

Speldhurst Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 19th JANUARY 2009 at 7.45pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL, SPELDHURST

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

County Councillor John Davies, Borough Councillor David Jukes, Borough Councillor Julian Stanyer and 2 members of the public

2138 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys – Personal & Prejudicial – Item 5 (Middlefield application) – resident of The Boundary

Cllr. Mrs Podbury – Personal & Prejudicial – Item 4 (Grant to Speldhurst Village Hall) – Parish Council Representative on the Village Hall Trust

Cllr. Ellis – Personal & Prejudicial – Agenda Item 8 (Renewal of the Licence between the Parish Council and Langton Green Charitable Trust) - Trustee

Cllr. Mrs Soyke – Personal – Agenda Item 13 (The Crown, Groombridge – Christmas Lights) – local pub

Cllr. Mrs Soyke – Personal – Agenda Item 15 (1825-3) (Ashurst Village Play Area / Registering of Common Ground) – resident of Ashurst

Cllr. Peter Brown – Personal – Agenda Item 6 (Holmewood House School) – resident of Hither Chantlers

Cllr. Gerry Colley – Personal – Agenda Item 6 (Holmewood House School) – resident of Hither Chantlers

Cllr. Langridge – Personal – Agenda Item 6 (Holmewood House School) – occasional driver

Cllr. Langridge – Personal – Agenda Item 19 (Placing of a bench by the Langton Green Rural Society) – Committee Member of the Rural Society

Cllr. Parker – Personal – Agenda Item 8 (Renewal of the Licence between the Parish Council and Langton Green Charitable Trust) – Trustee

Cllr. Parker – Personal – Agenda Item 19 (Placing of a bench by the Langton Green Rural Society) – Chairman of the Rural Society

Declarations of Lobbying :

Cllr. Brown advised that a conversation had taken place between himself and a resident of Hither Chantlers but that he had not expressed any particular point of view. Cllr. Brown also advised that he had been spoken to by a number of residents of Hither Chantlers whilst out and about in his role with Neighbourhood Watch, but again had expressed no particular point of view.

Cllr. Colley advised that as he lives in Hither Chantlers neighbours have spoken to him in the street in passing. Two people have telephoned him and sent copies of letters (which have also been sent to the Clerk). He has expressed no particular point of view.

2139 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis – prior hospital appointment – may arrive later in the meeting.

2140 MINUTES: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th December 2008, having previously been distributed to Members, were approved and signed with the following being agreed;

delete page two first paragraph – `remove 112 votes (21.5%) were in favour of the suggestion to close Barden Road and 411 (78.5%) were against the suggestion` and attach a breakdown of the Analysis.

2141 AGENDA ITEMS

2142 Finance Committee Report by Cllr. Mrs Soyke

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 10th December 2008, including a bar chart and accompanying figures, had previously been forwarded to Members.

Cllr. Mrs Soyke advised that the following grants had been agreed by the Committee under delegated powers :

£750 – Langton Green Rural Society

£550 – Hospice in the Weald

£2,000 – to fund a report on the Middlefield / Rusthall Elms access for construction traffic.

Decision by Council on the Committee`s recommendation to approve a Grant to Speldhurst Village Hall Committee to fund a replacement front door

Cllr. Mrs Podbury advised that as DDA regulations had changed the entrance doors had failed the annual report. Cllr. Mrs Podbury then left the room.

Cllr. Mrs Soyke advised that the Village Hall Committee were seeking alternative grants. It was the recommendation of the Finance Committee to approve a grant of £5,000 with up to a further £4,000 being considered when further funding is known. A discussion took place and Cllr. Mrs Soyke proposed **that Council approve a Grant of £5,000 and that the Village Hall Committee should return to the Parish Council should further funding be required.** An amendment that Council **approve £5,000 and hold £4,000 in reserve should alternative fund raising efforts fail** by Cllr. Mrs Hull **was lost by 3 votes to 7.** The original proposal was then put to the vote and it was resolved by **7 votes to 3 that the Council approve a Grant of £5,000 and the Village Hall Committee should return to the Parish Council should further funding be required.**

Cllr. Mrs Podbury was invited to re-join the meeting.

2143 Middlefield / Rusthall Elms Site

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys left the room without making any comment.

Cllr. Mrs Soyke chaired the meeting.

- i) Planning Committee`s decision to appoint a Consultant to prepare and submit a report on behalf of the Parish on an alternative access for construction traffic.

The Planning Committee`s Minutes of their meetings held on 18th December, 7th and 14th January containing detailed information on the Committee`s decision to fund a report had previously been forwarded to all Members.

In the absence of Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis, Cllr. Wheeler updated the meeting and advised that some members of the Committee were meeting with Ruth Chambers the Planning Officer the following day.

Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis arrived at 8.15pm.

It was agreed to delay any further discussion until after the meeting with Ruth Chambers. It was agreed that given the time limits, it may be necessary to arrange an Extra Ordinary Meeting.

It was agreed to delay items ii) and iii) until after the meeting with Ruth Chambers.

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys was invited to re-join the meeting.

2144 Holmewood House School – Planning application – decision by Council on the Planning Committee`s recommendation

The Minutes of the Planning Committee had previously been distributed. As this was a major development a full Parish Council decision was required on the recommendation of the Planning Committee. A lengthy discussion took place and Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys **proposed that Council accept the recommendation of the Planning Committee to Remain Neutral and that an additional comment be added `the proximity and size of the car park to the boundary` . This was unanimously agreed with Cllr. Trevor Parker abstaining.**

2088 Highways – Speldhurst – Village Traffic Survey - Kent Highways have commissioned the surveys and initial confirmation is that these will be carried out late February / early March 2009 and will be for 7days. The Council will request that the surveys are not carried out during half-term week commencing 19th February.

2088 Further Parking Restrictions – Speldhurst - Kent Highway Services will shortly be commencing the statutory legal process to install further parking restrictions as requested by the Council. As St Marys Lane is a private road the Parish Council has been requested to canvass the residents before publication of the Orders and the Clerk was requested to send a letter to each householder.

2129 Barden Road footway – nothing further to report.

1887-4 Speldhurst Hill – Safer Crossing – Nothing to report.

2137-4 Speldhurst Primary School – Travel Plan - A report on the meeting of Cllr. Mrs Hull, Mrs Podbury and Stevens had previously been circulated. These were excellent meetings and the Clerk would arrange a similar meeting with Langton Green Primary School.

1887-4 Crossing from the Langton Green Recreation Ground to The Twitten including consideration for parking restrictions and interactive sign – Kent Highway Services had confirmed that the Scheme had reached final design stage and should be constructed in the Spring 2009. The Clerk was checking the provision of an interactive sign as part of the project.

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

2145 Decision by Council to the Renewal of the Licence between the Parish Council and Langton Green Charitable Trust for the exclusive use of the paved and fenced patio area – Cllrs. Ellis and Parker duly left the meeting. The Council unanimously agreed to renew the Licence on the same terms with an increase in 3% to the rental. It was further agreed that the Cricket and Stoolball Clubs should incur similar increases and that discussions would continue with the Football Club to ascertain use. Cllrs. Ellis and Parker re-joined the meeting.

1965 Conservation Enhancement Project – decision by Parish Council to part fund repairs to Langton Green War Memorial – Cllrs. Mrs Paulson-Ellis, Mrs Podbury and the Clerk had met with Brian Hayward who had confirmed that the Church were meeting 50% of the cost to work in the Churchyard and the Parish Council were being asked to make a similar

contribution to the repair to the War Memorial. Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys proposed **that Council meet 50% of the cost to a total of £1,576** which was unanimously agreed.

2124 Conservation Architect's opinion on the removal of the hedge to the front of Speldhurst Primary School. Cllr. Mrs Podbury advised that the Conservation Architect could see no problem with the removal of the hedge and he would work with the school to enhance the area.

2074 Parish Council Questionnaire – Cllr. Langridge requested that this be left until the February meeting as other items on the Agenda may have an impact.

2972 Your Parish Council – a further draft had been circulated. This was unanimously agreed. The Clerk would try and extend the map to include the whole of Old Groombridge. It was agreed to launch this at the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

2137-1 Speaker for AGM – it was unanimously agreed to invite County Councillor Keith Ferrin as guest speaker.

2130 The Crown, Groombridge – Christmas Lights – It was agreed to diarise for October.

2146 Parish Council Surgeries : consideration to change of name and `duty` Councillors – the last Surgery saw 8 Councillors but no residents. A discussion followed as to the possibility of a change of name. It was agreed to continue with `Surgery` but to advertise in the village magazines. It was agreed that only two Councillors need to attend with the Clerk.

2147 Matters for Updating from the Minutes dated 8th December 2008

2043 Transfer of Land either side of the former Watson Hall – Completion took place on 16th January 2009.

2060 Appointment of Parish Council Representative on Langton Green Charitable Trust – Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys confirmed that Marianne Buckley had accepted this position and the Clerk was asked to write to her.

2119-8 Courier Mini Web Site (BLOG) – It was agreed that only Council events would be advertised on the Speldhurst BLOG. The Clerk confirmed that in the last six weeks there had been over 3,000 visits to the Parish Council web site.

2088 – Speldhurst Bus Service – the Clerk was trying to arrange a meeting with Arriva to discuss a `shuttle` style bus service between the villages.

1825-3 Ashurst Village Play Area / Registering of Common Ground – Cllr. Mrs Soyke hoped to have a survey ready by the end of the month which had been completed by three Ashurst residents.

2075 Parish Council Notice Board – Langton Green – The Clerk was making arrangements to have the Langton Green board moved to the Recreation Ground.

2028-3 TWBC – Affordable Housing Needs Survey – Nothing to report.

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

2134 Black Lion House – the Clerk was waiting a reply.

2148 – Parish Plan – Proposal by Cllr. Colley – it was agreed to arrange a meeting with ACRK.

2149 Merging of Footpaths and Recreation Ground Committee – Proposal by Cllr. Colley
– defer to February meeting. Cllr. Colley would discuss with Cllrs. Ellis and Stevens

2150 Appointment of a Parish Council Highways Committee – Proposal by Cllr. Colley – discuss February.

2151 Placing of a bench by the Langton Green Rural Society – replacing the current dilapidated bench near to the Langton Green Village sign (on the newly acquired land).

Proposed by Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys and unanimously agreed.

As we had reached the 2 hour mark Councillors were asked if they wished the meeting to continue. As we were nearing the end, this was unanimously agreed.

2152 Correspondence Received

1. Thank you message from Maria Cook for her get well gift.
2. Mr Arrowsmith, Groombridge resident. Concerns with speeding traffic. It was agreed that Cllrs. Mrs Hull and Mrs Soyke would visit the village.
3. Kent Police Authority 2009/10 Survey. Completed.
4. TWBC Town/Parish Council Seminar – Permitted Development regime for households which came into force on 1st October 2008. All members of the Planning Committee would attend.
5. JTB meeting 19th January 2009. It had been noted that more improvements to A26 were being proposed which could affect traffic through Speldhurst. County Cllr. John Davies would make enquiries.
6. Mrs Quarterman, Speldhurst resident. Concerns that the bar had been removed from the Ferbies Twitten which may cause problems with motorcycles. The Clerk was asked to contact Mrs Quarterman suggesting a meeting with Cllr. Stevens.

2153 Parish Council Chairman`s Report

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys reported on the various thank you cards received.

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys and the Clerk had been invited to a Focus Group on Rural Housing on 23rd February.

2154 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning – Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis reported on the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 7th and 14th December, the Minutes having previously been forwarded to all Members.

Footpaths – nothing to report.

Recreation Ground – Cllr. Ellis reported :

Two people had expressed an interest in the position of `Groundsman` but both had decided not to take it further. It has been agreed with a regular contractor to spend 1.5 hours twice a week to walk the Recreation Ground and clear of rubbish and dog poo, sweep the paths around the car park and play area. The cost is £10 per hour.

Smoke detectors have been fitted in the Pavilion and a ramp made for disability access. An electrician will be checking the wiring in the Pavilion and will be asked to quote on installing a small convector heater and small fridge. We will then be in a position to request that the Football Club remove their items.

The Football Club have suggested a `Users Meeting` which will be arranged for February / March.

New gates have been fitted in the Play Area.

Cllr. Ellis proposed **that the Play and Teen Areas be transferred back to the responsibility of the Recreation Ground Committee. This was unanimously agreed.**

KALC – Cllr. Colley reported on the KALC meeting on 10th December, his report having previously been circulated. It was unfortunate that the Agenda for the KALC meetings came out too late for items to be discussed by the Parish Council prior to the meeting. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries.

2155 DIARY DATES

10th February – Surgery – Langton Green 2pm – 3.30pm

16th February - Council Meeting – LangtonGreen 7.45pm

28th February – Rural Society`s Quiz Night. Anyone interested in getting together a `Parish Council table` should contact Cllr. Langridge.

2156 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – JANAUARY 2009

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| 1. | Teambase | £ 132.89 | Stationery |
| 2. | M.R. Lawrence | £ 180.00 | Grass cutting - Roopers |
| 3. | M.R. Lawrence | £ 75.00 | Hedge cutting - Roopers |
| 4. | EDF Energy | £ 190.43 | Electricity – LG Pavilion |
| 5. | British Telecom | £ 196.18 | Telephone and Fax |
| 6. | Ashust Parish Church | £ 6.00 | Magazine subscription |
| 7. | RIP Cleaning Services | £ 120.75 | Canine Refuse |
| 8. | Teambase | £ 114.96 | Printer cartridges |
| 9. | M.R. Lawrence | £ 75.00 | Clearing leaves and rubbish LGRG |
| 10. | Tate Fencing Ltd | £ 473.80 | 4 x gate posts, 2 x gates and repair fencing |
| 11. | Langton Green Rural | £ 750.00 | Approved Grant - 2009 Insurance |
| 12. | Hospice in the Weald | £ 550.00 | Approved Grant |
| 13. | Donaldson West | £ 1,150.00 | Legal Fees – Purchase of land either side of the former Watson Hall Institute |
| 14. | Donaldson West | £ 40.00 | Land Registry Fees – Purchase of land Either side of the former Watson Hall Institute |
| 15. | Keogh Caisley | £ 1,656.00 | Solicitors fees – Purchase of land either side of the former Watson Hall Institute – agreed fees on behalf of the Langton Green Charitable Trust |
| 16. | Administration and Expenses : | £ 2,151.25 | |
| 17. | Gerry Colley | £ 122.00 | Agreed Expenses – Marchiennes 10 th Anniversary |
| 18. | Lynn Jeffreys | £ 230.00 | Chairman`s Allowance |

