



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

**Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting of the Parish Council
held on Monday 9th May 2022 at 7.30pm in the Palmer Room, Langton Green Village Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Pate (Chairman), Curry, Ellery, Langridge, Mrs Lyle, Norton, Rajah, Scarbrough and Mrs Soyke.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Neve – Clerk, Mrs K Harman (minutes)(KH) and Mrs C Barrett (CB) – Assistant Clerks and Mr C May – Finance Officer.

IN ATTENDANCE

Borough Cllr Allen was in attendance.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

The Chairman advised that the meeting was being audio-recorded by the Clerk for the purposes of accuracy of the minutes. The recording would be destroyed once the minutes had been approved at the next Full Council meeting.

The Chairman brought the matter of covid-compliance forward to ensure members' concerns on the matter were addressed before starting the business of the meeting. Councillors had varying views and after much discussion it was agreed that the wearing of masks would be decided on a meeting-by-meeting basis, decided by each Chairman at the time, respecting each individual members' wishes.

22/088 Election of Chairman

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Curry as Chairman of the Parish Council. He signed the declaration of office which was then counter-signed by the Proper Officer.

Cllr Ellery, joined by other members, thanked Cllr Pate for stepping up to carry out the role of Chair and for all his contributions towards the parish council over the past year.

22/089 Election of Vice-Chairman

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Mrs Lyle as Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council. She signed the declaration of office which was then counter-signed by the Proper Officer.

22/090 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting

The meeting was recorded by the Clerk for administrative purposes – see note above.

22/091 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Barrington-Johnson and Rowe (holidays), Turner (Covid-related) and Mrs Woodliffe (work commitments).

County Cllr McInroy and Borough Cllrs Sankey and Ms Willis also gave apologies due to prior engagements.

22/092 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

22/093 Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

22/094 Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 4th April 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes, previously forwarded to Members were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22/095 Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present.

22/096 Borough and County Councillors' Reports

Borough Cllr Allen advised the following:

- He had been busy with the elections recently however he had managed to join a Speedwatch session in Langton Green, outside the Village Hall.
- He was supporting residents of Ashurst who had yet to see their pre-covid train timetable reinstated. He was arranging a meeting with Greg Clark MP and the rail service provider in the hope of resolving the matter.

Borough Cllr Ms Willis had sent apologies and meeting notes which advised the following:

- An update on the Ukrainian appeal to host families within the county. A reminder that the website www.twhelpsukraine.info has links to all the community groups including a 24/7 helpline called Kent Together which is there for vulnerable people who need help and support.

Borough Cllr Allen then left the meeting.

22/097 Review of Action Points

The Clerk advised that all the action points were either ongoing, in progress or complete. The newly updated list of action points, incorporating additional actions from this meeting, are shown at the end of these minutes.

22/098 Appointment of Committees including KALC Representative.

- a) It was **RESOLVED** that all existing committee membership remain the same with the following exceptions:
- Cllr Mrs Soyke would join the Planning Committee, temporarily replacing Cllr Turner.
 - Cllr Pate would join the Environment Working Group.

- Cllr Norton would leave the Environment Working Group and join the Planning Committee.
 - Cllr Mrs Lyle offered to chair the Amenities Working Group, as Cllr Rowe had completed his three-year term, and this appointment would be put to the working group at the next meeting on 27th June.
- b) **RESOLVED** that the Chairman is the KALC representative and the Vice-Chairman is deputy.

22/099 Annual Return

- a) Risk Assessments – It was **RESOLVED** to accept Version 2.0 of the Risk Assessment document which had been reviewed and updated by Cllr Pate.
- b) Annual Return – It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) be signed on the recommendation of the Governance Working Group.
- c) Public Inspection period of the Annual Return: It was **RESOLVED** that the public inspection period would run from 13th June 2022 to 22nd July 2022.

22/100 The General Power of Competence

It was noted that the General Power of Competence would continue until the elections in 2023.

22/101 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Ellery

- a) There had not been a meeting of the Finance Committee since the last Full Council meeting.
- b) Report on budget virements: There were none.
- c) Report on interim payments made since the last meeting:
Utility Bank: £29.10 nPower (this was duplicated and they have credited our account); £17.76 Tate Fencing – materials; £607.86 Simon Goacher for last financial year payroll; £297.50 LGCT re office electricity; £168.00 Fuzion for an outstanding invoice; £124.80 van chevrons*; £138.00 Pavilion cleaners; £193.18 pay off Mastercard; £175.00 EDF additional DD amount; £116.81 Glass Supplies pavilion door repair*; £117.35 Prestige Plumbing Pavilion boiler repair*; £227.44 Veolia Waste collection; £25.92 BT mobile.
Mastercard: £9.00 card fee; £10.00 Quickfix badges*; £18.07 Lakeland Plastic bags*; £26.60 Petrol*.
- d) Report on decisions made under delegated authority are starred * above.
- e) Recreation Ground pitch maintenance costs: The Chairman of the LGCSA had requested an increase in SPC's pitch maintenance contributions. Cllr Mrs Lyle reminded councillors of the terms of the contract between LGCSA and SPC which enabled the payments to be reviewed annually however there was no obligation to do so. Cllr Ellery voiced concern that an increase had not been budgeted for and the Finance Officer confirmed it could be paid from contingency. After much discussion it was **RESOLVED** that a 5% increase would be made this year with the disclaimer that a precedent was not being set and that any future requests for increased payments must be made ahead of the budget setting meetings in the Autumn.

22/102 Accounts for Payment

RESOLVED to pay the invoices as listed.

Payee Name	Ref.	Amount £	Detail
HMRC	MT2214	1,045.19	NI & Tax
EDF Energy	DD	537.00	Pavilion electricity
EDF Energy	DD	-537.00	Reversal re date
Sac-O-Mat UK Ltd	MT2225	330.88	Canine refuse bags
Sunstone	MT2226	1,875.65	Upgrade CCTV Office
Cloudy IT	MT2227	263.70	Monthly support
Katie Neve	MT2228	35.55	Expenses

JLM Pest Control	MT2229	230.00	Quarterly Pest Control
Viking Direct	MT2230	291.26	Stationery and Pav toilet paper
M R Lawrence	MT2231	320.00	Mowing and Strimming
CPRE	MT2232	36.00	Membership
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2233	50.00	Office rental
BeSure	MT2234	668.40	Annual support
KALC	MT2235	1,986.00	Annual membership
Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2236	64.63	Meeting rooms
Knockout Print	MT2237	120.00	Environment logo
Streetlights	MT2241	26.52	Light maintenance
Employees	MT2239	4,633.53	Salaries
N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	MT2240	437.73	Pension
EDF Energy	DD	537.00	Pav electricity
UK Debt Management Office	DD	2,554.72	PWLB repayment
Veolia	DD	241.55	Pav Recycling
Total:		£15,748.31	

22/103 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)

Cllr Mrs Lyle reported on behalf of the Pavilion Management Committee.

- The current management set up was not proving very effective and a meeting was being arranged to discuss the way forward and the possibility of recruiting a caretaker/building manager.
- The café proprietor had been advised by the football club that they would like exclusive use of the pavilion for nine days at the end of May whilst they held their football fiesta which they were entitled to do under their contract with SPC. As this item was not on the agenda no immediate decision could be made; however, this would be added to the next Full Council agenda to consider a rent relief to the café proprietor to compensate for her loss of café earnings during this time.
- It was reiterated that in future, the Finance Committee should be made aware of budget submissions at the annual budget setting meetings in October and November each year.

22/104 Planning Committee

Cllr Rajah reported that 18 applications had been considered by the committee, the majority of which were neutral with an application from Speldhurst School for a kitchen extension being supported. The matter of the trees bordering the Green in Langton Green would be addressed by Cllr Barrington-Johnson on his return from holiday.

22/105 Future Meetings of the Council

Consideration had been given by the Governance Working Group regarding the most effective format for parish council meetings bearing in mind current government guidance. A recommendation had been made for the committees which had temporarily been functioning as working groups to revert to in-person meetings. The Environment Working Group would, in the short term, remain a working group. The importance of including all councillors wherever possible, bearing in mind their current circumstances was considered but equally it was acknowledged that changing several committees to working groups had only been a temporary measure and did not fit comfortably within official guidelines. After much discussion it was agreed that a decision on how the future meetings of the council should be run would be deferred until the June meeting when guidance had been received from Greg Clark MP, TW Borough Council Legal Department and KALC.

22/106 Allotments

The parish council had been approached by a group of residents from Rusthall who owned allotments within Speldhurst parish. The allotments were under threat and they were seeking help; however the deadline by which to respond was extremely tight and prevented SPC responding in time. The residents were dealing with the matter themselves and had advised that they would keep the parish council updated with progress.

22/107 Chairman's Report

There was nothing to report.

22/108 KALC Community Awards Scheme 2022

The Clerk advised that she had received the award from KALC for the late Trevor Parker and had been in contact with his daughter who had confirmed she would be pleased to receive the award on his behalf. It was agreed the presentation would be made at the June Full Council meeting.

22/109 Working Group Reports

- a) **Governance** – Cllr Mrs Lyle reported that there had been a meeting on 27th April, the minutes having been circulated.
 - It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Statement of Internal Control.
 - The Internal Auditor (IA) was retiring and a replacement needed to be found. The Clerk was asked to work with other parish clerks to find a suitable replacement. She was also asked to write to Mr Buckett (the outgoing IA) expressing SPC's gratitude for all the help and guidance he had given over the years.
 - It was **RESOLVED** to appoint the Clerk as Data Protection Officer (DPO).
 - It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Code of Conduct for Employees.
- b) **Highways** - Cllr Curry had chaired the last meeting on 12th April and reported that there were no material changes or matters to be brought forward.
 - It was **RESOLVED** to alter the Highways Working Group Terms of Reference to enable Cllr Pate to continue his chairmanship for a further two years. It was recognised that the nature of highways projects meant they were often lengthy and it would be a shame to lose his experience as chair.
- c) **Amenities** – there had not been a meeting of the Amenities Working Group since the last Full Council meeting, the next one being on 27th June. There was nothing further to report.
- d) **Air Traffic** – there was nothing to report.
- e) **Footpaths/Fire Hydrants** – Cllr Langridge reported as follows:
 - **Fire Hydrants:** he did not consider SPC could offer any additional benefits to the existing fire hydrant checks being carried out and made a recommendation to remove the matter from SPC's agenda.
 - **Footpaths:** minor issues were being dealt with. He and the Assistant Clerk (CB) had been in direct contact with the new owners of Shadwell Woods who were happy to carry out repairs to stiles on their land. Their mission for the year was to try and obtain contact details for all the landowners within the parish and contact them directly regarding maintenance – it was hoped this would produce a quicker and more effective response than going through KCC. Hedges were becoming overgrown faster and they were working on this issue with residents.
- f) **Environment** – Cllr Langridge reported on Cllr Turner's behalf.
 - The residents closest to Pocket Park in Speldhurst supported the EWG's plans to encourage biodiversity within the park. Small signs would be put up in the area informing residents of what was being done and encouraging them to get involved.
 - The new owners of Shadwell Woods had also appeared keen to encourage biodiversity on their land and the EWG would be working with them in the future to help make this happen.
 - A grant was being applied for from Sussex Lund to assist with the purchase of signs etc.
 - It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Environment Working Group Terms of Reference.

- g) **Defibrillators** – Cllr Curry reported that unfortunately the electrician who installed the defibrillators in the pavilion and on the wall of The Crown in Groombridge had not performed a very good job however this was being remedied with the help of former parish councillor Trevor Myles. It was anticipated that the unit on the wall of the SPC office would be relocated to another site in Langton Green, near the shops.
- h) **KALC** – There was nothing to report.

22/110 Diary Dates

- Wednesday 11th May – PCSO Crime Prevention Drop-in at LGVH – 12pm-2pm
- Monday 16th May – Planning Committee Meeting – LGVH – 7.30pm
- 2nd-5th June – The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday Weekend
- Monday 6th June – Full Council Meeting – SPVH – 7.30pm
- Monday 13th June – Finance Committee Meeting – 7.30pm – LGVH
- Tuesday 14th June – Highways WG Meeting – 7.30pm – Teams

22/111 Items for Information:

- A meeting had been held in Speldhurst Village Hall regarding the future of Speldhurst Chapel. The Assistant Clerk (KH) had attended the meeting and circulated meeting notes.
- Trees in Furzefield Avenue, Speldhurst: A request had been received from a resident of Furzefield Avenue to replace any of the trees that border the avenue which are missing. It was acknowledged that the clerks did not currently have the capacity to undertake a project (as carried out ten years ago) to plant the remaining trees however as they would be on KCC Highways land, the Assistant Clerk (KH) would make contact to find out the situation regarding commissioning trees on KCC land. If KCC agreed to the planting, the Assistant Clerk could put Furzefield Avenue residents in touch with a local landowner who had been involved in a recent project to plant trees in Langton Green.
- Cllr Mrs Lyle reported that Stonewall Park Road in Langton Green would be holding a Jubilee Party.

There being no further items the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Chairman

Full Council Action Points

Action No	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
17/21	Raise awareness of LG car thefts and need for Neighbourhood Watch rep across media channels.	Cllr Langridge: Has now heard from NW Liaison Officer. Will follow up and report back.	4/10	Carry Over
22/21	Monitor water levels in swales on LGRG, particularly after heavy rainfall.	Cllr Barrington-Johnson and Cllr Mrs Lyle visited following prolonged rainfall and advised swales are holding water and not overflowing.	1/11	Ongoing
43/21	Cllrs to visit the Langton Green Village Car Park at weekends to monitor the traffic and parking.	All Cllrs	6/12	Ongoing

17/22	Write article for Local Magazine asking parish residents to sign up for an e-newsletter.	Assistant Clerk (CB)	7/02	Carry Over
23/22	Investigate Grid Matting for LGRG Car Park.	Cllr Mrs Lyle	7/03	Ongoing
27/22	Subbuteo World Cup event 2024.	Cllr Langridge to take the lead	7/03	Ongoing
30/22	Progress purchase of new office equipment.	Clerk	04/04	In progress
33/22	Display Public Inspection Notice of AGAR on 9 th June.	Clerk	09/05	TBA
34/22	Increase SPC's contribution to LGCSA pitch maintenance contract by 5%.	RFO	09/05	TBA
35/22	Add to next FC agenda - to consider rent relief to café proprietor.	Clerk	09/05	TBA
36/22	Add to next FC agenda - the consideration of future meetings and seek guidance from Greg Clark MP, TWBC Legal Dept and KALC.	Clerk	09/05	TBA
37/22	Add to next FC agenda and formally invite the late Trevor Parker's daughter to receive the KALC Award.	Clerk	09/05	TBA
38/22	Add to website the following updated documents: Statement of Internal Control, Employee Code of Conduct, Env WG & Highways WG Terms of Reference.	Clerk	09/05	TBA
39/22	Look for new Internal Auditor and write to David Buckett expressing thanks for his work.	Clerk/RFO	09/05	TBA
40/22	Remove Fire Hydrants from Agenda and inform KALC/Fire Services of decision.	Clerk	09/05	TBA
16/22	Inform Clerk of any jubilee celebrations planned in your village.	All Cllrs - Groombridge – street party centred around village green. Ashurst-event organised. I have informed TWBC of those I have been notified of.	7/02	Complete
28/22	Amend items for LGRG report on next Full Council agenda.	Clerk	04/04	Complete
29/22	Include link to TWBC help for Ukraine page on website and social media.	Assistant Clerk (CB)	04/04	Complete
31/22	Distribute fixed asset lists to committee Chairs.	Clerk	04/04	Complete
32/22	Inform resident of Cllrs' decision regarding all-weather path at LGRG.	Clerk	04/04	Complete