



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

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL'S OPEN MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 8<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2012 AT 7.30pm  
IN LANGTON GREEN VILLAGE HALL**

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**PRESENT:** Cllr. Mrs Lynn Jeffreys - Chairman, together with twelve Parish Councillors, Borough Cllrs David Jukes and Julian Stanyer and 39 parishioners.

The following papers were available to those present: financial information, a paper on Neighbourhood Planning and plans for the proposed re-development of the Langton Green Sports Pavilion.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – There were none.
2. **Chairman's Introduction** - Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing Carole Braidwood and Steve Aldis of Langton Green Sports Club. She explained that the pavilion is owned by Speldhurst Parish Council but that the Sports Club are taking the lead with the project to refurbish the pavilion and have access to grant funding that would not be available to the Parish Council.
3. **Langton Green Sports Club – Proposals for refurbishment of the Pavilion** – Steve Aldis said that the Sports Club has been working on the project for some time and that the proposal is to enlarge and improve the existing pavilion. It will be used by all the village sports clubs and they are looking at funding opportunities. The estimated total expenditure is £250,000 and the plans are yet to be finalised. The Sports Club would like to proceed with the project as soon as possible probably within the next 12 – 18 months. Mike Wheeler of Ashurst and Blackham Sports Association said that they would be happy to assist with information and fundraising ideas. Martin Russell added that the Cricket Club were looking at ways to help with the funding.
4. **Neighbourhood Planning** – Cllr Turner said that he has prepared a booklet on Neighbourhood Planning which is available this evening. A Working Group is to be established to deal with Neighbourhood Planning, volunteers are needed from residents of the Parish and a meeting of this Working Group will be held in November. Cllr Langridge said the Working Group will probably comprise eight members of the public and four Parish Councillors and will be led by a member of the public. Cllr Woodward said it is anticipated that a representative of TWBC will be invited to this first Working Group meeting to give advice. Reverend Douglas Wren said he feels it is very important to have a wide cross-section of the community involved with Neighbourhood Planning. Cllr Jukes re-iterated that it was important that a plan was considered and sent to TWBC so that local wishes could be taken into consideration before the plan is finalised.
5. **Finance and the precept** – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys explained that over the next 4 - 6 weeks the Parish Council will be preparing the budget for 2013/2014 and setting the Precept. She said that because community facilities are run by local groups rather than being the responsibility of the Parish Council the SPC assists them with financial support through grants. One of the hardest things in budgeting is not knowing what grant requests might come in during the following year so she requested that local organisations advise the Parish Council as far in advance as possible of likely grant requests.
6. **Question and Answer Session** - Cllr Mrs Jeffreys invited questions and comments from members of the public on any other matters of interest or concern.

Peter Brown passed on grateful thanks from Mr John Austin of Gipps Cross Lane to the Parish Council for very promptly resolving an issue regarding ownership and resurfacing of an area outside his property.

Dan Davidson asked if there could be double yellow lines at The Hare crossroads. The Clerk said that Kent Highway Services would not install double yellow lines here because there are not any personal injury accident records. He will request The Hare try and monitor customer parking.

Marianne Buckley asked about voluntary 'twenty's plenty' 20mph signs. Borough Councillor David Jukes said that KHS are going to trial 20mph outside two schools in the Borough one of which will be a rural school.

Angie Larkin said she was very pleased to see there had been speed watch with the Police in Speldhurst and that the TWITA car had been to Speldhurst School.

Stuart Smith said that walking and cycling along Barrow Lane is dangerous and asked if the Parish Council would consider signs saying 'warning pedestrians and cyclists'.

Nick Critchlow said he is very concerned about traffic speeds in Barden Road. He has been told by the Police that this location is too dangerous for them to carry out a speed watch. He would be happy for them to use his driveway to enable them to carry out such an exercise.

Richard Larkin asked about the recent felling of trees adjacent to Burnt House Lane and the loss of the mirror at the end of Burnt House Lane. The Clerk advised that these were two separate incidents and that the mirror was on private land. Cllr Langridge advised that the Planning Committee had investigated the tree felling and it was carried out following direction from Kent Highway Services and TWBC Tree Officer because of the dangerous condition of a small number of trees within close proximity of the main road.

Mike Wheeler expressed his concern that the A264 at Stone Cross is described on a motor-biking website as 'great for speeding with chicanes.'

Alan Marriott asked if there is a sustainability group and a sustainability plan for Tunbridge Wells.

Chris Wren expressed his concern at fungus on a beech tree in Ferbies. The Clerk advised that this has been reported to the TWBC Tree Officer. (Since the Open Meeting the Parish Council has been advised that the tree is to be felled by KCC).

Miles Phillips asked whether the trees opposite the shops on Langton Road could be cut back.

Deborah Burnett expressed concern at the Langton Green Recreation Ground car park being extremely busy and often full at school drop off and pick up times and at the condition of the paths leading from the car park to the school. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys advised that the Parish Council are looking at the possibility of opening the overflow car park at peak times and that the Amenities Committee will consider improving the paths.

Richard Holiday raised the issue of maintenance of footpaths and also cutting back of overhanging foliage. Cllr Milner clarified that residents are expected to cut back foliage which is overhanging footpaths from their own property and that the maintenance of the footpaths is the responsibility of Kent County Council. Cllr Mrs Hull said that the footpath volunteers, led by Cllr Milner, worked really hard and Cllr Mrs Jeffreys asked that the work of the volunteers be acknowledged with a round of applause. Derek Robinson and Ron Fisher said that they had been working on PROWs for 20 years and found the work enjoyable. Cllr Milner appealed for anyone who would like to help to come forward.

Reverend Douglas Wren of St Mary's Church, Speldhurst thanked the Parish Council for their financial support for the repairs to the Church wall and the extension of the Churchyard. He said that the Bishop of Rochester is consecrating the new graveyard extension on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys thanked everyone for coming and showing interest in the work of the Parish Council. She said that points raised that could not be answered this evening will be followed up.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

CHAIRMAN