



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

**MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 7th NOVEMBER 2011 at 7.30pm
IN THE MAIN HALL, ASHURST VILLAGE HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys (Chairman) Mrs Hull, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Brown, Hemming, Langridge, Milner, Parker, Pendleton, Ringrose, Owen and Woodward

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr C May – Clerk and Mrs M Flemington – Assistant Clerk
Borough Councillor David Jukes

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were seven members of the public present.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

There were no apologies for absence.

11/192 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST:

Cllr Mrs Soyke 11/206 - personal and prejudicial - She is the Parish Council nominated Trustee of Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust.

Cllr Parker, Cllr Langridge, Cllr Brown and Cllr Ringrose 11/208 – personal and prejudicial – they are members of Langton Green Rural Society governing committee.

11/193 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING:

Cllr Mrs Hull and Cllr Mrs Podbury have been spoken to by residents about Local Needs Housing.

Cllr Owen has been spoken to by residents about the path by Langton Green Recreation Ground. **Clerk to investigate**

Cllr Milner has been spoken to by Mr David Kneeshaw about the footpath leading into Shadwell Wood which runs across his land.

11/194 MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on **3rd October 2011**, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.

The Minutes of the Open Meeting held on **10th October 2011**, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed, subject to amending Alan Marriott's name to John Andrew's name on page 3.

11/195 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION:

The meeting was adjourned.

Ivan Goodsell of Speldhurst introduced himself as a representative of the Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee and spoke about the proposed improvements that were being planned to the children's playground. He had emailed notes earlier that day outlining proposals and estimated costs, he realised that these were too late for Cllrs to have had a chance to review but wanted to give notice that work was in progress and that the committee would be grateful if the Parish Council was able to give any financial assistance.

Borough Councillor David Jukes advised that there are various grants available from TWBC.

There were a number of questions from Councillors:-

Cllr Ringose asked if the proposed costs were in line with the costs of the Langton Green playground - it was confirmed that the amounts were similar.

Cllr Langridge asked if the proposals involve extending the existing area - the plan is to extend into the area which contains the mini football pitch.

Cllr Woodward asked if the views of the other Recreation Ground users had been sought - the Playground Committee is in discussion with them.

Cllr Mrs Podbury advised that the current Chairman and Treasurer of the Recreation Ground Committee will be retiring this year.

Richard Larkin of Speldhurst asked if there will be ball stop netting - there will be ball stop netting.

Cllr Ringrose asked if the Parish Council had planned financially for a grant towards this project – it was confirmed there is an amount in the budget and Cllr Mrs Podbury stated that money had been put aside because improvements to the playground were a major request to come out of Parish Vision.

Borough Councillor David Jukes reported that a planning application has been submitted for the demolition of the old cinema site in Tunbridge Wells.

Philip Tew of Speldhurst asked if the Parish Council “accept that Action for Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) were not an independent organisation when it carried out the Local Needs Housing survey”. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that no-one felt misled by any information given at the time and the level of interest shown since shows there is a need for such housing.

Philip Tew asked if these interested parties had been scrutinised. Cllr Woodward replied that they have and that this process is carried out by TWBC.

Cllr Woodward advised that ACRK were chosen by TWBC. Cllr Langridge stated that it is now irrelevant who carried out the original survey as seventeen parties have already expressed an interest in the properties and have all been approved as passing TWBC scrutiny procedures.

Philip Tew asked whether SPC is proposing to consult Speldhurst village residents as to whether they think it is fair that Speldhurst provides the Local Needs Housing for the whole parish.

Sana Smith-Tilley of Speldhurst said she did not think it had been made clear before the Open Meeting that the other three villages in the parish were not able to have any Local Needs Housing.

Richard Larkin of Speldhurst asked if SPC had made enquiries about English Rural Housing Association’s (ERHA) financial situation. Cllr Woodward replied that SPC have obtained all the information from the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) who are satisfied with ERHA. Cllr Langridge read out the statement from the TSA.

Philip Tew asked if there will be a referendum of the residents of Speldhurst. Cllr Woodward said that SPC are keeping an open mind and deciding after the Consultation Day but that if there was it would be for the whole parish and not just Speldhurst.

The meeting was re-opened.

11/196 FINANCE COMMITTEE – Report by Cllr Parker

- i) Cllr Parker referred Members to the draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 24th October which have been previously circulated.
- ii) Cllr Parker reported that there had been four email decisions by the Finance Committee. The costs of £375 for leaflets for Local Needs Housing and £150 for the boards to advertise the Local Needs Housing consultation day were approved. It was agreed to give a donation of £100 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. The cost of £60 to reduce stems on the tree on the green at Langton Green was approved. The Clerk’s overtime of 29 hours was approved.

Noted and AGREED that the above £100 donation and £103.09 spent on drinks for the Open Evening will be debited to s137.

Cllr Parker referred to the grant request letter received from St Mary’s Church Speldhurst on which a decision was to be made at this meeting because no clear decision was made by email by the Finance Committee. After much discussion and two proposals of £1,000 and £500 it was **AGREED** by a vote of 10 in favour and 3 against to award a grant of £500.

- iii) Cllr Parker reported that £50,000 has been invested in a one year bond at 2.5% interest with Nat West.
- iv) The Terms of Reference were **AGREED** and adopted. Cllr Mrs Hull requested that a statement on transparency should be added. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that a transparency code is due to be published and that the Standing Orders would be amended to reflect this change.
- v) Cllr Parker reported that the Finance Committee propose that the Precept for 2012-2013 is £122,000 (a reduction of 1.5% on 2011-2012). After much discussion and a further explanation of the figures it was **AGREED** unanimously to adopt the precept figure of £122,000.

Cllr Mrs Hull asked if enquiries could be made to see if the light on Groombridge could be converted to solar. **The Clerk will investigate.**

11/197 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – Invoices verified by Cllr Owen

<u>Payee Name</u>	<u>Cheque Ref</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Transaction Detail</u>
EDF Energy	DD	271.85	Electricity LG Pav
Cory Enviromental Services	222	929.10	Annual LGRG litter/cleansing
BT PLC	223	29.70	Mobile
Premiere Digital	224	450.00	LNH Leaflets
Premiere Digital	225	180.00	LNH posters
Southern Water	226	24.52	Water bill LG Pavilion
KALC	227	576.00	Training courses
Direct Technical Services	228	21.40	Street light maintenance
SLCC	229	168.00	Clerk membership
RIP Cleaning Services	230	151.20	Sept Dog bins
RIP Cleaning Services	231	189.00	Oct Dog bins
Harraway Tree Services	232	450.00	Tree Inspection LG
Langton Green Primary School	233	500.00	Marchiennes grant Oct trip
M R Lawrence	234	810.00	Various Maintenance
M R Lawrence	235	320.00	Various Maintenance Oct
Langton Green Charitable Trust	236	33.00	Meeting rooms Sept - Oct
Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust	237	179.00	Meeting rooms May -Sept
Speldhurst Village Hall	238	34.87	Meeting rooms July - Sept
Mr L Cooper	239	100.00	Groundsman duties Oct
HMRC	240	730.65	NI & Tax Nov
C May	241	1385.47	Salary
C May	242	357.79	Expenses
M Flemington	243	400.95	Salary
M Flemington	244	65.32	Expenses
Audit Commission	245	1050.00	Audit Fee
	Total Payments	9,407.82	

11/198 HIGHWAYS REPORT:

Cllr Mrs Podbury referred to her written report and advised that a meeting is to be held with Kent Highways on 2nd December.

Several references were made to unauthorised road closures in Speldhurst and disabled parking issues. Councillors were advised to email the Clerk with full details to enable such issues to be reported.

2249 PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE:

- i) Building work is nearing completion and it is hoped to move into the office in before the end of November.
- ii) Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported that the Trustees of LGCT are not in agreement with the Parish Council's proposal to have a free-standing Notice Board in front of the office. Cllr Pendleton suggested leaving the discussions and decision to Cllr Mrs Jeffreys, Cllr Mrs Soyke and the Clerk. This was **AGREED**.

11/199 OPEN MEETING:

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys thanked Cllr Woodward for answering so many questions from residents and reported that the majority

of questions related to Local Needs Housing and some to Broadband and that there was only one financial suggestion. Cllr Mrs Soyke said that she took exception to the points made in a recently circulated email that members of the Council had already made up their mind on the issue. Cllr Mrs Hull said that she is concerned that TWBC policies do change which could lead to further development and Cllr Brown said he would like to see a letter from TWBC confirming that the rest of the Site 15 field will remain Green Belt.

11/200 LOCAL SCHOOLS:

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys and Cllr Brown will arrange to visit Langton Green School to start discussions about an environmental project involving Langton Green and Speldhurst Schools and the Parish Council. The barrier extensions at Speldhurst School have been painted.

11/201 LGRG SPORTS PAVILION:

There was nothing to report.

11/202 BROADBAND:

Cllr Woodward reported on the meeting held with KCC earlier today. In summary 65% of delivery is to come through market forces, Broadband Development UK funding aims to increase this to the maximum 90% level. The remaining 10% is not capable of being serviced by fibre to cabinet methods. KCC plans to deliver to greatest need first and all residents will need to register and vote for better broadband. The Speldhurst working group were commended by KCC as being the parish to have done the best groundwork on Broadband in the county.

Following discussions about the principle of having an online forum for Broadband it was **AGREED** by a vote of 12 in favour and 1 abstention to use an online forum for broadband and then review in due course whether to use online forums for other issues.

11/203 SHOPS IN THE PARISH:

Cllr Mrs Hull reported that she had been speaking to Mrs Davis of Speldhurst Post Office and Stores and that the For Sale boards are up again.

Cllr Langridge reported that he is keeping a watching brief on the Langton Green shops.

11/204 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING:

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys advised that planning for this meeting will start in January 2012. It will be held on Monday 2nd April at Speldhurst Village Hall. She asked for suggestions as to a speaker. A number of suggestions were made and **the Clerk will contact them to enquire about availability.**

11/205 AMENDMENT TO SIGNS POLICY:

The Clerk reported that the timescale on requests for signs on parish Council land is often too tight for them to be dealt with at Full Council meetings. After discussion it was **AGREED** that such requests be dealt with by email approval by the Planning Committee plus Cllr Pendleton, when the land in question was in Old Groombridge, with a majority of four out of the seven Councillors required approving the request.

Cllr Pendleton reported that there have recently been two signs on Groombridge Green without the permission of the Parish Council. **Clerk to investigate.**

11/206 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER OF SPELDHURST PARISH COUNCIL AS A TRUSTEE ON THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF ASHURST McDERMOTT HALL TRUST:

Cllr Mrs Soyke indicated that she was willing to continue and then left the room. It was **AGREED** that she continue as Trustee. She re-joined the meeting.

11/207 AUTUMN/WINTER NEWSLETTER:

The Newsletter will be delivered to residents in December and will contain articles on the LNH Consultation Day, Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Precept, Parish Office, Broadband and maintenance of the Twittens.

11/208 CHRISTMAS TREE ON COUNCIL LAND:

It was **AGREED** to allow the Langton Green Rural Society to place their Christmas tree on Council land.

11/209 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The Chairman had nothing to report.

11/210 COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- i) Governance Committee – Cllr Pendleton reported that there has been no Committee meeting since the last Full Council meeting.
- ii) Planning – Cllr Mrs Podbury referred to her written report and advised that under current planning laws TWBC had no option but to grant retrospective approval for the Priestfield Stables, Old House Lane, Fordcombe

application TW/11/02630/CEU. Cllr Mrs Soyke reported that this law is going to change but that it will not be retrospective.

- iii) Amenities – Cllr Milner reported that a Committee meeting was held on 17th October. The Committee agreed to say no to the request for camping on LGRG.
- iv) Footpaths – Cllr Milner referred to his written report and to the recent resurfacing of the path into Shadwell Wood. He also referred to emails from Mr David Kneeshaw of Summerfield who owns the land through which this footpath runs and that prior permission to carry out the remedial work had not been requested. This was because they were not aware that Mr Kneeshaw was the owner of the land. **The Clerk was asked to send a letter of apology to Mr Kneeshaw.**
- v) KALC – Cllr Brown and Cllr Mrs Hull are attending the AGM on 12th November.
- vi) Local Needs Housing – Cllr Woodward referred to his written report. The second Public Meeting is to be held on 9th November 4.00 - 8.00pm at Speldhurst Village Hall.
- vii) Environment – Cllr Brown referred to his written report on the ‘Planning for Low Carbon living’ day he had attended on 6th October.

11/211 OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 3rd OCTOBER 2011:

Cllr Mrs Hull reported that she had received a negative response from Town and Country Housing Association regarding provision of off-road parking for their tenants in Northfields, Southfields and St Mary’s Lane, Speldhurst. **The Clerk was asked to write to the Chief Executive of Town and Country Housing Association.**

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported that the Parish Council is not able to recover the VAT element of the grant to the roof of Ashurst and Blackham Sports Pavilion.

The Clerk reported that the deadline for applications to the Big Tree Fund has been extended. **The Clerk will make the application.**

The Parish Footpath map is to be progressed. **The Clerk to investigate and provide costs.**

11/212 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

- i) ERHA Annual Report (circulated)
- ii) KALC Invitation to AGM – 12th November
- iii) KALC Annual Report 2010-11
- iv) ACRK Rural News Issue 108 (circulated)
- v) Letter from TW Mayor re Remembrance Sunday – Parish Chairmen invited
- vi) Open Spaces Society Special General Meeting – 23rd November
- vii) Minutes KALC Area Committee (to Peter Brown) – next meeting 29th November
- viii) Email from Tony Lewin a PC from Forest Row inviting members to an Energy Fair November 5th
- ix) CAB Annual Report
- x) Cam & Co Autumn Newsletter (circulated)
- xi) Letter from KCC Planning & Environment re Mineral and Waste Sites DPD – Consultation meetings 1st & 3rd Dec at Lenham Community Hall
- xii) Letter from The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal thanking us for our donation (£100)
- xiii) KALC November Newsletter (circulated)
- xiv) TW CSU Newsletter (circulated)
- xv) Letter from Sevenoaks District Council re LDP
- xvi) Email from Mr & Mrs Pattenden thanking the Parish Council for the work that has been carried out improving the footpaths in Shadwell Woods
- xvii) Email from RBS Software (our bookkeeping) advising of new support charges for 2012 (small increase – within budget)
- xviii) BTCV looking for volunteers to look after trees and become wardens
- xix) Letter and booklet from Pageantmaster re Queen’s Diamond Jubilee - Beacons
- xx) Email from David Kneeshaw (Speldhurst resident) regarding remedial work carried out on his footpath without permission (and reply from KCC Jonathan Bibby)
- xxi) Email from Linda Meades regarding the grass at the end of Furzefield Avenue and its demise – **Clerk to progress**
- xxii) Email from British Red Cross looking for volunteers in the area to work with the Red Cross providing practical assistance in an emergency
- xxiii) Email from Mr Ponsford regarding hazardous conditions at the LGRG car park on Saturday mornings due to the closure of the overflow car park because of building works – **The clerk will speak to the LGSC**
- xxiv) ACRK Rural News No.109 (circulated)
- xxv) Letter from NatWest regarding Fixed Deposit Rates from 23 Nov
- xxvi) Hospice in the Weald autumn newsletter
- xxvii) Letter from Brighton & Hove City Council regarding the East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan – Public Consultation: 27 Oct to 8 Dec
- xxviii) CPRE Protect Kent AGM and lunch – Friday 25 Nov
- xxix) Open Space Autumn magazine

xxx) Email letter from Kent Fire & Rescue Service – “Towards 2020” – closing date for comments is 16 Jan 2012
xxxi) Email letter from TWBC re Christmas lighting grants (circulated)
Cllr Mrs Hull requested that all emails from residents regarding local needs housing (LNH) be copied to all Councillors and not just the LNH Committee, TWBC and ERHA as had previously been done. **Clerk to re-send to ALL Councillors.**

11/213 DIARY DATES:

Wednesday 9th – **Consultation Day** – LNH – SPVH Committee Room
Saturday 12th – KALC AGM – Ditton Community Centre – 9.45 – 15.45
Monday 14th – Planning meeting – LGVH Committee Room
Tuesday 15th – Parish Chairman’s meeting – Town Hall 7pm
Monday 21st – Highways* Committee meeting – LGVH Committee Room
Wednesday 30th – SLCC SE Conference – East Grinstead – all day
Friday 2nd Dec – Highways meeting (Cllr Mrs Podbury and the Clerk) with John Burr, Bryan Sweetland and John Davies at KCC Sessions House Maidstone 11am
Monday 5th December – **Full Council Meeting** – LGVH Committee Room

Note change to meeting on Monday 21st – now a Highways Committee meeting and not Finance*.

Cllr Mrs Podbury advised that the Speldhurst Playground Committee were planning to attend the Finance Committee meeting on 21st November to speak about their proposals and their grant request. **The Clerk will advise them that this meeting will not take place and that they can attend the Full Council meeting on 5th December. The Clerk will also send them the Parish Council’s grant awarding guidelines.**

11/214 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

Cllr Ringrose reported that he has heard about thefts of metal from War Memorials being a problem.
Cllr Milner reported that Jonathan Bibby of KCC will deal with the fallen tree in the Twitten at Speldhurst. **Clerk to advise A1 Garden Services that their estimate would not be required.**

There being nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 9.53pm

CHAIRMAN