earlier categorical denials. SPC independently and as a member of HWCAAG will continue to work on this and the issue of the Airbus A319/320/321 'scream' engine noise.

Our actions are being felt. We and other Councils have been invited to a meeting with Gatwick. We have proposed that all HWCAAG member councils attend in order to ensure that Gatwick does not attempt to 'divide and rule'.

On the Airbus issue, we have written to easyjet again, this time via Sir Stelios Haji

Gatwick westerly arrivals track density diagram, August 2010 (200m grid)



Ioannou, founder and main shareholder who no longer runs the business but frequently takes issue with its management. He passed this to easyjet and this time they did respond and have now clearly stated that they will not retro-fit existing aircraft (unlike other airlines) so we will focus our efforts on Government and regulators to seek an imposition on airlines to modify.



In the meantime, please keep making those complaints to Gatwick Airport Noise line (noise.line@gatwickairport.com) each time a noisy plane shatters your peace – day or night. This remains an essential action for all parishioners, and don't forget to copy clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Hi-Speed broadband - nearly there!

Phase 3 (our area) of The Making Kent Quicker Project was promised to commence between July and December 2014 – and they met the deadline, just. New cabinets have been seen around the parish and some have been connected, but not all yet! The promise of 90% of households and businesses in Kent being connected by this year could still be a reality.



Parish Plan steaming ahead

Under the chairmanship of Langton Green resident, Ken Howes, a series of open days will shortly be held where members of the public will be encouraged to come along and say what and how they think their parish can be improved. The last Parish Plan was in 2009/10 and was responsible for many of the improvements you see today. Interactive speed signs; yellow no-parking lines; youth club formed; environment committee established; reduction in speed limits....and much more. The working group, run by residents under the Parish Council umbrella, will want to hear what is good and not so good about where we live. Please respond because what comes out of this exercise will be the last for quite some time. If you have any experience in designing and/or analysing questionnaires and you would like to volunteer your services, please contact the Parish Clerk.



Speed-watch

At the end of 2014, as part of the Parish Council's on-going mission to find ways to manage the speed of traffic throughout the parish, a survey was carried out by Kent County Council, commissioned by the Parish Council, on the Speldhurst Road, Langton Green between Lampington Row and Winstone Scott Avenue. The objective was to build evidence of speeding and volume patterns to be able to present a case to Kent County Council for lower speed limits or other preventative measures. The results were startling and concerning, particularly so close to the primary school. The results will be used to support the case for 20 mph speed restrictions around our schools. More volunteers are needed to help with Speedwatch roadside sessions. Please contact the Parish Clerk.

Elections in May

There will be much attention of course on the general election in the coming months, but locally the Borough and Parish Council elections will also be taking place. With the 'localism' bill and County and Borough Councils being forced to cut back on services, more and more responsibility is being passed down to Parish Councils. So it is an interesting time for those who may consider standing for election. We are an exceptionally busy and forward thinking council and welcome interest from those in the parish who feel they have something to give. Please visit our website for details or get in touch with the Parish Clerk for further information.

Defibrillators

The Parish Council have purchased four defibrillators for key locations in the villages. These should be installed in February in Langton, Ashurst and Speldhurst village halls, and the other in Groombridge (shared with Withyham PC). These are vital to help saving lives as every minute which passes without CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and defibrillation reduces the chance of survival of a heart attack by 10%. Make sure you know exactly where they are – just in case!



Extended car park in Langton Green

Following the recent announcement of a doubling in size of the primary school in Langton Green, it was necessary to increase the provision of car parking spaces. The two 'secondary' car parks which were underused have now been tarmacked to create many additional spaces. People are requested to park sensibly and not outside of the bays as the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians within the car parking area is of paramount concern.



2015/2016 Precept

As in the past couple of years, the Parish Council precept has been held to a figure below 2%. For the coming year, it will increase by 1.9% to £132,500. With reductions to services at County and Borough levels, it may be that the increases in the future may well have to exceed this figure in order to maintain the services we regard as essential.

Next Annual Parish Meeting

Put the date in your diary – **Monday, April 27th in Langton Green village hall.** Come and hear speakers from Kent Police and Kent Highway Services who will update you and answer questions. It is also a good opportunity to quiz the Parish Council on any subject which may be causing you concern.

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

Speldhurst Parish Council

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

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