

Speldhurst Parish Council

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

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 16th FEBRUARY 2009 at 7.45pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL, LANGTON GREEN

PRESENT: Cllrs. Mrs Jeffreys (Chairman), Mrs Hull, Mrs Paulson-Ellis, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Brown, Ellis, Langridge, Parker and Stevens

No members of the public present

2158 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr. Ellis – Personal & Prejudicial – Agenda Items 17 and 18 (Extension to Langton Green Village Hall and Paved and fenced patio area outside of the Village Hall) - Trustee

Cllr. Parker – Personal & Prejudicial – Agenda Items 17 and 18 (Extension to Langton Green Village Hall and Paved and fenced patio area outside of the Village Hall) - Trustee

Declarations of Lobbying : No declarations were received

2159 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. Mrs Waters – child unwell

Cllr. Colley – holiday

Cllr. Wheeler - holiday

2160 MINUTES: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th January 2009, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.

2161 MINUTES: The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2008, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.

2162 AGENDA ITEMS

2163 Re-negotiation of Clerk`s Contract of Employment and Nomination to Join the Pension Scheme

The Clerk wished her current contract to be updated in line with the NALC model contract. The Clerk left the room whilst the Council debated. The Clerk was invited back to the meeting and informed that a working party would be set up consisting of Cllrs. Brown, Langridge and Parker.

2164 Decision of Council on future Agenda item for `Questions from the Public`

It was agreed that this was an excellent idea and should be added after the signing of the Minutes. The Clerk informed Council that the meeting would be adjourned during this item. It was unanimously agreed to incorporate this as part of future Meetings under the heading `Items from the public`.

2165 Finance Committee from Cllr. Mrs Soyke on the meeting held on 9th February 2009 copy of the unapproved Minutes having previously been forwarded to Members :

Items approved by the Committee : Please see Finance Minutes for details.

It was unanimously agreed that KHS be asked to place three salt bins at a cost to the Parish Council of £240 each at the following locations; Lampington Row, Bird in Hand Street and at the entrance to 20-24 Northfields.

Decision by Council on the recommendation of the Committee to approve a Grant to St Mary's Church, Speldhurst – roofing repair

Cllr. Mrs Soyke proposed that **‘Council approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee to a grant of £10,000 for the repair to the north slope of the north side of St Mary's Church roof with strict conditions that an order must be placed for this work by 30th June 2009 and work commenced by 30th September 2009. Failure to comply would require that this grant be returned and re-negotiated’**. This was unanimously agreed. This grant formed part of the Local Government Act 1972 Section 137 Power.

2166 Middlefield / Rusthall Elms Site

Following a comment from a member of the public to the Planning Committee, Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys wished to clarify to Council that she and her husband had never had dealings with anyone from the Middlefield development and do not intend to have any dealings in the future with the developers.

Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis informed the meeting that the Planning Committee had spent a lot of time considering the commissioning of a report for access for construction traffic and had met with the Planning Officer and had spoken with the landowner and their managing agents, the Commons Conservators. Taking everything into account it was the decision of the Committee that they would not be taking the report further.

It was agreed to continue to hold a small amount in the Finance Budget for legal fees.

2167 Highways Report - An update had been circulated to Members. The Clerk updated further :

Further parking restrictions - St Mary's Lane – four letters of support had been received. One resident requested that he would only agree if the following point was addressed; the problem with cars parking opposite his driveway and requested that double yellow lines be painted opposite each resident's driveway. He also requested that a sign be placed stating that parking was for residents only.

It was agreed that as this is a private road residents could put a sign up themselves (along the lines of the one placed in the other half of St Mary's Lane). The Clerk was asked to forward the request for further double yellow lines to KHS, and in the meantime inform the resident that as the lane was private he should consult with his neighbours.

Speldhurst Hill – The Clerk had received an email from KHS stating that following the results of the last experiment which was not well received by residents, unless good reason is given the matter will continue to be monitored for any material change in circumstances through the annual trawl of the Kent crash database.

The Clerk was asked to contract KHS asking if they were aware of previous discussions with KHS.

Speldhurst Traffic Survey – the Clerk had been contacted by Laurence Doig of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who were interested in offering support to the `rat run` situation in Speldhurst. It was agreed to wait the outcome of the KHS's traffic survey.

Langton Green – Safer Crossing – Lampington Row – Nothing to report

Cobhams – Cllr. Stevens took the opportunity to raise a request that he had received with regard to the grassed verge at the entrance to Cobhams and the possibility of this being made into car parking spaces. The Clerk would check ownership.

2074 Parish Council Questionnaire – Delay until March meeting.

2137-1 Speaker for AGM – the Clerk was waiting confirmation from County Councillor Keith Ferrin that he would attend as guest speaker.

1825-3 Ashurst Village Play Area – Registering of Common Ground – report in March.

2091 Parish Council Style of Name Change – it was unanimously agreed to approve the additional wording to the `Speldhurst Parish Council heading` as follows : *Local Government for Langton Green, Speldhurst, Ashurst and Old Groombridge.*

2168 Parish Council Surgeries :

Cllrs. Jeffreys and Langridge together with the Clerk had attended the surgery. Cllrs. Brown and Parker joined at varying times. PCSO Ray Nuttall and PC Chris Carter also attended.

Mr Tapp – resident of Northfields attended the Surgery requesting that the Parish Council gives consideration to extending the parking restrictions around the corners of the private access to numbers 20-24 Northfields to protect these corners. This was unanimously agreed and the Clerk was asked to confirm to KHS. It was agreed that these additional restrictions should be notified to residents of Speldhurst via the magazine.

2169 Comments on proposed disabled persons parking bay – Barden Road, Speldhurst

This was unanimously agreed.

2170 Standing Orders

- i) Amendment to the wording to Standing Order 13 – Rules of Debate. `At the end of any speech a member may request **I propose that**` this will replace the words `that the question be now put`. This was unanimously agreed.
- ii) Additional clause to Standing Order 18 – Committees and sub committees. It was unanimously agreed that the following clause is added : **`Should clarification on the comments be required outside of a meeting this will only be carried out by the Committee Chairman (or in the absence of the Chairman by the acting Chairman) and the Clerk (or in the absence of the Clerk by the note taker) and should be resolved before the main Parish Council Meeting.`**

2171 Extension to Langton Green Village Hall – decision by Council – Cllr. Parker commented that it would be the preference of the Trustees that the Parish Council consider option ii) for the Licence as outlined in the notes on a Transfer of Land Meeting. Cllrs. Ellis and Parker duly left the room.

Notes on the Transfer of Land Committee meeting having previously been distributed to Members a short discussion took place and it was unanimously agreed to approve the plans as presented.

2172 Decision of Council on the paved and fenced patio area outside of the Village Hall – The Trustees had approached the Transfer of Land Committee with a proposal that they were interested in extending the Licence on the paved and fenced patio for unrestricted use 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

It was the unanimous decision of the Council to approve this request along similar terms as the current Licence and at an annual rental of £1,000.

2173 Matters for Updating from the Minutes dated 19th January 2009

2088 – Speldhurst Bus Service – the Clerk was trying to arrange a meeting with Arriva to discuss a `shuttle` style bus service between the villages. Clerk to chase.

2075 Parish Council Notice Board – Langton Green – The Trustees had approved the sharing of the main notice board outside of the Village Hall for Parish Council notices.

2028-3 TWBC – Affordable Housing Needs Survey – Nothing to report.

2134 Black Lion House – The Clerk had received a reply from the Team Leader, Planning Enforcement which advised that as the pillars do not touch the Listed Building and are low in height they are not considered to have detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building. The Enforcement Officer advised the powers of enforcement. It was unanimously agreed to reply `the Parish Council is disappointed at this decision as it sends out the wrong signals to owners of Listed Building`.

2148 – Parish Plan – meeting arranged with ACRK for 2nd March at 7.30pm Speldhurst Village Hall.

2149 Merging of Footpaths and Recreation Ground Committee – Proposal by Cllr. Colley – defer to March meeting.

2150 Appointment of a Parish Council Highways Committee – Proposal by Cllr. Colley – discuss March meeting together with item 2149.

2152-6 Ferbies Twitten – Cllr. Stevens had met with Mrs Quarterman and the Clerk was in contact with TWBC.

2137-4 Meeting with Langton Green Primary School. Cllrs. Mrs Jeffreys, Parker and the Clerk together with PCSO Ray Nuttall, Alison Dry (PTA) and Judith Lees had met to discuss joint issues or concerns. Although parents were using the Recreation Ground car park there was still a lot of congestion in Lampington Row and parents should be discouraged from using this road to drop off their children. Various options were discussed including `shuttle mums` where children could be dropped off in the car park and taken to school by parents on a duty rota.

The headteacher would write home encouraging parents to use the Recreation Ground car park.

The clerk and PCSO would look into street enforcement, resident parking permits or restricted parking along Lampington Row.

It was a useful meeting and a further one was agreed for June.

The Clerk suggested that it may have more impact for the Parish Council to write a letter home to parents expressing the concerns of parents parking in Lampington Row and encouraging parking in the Recreation Ground.

2174 Correspondence Received

1. Mrs Bickmore – regularly travels from Tonbridge through Speldhurst. About 20 years ago there was a sign on Speldhurst Hill (opposite George & Dragon) showing the Barden Road junction. The Clerk would discuss with KHS.

2. Action with Communities in Rural Kent – has your village got community spirit ? Village of the Year Competition.
3. TWBC Annual Borough Housing Forum. Thursday, 14th May 9.30am – 1pm formal invites will be sent out shortly.
4. Thank you from Rural Society for grant for annual insurance.
5. Communities and Local Government – Code of recommended practice on local authority publicity - consultation
6. Thank you from Hospice in the Weald for Grant.
7. VAT claim of £21,100.69 approved by HM Revenue & Customs
8. Four Counties Legal and Finance Update – 24th March 9.30am – 4pm. Open to Clerks and Councillors - cost £60.00. If you wish to attend please let the Clerk know asap.
9. Letter from Mr and Mrs Page – The Green, Langton Green. (Land either side of the previous Watson Hall – newly acquired by the Parish Council)

Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis declared a Personal Interest as Mr Page is her architect.

Required confirmation from the Parish Council on the following points :

Responsibility for drainage of the footpath
Resurfacing the footpath
Maintenance and cutting of the grass
Maintaining public liability insurance

Cllr. Ellis advised that the owner of The New House has taken on responsibility for cutting the grass from the Watson Hall – to the main road.

The residents have always cut the grass from Old Birchetts – north (towards Speldhurst). KHS cut the grass on the bank.

The footpath is maintained by KHS.

There is no change in the status of the maintenance and remains the same as when in ownership of the Langton Green Charitable Trust.

2175 Parish Council Chairman`s Report

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys advised that the Chairman`s Meeting had been cancelled due to bad weather and she would report back in March.

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys had been invited to speak at Speldhurst Village Society`s Annual Meeting about the Parish Council and to promote the Surgeries.

2176 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning – Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis reported on the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 5th February 2009, the Minutes having previously been forwarded to all Members.

Decision by Council on the Holmewood House School revised planning application

Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis advised that she had spent considerable time looking through the amended documents which were mainly legal issues.

It was the unanimous decision of Council to continue to **REMAIN NEUTRAL** and reiterate our previous comments.

Footpaths – nothing to report. Cllr. Stevens asked for approval to a memorial bench to be placed in Speldhurst Recreation Ground to mark the outstanding commitment that Don Jeffrey had given the Parish Council. A total cost of £450, to include a plaque, was unanimously agreed.

Recreation Ground – Cllr. Ellis reported asked if the clerk could check with A1 Services regarding the tidying of the Recreation Ground.

KALC – Nothing to report.

2177 DIARY DATES

10th February – Surgery – Langton Green 2pm – 3.30pm

16th February - Council Meeting – LangtonGreen 7.45pm

28th February – Rural Society`s Quiz Night. Anyone interested in getting together a `Parish Council table` should contact Cllr. Langridge.

2178 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – FEBRUARY 2009

1.	C. Worcester	£	123.00	Supply and fit smoke detectors and Ramp - Pavilion - LGRG
2.	LG Charitable Trust	£	22.87	Hire of Hall
3.	Kent County Council	£	882.38	2 nd half maintenance – Groombridge
4.	Kent County Council	£	966.92	2 nd half maintenance – Langton Green Recreation Ground
5.	Treework	£	57.50	Emergency treework – lift canopy – LGRG
6.	RIP Cleaning	£	96.60	Canine Refuse
7.	KALC	£	138.00	Planning Seminar (Cllrs. Brown and Langridge)
8.	LG Charitable Trust	£	8.62	Hire of Hall
9.	Nick Burgess	£	63.12	Agreed grant - Speldhurst web site Annual maintenance
10.	Simon Remordina	£	300.00	Agreed grant – Speldhurst Pram Race Insurance
11.	CPRE	£	29.00	Annual Subscription
12.	Administration and Expenses :	£	1,777.16	
TOTAL		£	4,465.17	

2179 Items for Information

1. The Clerk would chase the installation of a rubbish bin adjacent to the recycling bins at LGRG.
2. Cllr. Mrs Soyke asked if the Clerk would contact Highways regarding the continued flooding at Stone Ness (near Stone Cross).
3. Report of two recent break-ins - Ryders, LangtonGreen.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

CHAIRMAN