

Speldhurst Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 17th NOVEMBER 2008 at 7.45pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL, SPELDHURST

PRESENT: Cllrs. Mrs Jeffreys, Mrs Hull, Mrs Paulson-Ellis, Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Mrs Waters, Brown, Colley, Ellis, Langridge, Parker, Stevens and Wheeler

Borough Councillor Julian Stanyer. Four members of the public

2110 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr. Mrs Waters – Personal Interest – Agenda Item 4 (Grant request – Speldhurst School PTA) children attend Speldhurst School

Cllr. Ellis – Personal Interest (Trustee - Langton Green Charitable Trust) Agenda Item 8 Transfer of Land either side of the former Watson Hall

Cllr. Parker – Personal Interest (as above)

2111 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – All Councillors were present

2112 MINUTES: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th October 2008, having previously been distributed to Members, were approved and signed.

2113 AGENDA ITEMS

2114 Finance Committee Report by Cllr. Mrs Soyke

Cllr. Mrs Soyke updated Members on the two meetings of the Finance Committee held on 3rd and 11th November the Minutes having previously been circulated.

The Committee have appointed Kevin Funnell as Internal Auditor and he had already spent a day with the Clerk, arriving very well informed about the Parish Council having read all recent Minutes from the Parish Council web site. He had given the Clerk confidence that our procedures and adherence to recommendations are all in order and gave some useful help with preparing the Budget for the coming year.

The Committee had approved an increase in the Clerk`s salary by the recommended 2.45% plus an increase in spinal column point from 32 to 33 to be backdated to 1st April 2008.

Cllr. Mrs Soyke informed Councillors that if Council wish to expend money on Churches, schools or highway projects the only power available is LGA 1972 Section 137.

It is the recommendation of the Finance Committee that Council consider a payment of £10,000 in the current financial year to Kent Highways specifically for the improvement of a section of the footpath on Barden Road, Speldhurst. Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys proposed that `in principle approval for expenditure up to £10,000 for Barden Road footway in the current financial year be approved by Council`. This was unanimously approved.

The Finance Committee had also considered a request from Speldhurst School PTA for financial assistance to refurbish two classrooms. It was proposed by Cllr. Mrs Soyke that `Councillors give approval to a grant of £2,300 for the refurbishment of one classroom` This was seconded by Cllr. Mrs Podbury and unanimously agreed.

Cllrs. Mrs Soyke informed Members of other grants and expenditure approved by the Committee under delegated powers :

£1,200 Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee – Phases 1 and 2 of the Pavilion refurbishment.

£35 – Membership of Action with Communities in Rural Kent

£500 – Maintenance of the churchyard St Mary`s, Speldhurst

£412 – repairs to fencing behind the recycling bins and replacement of the gates in the play area.

The Committee were awaiting further information to allow consideration to a grant to Speldhurst Village Hall for replacement entrance doors.

2115 Setting the Precept for 2009/10

Cllr. Mrs Soyke advised that the Finance Committee had considered the Precept for 2009 / 10 very carefully and had taken into account that the Parish Council was being called upon more and more to assist with community projects. They had also taken into account the increased expenditure for monitoring of the new Play Areas in Langton Green. Cllr. Mrs Soyke advised that two of the churches within the Parish were also planning major renovation work.

Cllr. Mrs Soyke proposed that `the Parish Council approve a Precept of £115,000 for the financial year 2009/10 and that this is submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council`. This was seconded by Cllr. Parker and approved by Councillors with Cllr. Colley abstaining and Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys not taking part in the vote.

2116 - 2009 Dates and times for Parish Council Meetings and Parish Council Surgeries

These were unanimously agreed by Council with an amendment to the date of the March surgery to Monday, 9th March.

Councillors queried why there was no Surgery in September and the Clerk was asked to advise.

2088 Highways – Speldhurst – Letter to Speldhurst residents

Councillors had hand delivered letters to residents of Speldhurst.

The Clerk had received a telephone call from a resident who specifically wanted to ask if the Council would consider resident funding of `traffic calming`. A number of councillors had also received the same request.

The owner of the Post Office / Village Shop, asked if consideration could be given to a parking restriction alongside the dropped kerb leading to the shop. There was a further request to build up the redundant dropped kerb outside The Chapel and reinstate the white lines around the bend at the beginning of Furzefield Avenue.

The Clerk advised that she had spoken with Kent Highways and they were commissioning a Traffic Survey to ascertain type, volume and speed of traffic. Councillors wished to be fully involved with any proposals.

Cllr. Colley reported on the 2003 Tunbridge Wells Borough Transport Strategy document which clearly states that steps should be taken to ensure that Speldhurst's `rat run` should not increase.

1939-7 Lampington Row Safer Crossing – the Clerk had received confirmation from the Solicitors that providing the Parish Council maintain the new footpath this would be covered by their PL insurance and this had been confirmed by the Parish Council's insurers. This work was on track to be carried out by Highways in February 2009.

2043 Transfer of Land either side of the former Watson Hall – the Clerk had received the Agreement for the transfer of this land from the Trustees of Langton Green Charitable Trust to Speldhurst Parish Council. She queried with the Councillors that certain areas of the land were maintained by Kent County Council and wished to meet with the Trustees to clarify. Cllr. Ellis confirmed that this land had, to his knowledge, always been maintained by Kent Highways. It was agreed that the Clerk should meet with the Trustees.

The Clerk had carried out a Risk Assessment of the land to be transferred and reported that there was a large pot hole and the surfacing was badly breaking up.

2060 Appointment of Parish Council Representative on Langton Green Charitable Trust – as no volunteers had come forward the Clerk suggested that Marianne Buckley be contacted as some time ago she had expressed an interest in assisting the Parish Council. Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys agreed to approach her.

2080 Mayor to Visit all Parish Councils – the Mayor would attend the Parish Council Surgery on 1st December in Langton Green Village Hall. It was agreed to offer light refreshments. Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys gave her apologies.

2094-11 Kent Tree Scheme – the Clerk had contacted a Tree Surgeon who carried out contract work for Kent Highways. It was agreed that this scheme should not be taken forward.

2098-1 Risk Assessment – Cllrs. Mrs Hull, Mrs Podbury and the Clerk had carried out Risk Assessments of all Parish Council owned property and land the main concerns being :

- Very old and untested electrical appliances being stored in the Pavilion by the Users. As these were not the property of the Parish Council it was agreed to ask the users to remove them.

- No disability access into the Pavilion – the Clerk would obtain a quotation from Cliff Worcester.
- No smoke detectors - the Clerk would obtain a quotation from Cliff Worcester
- Wiring in the Pavilion – the Clerk would arrange to have this tested
- The wire fencing on two sides around the Ball Court were badly damaged and the Clerk would obtain a quotation for replacement
- Pocket Parks, Speldhurst - during the summer months canes were put into the ground to protect wild orchids – the clerk would make enquiries.

2117 Parish Council Surgeries – 11th November 2008 – Speldhurst Village Hall – attended by Cllrs. Mrs Jeffreys, Mrs Hull, Mrs Podbury, Brown, Langridge, Ellis, the Clerk, Borough Councillor David Jukes and PCSO Ray Nuttall.

PCSO Ray Nuttall discussed :

Access from Barden Road via the allotment path.

Parking around Southfields, Northfields and Peshurst Road particularly during surgery times. He advised that the surgery would place signs advising their visitors not to park on these junctions.

Suggestion of putting down cones to assist the bus.

PCSO agreed to put a Police warning notice on the windscreens of offending vehicles

Councillors continue to agree that Surgeries are important.

2118 Matters for updating from the Minutes dated 20th October 2008 including :

2088 Parking Restrictions : Barden Road / Speldhurst Hill – These parking restrictions were now in place.

Consideration for further Restricted Parking – Speldhurst – The Chairman and Clerk were meeting Kent Highways.

1887-4 Parish Council Funded Highways Projects – nothing further to report.

1887-4 Speldhurst Hill – safer crossing – Cllr. Mrs Waters advised that with the introduction of parking restrictions on Speldhurst Hill / Barden Road traffic was travelling faster and it was even more important that a pathway be installed.

1887-4 Crossing from the Recreation Ground to the Twitten – the Clerk had delivered letters to the eight houses in the private road.

2972 Your Parish Council – The Clerk and Cllr. Mrs Waters would meet and report back to the Parish Council.

2092 Mobility Access Around the Villages – The Clerk had informed Highways

2074 Parish Council Questionnaire - Discuss January 2009 meeting.

2075 Parish Council Notice Board – Langton Green - Clerk would obtain prices

2028-3 TWBC – Affordable Housing Needs Survey – Letter had been sent to all residents.

2018-3 Speed Hump and Give Way Lining – Completed.

2091 Parish Council – Style of Name Change - The Clerk would obtain further information.

1825-3 Ashurst Village Play Area / Registering of Common Ground – Cllr. Mrs Soyke would arrange a Village Survey.

1965 Conservation Area – A meeting with Brian Hayward was being arranged.

2098-2 – The Clerk had ordered a specimen name badge.

2119 – Correspondence Received

1. Kent County Council – an Academy for Tunbridge Wells – closure of TW High School. Public Meeting on 4th December at 7pm TW High School. Email views to school.consultation@kent.gov.uk. Proposal can be viewed on www.kent.gov.uk
2. Kent County Council Permit Scheme – further consultation of key changes.
3. Communities and Local Government – Codes of Conduct for local authority members and employees – consultation closed 24th December.
4. TWBC – Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) as they feel they are no longer a weak Council. We were chosen to be involved and completed a questionnaire and the Inspectors are likely to contact us again. Two documents `the Road to Excellent – Our Journey` and CPS Self Assessment 2008.
5. From 3rd November Town Hall enquiries will be dealt with from the Gateway in Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells. The main Town Hall door will be closed to visitors – entrance for meetings would be via the small Planning Area.
6. Parents from Langton Primary School – concerns that as dogs were no longer allowed on school property parents had nowhere to leave them when collecting their children. The Clerk had contacted PCSO Ray Nuttall for advice.
7. KHS – on line survey asking for perception of roads, pavements, congestion and communication with KHS. Cut off for reply 8th December.
8. Courier now had a mini village web site (BLOG). A good source of information about Speldhurst but mainly church orientated. The Clerk would enquire whether the Parish Council could make comment.
9. Appointment of Member of Speldhurst Parish Council as a Trustee on the Management Committee of Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust – it was unanimously

agreed that Cllr. Mrs Soyke continue her role as the Parish Council Representative and she duly accepted the position.

2120 Parish Council Chairman`s Report – Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys reported on the Focus Group of Parish Council Chairmen with CPA.

2121 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning – Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis reported on the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 5th November, the Minutes having previously been forwarded to Members.

Footpaths – Cllr. Stevens reported on the very sudden and sad death of his main volunteer, Don Jeffrey. It was agreed that the Chairman should write a letter to his wife. It was also agreed that a tree or bench in memory should be given by the Parish Council and Cllr. Stevens would consult with his Footpaths team.

It was agreed that Cllr. Stevens should remove a bar to the barrier to the Twitten at the end of Ferbies / Southfields to allow for pedestrians with buggies etc.

Cllr. Stevens would do a note to go into the Village magazines advertising for volunteers.

Cllr. Mrs Hull reported that the plastic sleeves put on the saplings need to be removed. Cllr. Stevens would investigate.

Recreation Ground – Cllr. Ellis asked for the approval of the Parish Council to the purchase of a kettle, fridge and convector heater which would be stored in the Pavilion for use of all users and that the Football Club should make their own arrangements for the removal of the old electrical appliances. This approval was unanimously given.

KALC – Cllrs. Colley and Brown reported on the recent KALC AGM. They expressed disappointment that a lengthy discussion had taken place regarding the 4% increase in KALC expenditure to the detriment of later speakers. They reported the reduction in PCSO`s country wide. David Coleman was the new KALC President

2122 DIARY DATES

1st December – Surgery which would be attended by the Mayor 2pm – 3.30pm

8th December – Drinks and Nibbles with the Mayor 5-7pm Town Hall

8th December – Parish Council Meeting – 7.30pm Langton Green Village Hall

8th December – pre Christmas get together (following the Parish Council meeting – location to be advised)

2123 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – NOVEMBER 2008

1.	Sturgeons	£ 1,568.63	Speed Hump and White Lining
2.	RIP Cleaning	£ 98.70	Canine Refuse
3.	Southern Water	£ 22.94	Surface Water

4.	Audit Commission	£ 470.00	Annual Return
5.	M.R. Lawrence	£ 180.00	Grass Cutting – Roopers
6.	LGCT	£ 21.37	Hire of Hall
7.	KALC	£ 17.00	Lunch - AGM
8.	Administration	£ 2,759.56	
15.	Lynn Jeffreys	£ 100.00	Chairman`s Allowance
16.	Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee	£ 1,200.00	Grants – Phases 1 & 2 Sports Pavilion Project
17.	St Mary`s Church Speldhurst	£ 500.00	Churchyard Maintenance
18.	Action with Communities In Rural Kent	£ 35.00	Subscription

TOTAL **£6,973.21**

2124 Items for Information

1. There had been an incident involving a child from the Nursery School and the toddler roundabout. A letter was being sent to the Parish Council.
2. Jim Kehoe, Head of Planning Services, TWBC – now covering Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks
3. Julia Soyke was joining the Standards Committee.
4. The drain on the left hand side of Barden Road (near Barden Mill) was badly damaged
5. Cllr. Colley reported on the recent visit by seven members of the Marchiennes Friendship Association. 22 people had attended the tree planting ceremony to commemorate the 10th Anniversary.
6. Cllr. Stevens reported that a school Parent Group were considering removing a hedge to the side of the school entrance and the Clerk was asked to write advising that as this was in a Conservation Area approval should be obtained.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

CHAIRMAN