



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

**Minutes of an Online Planning Committee Meeting held at
7.30pm on Monday 15th February 2021
Applications for Consideration and Discussion via Electronic Communication**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Ellery (Chairman), Rajah, Rowe, Turner, Barrington-Johnson, Langridge and Myles

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs Kate Harman – Assistant Clerk

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

There was one member of the public present.

1. **Welcome by the Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting**

No one present intended to record the meeting.

3. **To receive and approve apologies and reasons for absence**

There were none.

4. **Disclosures of Interests**

There were none.

5. **Declarations of Lobbying**

There were none.

6. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 18th January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. **Matters Arising**

All matters arising would be covered under item 11 - Compliance Issues.

8. Public Open Session

Mr Dave Rusbridge was attending the meeting to object to application no. 21/00068/FULL – Recreation Ground, Southwood Road, Rusthall. He owns and farms the land referred to in this planning application and summarised his objections as follows:-

- Loss of Greenbelt and AONB including the destruction of an established hedgerow and the natural habitat provided by it. The reference in the plan to one hedge is inaccurate, there are two. The ecological report is outdated and inaccurate, the fields having not been surveyed;
- Long-term ownership of the land which has been in his family since 1925 – he does not want to sell;
- Harm to the viability of his farming enterprise – the land is essential for him to continue his farming business which his family has done for nearly 100 years;
- No consultation or attempt to contact him as the landowner has been made by TWBC;
- There is no recorded demand for additional sports pitches within the borough. Furthermore, the proposal is for the new pitches to be grassed on fields with proven poor drainage which seems pointless and has received over 120 objections from members of the public. No recognition has been made in the calculation for provision in the borough of the 3G facility at Bennett Memorial which local teams currently utilise;
- Inadequate financial provision has been made to properly address the drainage issues;
- The carparking provision is vastly inadequate and if the proposal were to go ahead it would result in the narrow residential roads in the local area becoming choked with a dramatic increase in traffic during match times.
- The Playing Pitch Strategy document has not been reviewed annually as required and is therefore currently 3 years out of date.

Councillors noted Mr Rusbridge's comments and also that as Chairman of Rusthall Football Club, having been involved in the club for 40 years, he is in a position to appreciate both sides of the argument.

9. Planning Appeals

20/01909/FULL – for information only.

Location: 17 Holmewood Ridge, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells

Proposal: Subdivision of the plot and erection of a new five bed dwelling and garage, including the provision of a new access road and re-sited garage for 17 Holmewood Ridge.

10. Planning applications for discussion and decision

21/00068/FULL

Location: Recreation Ground, Southwood Road, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Proposal: Change of use of land to expand the existing recreational facilities through the provision of additional sports pitches, together with associated additional car parking provision, 'ball stop' fencing and ground works.

Decision: Please note our previous objection from 2017 which we have repeated underneath the following comments:

- We are of the understanding that the borough has sufficient existing pitches which could be used to address the current requirement across the borough with the appropriate maintenance and investment.

- The Presumption should always be against development of greenbelt land.
- We emphasise the unacceptable impact on the viability of the small agricultural business and the council must be even more mindful of this in these difficult times.
- This development would threaten an existing old and established hedgerow and it would appear the application misrepresents the presence of a hedgerow.
- We note the unprecedented number of objections from the local community and would hope that the borough council sees sense in this application. It is very hard to see how this proposal can be justified with not one single local resident supporting this application including from the football community both local and further afield.

We repeat our previous objections from 2017:

“We object to the enforced loss of agricultural land which would affect the viability of this long-established rural farm. The development would affect the landowner's access to parts of the land... we believe this is the wrong location, for the following reasons: -

Parking - the impact of such a large facility in a residential area would have a detrimental effect on a large number of the surrounding residents in terms of traffic congestion and overflow parking on narrow roads. Rusthall is already recognised as a bottle neck. We consider the parking provision to be inadequate and poorly designed being narrow and having no provision for coaches.

Drainage is poor which will severely limit winter use as the ground becomes waterlogged. It is not clear what provision would need to be made for drainage and the effect this would have on the surrounding farmland”.

20/03643/LAWPRO

Location: St Michaels, Burrswood, Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 9PY

Proposal: Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) – Conversion from a former care home (C2 use) to 72 assisted living (extra care) apartments (C2 use).

This application was not considered by members because advice had been received from TWBC that as a LAWPRO application, comments would not be taken into consideration. It was noted that SPC would have an opportunity to comment if a FULL application was submitted at a later date. Councillors were concerned about the dramatic increase in units in the proposal and the effect this would have on traffic generation in the narrow village country lanes in the surrounding area.

20/03509/LAWPRO

Location: Tophill Farm, Groombridge Hill, Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 9LY

Proposal: Lawful Development Certificate (Proposed) – Proposed extension.

Councillors were unsure why this application was a LAWPRO and asked the Assistant Clerk to contact the Planning Officer for an explanation to establish the grounds for the categorisation.

20/03387/FULL

Location: 19 Homewood Road, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0HH

Proposal: Demolition of existing rear conservatory and construction of single storey flat roof rear extension.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

21/00248/FULL

Location: Perugia, Ewehurst Lane, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 OJX

Proposal: Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Permission

20/02121/FULL: Changes include a balcony at first floor level over an existing single storey element to the rear corner of the dwelling; amendments to the fenestration to the North elevation.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

21/00229/FULL

Location: Bonds, Bullingstone Lane, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 OJY

Proposal: Construction of open-air exercise pool and paved surround together with associated works.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

21/00214/FULL

Location: 8 Little Mallett, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 OEL

Proposal: Conversion of part of garage to living accommodation; single storey front extension.

Decision: Whilst remaining neutral we note that the boundary identified on the plan includes land owned by KCC Highways.

21/00138/FULL

Location: The Spinney, Penshurst Road, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 OPA

Proposal: Proposed detached outbuilding to replace two existing garages.

Decision: We remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer but we would expect a proper bat survey to be done before the works are commenced.

21/00028/FULL

Location: Ridge House, Furzefield Avenue, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 OLD

Proposal: Erection of a garden shed.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

20/03861/FULL

Location: Went Farmhouse, Langton Road, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 ONR

Proposal: Conversion of outbuilding to annexe.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

20/03824/FULL

Location: 28 Holmewood Ridge, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 OED

Proposal: New front garage; single storey rear extension; internal alterations (Renewal of previously approved application 18/00027/FULL).

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

20/03825/FULL

Location: 28 Holmewood Ridge, Langton Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 OED

Proposal: New dwelling to replace existing garage and ancillary accommodation (Renewal of previously approved application 18/00028/FULL).

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

20/01376/FULL

Location: Wheelwrights Cottage, Speldhurst Hill, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 0NJ

Proposal: Enlargement of existing car port, associated landscaping.

Decision: Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer – we refer to our previous comments and have nothing new to add.

11. Compliance Issues

a) Little Mallett, Langton Green

The Assistant Clerk had been advised by KCC Highways that they had contacted the residents and it was hoped a resolution could be obtained in the near future.

b) Leggs Lane, Langton Green 19/02079/AGRIC

Cllr Pate had brought this matter to the attention of the planning committee. The existing structure appeared more substantial than approved in the planning application. There was also some uncertainty over its location. The Assistant Clerk had contacted the TWBC Enforcement Officer who would be visiting site and would report back.

c) Ashurst Place, Langton Green

TWBC Enforcement had advised that any works taking place were considered 'maintenance' and councillors agreed the matter would be removed from future agendas.

12. TWBC Draft Local Plan –

Councillors were disappointed that the grasslands survey did not appear to register the orchids and yellow rattle which are present in site 231. The Assistant Clerk was asked to email Richard Larkin to obtain photographs of the flowers which SPC could then send to TWBC to obtain confirmation.

Councillors asked the Assistant Clerk to email Stephen Baughen to confirm that the housing proposed at Burrswood was not considered 'new' because it is assisted living and that any increase in housing would be included as 'windfall' under the Draft Local Plan and would therefore not add to the housing figures.

13. St Michaels, Burrswood, Groombridge

Councillors considered a separate meeting with Martin Homes was more appropriate than incorporating it into a planning committee meeting. The Assistant Clerk would go back to Martin Homes to agree a date and ask the Admin Assistant to advertise the meeting.

14. Items for Information

Councillors considered the merits of contacting the residents of Quarry House in Groombridge to ask that the builders constructing their new swimming pool only use small lorries because of the narrow country lanes in the surrounding area. This concern had been raised by TWBC in the delegated report and it was agreed the matter would be raised with the resident if a problem occurred.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting finished at 9.19pm.

Chairman