



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

**MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 5th MARCH 2012 at 7.30pm
IN ASHURST VILLAGE HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys (Chairman), Mrs Hull, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Hemming, Langridge, Milner, Parker, Owen, Pendleton and Woodward

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr C May – Clerk and Mrs M Flemington – Assistant Clerk

Borough Councillor David Jukes

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were fifteen members of the public present

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: County Councillor John Davies and Borough Councillor Julian Stanyer

12/140 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST:

Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys and Soyke declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 7iv) – they are both appointed to the advisory committee - Cllr Parker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 10i) – he is a Trustee.

12/141 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING:

Cllr Mrs Hull – Local Needs Housing and prospective Councillors. She has also been spoken to by residents about the Town and Country Housing lorry parking in Northfields

Cllr Mrs Podbury – Local Needs Housing and prospective Councillors

Cllr Owen – a resident has spoken to him about a tree at Langton Green Primary School. **The Clerk to investigate**

12/143 MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on **6th February 2012**, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed as a true record.

12/144 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION:

The meeting was adjourned at 7.37pm

The following residents spoke;

Philip Tew of Speldhurst made a statement stating his view of Cllrs decision at the February meeting regarding the Local Needs Housing (LNH) issue. He asked if SPC has now seen direct evidence of the numbers in need of this housing and have Cllrs verified the applicants need. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that she believed this information is confidential and is in terms of numbers not names. He also asked if SPC has reviewed all the initial sites. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys advised that they were all reviewed by TWBC not ERHA and they were all within the Green Belt and that reasons for rejection may be requested.

Chris Ponsford of Langton Green referred to Parish Vision in respect of protection of the Green Belt, AONB and the local environment. She advised that a group of residents have called a Parish Meeting to be held on Tuesday 27th March at 8.00pm in Speldhurst Village Hall. She asked that SPC consider deferring the decision on Local Needs Housing until after that meeting and if there is a poll/referendum, until after the results of that.

Borough Councillor David Jukes said that the 6,000 houses to be built by 2026 is dictated by Central Government, this is across the whole Borough, 1,500 have already been built and only a very small number will be within Speldhurst Parish Council's area.

Sana Smith-Tilley of Speldhurst referred to Consulting Engineers they have employed who say there are problems with the LNH site in respect of highways and sewerage. They have written to ERHA asking for information regarding highways and sewerage and for copies of correspondence between ERHA, SPC and TWBC. She asked if SPC have obtained any further reports since the meeting on 6th February. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys confirmed that no additional information had been received and asked if it was possible to have copies of the correspondence.

Joanna Horne of Speldhurst stated that she feels the two LNH Consultation Days were carried out very differently and she is concerned that Councillors are choosing to ignore the views of the majority.

Graham Smith-Tilley asked on behalf of Richard Larkin whether any Councillors have relatives applying for one of these properties. It was confirmed that they do not. He asked why consideration is being given to Local Needs Housing being allocated to Extraordinary Full Council Meetings. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys advised that this is so sufficient time can be devoted to discussions.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys addressed Mr Tew about the Parish Meeting he has called. She advised that SPC will be responsible for the costs of the hall hire for the meeting and that it is a legal requirement that if Cllr Mrs Jeffreys attends (or Cllr Mrs Soyke in her absence) she would have to Chair the meeting. Mr Tew confirmed that he is aware of this.

The public open session closed at 7.57pm

12/145 LOCAL NEEDS HOUSING:

After some discussion it was **AGREED** that in future Local Needs Housing would be dealt with at extraordinary Full Council Meetings, so that time could be given to full discussions of the subject by ALL Cllrs without there being any detrimental effect on the rest of the Council's business. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys proposed and it was **AGREED** to bring forward Item 15 on the Agenda - Working Groups, in respect of Local Needs Housing only to this point of the Agenda to be discussed simultaneously.

After further discussion it was **AGREED** that at present there would be no Committee or Working Group meetings in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and that all Local Needs Housing would be dealt with at extraordinary Full Council meetings.

12/146 FINANCE COMMITTEE – Report by Cllr Parker

- i) Cllr Parker reported that a Committee meeting was held on Monday 20th February and referred to the minutes
- ii) Cllr Parker reported that there had been four email decisions by the Finance Committee. The cost of £350 for pruning the roadside trees at Langton Green was agreed; the cost of hiring Langton Green Village Hall for a Broadband meeting was agreed; a donation to Groombridge Magazine to include subscription and postage costs was agreed and the Clerk's overtime of 16.25 hours was approved.
- iii) Cllr Parker reported that the Finance Committee had made decisions regarding the Diamond Jubilee grant requests as reported in the minutes of the Committee meeting of 20th February.
- iv) A letter had been received from Citizens Advice Bureaux requesting a grant. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys and Cllr Mrs Soyke left the room. Cllr Mrs Podbury took the Chair. Cllr Parker reported that the request was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting on 20th February and the Committee recommended a grant of £1,000. After discussion this was **AGREED** by a vote of 8 in favour and 1 abstention. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys and Soyke re-joined the meeting.
- v) Cllr Parker reported that the Finance Committee recommend opening an account with Unity Bank for day to day banking arrangements with a working balance of approximately £10,000, with other funds remaining with Barclays, for a trial period. The Clerk outlined the benefits of Unity Bank for Parish Council accounts. This was **AGREED**.
- vi) The Finance Committee recommend acceptance of Martyn Lawrence's prices for maintenance for 2012. This was **AGREED**.

Cllr Pendleton left the meeting at 8.23pm due to illness

12/147 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – Invoices verified by Cllr Mrs Podbury

<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
Shaw & Sons	320	273.56	Minute Books
Samaritans	321	250.00	Grant
BT PLC	322	30.00	Mobile

Viking Direct	323	22.66	Snow shovels
C Worcester	324	115.00	LG Pavilion Tanks and Notice Board fitting
Broker Network Ltd	326	3,028.78	Insurance
C May	327	1,263.32	Salary
C May	328	140.00	Expenses
M Flemington	329	608.22	Salary
M Flemington	330	42.30	Expenses
HMRC	331	652.41	Tax & NI
L Cooper	332	150.00	Groundsman duties
St Thomas' Church	333	15.00	Groombridge Magazine
Groombridge			
RIP Cleaning Services	334	151.20	Dog Bins February
LGCT	335	41.25	Hall hire
KCC (KCS)	DD	187.04	Copier rental
KCC (KCS)	DD	83.88	Rock salt
Total payments		7,054.62	

12/148 HIGHWAYS REPORT:

- i) Cllr Mrs Podbury advised that there has been a request for a Traffic Officer to be in attendance in Speldhurst to enforce the double yellow lines. **Clerk to action**
- ii) It was **AGREED** to adopt the revised Terms of Reference.

12/149 LANGTON GREEN RECREATION GROUND CAR PARK:

- i) Cllr Parker left the room. The request by LGCT that their lease for the additional car parking areas be surrendered to SPC was discussed and **AGREED. The Clerk to contact the Trustees and Solicitors.** Cllr Parker re-joined the meeting.
- ii) The request from Village House Nursery to park the Kent Discovery Bus on LGRG car park on 19th March was **AGREED.**
- iii) The request from the BBC Switchover Scheme to park their information van on LGRG car park on 4th May was **AGREED.**

12/150 LOCAL SCHOOLS:

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported that she is hoping to have a meeting at Speldhurst School soon to discuss the environment project and the Annual Parish Assembly. The Parish Council will be giving a Jubilee Award to each School for Child Volunteering.

12/151 LGRG SPORTS PAVILION:

The Clerk advised that there is nothing further to report at present.

12/152 BROADBAND:

Cllr Woodward reported that there are 60 white boxes within the Parish which are being monitored. There are no plans to increase this number at present. The Working Group is meeting on 27th March to discuss community led fibre to the home. He believes KCC have funding from BDUK but that DEFRA will not hear about their funding until at least the end of March. He has spoken to Withyham Parish Council; they are not progressing their Broadband initiative at present but he will keep them informed.

12/153 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys advised that plans for the Annual Parish Assembly are coming along well and a date of 14th March has been set for written submissions for the brochure. She referred to her written report of the Parish Chairman's meeting on 21st February and mentioned the Neighbourhood Planning training day being held by TWBC on 14th March. Several Councillors will attend this. **Clerk to confirm**

12/154 WORKING GROUPS:

The Clerk suggested that the Environment Committee becomes a Working Group and that this is reviewed after a period of time. He stated that Footpaths is already effectively a Working Group. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys suggested that Amenities could be a Working Group and that this should be considered at the next Amenities Committee meeting. It was proposed and **AGREED** that Environment becomes a Working Group.

12/155 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING:

There are several forthcoming information and training events which Councillors are attending.

After discussion it was **AGREED** to start a Neighbourhood Planning Working Group.

The Clerk stated that this should be a community led project so a Working Group would need to consist of probably four Councillors and eight members of the public. Cllrs Mrs Podbury, Mrs Hull, Langridge and Woodward volunteered and one member of the public has already volunteered. They will start discussions and report to the Full Council Meeting on 16th April.

12/156 COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- i) Governance – A Committee meeting is to be held soon. The Complaints Policy was discussed and comments made by two Councillors on wording. **These comments to be emailed to the Clerk who will re-circulate the amended version.**
- ii) Planning – Cllr Mrs Podbury referred to her written report
- iii) Amenities – Cllr Milner reported that there is to be an Amenities Committee meeting on 12th March
- iv) Footpaths – Cllr Milner reported that some tree clearance has been carried out by the landowner in Shadwell Woods and that he has been clearing tree debris in the Pocket Park. The next projects are replacement boardwalk in Shadwell Woods and replacement of the steps on WT67. He reported that Derek Robinson is unwell and the Chairman asked for the Parish Council's best wishes to be sent to him. Cllr Milner was thanked for his recent work in Roopers.
- v) KALC – Cllr Mrs Hull referred to her written report of the KALC meeting on 8th February
- vi) Environment – The Environment Policy will go on the website. **The Clerk to pursue the electricity monitors for Schools**

12/157 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 6TH FEBRUARY 2012:

12/133 Ashurst Flagpole – The Clerk is waiting to hear from Alan Legg of TWBC.

12/104 Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported that she has had a letter from TWBC confirming that the Ward Walk has been deferred until 2013.

12/016 Cllr Mrs Jeffreys asked for an article to be placed in Speldhurst News seeking volunteers to deliver the Newsletter to the outlying rural properties before a decision is made on whether they need to be posted.

The Clerk confirmed that there is to be an election on 3rd May for the two vacancies and advised Councillors of the details. Cllr Mrs Hull suggested that the Borough Councillors could do more in terms of a two way communication process which would enable the Parish to be more aware of issues at a Borough level that would impact our community.

12/158 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

- i) Email dated 14th February from BBC Switchover Help Scheme which is bringing its information van to our area on Friday 4th May
- ii) Email dated 18th February from Christopher Blyth Hon Treasurer of St Martin at Tours Church, Ashurst thanking the Parish Council for the grant of £4,500 and the subscription for the Ashurst Broadsheet
- iii) Email dated 20th February from Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling Youth Service regarding the Tryangle Awards 2012
- iv) Email dated 24th February from Edward Pinnell of Kent Cottage, Barden Road, Speldhurst confirming that he will arrange to cut back his roadside hedge during the next two weeks
- v) Email dated 29th February from John Burr of Kent Highway Services thanking the Parish Council for providing positive feedback on recent improvements in services
- vi) Letter dated 29th February from Borough Councillor Julian Stanyer confirming that he would like to participate in the Annual Parish Assembly
- vii) Grant request letter dated February from Citizens Advice Bureau
- viii) Letters dated 29th February to both Cllr Woodward and the Clerk from West Kent Chamber of Commerce and Industry supporting the Joint Expression of Interest submitted by the Broadband Working Party to DEFRA. **Cllr Woodward asked the Clerk to forward a copy of this letter to Hilary Smith TWBC Broadband Officer**
- ix) Letter dated 5th March from P G Tew of Speldhurst giving Notice of a Parish Meeting on 27th March
- x) Letter from The Kent Men of the Trees regarding the Trees in the Village Competition 2012
- xi) Letter dated 23rd February from Brighton & Hove City Council regarding East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan
- xii) The Open Spaces Society Spring 2012 publication
- xiii) Subscription renewal dated 27th February from the CPRE

12/159 DIARY DATES:

Thursday 8th March – Planning meeting – Parish Council Office
Monday 12th March – Amenities meeting – Parish Council Office
Thursday 15th March – Governance meeting – Parish Council Office – **10.00am**
Tuesday 27th March – A Parish Meeting – Speldhurst Village Hall – **8.00pm**
Monday 2nd April – Annual Parish Assembly – Speldhurst Main Hall – **8.00pm**
Monday 16th April – **Full Council Meeting** – Speldhurst Village Hall

12/160 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

Cllr Langridge enquired about the TWBC Heritage Assets consultation document. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys advised that the consultation period ends on 11th March.

Cllr Mrs Hull reported that a rock from the wall by the George & Dragon has slipped into the road. **The Clerk to investigate.**

There being nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 9.54pm

CHAIRMAN