

Precept for 2012/13

It was agreed at the November meeting of Speldhurst Parish Council to reduce the Precept for the coming year to £122,000 – a reduction of 1.5% over the current year. Our reserves are now in good shape and the Council is confident that it can meet its commitments to the Parish at this lower level, which we are sure will be welcome in these difficult economic times.

Footpaths – a request for help

During the growing season this year, many footpaths in the Parish became overgrown with brambles and nettles. A major part of the problem is the cuts put in place to Kent County Council's Countryside Access Service where their maintenance programme has been reduced by 50%. As a result, it was left to Parish Councillors and volunteers during the summer months to do the work necessary to keep many of the paths open. This they cannot continue to do as there are around fifty footpaths in the Parish.

Therefore, we are making a polite request to those residents who have a footpath running past their property to do all they can next year to take responsibility for that section of path and keep it clear. The main footpaths nearly all go past someone's house – either at the front or, more often that not, at the back and are frequently used by parents with their children



on the way to school as well as by dog walkers and ramblers.

Please keep an eye out and if there is a problem that you cannot deal with through age or infirmity, or because you lack the necessary equipment, please get in touch with the Parish Clerk on 862927

New Parish Office opens for business



Scheduled to be fully open for business on December 1st, the new Parish Council office will house the Parish Clerk, Chris May and the Assistant Clerk, Min Flemington. Residents are welcome to come and discuss specific issues with the Clerk on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays between 9.30 and 1pm and

Wednesdays from 1.30pm to 5pm. (Closed Thursdays) or he can be contacted on 862927 /email: clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk Please note that these are new contact numbers. The office is located adjacent to the village hall, next to the recreation ground.



Speldhurst
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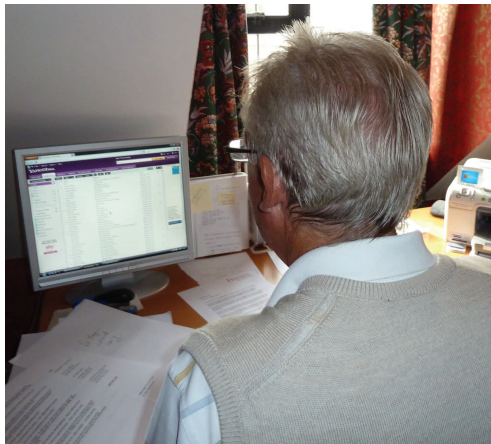
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Broadband survey a hit!

Considering the technical nature of the subject, the level of response to the recent survey undertaken by the Parish Council exceeded expectations. The 564 responses – split almost equally between online returns and collections from the doorstep – represented about 30% of residential and business addresses in the Parish. However, the Parish had already been made aware that this was a 'hot' subject when over one hundred people turned up at the Broadband Public Open Meeting organised by the Parish Council in Langton Green Village Hall, to hear from Kent County Council and to express their views, which were largely negative, on the current broadband services. Frequent disconnections and slow speeds were the predominant complaints. Sincere thanks must go to all the volunteers – over fifty of them, who hand delivered, and collected the survey forms.

The Working Group has now analysed the responses and the results are available as a



download from the Parish Council's website. The Group is now in the process of identifying options for delivering superfast broadband and preparing for a possible bid for Kent County Council/Broadband UK funds. Those people who provided email addresses in their response to the survey are receiving occasional news updates.

Local needs housing – the debate continues

There was a good turnout at the Consultation Day held at Speldhurst Village Hall on November 9th regarding the proposal to



develop a site off the Speldhurst/Langton Road, opposite Went Farm, for local needs housing. Because this is a green belt location, there was much comment about the choice of this site, but the Parish Council with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and English Rural Housing Association explained that if we are to help the young to be able to stay in the village, this is the only option in the Parish currently available. Applications from seventeen households with a proven strong local connection to the village of Speldhurst have been received and approved by the Housing Association for the seven properties, should they be built. An analysis of all the comments from the Consultation Day will be undertaken and these will be presented to the full Parish Council in due course. They will also discuss whether a referendum on the issue would be deemed to be necessary or appropriate.

Thinking about holding a Queen's Diamond Jubilee party?

If you are, you may be able to get a contribution toward the cost. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is making approximately £2400 available for the Parish of Speldhurst, and the Parish Council will be matching that amount. So if your event is within Speldhurst Parish and it is a genuine community party to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June, please get in touch

with the Parish Council Clerk at clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk or by phoning 862927.

Details of the proposed party are required and must be with the Parish Council by the end of January 2012. A decision as to what grants will be awarded to those who have applied will be made known by the end of February.



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Speldhurst Parish Council

Lynn Jeffreys (Chairman)

Peter Brown

Tony Hemming

Rosemary Hull

Ed Langridge

Rupert Milner

Crispin Owen

Trevor Parker

Chris Pendleton

Joy Podbury

Peter Ringrose

Julia Soyke

Chris Woodward

This newsletter will be available, as will all future issues, on the Parish Council web site.

All enquiries to the Parish Clerk;
Chris May on (01892) 862927 or at
clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk