



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

Minutes of an Amenities Committee Meeting held in the Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground on Monday 22nd August 2016 at 7.30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllr Mrs Podbury (Chair), Mrs Soyke (7.45pm), Mrs Jeffreys, Allen, Kerby, Parker and Barrington-Johnson (ex-officio)

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs K Plunkett – Assistant Clerk, Mr C May - Clerk

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were no members of the public present

1. **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.
2. **To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence:** Apologies received from Cllr Turner (holiday)
3. **Disclosure of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests:** Cllr Mrs Jeffreys declared an interest in item 10f – she lives in The Boundary
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
5. **Minutes: RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on **20th June 2016**, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
6. **Public Open Session** There were no members of the public present.
7. **Matters Arising and Correspondence:** All matters were covered by the agenda
8. **Boundary Change:** The Clerk explained that this matter has been discussed for many years and with Cllr Mrs Podbury being both a Parish Councillor for Speldhurst and a Borough Councillor for Rusthall, she is ideally placed to take the process forward which makes logical sense for both Councils. A meeting had been held on Thursday 18th August with both Chairmen and Clerks with Cllr Mrs Podbury and an initial discussion took place. There are three proposed changes – near the Recreation ground at Southwood and Westwood Rd; The Boundary and Longmeads, and 6 houses on Lower Green Rd. Rusthall are in general agreement with the changes. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the boundary changes be considered for approval, once both Parish Councils have agreed to the process in principle then TWBC would be consulted on how to progress the issue. Cllr Mrs Podbury explained that the process may take up to 2 years.

9. **Financial Review:** The Clerk referred to financial papers included in Councillors papers and said that these include corrections made following a thorough review with the Chairman. One example of an error was two payments for repairs which should have come from the repairs and renewals code and such transfers require Full Council approval. Cllr Parker asked where the payment for the new Container had come from and the Clerk clarified that a transfer has been made from the contingency account which will be reviewed by the Finance Committee at the next meeting.

10. Parish Council Land

a) **Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)**

- 1) Langton Green Village Hall –There was only one issue concerning the Village Hall which involved parking and is covered in item 4.
- 2) The Clerk reported that the Pavilion is on target to be ready for the opening date of 3rd September. Insurance is already in place and the asset register has been updated. The management committee are making good progress.
A meeting with the Cricket Club took place last week with Cllrs Barrington-Johnson, Mrs Jeffreys and Mrs Lyle in attendance but final figures were not available from the management committee so pavilion and ground rental is not yet finalised. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys noted that FA rules state that you cannot increase fees by more than RPI when a new facility is built. £750 is the maximum rental the Cricket Club have been asked to pay in prior years. Cllr Kerby asked whether the issue of the Local Rule had been resolved and the Clerk said that a rule of 4 runs instead of 6 when the Pavilion was hit was likely to be adopted. Research into insurance policies has found that there is no cover available for windows damaged by cricket balls. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys has asked to see the Speldhurst insurance policy and Cllr Kerby will try to get a copy of Bidborough's policy.
The Clerk showed the Committee a sign at Ashurst Village Hall car park which states that parking is at the owner's risk and pointed out that there is no such sign at LGRG. The Clerk will contact the insurance company to enquire whether such a sign is needed.
The Committee discussed an email from the Stoolball Club which explained their difficulty raising funds without a pavilion this year. It was **RESOLVED** to waive the rental fee for this year but it is expected that the management committee will charge the normal level from next year.
- 3) **Children's play area** – The Clerk reported that some new ropes for the climbing frame have been installed. Cllr Mrs Podbury said that some of the play equipment was becoming mouldy and in need of cleaning and the tables and benches also needed refurbishment. The idea of a team of volunteers to carry out the work was discussed which could be publicised through the Nursery School.
- 4) **Car park** –The Clerk reported that car parking had been a big problem at Langton Green School Sports Day. Although the school organised parking at Ashurst Place they did not have any marshals in place to make sure that this area was used instead of LGRG car park. Consequently car parking in the LGRG car park was chaotic and hall users had to go home as they could not park, causing the hall to lose revenue. The Clerk was requested to write to the school to highlight the problem and ask that they employ a system to avoid use of the car park, which will probably involve the use of marshals, so that it does not happen again.
Landscape Services have looked at the subsidence problem in the LGRG car park and will send a quote for repair works. Their initial opinion was that there was no significant problem but this will not be clear until the area has been dug up.
- 5) **Groundsman** – The Clerk reported that arrangements should continue as they are until KCC make decisions about responsibility for soft landscaping. He confirmed that Rusthall are still interested in sharing a Groundsman.
- 6) **Trees** – All of the recommended work has now been completed and this item can be removed from future Agendas.

b) **The Green at Langton Green**

Following a request from the headmaster of LGPS, the Clerk had met with Tate Fencing to get a quote for a wooden structure to act as a barrier at the crossing to Lampington Row. Tate Fencing said that the

narrow footpath is a problem for an offset barrier and alterations will be needed to the footpath to make a barrier possible. The quote is awaited and the issue will be discussed when it has been received.

- c) **The Green at Groombridge** – The problem of The Green being eroded remains. Landscape Services have suggested placing 13 granite stones on the Green. They will be sending a quote for this work. Cllr Kerby confirmed that there is overwhelming agreement from Old Groombridge that something needs to be done to protect the Green. Cllr Parker said that the stones will need to be set in cement to prevent theft.
- d) **The Pocket Park at Speldhurst** – Cllr Mrs Podbury said that shrubberies in this park need attention. The Clerk agreed to meet Cllr Mrs Podbury at the park to review the extent of work required. The Clerk will then ask A1 for a quote.
- e) **Signs on Council land** – There are no issues at present and this item will remain on the agenda to remind Councillors to remain vigilant to improper signage.
- f) **The Boundary** – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that the pond in the Boundary requires attention as there are trees with branches hanging far over the pond and there are some substantial bushes that need cutting back. She said that the state of the pond would continue to deteriorate unless action was taken. It was **RESOLVED** to obtain a quote for the work from a tree surgeon and Cllr Mrs Jeffreys agreed to look in to this and obtain a quote and to see if he would undertake the work in Pocket Park as well. The Clerk explained that there is a problem with tree roots under the driveway at 36 The Boundary and Dan Docker from TWBC has agreed to give an opinion on what should be done.

11. Public Rights of Way

- a) **The Alan Passmore memorial plaque** – Cllr Mrs Podbury reported that she now has the final wording for the plaque and has approached 'All Signs' about producing the plaque but they require more detailed measurements than supplied by Cllr Milner. The company has suggested stainless steel as the best material. Cllr Mrs Podbury will progress this further.
- b) **Footpath from Penshurst Rd, Speldhurst to rear of school** – The new owner of Yew Tree House has asked for a large tree to be cut back which hangs over this footpath but KCC have not been able to confirm ownership of the tree. Feedback is awaited from Jonathan Bibby before this can be progressed. Discussion took place about re-opening this footpath as it is a safer route for school children than the current crossing by the Church.

12. SPC Noticeboard at The Crown, Groombridge

–The new notice board in Ashurst and the small one at the Crown in Groombridge are both in place and this item can now be removed from the agenda.

13. Items for Information:

The Clerk said that he had written to three householders within the Parish about hedges that need to be cut back to keep footpaths clear. The houses are all on WT89 in Asher Reeds and Dornden Drive. The second item for information concerns Speldhurst Post Office. The owner has rung the Council Office to complain about the road closure of Speldhurst Hill and the effect it is having on her business. She said that there are often times when no one is working on the road. Martin Steibelt has also written to the Clerk to complain that there was a period of 8 days when no one was working there. The Clerk will send an email to SGN recording these complaints and asking for an explanation. He also said that he considered it Councillors' responsibility to monitor and check such issues. Cllr Kerby asked whether Old Groombridge need to apply for permission for the Christmas Tree on the Green as last year and Cllr Barrington-Johnson said that permission must be sought every year just so the Council has information on lights, position etc but there should not be any objections.

The meeting closed at 8.42pm

Chairman