

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

**MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON
1ST MARCH 2022 at 7.30PM
CONDUCTED ONLINE VIA TEAMS ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Rowe (Chair), Langridge and Turner

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk (AC)

1. **To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting**
No-one present intended to film, photograph and/or record the meeting.
2. **To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence**
Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs Woodliffe who had work commitments, Mrs Lyle who was on holiday and Mrs Soyke who had technical difficulties accessing the meeting.
3. **Disclosure of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests**
There were none.
4. **Declarations of Lobbying**
There were none.
5. **Minutes**
RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on **29th November 2021** be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
6. **Public Open Session**
There were no members of the public present.
7. **Matters Arising and Actions from the Previous Minutes:**
The Assistant Clerk (AC) ran through the list of matters from the previous minutes as follows:
 - An article had been published in the Speldhurst News asking residents for their views on the provision of additional bin(s) in Speldhurst. Only one response had been received and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that the matter would not be taken any further.
 - Rubbish on LGRG –a log was being kept by the AC. There was nothing to report.
 - Provision of dog bags on the Langton Green Recreation Ground – Councillors wanted to canvass the opinion of residents regarding their precept being spent on dog bags. Catherine Barrett would be asked to include an article in Langton Life.
 - A submission had been made to TWBC asking for the cost of the new benches on the LGRG (amongst other things) to be sought as part of a developer's contribution for the Ashurst Place development.
8. **Financial Review**

The finance sheets had been circulated. Cllr Rowe asked the AC to check the figures for tree works carried out in Pocket Park.

9. Parish Council Land

a) Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)

- **To consider installation of paths**

1. Behind ball-stop net, joining up the path from the pavilion to the junior playground:
The Assistant clerk had circulated a quotation for the installation of a path which members considered. It was **RESOLVED** that whilst the path would be very beneficial, the cost made it prohibitive in the current financial climate and it would be put on hold for the time being. It was then **RESOLVED** that a submission be made to the TWBC planning officer for the development of Ashurst Place seeking a developer's contribution towards the cost of the path.
2. Around the perimeter of the recreation ground, joining up existing paths: Quotations were circulated to consider various options. A gravel path would most likely cost in the region of £72K and grid matting approximately £12K which members believed made both prohibitive at the current time. Additionally, they were concerned about carrying out any further groundwork in the area until the issues with the swales had been resolved. It was **RESOLVED** that a recommendation would be made to Full Council that a path around the Recreation Ground should be put on hold at the present time due to the prohibitive cost and also that no further structural works should be carried out whilst the existing drainage project still had outstanding issues with the swales. The AC was asked to contact KALC regarding SPC's responsibilities in relation to access to LGRG.

- **To consider action to repair a broken bench**

The Groundsman had reported a broken bench on the LGRG. The Assistant Clerk had tracked down the original donator and discussed the options with them, all of which would be their responsibility – to either carry out repairs; pay for a replacement (following the guidelines in the new bench policy); or pay for its removal. The AC would report back to members once she had received an update from the donating family.

b) The Green at Groombridge

James Playfoot provided the cheapest quotation and had therefore been instructed to carry out the works which he had advised would be done in May. The AC would do a letter-drop to residents in the week prior to the works commencing to keep them informed.

c) Pocket Parks at Speldhurst

To consider making Pocket Park a designated area of biodiversity

The Environment Working Group (EWG) had been considering ways to increase the biodiversity within the parish and it was considered important to involve residents so that they could engage in the positive aspects of the project. They had identified the Pocket Park as a suitable location and come up with the following suggestions:

1. Reduce the mowing schedule to once per year in a targeted approach to specific areas of the park, rather than just leaving the whole area to become overgrown and unsightly;
2. Install bird and bat nesting boxes (possibly paid for by reduced maintenance costs);
3. Install signs to advise residents of what was being done and why.
4. Contact local residents as a courtesy to explain what was being done and why.

After much discussion it was **RESOLVED** in principle to allow the Pocket Park to become a designated area of biodiversity.

10. **Parish Council's Guidance For Requesting Permission to Erect Temporary Signs on Council Land**

It was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council that this policy be adopted.

Draft Policy on Donations of or Bequests for Park Benches

It was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council that this policy be adopted.

11. **Items for Information**

- **Ownership of The Green at Langton Green**
The AC had tried to obtain confirmation from the solicitors used when this land was taken over by SPC however as the transaction was over ten years ago, the paperwork had now been destroyed. Councillors agreed it was important to get the matter resolved and asked the AC, in liaison and agreement with the Clerk, to go back to the solicitor to ask them to investigate and confirm the situation regarding ownership and responsibility of the land in writing, before the residents were written to.
- **Maintenance and Repair of playground equipment**
The AC had obtained three quotations and Full Council had given approval for the cheapest contractor to be instructed up to a total value of £4K. However, having carried out due diligence, it was agreed the most appropriate contractor was Capel Groundcare whose quotation was for £4,280. Councillors agreed to ask Full Council for approval to use Capel Groundcare and authorise the additional £280 expenditure.
- Cllr Turner asked if SPC could do something to help any Ukrainian refugees who come into the parish and it was agreed the matter would be put to Full Council.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Chairman

Actions from Amenities Working Group

Action	Owner	Date created	Status
Maintenance carried out to playground equipment following annual inspection	Clerk Instruct contractor once approval for additional £280 obtained.	29/11	Approval for £280 additional spend to be obtained.
Benches on LGRG outside pavilion primarily for café use	Pavilion Management Committee to choose product and locations. Possibility of benches being covered by Ashurst Place developer's fund.	29/11	Carry over – awaiting response from TWBC.

Bench policy – for commemorative benches	Cllr Rowe Draft circulated. For approval by Full Council.	29/11	For approval by Full Council.
Rubbish in SPC bins and on LGRG.	Log being kept by Clerk Groundsman reporting back to clerk. Monitor.	29/11	To be removed from actions. Clerk to continue to monitor and raise if further issues arise.
Repair of stone wall – Penshurst Road/Pocket Park	Cllr Rowe – repairs complete, invoice paid.	29/11	Completed.
Survey of parish trees	Clerk to organise another survey.	Sept	Carry over to 2022
Survey on whether or not to keep dog bags	Clerk. Catherine Barratt to be asked to put article in Langton Life and socials. Article to go into June edition and socials in March.	29/11	Review responses in July.
Action to prevent further erosion of the Green at Groombridge	Clerk James Playfoot instructed – works to be done in May	29/11	Completed.
Check invoices for tree works in Pocket Park	Clerk	1/3	
Installation of paths on LGRG. Advice from KALC to be obtained regarding SPC's responsibilities.	All councillors. Advice obtained from KALC and circulated to WG.	1/3	Cllrs looking into response from KALC.
Broken bench on LGRG	Clerk - Donator advised of options – repair, replace or remove – their responsibility.	1/3	Awaiting decision from donator.
Letter drop to residents of Groombridge Green providing update on preservation works.	Clerk Once confirmation of start date received from contractor (?May), AC to draft letter for letterdrop.	1/3	Awaiting confirmation of start date from contractor.

Ownership of LG Green.	AC in liaison with Clerk to get details confirmed by solicitor.	1/3	
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