

Speldhurst Parish Council

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

**MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 1st FEBRUARY 2010 at 7.30pm
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, LANGTON GREEN VILLAGE HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs. Mrs Jeffreys (Chairman), Mrs Soyke, Cllr Mrs Paulson-Ellis, Mrs Hull, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Waters, Brown, Ellis, Langridge, Milner, Parker, Pendleton and Wheeler

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris May, Clerk

Borough Cllr Julian Stanyer

Gary Stevenson TWBC, Head of Environment & Street Scene Services and Lene Beynon TWBC, Borough Engineering Officer

Jenny Blackburn and Carol Morris

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were none

10/019 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST:

Personal – Cllr Mrs Soyke – Ashurst Village Play Area – resident of Ashurst (1825-3).

Personal & Prejudicial – Cllr Mrs Soyke - 10/027vi) footpath near her house. The Clerk - 10/025iii) approval of his overtime. Cllrs Parker and Ellis - 10/028 Trustees of LGVH

10/020 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING: No declarations were received

10/021 TALK BY TWBC ABOUT A NEW BOROUGH ENTRY SIGN – Gary Stevenson introduced the “Love Where We Live” project which included Community clear-ups, Community engagements and awards. It was an initiative from the Senior Executive of the TWBC and it was proposed to put a new entry sign to the Borough in the Parish. Lene Beynon explained that they were trying not to duplicate other Borough signs, which is why there was only one. The sign was in two parts with the “Love Where We Live” sign separate from the main sign “Welcome to the Borough of Tunbridge Wells” and Cllr Brown asked if the slogan would be removed once the campaign is over and the Officers confirmed this.

Cllr Wheeler had safety reservations regarding the site because it was a junction where cars often swerved off the road and Cllrs Mrs Hull and Waters both had reservations regarding the unnecessary urbanisation of the area. TWBC asked permission of the Parish Council for the sign to be situated at a junction on the Fordcombe Road and after some discussion it was **RESOLVED** by 10 votes to grant permission. Cllr Mrs Soyke asked for a few days to consult some residents who she would advise to call Lene Beynon direct if they had any questions. The two Officers then left the meeting.

10/022 MINUTES: The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on **4th January 2010**, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.

10/023 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION – Cllr Stanyer and the two members of public were then asked if they would like bring to the attention of the Council any matters. They declined and the two members of the public from Rusthall advised that they were here to observe the meeting and its format.

10/024 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - Report by Cllr Jeffreys

- i) Cllr Mrs Jeffreys asked for the Terms of Reference for the Governance Committee to be approved. This was voted on and it was **RESOLVED** to unanimously adopt them. It was decided to delay requesting approval for The Terms of Reference for the Internal Audit until feedback had been received from the Internal Auditor.

- ii) The Council was asked (this question was asked before item 10/024i) if there was any concern regarding the fact that all of the appointees to the Governance Committee were from the Finance Committee. The Council responded that there was no concern on this issue.
- iii) The Clerk gave details of his meeting with the Internal Auditor, which had lasted 2 ½ hours, and reported that all of the accounts that were checked were found to be in order. The Auditor had made some minor recommendations which were noted. He has had some communication with the Auditor regarding the Governance Committee and other matters and this required further correspondence to clarify some issues. **The Clerk was asked to circulate a copy of the report to the Council.**
- iv) Cllr Mrs Jeffreys gave a summary of the first meeting, which had been long due to the necessity to establish certain procedures. She added that matters were coming up from simple checks that needed attention for example the need for insurance on the new Christmas lights.
- v) Cllr Mrs Jeffreys highlighted that the Council's Standing Orders required updating and it was agreed that the **Governance Committee would undertake to do so in time for approval at the March meeting.**

10/025 FINANCE COMMITTEE – Report by Cllr Parker

- i) The Clerk left the room. The Council voted to approve the overtime for January and the Clerk was asked to rejoin the meeting.
- ii) Cllr Parker advised the Council that the following payments had been authorised by the Committee - £95 for envelopes for the Parish Vision project; £50 in addition to the £300 already allocated to the insurance for the Speldhurst Pram Race (because of the increase in attendance from 500 to 1,000) and £33 annual subscription to The Woodland Trust
- iii) There was a discussion on the contents and layout of the pamphlet explaining the rise in the Precept that had been previously circulated by Cllrs Langridge and Pendleton. There were a number of changes to substance and grammar. **Cllr Langridge would amend and re-circulate.** No decision was made on how it was to be distributed.

10/026 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT –January 2010 – Invoices verified by Cllr Brown

The following payments had been made and authorisation was requested retrospectively.

BT	£103.60	Telephone Bill 533501	763
Festive Decorations Ltd	£2,250.12	Christmas Lights	764
RIP	£101.20	Dog Bins	765
M R Lawrence	£80.00	LGRG Site Clearing	766
EDF	£53.24	Street Light	768

Total **£2,588.16**

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – January 2010 – Invoices verified by Cllr Brown

Mr C May	£1,128.77	Salary	767
HMRC	£569.99	N.I./Tax	769
Mr C May	£342.11	Expenses	770
St. Thomas' PCC	£11.00	Groombridge Mag & Post	771
EDF	£101.51	LG Sports Pavillion	772
LGCT	£32.62	Hall Hire	773
St. Martin's Church, Ashurst	£12.00	Ashurst Mag & Post	774
SLCC	£14.75	Councillor's Guide	775
J L Roberts	£288.00	Internal Auditor	776
BT	£28.32	Mobile	777

Simon Remordina	£350.00	Insurance (Speldhurst Pram Race)	778
The Woodland Trust	£33.00	Annual Membership	779
Tate Fencing	£1,446.43	Palisade fencing - Lampington Row	780
Ryman	£104.62	Stationery	781
Donaldson West	£149.00	Legal fees re Ashurst land	782
Mrs J Podbury	£62.97	Stationery -PV	783
Mr E Langridge	£65.00	Stationery -PV	784
KCC (KCS)	£2,339.77	LGRG Drainage	785

Total **£7,079.86**

10/027 HIGHWAYS REPORT – The Clerk had printed off a Parish report which is available online from KHS of all the outstanding issues raised with KHS in the last six months. The number of items that were reported by members of the public was considerable and although he said that the reporting of minor problems could be useful, if they were reported via the Parish Council it would get priority. Reporting through the Parish Council would also mean we could avoid duplication and ensure that members of the public did not ask for signage that was not warranted or in the wrong place. He asked that all magazines put a piece in to this effect and that the members of the public give exact details of the location when reporting. Cllr Langridge would write a piece for inclusion in all the magazines so they appeared in a common style.

The Clerk had circulated a report to all Councillors prior to the meeting which included updates on a number of Highways issues.

- i) Parking restrictions in Speldhurst – we are still awaiting a timetable for action.
- ii) 2190 Langton Green – Land outside the old Watson Hall – KCC Landscapes had advised the Clerk that they were unable to quote for the project because it abutted the highway. They would quote via a sub-contractor.
- iii) 2213 Groombridge Hill – nothing further to report.
- iv) Ashurst ISS – The Road Safety Team are expected to report in February 2010.
- v) The Spire Hospital bus stop – Nothing further to report
- vi) Cllr Mrs Podbury had not made contact with Jonathan Bibby about the footpath at Ashurst and would pass the information to Cllr Milner to take it further.
- vii) Salt bins – The Clerk had written to KHS by email again on 29th January (following up on the letter of 17th December) advising them of the experiences of the villages during the two recent heavy snowfalls and again requesting more salt bins.

The Clerk was asked to chase up the results of the traffic survey that was conducted about a year ago in Speldhurst.

10/008 PARISH WEBSITE AND LOGO – A meeting had been held between Cllrs Langridge, Pendleton and The Clerk. Cllr Langridge produced two logos for the Council to consider and they were quite different – one was of a tree and the other depicting a family. There was considerable discussion on the merits of each but it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to proceed with the logo with the tree. Cllr Langridge would have a letterhead revised and present it at the next meeting.

A paper had previously been circulated with ideas about a website. It was felt that the one currently being used through KCC and Kent Parish Councils was too basic in its format and not very inviting. The Council could upgrade to a much better website at relatively little cost and again upgrade at a later date if we felt it necessary. If we used a company called Arrowscape who maintain a number of Parish Councils websites using a similar format the initial costs would be in the region of £500 (with £300 being the set up charge and about £180 being the annual maintenance charge). It was felt that the site should have maps, highways news, articles on what we do and pages for the villages and links to their websites ensuring no overlap, along with the basic pages outlined in the paper. It was also recommended and agreed that the development of the site should be done gradually.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to commit £500 to the set up of a website.

Cllrs Langridge, Pendleton and the Clerk would meet and report progress at the next Council meeting.

1825-3 ASHURST VILLAGE PLAY AREA – Registering of Common Ground – The Council had received an invoice for £149 from Donaldson West being £200 plus vat for work done less £86 not used from £100 previously sent towards land registry fees. The Clerk and Cllr Mrs Soyke were meeting Tate Fencing to obtain a quote on

Wednesday 3rd February and ***a quote was also needed for clearing and levelling of the land. The Clerk was asked to try and find out if we were covered for any insurance liability when we have no claim on the land.***

10/009 ASHURST NOTICE BOARD – The Clerk had been in contact with Mr Worcester and the fitting of the notice board was due to be done within the month having agreed a site with Cllr Mrs Soyke.

10/028 RENEWAL OF THE LICENCE between the Parish Council and Langton green Charitable Trust for the exclusive use of the paved and fenced patio area. Cllr Parker said that he hoped the Council would take in to consideration that the Nursery was in need of funds for an awning to create shade, and although it was a business, it was not a very profitable one. Cllrs Parker and Ellis duly left the room.

The Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to keep the annual lease of the patio area at £1,000. A contribution towards the awning was discussed but because it was a business it was decided that the Council should not be involved. Cllr Parker and Ellis were invited to re-join the meeting.

2249 PARISH OFFICE – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys explained that LGCT had requested that whilst transferring the new build land it might make sense to tidy up the footprint to include the patio area thus wrapping up all of the SPC land that the Trust has access to. It was decided that this would be considered after the planning application had been approved. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council would put in the Planning Application in its name to save VAT.

10/010 INSTALLATION OF WIFI IN PARISH VILLAGE HALLS – The Clerk reported that he had used his contacts in Kent to find out what other Councils have done about this issue. It was clear that none of the 22 Parishes contacted had WiFi installed but they had some suggestions on how to change passwords etc. ***The Clerk would attempt to put the question nationwide via the SLCC website for further answers.***

10/029 ASSISTANT CLERK – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys had held two meetings to discuss the issue and had circulated a paper earlier to Members. It was a matter of good practice that the Council had the necessary back up for the Clerk in case of illness or any other unforeseen problems. Further discussions took place and various ideas were put forward including a possible short term contract. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Council should place advertisements in the April editions of the four local village magazines for an Assistant Clerk with a two week period of acceptance. The position would be for 10 hours a week based on a salary of £17,161 spinal point 18 of LC1 scale which pro rata is £4,638p.a. There would need to be a possible amendment if the scale is adjusted by NALC in the annual review. The last 3 people who were reviewed for the present position of Clerk would be notified of the vacancy.

Cllr Langridge would draft a copy of an advertisement for the magazines and send to all Councillors for approval. He would also have a copy made for the notice boards.

10/030 AGM – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reminded **all** Chairmen of Committees that they would be required to make a report at the meeting.

Cllr John Davies has agreed to be our Speaker and he will talk about his experiences as Chairman of the KCC. Cllr Langridge was asked if he would organise the 6 signs this year advertising the event. He agreed and would borrow the boards from Cllr Pendleton.

Cllr Mrs Hull would purchase of wine and soft drinks and Cllr Mrs Podbury would help on the night.

10/031 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that she and Cllr Parker had given the Clerk his appraisal. Having sought comments from all Cllrs and having received positive comments she was pleased to say that he had passed his probationary period. Some suggestions had also been made to the Clerk which he had duly taken on board.

The Parish Chairman's meeting was on Wednesday 3rd February but because of family commitments she was unable to attend. Cllr Mrs Soyke would attend in her place.

The KALC survey – she had received most of the returns and would summarise the comments and pass to the Clerk for him to add his points.

10/032 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- i) Planning – Cllr Mrs Podbury had nothing further to report other than was covered by the minutes of the meetings that had been circulated to members. She did say that the two latest approvals from TWBC had come with 4 & 5 pages of conditions.
- ii) Parish Vision – Cllr Mrs Podbury thanked everybody for helping with the delivery of the questionnaire – it had been an enormous task. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys thanked Cllrs Mrs Podbury and Langridge for their efforts in preparing the questionnaires for distribution.
Cllr Mrs Podbury said that there had been some unforeseen expenses which would mean that they would exceed the budget forecast.

A new grant had come to light which could be as much as £500 and Cllr Mrs Soyke would apply on the Council's behalf.

- iii) Recreation Ground – Cllr Ellis said that he was still looking for a Groundsman. KCC Landscapes were having a problem acquiring the oak posts for the bollards in the car park. He had been sent a letter by the Chairman of the Sports Club requesting that the football pitches be drained which he had passed on to the Clerk. **The Clerk would reply and look in to the cost of drainage.**
- iv) Footpaths – Cllr Milner had taken over responsibility for the Committee and gave a summary of his findings. Derek Robinson of the Footpaths Group had a list of work to be done, most immediately that in Shadwell Woods and there was an issue of barbed wire along one or two footpaths and whether this was permissible.
He also said that footpaths WT88/89 had been resurfaced by KCC.
There was to be a meeting at the LGRG on Thursday 4th February at 2pm to decide where the container for the footpath materials should be sited. Cllr Mrs Soyke said that she thought that the front asphalted car-park should be avoided if possible, both because of the loss of parking-space and because it had been expensive to lay.
- v) KALC - Cllr Brown had nothing to report but there was a meeting on March 11th.
- vi) Environment – There was nothing to report.
- vii) Local Needs Housing – Cllr Wheeler reported on the positive meeting held with TWBC on January 15th – the notes having been circulated earlier to all members. There is to be a walk around of other possible sites on February 12th and a meeting with the RSLs on February 19th.
Cllr Mrs Hull agreed that the meeting had been a good one but she said that the Parish would lose Green Belt land unless other options were investigated and she was concerned that TWBC was fragmenting the Parish by treating Langton Green as a suburb of Tunbridge Wells.

10/033 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 4th JANUARY 2010 – 10/016x) Cllr Mrs Podbury had seen what she thought might be an answer to the problem at The Twitten (Breakstones Lane) in the form of parallel bars offset to allow access. **The Clerk would contact the TWBC Environmental Health Access Office as a first step.**

10/034 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- i) Letter dated 5th Jan from RIP Cleaning Services notifying of a price rise of 10p per bin, per visit effective from February 2010. This may be a matter for the Finance Committee to review, however our Internal Auditor commented that their rate was low compared to other Councils he had seen. It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to accept this increase.
- ii) Email dated 8th Jan from TWBC re Core Strategy Independent Examination: Advertisement of Changes to Core Policy 6: Housing Re. Affordable Housing Provision. (change of 15 dwellings to 10) – previously circulated
- iii) Email dated 8th Jan from Judith Lees, headmistress at LGPS saying that they are sending out a questionnaire to parents soon regarding the walking bus.
- iv) Email dated 7th Jan from Acacia Tree & Garden Care outlining their services
- v) Pamphlets from Notts Sports Ltd re renovation of sports pitches
- vi) Letter dated 2nd Jan from Carol Braidwood addressed to Cllr Ellis regarding the need for the drainage of the pitches. See Recreation Report.
- vii) Email dated 13th Jan from Scott Poleykett advertising his Circus workshop for family days, fetes etc
- viii) Email dated 13th Jan from Clive Rolf advertising his mobile crepe trailer for events
- ix) Email dated 15th Jan from Kent High Weald Partnership detailing the exciting new project "Orchards for all".
- x) Letter dated 12th Jan from the Mayor of TW thanking for our donation to his Toy Appeal 2009
- xi) Letter dated 12th Jan from Hazelwood Tree Management advertising their services (with details of Public Liability Insurance and operational standard BS3998)
- xii) Letter via email dated 18th Jan from resident Gordon Rees of Squirrelsmead, Barden Road enclosing a copy of his letter to KCC regarding two serious road accidents in Dec and Jan. These accidents were known to the Council or the Police.
- xiii) Telephone call from Mrs Katie Rieckman of Keepers Cottage Burnt House Lane regarding the diverted traffic during the road works at The Hare junction on 20 and 21st Jan
- xiv) Letter dated 25th Jan from Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust Management Committee thanking the Parish Council for their generous grant towards the Hall extension.
- xv) Email from Philippa Gould of Adam Cottage (copy enclosed) regarding the beech tree. The matter was discussed but the tree had been pruned in accordance with a report and in line with the Tree Officer's recommendation, so it was felt that the Council had done what it could. **The Clerk to write accordingly.**
- xvi) Email dated 19th Jan from Isobel Allen regarding information about changes to our local ambulance service (previously circulated to members)
- xvii) A brochure from ROSPA regarding inspection of play areas

- xviii) A letter dated 25th Jan from Kent Wildlife Trust requesting we advertise two events on our notice board
- xix) Card post dated 26th Jan from Nottssport – they are leading UK artificial sports, play and landscape surfacing specialist. Their rep is in our area next week.
- xx) Email dated 28th Jan from Ringway wanting to know if we would like them to quote for our street lighting annual maintenance contract.
- xxi) Email dated 31st Jan from Katrina Sigston, Chairman of Speldhurst CEP School PTA requesting a contribution to a new outdoor school project. ***This has been forwarded to the Finance Committee for review.***
- xxii) Email dated 30th Jan from Denis Gibbs, Chairman of Speldhurst Recreation Committee advising that they have not been able to obtain a third quote as yet and therefore no works would be starting this financial year. He hoped that any funds that were earmarked could be carried forward in to the next financial year. ***This will reviewed by the Finance Committee.***
- xxiii) Email dated 1st Feb complaining that her neighbour Philippa Gould has left her bins out (on our land).
- xxiv) Letter dated 26th Oct 2009 from Dr Martin Davies regarding the need for a Post Office in Langton Green – giving some ideas on how one could be started and requesting that we help the process. ***The Clerk would reply by email.***

10/035 DIARY DATES

Wednesday 3rd February – Parish Chairman’s meeting

Monday 8th Feb – Planning meeting LGVH 7.30pm

Friday 12th Feb – site visits LNH committee with TWBC

Friday 19th Feb – Meeting RSLs LNH committee with TWBC at Town Hall

Monday 1st March – Planning Training at Town hall

Monday 1st March – Full Council Meeting – Ashurst VH

10/036 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION – Cllr Mrs Waters reported that there was some offensive graffiti on a gate on the land opposite Smallbrook Farm. ***Cllr Mrs Podbury would contact the owners.***

Cllr Mrs Podbury said that Mr Butcher of Upper Bullingstone Lane had reported shooting on the land in the area during the day and night.

Cllr Mrs Paulson-Ellis said that her subscription to the “Planning” magazine was up for renewal and it was used by all of the Committee. She asked if the Council would pay the annual fee and it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that this would be paid for.

There being nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 10.15pm

CHAIRMAN