



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

Minutes of a Highways Committee Meeting held in the Gallery Room, Langton Green Village Hall on Thursday 26th July 2018 at 7.30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Podbury, Mrs Lyle (left at 7.50pm), Mrs Woodliffe (7.44), Ellery, Pate and Barrington-Johnson (ex-officio) with Mr Wheeler and Mrs Norton

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr C May – Clerk

1. **Election of Chairman – RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Mrs Podbury as Chairman. She said she was willing to Chair for a year when she hoped that another Councillor would take over.
2. **To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting:** No-one present intended to film, photograph or record the meeting.
3. **To receive and approve apologies and reasons for absence:** Cllr Allen (work commitments) and Mrs Horne (prior engagement)
4. **Disclosure of Interests:** There were none
5. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
6. **Minutes: RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Highways Committee meeting dated **19th February 2018** which have previously been distributed to all members, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
7. **Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public present
8. **Matters Arising and Correspondence:** There were several items:
 - The Clerk reported that KCC considered the small wind turbines, available only on fixed ISS signs, were ineffective and had no intention of deploying them.
 - The Clerk contacted Highways regarding the problem of cars mounting the pavement to turn left on to the Langton Road at the Hare junction. KCC considered that a post or bollard would be cost effective. The Clerk was advised to log an enquiry.
 - The Clerk advised the Committee that a large tree stump at the bottom of Groombridge Hill had shifted due to the dry weather and was considered dangerous. KCC Highways were advised and the stump was removed the same day.
 - He advised that the deer signs were still outstanding
 - Cllr Mrs Lyle said that due to personal circumstances she had to leave but considered the dangerous bends on the Ashurst Road a priority

- Cllr Mrs Lyle said that parking outside the newsagents and bakers on double yellow lines obscured the exit from Stonewall park Road. Cllr Mrs Podbury advised that the Traffic Officer was returning to TWBC and Cllr Barrington-Johnson said he would make another attempt to meet with Cllr Stanyer to discuss the issue.
- The issue of a crossing person for Langton green was discussed and considered a priority

9. Review of Highways Committee's Budget: The Clerk had circulated the financial sheets. He said that after all expenditure of the current projects he expected there to be a surplus of approximately £15,000. This would be put towards new projects.

10. Monitoring of recent accidents in the Parish: The Clerk had circulated a sheet of reported accidents for 2018. These were only incidents reported to the clerk because the new PCSO has been instructed that information previously submitted was now unavailable because of the new GDPR rules. This was considered incorrect and the Clerk will pursue the request. Another accident at the Hare crossroads had happened recently and it was considered that the white lines at the junction needed re-painting as a matter of urgency. Clerk to action.

11. Parish Plan

- The Clerk said that most of actions in the Parish Plan that had been completed come under Highways.
- Cllr Barrington-Johnson will provide an update

12. KCC Public Consultation: Big Conversation: Rural Transport – The Clerk and Cllr Mrs Soyke recently attended a seminar. The Clerk had circulated all the information provided and there were three options being considered by KCC to improve rural bus services. The presentation at the seminar included explanatory YouTube videos but there was no link for Councillors to see them. The Clerk will try and obtain access to these. Cllr Mrs Woodliffe and Cllr Pate offered to review the reports further with a view to making a recommendation.

13. 20 mph outside schools.

- Speldhurst – All signage had been installed by KCC and 20mph was now officially the legal speed limit throughout the designated area in the village. The ISS, installed by SPC five years ago, had to be taken down because it was set at 30mph. The company that installed the sign said that to recalibrate the machine to 20mph would cost £1,200 and suggested that with one year left on the warranty it would be better to purchase a new machine. KCC said that no 20mph sites in Kent have an ISS and would want a trial period before one was considered. It was agreed to see if a neighbouring Council could make use of the machine and possibly make a small payment. It was also agreed to carry out a traffic survey once the schools were back in September.
- Langton Green – The Clerk reported that a cheque had been sent for the installation and it was hoped that this would be in place for the new term.

14. Gateways – All gateways have now been installed. There was a problem with vegetation at the Ashurst gateway as a hedge has completely overgrown the post and it is in a dangerous position for the groundsman to maintain it. The Clerk will log it for KCC to maintain.

- There was agreement that the gateway at Langton Green was disappointing. It was agreed that a sign within the gateway was preferable and the Clerk was asked to obtain a quote.
- The Groundsman would maintain all gateways where it was safe to do so (clean and keep clear of vegetation)

15. To consider reports on the following issues by Village

a) Groombridge

- Speed Limit Review on Groombridge Hill - It was agreed by the committee to make the reduction in speed limit from 50-40mph a priority. It was agreed to have a traffic survey carried out and the Clerk would arrange this. Cllr Pate suggested employing an independent consultant to make recommendations.
A resident (Mr Norton) had emailed KCC and TWBC Councillors regarding accidents on the road and they were making enquiries.
It was agreed to see what progress they can make before making separate enquiries.
Mrs Norton will email all the reasons, from a resident's point of view, why the speed limit should be reduced.
- Bird in Hand Street – Councillors noted the serious accident when a car skidded in snowy conditions and hit a house causing serious damage to a grade 2 listed home. Councillors suggested asking KCC for recommendations on how to improve safety on the approach from Ashurst.

b) Ashurst

- A264 Ashurst Road has inappropriate signage on the dangerous bends and it was agreed to try and reduce the speed limit around those bends. Cllr Pate again suggested an independent assessment.

c) Speldhurst

- The Clerk advised that he had received emails from concerned residents regarding speeding on Barden Road and Stockland Green Road. The Committee agreed that priority had to be given where accidents had occurred, but traffic surveys may be considered at a later stage.
- Flooding – the drains on Speldhurst Hill and Etherington Hill are blocked due to the dry weather and the Clerk will report them.

d) Langton Green

- There have been no objections to the reduction of the speed limit on Speldhurst Road from 60-40mph and all legal documentation will be complete by late August. The Clerk advised that there will be an installation cost.
- A resident has written regarding Broom Lane. He has written to his neighbours seeking their support for several improvements: speed reduction to 30mph for a section of the lane; for improved signage and special designation. Councillors had sympathy and noted his points, especially because the lane is used by tankers using the sewage works, but agreed that priority is to be given to projects where accidents have happened (Groombridge Hill and Ashurst Road). The Clerk was asked to respond.
- School crossing points: The headmaster had met with the Clerk to voice his concern at the crossing points and lack of drainage. The Clerk advised that the 20mph advisory signage should be in place by the start of the new term and it was agreed to monitor speeds and prioritise the hiring of a crossing person.

16. Speed watch –

- Speedwatch Sessions – the Speedwatch co-ordinator does not have to be a Parish Councillor. Mrs Bischoff from Speldhurst has shown an interest in this position and the Clerk will contact her.
Cllr Pate reiterated its importance and said it makes a big contribution to traffic management. Sessions should include the PCSO where possible.
- Funding Police operations in the Parish – it was agreed not to pursue this but to encourage the police to carry out enforcement operations, especially in the new 20mph zone.

17. Items for information - There were none

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm

Chairman