



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

**MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2017 AT 7.30PM IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, SPELDHURST VILLAGE HALL**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cllr Barrington-Johnson (Chairman), Milner Mrs Lyle, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Price, Mrs Jeffreys, Mrs Soyke, Kerby, Allen, Mercieca

**OFFICER PRESENT:** Mr C May – Clerk, Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Borough Councillor Julian Stanyer

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** There were two members of the public present.

**17/218 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.

**17/219 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Apologies received from Borough Cllr David Jukes, County Councillor James McInroy and Cllr Parker – all previous engagements.

**17/220 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS:** The Assistant Clerk declared an interest in agenda item 26a (minute 17/243a)

**17/221 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING:** There were none.

**17/222 MINUTES:** It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting on **2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017** be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**17/223 CO-OPTION OF NEW COUNCILLOR: RESOLVED** Mr Ellery was co-opted onto the Council. Cllr Ellery then took his seat with Councillors, signed the declaration of acceptance of office and it was **RESOLVED** that he be assigned to the Finance and Planning Committees. Cllr Ellery thanked Councillors for selecting him and said he is looking forward to having the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the parish.

**17/224 CO-OPTION: RESOLVED** that Cllrs Barrington-Johnson, Mrs Jeffreys and Milner form a working group to hold co-option interviews, following the resignation of David Turner. Cllr Mrs Lyle was available as a reserve if required.

**17/225 BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS:**

- Borough Cllr Julian Stanyer advised that TWBC are largely focussing on the Civic Development proposals – the deadline for a decision on the project is 6<sup>th</sup> December. There are 3 open days coming up when members of the public will have the opportunity to have their say on the proposals.
- Cllr Mrs Podbury said that planning was extremely busy at present before TWBC increases its fees.

**17/226 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION:** Marianne Buckley said that LGVH Trustees believed there is a conflict between bookings for LGVH and the pavilion. She said that the café was undercutting the Hall and that hire prices were not transparent. She said that equipment from the Hall had been used without permission. Cllr Mrs Lyle confirmed that rental fees are paid to book the pavilion for evening events and apologised if equipment had been borrowed from the village hall by the pavilion. The Clerk said that he found Mrs Buckley's assertions surprising because had recently spoken to the Chairman of the Trustees of LGVH about the issue of the pavilion bookings and been advised that there was no issue.

**17/227 FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Cllr Mrs Lyle reported the following:

- a) There had been a Finance Committee meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017, the minutes having previously been forwarded to all Members.
- b) Virements – there were no virements.
- c) Interim payments – Interim payments since the Finance Meeting: Unity bank current account: £2,200 for TRO application on Speldhurst Road. Mastercard: £19.76\* maintenance equipment; £100.80\* to transfer our website to up-to-date server; £358.95 new laptop and £11.99 petrol\*.
- d) Payments made under delegated authority are starred above. Additionally, there is a payment of £300 to have a temporary website constructed. It was considered this would give the Website Working Group more time to investigate a replacement website.
- e) **RESOLVED** to donate £100 towards the Mayor's annual Christmas Toy Appeal.
- f) LG Allotments – Cllr Barrington-Johnson gave a report on the meeting that he and the Clerk attended with Mr Justin Bodle, owner of Groombridge Place that afternoon. He said that Mr Bodle had long-running frustrations with the existing management of the allotments and that the current arrangement will cease at the end of December. His intentions are for the allotments to remain and that existing plot-holders can re-apply, and they would be priority. He stated that a new management structure was needed. Cllr Barrington-Johnson said that the Parish Council would help, at least initially, to ensure the plot holders had the minimum disruption and could continue to use their allotments.
- g) **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the precept be increased by 3.5% from £143,000 to £148,000. Cllr Kerby enquired how this compares to County and Borough precepts. The Clerk said that both County and Borough are 1.99% plus an extra 2% for statutory care. Cllr Barrington-Johnson reminded Councillors that SPC's precept remains uncapped and said that the increase should be considered fair and reasonable. The Clerk said that the increase, based on the previous year's tax base, equates to a £1.62 annual increase for a Band D household (£60.52 increased to £62.14 per annum).

**17/228 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:** Invoices verified by Cllr Allen

To authorise the payment of invoices as listed

Payee Name	Reference	Amount	Detail
BT Plc	DD	30.00	Mobile
M Flemington	MT1149	52.50	Salary
Tate Fencing Ltd	MT1150	259.38	Various materials
Paul Cheater	MT1151	112.00	Pavilion cleaning September
KALC	MT1152	288.00	Training
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT1153	20.00	Meeting room hire
RBL Poppy Appeal	300235	75.00	Donation
TW & District CAB	MT1155	1,000.00	Grant
Victim Support	300236	250.00	Grant
RIP Cleaning Services	MT1157	172.80	Canine Refuse
Langton Life	MT1158	250.00	Advertisement
Streetlights	MT1159	25.20	Maintenance
Prestige Web Marketing	MT1160	30.00	Website maintenance

KCC Highways	MT1161	4,508.62	SID purchase
M R Lawrence	MT1162	320.00	Mowing
Mr L Cooper	MT1163	35.68	Expenses
C May	MT1164	75.00	Expenses
Kate Harman	MT1165	21.60	Expenses
N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	MT1166	25.96	Pension Scheme Contributions
Kate Harman	MT1167	605.60	Salary
Mr L Cooper	MT1168	640.70	Salary
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT1171	20.00	Room Hire
M R Lawrence	MT1172	320.00	Mowing and Strimming
M R Lawrence	MT1173	455.00	Hedges, strimming
Prestige Web Marketing	MT1174	300.00	Installation of new software
C May	MT1169	1,807.27	Salary
UK Debt Management Office	DD	2,942.77	PWLB Repayment
Sunstone	MT1170	1,518.36	Annual Maintenance Agreement
<b>Total:</b>		<b>£16,161.44</b>	

It was **RESOLVED** to pay the invoices listed above, authorise the electronic payments and sign the cheques drawn on Unity Trust Bank.

**17/229 HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE:** The Clerk reported the following:

- a) A meeting was held on 16<sup>th</sup> October, the minutes of which have been distributed.
- b) **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference remain unchanged.
- c) The Clerk explained that the original costings by KCC Highways for 20mph project had been made one year ago and as more details emerged the price for the advisory limit in Langton Green had increased due to road closures and diversions because electricity needed to cross the road. The original estimate was about £12,000 but this was increased to £16,000 and the Speldhurst 20mph zone from £6,720 to about £8,000. He said that due to savings elsewhere the project should be within budget.  
**RESOLVED** to accept the increased costings and proceed on that basis.

**17/230 LANGTON GREEN RECREATION GROUND (LGRG):** Cllr Mrs Lyle reported the following:-

- a) The matter of obtaining a maintenance contract for the pavilion had been put on hold due to the issue of rates for the building.
- b) The income for September was £1,405 and expenditure was £1,100 - outgoings for the pavilion were higher than normal this month due to the large utilities bills.
- c) Cllr Mrs Lyle is seeking a replacement Councillor to go on the management committee for the pavilion, following the resignation of David Turner. Cllr Barrington-Johnson asked Councillors to consider joining the committee and let him know if they wish to.
- d) It had been suggested that a 3G pitch could be built on LGRG and the FA would provide the majority of the funding. Cllr Lyle noted that the 3G pitch would be extremely expensive (possibly more than the Pavilion) so even a minor balance to be funded would still be a considerable sum.
- e) Pitch maintenance – a quote has been accepted by the LGSA to have the pitch treated and aerated which will improve the performance of it during the winter months.
- f) Rates – SPC are liable for paying the pavilion's rates. Cllrs Barrington-Johnson, Mrs Jeffreys and Mrs Lyle had met to discuss the possibility of using the General Powers of Competence to set up a separate entity to manage the pavilion and reduce liability. More information will be provided in the New Year following a thorough investigation of this suggestion.

**17/231 PARISH PLAN:** Cllr Barrington-Johnson gave an update as follows:

- a) 20 mph – see item 17/229 b).
- b) Speedwatch – a plea for more volunteers to come forward. The objective is to have one session per month.
- c) Arriva bus services – no response had been received from Arriva despite Cllr Barrington-Johnson chasing them.
- d) Post office services in Langton Green – Three letters have been sent to the Post Office. Cllr Barrington-Johnson said that if no response was received he would approach Post Office management. Cllr Kerby advised that there is temporary cover at the Post office in Groombridge.
- e) Keep Safe – Peter Brown has agreed to take a lead on drafting a Keep Safe leaflet.
- f) Tennis facilities – Cllr Barrington-Johnson now has contact details for the court in Langton Green which he will follow up and report back. Cllr Mrs Soyke said that maintenance and insurance costs for running tennis courts are often so high it can prevent them being rented out.
- g) Parking – Cllr Barrington-Johnson and Borough Cllr Julian Stanyer are hoping to have a meeting to discuss parking in Langton Green. Cllr Mrs Lyle noted that she has seen cars parked across the emergency exit to The Grange. Cllr Barrington-Johnson said that he will leaflet and photograph any cars he sees parked in an anti-social way.

**17/232 DCLG CONSULTATION: Planning for the right homes in the right places:** Cllrs Mrs Price and Milner had prepared a response on behalf of SPC. **RESOLVED** that the response be submitted by the deadline of 9<sup>th</sup> November on behalf of SPC with one minor change; item 18 “fees should reflect relative costs in the different areas”. A copy will be sent to Cllr Jukes.

**17/233 DCLG CONSULTATION: New rules to strengthen standards for councillors and mayors:** **RESOLVED** to endorse the proposals updating the criteria disqualifying individuals from standing or from holding office as a local authority member.

**17/234 2018 Parliamentary Constituency Boundary Review:** **RESOLVED** to respond as a Parish Council to the effect that changes to MPs were acceptable but any Parliamentary boundary changes should not affect levels of local government. This Council would like to remain within Tunbridge Wells Borough and not become part of Tonbridge & Malling Borough.

**17/235 KCC Draft Budget Strategy 2018-19:** **RESOLVED** to send no response by SPC but Councillors should respond as individuals.

**17/236 TWBC Civic Development Planning Framework Public Consultation:** **RESOLVED** not to send a response by the Parish Council but Councillors should respond as individuals.

**17/237 Langton Green Christmas Tree:** **RESOLVED** to permit the Langton Green Village Society (LGVS) to erect a Christmas tree on the same location on Council land, opposite The Hare, for the foreseeable future until one party rescinds. It was also **RESOLVED** to allow Groombridge residents to erect a Christmas tree on The Green should they so wish, as long as the requisite health and safety rules were applied. The Chairman asked, on behalf of the Langton Green Village Society, for permission to plant spring bulbs on the grass owned by the Parish Council. This was agreed.

**17/238 Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust:** **RESOLVED** to re-elect Cllr Mrs Soyke as a SPC’s representative on the Hall Trust

**17/239 Remembrance Wreaths:** **RESOLVED** that the wreaths will be laid by Cllr Barrington-Johnson in Langton; Cllr Mrs Lyle in Ashurst; Cllr Milner in Speldhurst and David Crundwell in Groombridge

**17/240 Rude Mechanicals: RESOLVED** to allow the theatre company to use the Langton Green Recreation Ground on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018 for their summer play

**17/241 KALC Community Awards Scheme 2018: RESOLVED** to adopt the scheme for the coming year. The Chairman asked Cllrs to consider nominations.

**17/242 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** The Chairman said that he felt that the Open Meeting went well; that the number of people attending was about right and that the Allotments issue was interesting.

**17/243 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a) **Governance** – Cllr Milner reported that a meeting had been held on 30<sup>th</sup> October and the minutes were available and a hard copy distributed.
- Mrs Harman left the meeting. **RESOLVED** that Mrs Harman be awarded a pay rise to scale LC1 20 (£10ph) effective November 14<sup>th</sup> 2017. Mrs Harman re-joined the meeting.
- RESOLVED** that the following standing orders and policies be approved in line with the Governance Committee's recommendations.
- Standing Orders – Full Council (minor changes)
  - Standing Orders – Financial Regulations (changes to procurement procedures)
  - Media Policy (no change)
  - Winter Weather Policy (no change)
  - Investment Policy (minor changes)
- b) **Planning** – Cllr Mrs Price reported that a committee meeting had been held on 11<sup>th</sup> October and a copy had been distributed. She reminded Cllrs of the training session being held prior to the meeting on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November in the Gallery room, LGVH at 7pm.
- **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference
  - **RESOLVED** to address the issue of detrimental public comments with TWBC planners attending the training session prior to the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> November
  - The Chairman reported that there was a rumour going around about a sizeable housing development planned for Langton Green. The LGVS asked if he would represent the Council on a group of concerned residents. **RESOLVED** that the Chairman represent SPC and report back to Council.
- c) **Amenities** – Cllr Mrs Podbury said that a meeting was scheduled on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November.
- d) **Air Traffic** – The Chairman said that a meeting will be held soon to review a new consultation on another runway in the South of England. **RESOLVED** to delegate responsibility to respond the committee.
- e) **Footpaths** – There was nothing to report
- f) **KALC** – There was nothing to report
- g) **Environment Workshop** – Cllr Price said a meeting will be held this month

**17/244 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017** – There was nothing to report

**17/245 CLERK'S REPORT:** The Clerk reported on a conversation he had with Derek Robinson regarding a WW1 commemorative idea started in Penshurst but now going nationwide. It involved Perspex figures and a life size Tommy. Costs were estimated at £2,500-£3,000 for St Mary's Church, Speldhurst. He believed costs would be covered by donations and sponsorship but asked if the Parish Council would consider a grant should there be a shortfall or whether it was prepared to contribute towards the significant event marking the centenary. Councillors agreed to consider any grant request on merit bearing in mind there were four churches in the parish.

**17/246 DIARY DATES:**

**Wednesday 8th** – Planning Meeting, Gallery Room LGVH 7pm Stephen Baughen, TWBC Planning will address the meeting. Main business will start about 8pm

**Thursday 9th** – Internal Auditor 9.30am

**Wednesday 15th** – Amenities Meeting 1.30pm

**Friday 17th** – LGVH 10th Anniversary 6.45pm

**Monday 4th December – Full Council Meeting, Palmer Room, LGVH 7pm – Christmas Drinks at George & Dragon**

**17/247 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:** Cllr Mercieca said that the bus stop on Langton Road, Langton Green had still not been repaired. The Clerk said that this has been reported to TWBC and instructions have been sent ordering the repair.

There being nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Chairman