



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

Minutes of an Amenities Committee Meeting held in The Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground on Monday 30th November 2015 at 7.30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Hull (Chairman), Mrs Jeffreys, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Barrington-Johnson (ex-officio), Allen (arrived 7.42pm) and Turner

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs K Plunkett – Assistant Clerk, Mr C May - Clerk

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There was one member of the public present.

1. **To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting:** No-one present intended to film, photograph and/or record the meeting
2. **To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence:** Mrs M Flemington – Assistant Clerk (illness)
3. **Disclosure of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests:** There were none.
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
5. **Minutes: RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on **21st September 2015** be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman
6. **Public Open Session:** There was one member of the public present in connection with item 11 on the agenda. It was agreed that following the public open session these items would be brought forward on the agenda for discussion and decision. Mrs Nicky Earwaker suggested that a flower bed in Speldhurst would be a good focal point opposite the Doctor's surgery, near the Speldhurst village sign. She would like a 4ft bed with perennials and bulbs which would require low maintenance. This land belongs to Kent Highways and the Clerk will request permission from them. This would mean that the land would have to be maintained locally if permission is granted. Mrs Earwaker will seek help via the local magazine. It was **RESOLVED** to support the initiative if permission is granted.
7. **Matters Arising and Correspondence:**
Trees in the Village Competition 2015 – The certificate of commendation was discussed and Cllr Mrs Soyke agreed to enter Ashurst in the competition next year.
The Assistant Clerk will send a copy of the report to Jennie Poulson-Ellis.

Tree for Stonewall Park Road – The Assistant Clerk reported that the replacement tree has been approved by the Finance Committee and it will be planted early in the New Year.

8. Parish Council Land:

a) Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)

- 1) **Langton Green Village Hall** – The problem of flooding from the roof of the Hall over the canopy outside the office during heavy rain is being looked into by the Trustees of LGVH. The Clerk explained that the gutters are blocked and that the glass roof makes access difficult. Further progress will be reported at the next meeting.

The Clerk reported that two posts have been knocked over in the car park in recent days and one light has been broken. He suggested that some of the wooden posts be replaced by metal posts and that the lights are moved. The posts are essential to protect pedestrians. The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Clerk look into the costs of metal posts and report back at the next meeting.

- 2) **Sports Clubs** – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported on her meeting with the LG Football Club representatives and the Pavilion contractor. She reported that the recent problems with electricity and security were discussed and stressed as of the utmost importance. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys explained that there is a list of items needed for the new Pavilion and it is not clear if the football club will be contributing to the cost of these, examples include CCTV and alarms.

The Committee discussed LED lighting and whether this would be a practical option given the high ceilings of the new Pavilion.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys reported that the contractor will produce a timeline of decisions so the Committee should receive adequate notice to make decisions on issues such as lighting, heating etc. in the new Pavilion.

Cllr Mrs Soyke asked if there is a plan to hire out the Pavilion. The Clerk said that he has been approached by Mrs Jo Blackwell who has submitted a proposal to manage the Pavilion and run it as a small café. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that Langton School should be approached about running a breakfast club and Cllr Barrington-Johnson agreed to discuss this at his meeting with the school later in the week.

The use of containers to solve storage issues on the Recreation ground was discussed. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys proposed that there should be three separate 20ft containers, one for the cricket club, one for the football club and one for the village society. There is the option of timber cladding the containers which the Committee agreed might be worth the additional cost. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys noted that planning permission would be needed for the containers but that there are many precedents for such containers on recreation grounds. The Clerk advised the Committee that there could be some opposition to the use of containers because they would be on Green Belt. His advice was noted but the Committee agreed this would be dealt with in the planning process.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys proposed that the football club fund their own container and that SPC make a grant contribution towards the containers for the village society and cricket club. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Mrs Jeffreys' proposal be recommended to Full Council.

- 3) **Children's play area** – The annual playground inspection was carried out by Craigdene on 10th August. The Clerk reported that the playground is 7/8 years old and there is some maintenance which has to be carried out this year. This maintenance work is in progress and Cllr Mrs Hull suggested a monthly schedule of works.
- 4) **Consideration of Landscape Services quotation for grounds maintenance for 2016** – After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Finance Committee that the quotation be accepted.

- 5) **Use of LGRG by Langton Green Primary School** –The Clerk reported that he has received a request from the school for the basketball court to be used by Year 6 at break time and at lunchtime. It was **RESOLVED** to agree use of the court under proper supervision.
 - 6) **LGRG Rude Mechanicals** – The Clerk reported that, if approved, this will be the fourth year that this company put on an outdoor theatre production on the recreation ground. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the request.
 - 7) **Groundsman** – The Clerk reported that the Groundsman continues to do an excellent job and that his hours should be increased by four hours per month (as resolved at the Governance meeting) to cover the moving of the SIDS and other work. The Committee discussed sharing a groundsman with other Parishes and the possibility of the position becoming full time at some stage. The Clerk noted that there may need to be an increase in the precept for this to be possible.
 - 8) **Recycling** – There are no particular issues at present although it was noted that at other sites in the Borough cardboard and paper and different glass colours are being mixed.
 - 9) **Arboricultural survey**
The Clerk reported that the arboricultural survey has been received and that once costings had been obtained, a schedule of works would be drawn up to be progressed over the winter. The Committee discussed the results of the survey and agreed that all recommended work be implemented.
- b) **The Green at Langton Green**
- 1) It was **RESOLVED** that the Hornbeam tree be replaced by a Hawthorn tree. The exact specimen of Hawthorn will be selected by Cllr Mrs Soyke. The Hornbeam tree will be relocated to LGRG. The Yew Tree near the millennium sign will also be relocated to the LGRG. A flower bed may replace the Yew Tree at some stage.
 - 2) The Committee discussed the safety of the crossing from Lampington Row to the Green and the recent incident of a car driving up the footpath on the Green. The Clerk reported that wooden posts have been put up to act as a deterrent to cars driving on the Green. The Headmaster of Langton Green Primary School is also concerned about children crossing the road to school. This issue will be taken up with the Headmaster at the next meeting.
- c) **The Green at Groombridge**
- 1) It was **RESOLVED** to give permission to Old Groombridge Community Group to put a neighbourhood watch sign on the street light. There followed a discussion of signs on the Green and Cllr Mrs Hull expressed concern that there are too many signs on the Green. The possibility of a double sided hospital sign was discussed as one possible solution. It was **RESOLVED** to contact the owners of all signs and request permission to relocate signs to one location. Cllr Mrs Podbury suggested adopting a similar advertising policy to that used by the Commons Conservators and supplied a copy for consideration.
 - 2) The Landscape Services quote for maintenance of the Green for 2016 was considered. The increase from the prior year fee is higher than for LGRG and the reason for this is being investigated. However it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the quotation to the Finance Committee following a sensible explanation of the increase.
- d) **The Pocket Park at Speldhurst**
- 1) Arboricultural survey –as above.
Cllr Podbury asked why the larger horse riding sign had not been put up at Pocket Park in Speldhurst. The Committee discussed whether a letter from the Chairman of SPC to the lady who rides through the park might be a better option than a new sign. The Chairman agreed to write the letter and the sign will also be progressed.
- e) **Signs on Council land** – There were no issues to report.
- f) **Transfer of land from TWBC**
- 1) Arboricultural survey – as above.

2) Maintenance

The Clerk reported that maintenance of recently transferred land will not start until spring, 2016.

9. Public Rights of Way:

- 1) The Clerk reported that the Groundsman has put up a post and the 'Caution Road Ahead' sign on the footpath between the Speldhurst Village Hall and Barden Road.

10. Trees in Furzefield Avenue:

Cllr Mrs Hull reported that Cllr Milner will remove the stakes from the trees in Furzefield Avenue as these are no longer required.

11. Southfields:

Item discussed in Public Open Session.

12. Litter Clearance

The Clerk reported that several volunteers have come forward following the request in the survey. Coordinating volunteers needs to be a Councillor led task. Cllrs Mrs Soyke and Mrs Podbury volunteered to coordinate and hold a session in the spring. The possibility of involving the Scouts was discussed.

13. Financial Review: The financial papers were discussed in terms of budget, expenditure to date and expenditure for the remainder of the year. The Clerk said that next year he will break down the Langton Green maintenance cost as this is the most significant cost for 'Amenities'.

The Clerk confirmed that additional costs relating to the new Pavilion are not included in this year's Budget. All Pavilion costs will be treated as capital costs and will be funded from the Contingency Budget.

14. Items for information:

Cllr Mrs Hull reported that a post has been knocked over on Southfields in Speldhurst, opposite the bus shelter. **The Clerk to ask the Groundsman to repair.**

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys asked whether residents at the Boundary in Langton Green had received letters about the transfer of land to SPC. **The Clerk confirmed that this would be done before any maintenance work starts in 2016.**

The Clerk mentioned that the bus timetable, currently housed in the notice board on the wall of The Crown was overcrowded. He asked if the single pane wooden notice board currently stored in the container could be used for this purpose to free up space for SPC notices. **The Clerk to ask permission from The Crown and report back.**

The meeting closed at 8.52pm

Chairman