

Pedestrian Safety measures installed in Barden Road

Where Barden Road meets Speldhurst Hill has for a long time been a difficult junction for both pedestrians and traffic alike. Cars regularly mount the pavement as the road at this point is very narrow, but in doing so, puts pedestrians at risk. After lengthy discussions between the Parish Council and Kent Highways, a solution was created and works have been carried out to protect pedestrians when walking along the pavement.



A beautiful landmark tree – lost forever



A great sadness came over Langton Green when it was discovered that the copper beech which has dominated the area around The Green for so many years had contracted a fungus and was deemed to be in a dangerous condition. After specialist advice from an arboriculturalist and the tree officer at TWBC, it was decided that the tree should be felled immediately.

Broadband – update!

In early January, we were advised by TWBC that the DEFRA bid submitted by Kent County Council for gap-funding to improve services in ‘hard-to-reach’ areas (such as Ashurst) has been accepted. This welcome news is in addition to last year’s commitment by Kent County Council, Broadband Delivery UK and BT to bring superfast broadband to Langton Green, Speldhurst and Old Groombridge – the roll-out beginning later this year.

Precept for 2014/15 – increased by 4p per week

It was agreed by the Council to increase the precept for the whole parish by £5000 for the coming tax year which, according to recent figures produced by TWBC, equates to an increase of 2.5% taking into account the changing tax base. This typically will mean a rise of 4p per week for a Band D property.

This small increase was voted for by Councillors who were concerned that money required to repair or renew parish assets was not accruing at the required pace due to the increase in calls for help from local organisations, including schools and churches, during the year.

Langton Green school expansion continues apace

Significant structural work has already taken place at the village primary school and a planning application is due shortly outlining how Kent County Council propose to deal with the additional car parking space which will be required. Speldhurst Parish Council has already agreed in principle to changes to the existing car parks in the recreation ground to facilitate the expected large increase in volume of traffic.



Speldhurst Parish Council

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Ward Walk Survey results

A major piece of research into lifestyle habits and observations was initiated and led in the summer by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, assisted by Speldhurst Parish Councillors and residents from the parish. Thirty six people took part in the interviewing process. A total of 550 homes (25% of households) were selected as a sample and 146 agreed to be interviewed. The conclusion was that over 97% were

satisfied with the local area as a place to live, with over 75% being very satisfied. The best features were the countryside, peace and quiet and the people. The worst – traffic speed, aircraft noise, slow broadband and traffic congestion. The six key areas to be addressed were traffic calming and road safety; traffic congestion; planning and development; road maintenance; aircraft noise and slow broadband. A more comprehensive analysis is on the Parish Council website.

Several of the Parish Council committees are now actively following up the results and any actions will be reported in due course.

New Parish Councillor joins the team

Following the resignation of Tony Hemming who has moved away from Langton Green, we are pleased to welcome Peter Craine, resident of Holmewood Ridge, Langton Green to the Parish Council. Interviews took place with the four candidates who put their names forward and Peter was chosen and signed the declaration of acceptance at the January meeting.



New aircraft noise committee formed

In order to gain as much weight as possible for the concerns of local residents, a new committee has been set up of Councillors and members of the public to join forces with local MP's, Councils and pressure groups to fight the negative impacts of overflying aircraft and promote tighter air traffic controls.

Welcome to our new PCSO

Claire Cockburn who started her duties in October, has taken over from PCSO Christian Ward Davies. Her duties include looking after Speldhurst Parish along with Rusthall and we hope that she will get the chance to get to know and understand the 'patch' and the people who live here. Please dial 999 for emergencies or 101 to report non-emergencies. Claire's contact details (which should not be used in an emergency) are 07772 113173 or email 56267@kent.pnn.police.uk

Storm damage

Following the atrocious weather which hit our parish in December and January, many roads and footpaths were blocked by falling trees and fences. Thankfully most of the 'clearing up' has taken place but if anyone notices a problem which needs attention, particularly on footpaths, please get in touch with the Parish Clerk.



Parish Plan – *leader urgently needed*

As reported in previous issues, the Parish Plan is moving forward with a committee of council and non-council members. What is urgently needed is someone to grasp the challenge to push the project forward and, ideally, this person should not be a Parish Councillor but a member of the public. If you have leadership skills, some spare time and experience of running a committee, please get in touch with the Parish Clerk. This is an important role as what is determined by the committee will play a large part in the future of our parish



Speldhurst
Parish Council

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Speldhurst Parish Council

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Tony Hemming
Joanna Horne
Rosemary Hull
Ed Langridge
Rupert Milner
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Chris Pendleton
Joy Podbury
Julia Soyke
David Turner
Chris Woodward

This newsletter will be available, as will all future issues, on the Parish Council web site.

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