



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

**Minutes of a Local Needs Housing Committee Meeting held in the Committee Room,
Langton Green Village Hall on Thursday 7th April at 7.30pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllr Wheeler (Chairman), Cllrs Mrs Hull, Langridge

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris May, Clerk

1. **Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interest:** There were none
2. **Declarations of Lobbying:** All members declared that they had been lobbied by members of the public at some stage during the Open Day on February 16th and the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) on April 4th both for against the project.
3. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Brown prior appointment; Cllr Milner previous engagement
4. **Minutes of the meeting dated 5th November 2010**, copies having previously been forwarded to all Members, were approved and signed as a correct record.
5. **Matters Arising and Correspondence:** There had been a number of emails received some residents in Speldhurst, the content will be dealt with under item 7.
6. **Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public present
7. **Review of the current situation after the Annual Parish Meeting:** Cllr Langridge said that following the APM, when some residents voiced opposition to the scheme, the Parish Council should respond and engage the community with an honest assessment on the rights and wrongs of the scheme. Cllr Wheeler supported this proposal and said that a page was needed on the website dedicated to Local Needs Housing.
Cllr Mrs Hull said that local people had concerns and that they could not be ignored. Cllr Wheeler said that until the petition was presented no judgement could be made and a lot would depend on the wording of the question and how it was presented. All the committee could work on at the moment was the overwhelming support the project received at the Consultation Day on 16th February.
There was much discussion on the issue and Cllr Wheeler said if it did not happen on the present site, in his opinion it would not happen at all, which would be a huge disappointment for a lot of people and a missed opportunity. Cllr Mrs Hull said that it was important to listen to the public and that a second Open Day was needed because despite adequate notification some people did not know about it. Cllr Mrs Hull asked if the project would be stopped if the results of the second consultation day rejected the scheme. Cllr Wheeler suggested that if that did happen the viability of the project would need to be reassessed.
8. **A Review of timetable ahead:** Cllr Wheeler said that it was important that the Parish Council agreed on Monday evening for the next stage of the project to go ahead. He said that everybody should listen to what Alison Thompson of English Rural Housing Association (ERHA) had to say and vote. The emphasis was still that it was by no means a fait accompli and that there would be another Consultation Day which he estimated would be in about three months. This time there would large boards (APM style).

- 9. Items for Information:** Cllr Wheeler said that a positive vote from the Full Council on Monday evening 11th April was vitally important to enable the project to continue to the next stage. In light of the strong support for the project received at the Consultation Day he felt the committee in particular should support the ERHA and then on to the new committee post 16th May.

Cllr Mrs Hull said that there must be alternative opinions and she did not agree that there should be a three line whip. She said that it was difficult, as a resident of the village, being on this committee but believed that Speldhurst needed representation. She would vote according to the facts.

Cllr Langridge agreed with Cllr Mrs Hull and said that the Local Needs Housing committee would continue in the future, perhaps in Langton Green and that it was important to listen before voting.

Cllr Wheeler announced that as he was leaving the Parish Council on April 11th he was standing down as Chairman forthwith.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Chairman