



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

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL'S OPEN MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 14<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2013 AT 8.00PM  
IN SPELDHURST VILLAGE HALL**

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**PRESENT:** Cllr. Mrs Lynn Jeffreys - Chairman, together with nine Parish Councillors, Borough Cllrs David Jukes and Julian Stanyer and 30 parishioners.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr C May – Clerk; Mrs M Flemington – Assistant Clerk

Financial information papers were available to those present

- 1. Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs Mrs Hull, Pendleton and Turner
- 2. Chairman's Introduction** - Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing Hilary Smith Economic Development Manager for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC)
- 3. The community right to nominate and bid for assets of community value** - Hilary Smith started by explaining that this legislation has been in place since November 2012 as part of the Localism Act and applies to assets whose current or recent use furthers the social wellbeing of the local community e.g. village shops, pubs, community centres and libraries. An asset has to be nominated by a local group which must have at least 21 members from the electoral roll. The Parish Council (as an existing legal entity) or a neighbouring Parish Council can nominate an asset regardless of the number of councillors. Nomination forms are on TWBC website and the information on [www.mycommunityrights.org.uk](http://www.mycommunityrights.org.uk) is also helpful. When a nomination is received TWBC have to notify the landowner and make a decision within 8 weeks. The landowner has the right to appeal TWBC's decision and thereafter to apply to a government tribunal if they are still unhappy with the decision.

An asset that has been nominated and selected by TWBC remains on the registered list for 5 years (also notified to the Land Registry and Land Charges register). If the owner wants to sell a listed asset he has to advise TWBC and the group that nominated the asset has 6 weeks to decide whether it wants to make a bid and if the answer is yes it has a 6 months moratorium period to arrange finance. The owner is not obliged to sell to the nominating group but cannot sell to a third party during this time.

There are currently two properties registered; The Ridgeway Centre, Southborough and The Royal Oak pub, Prospect Road, Tunbridge Wells and one other has been nominated and is being considered; The Royal Oak pub, Pembury.

Grants may be available and the Campaign for Real Ale is already quite involved with pubs under this scheme. Hilary Smith suggested that it is worth nominating an asset that is of community value even if a sale or business closure is not necessarily imminent. She also said that TWBC will assist groups with the nomination procedure.

4. **Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Ward Walks** – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that the report on the 2013 Ward Walks has been received from TWBC. She said that residents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the area but that common concerns were traffic speed and congestion, highway maintenance, planning and development, slow broadband and aircraft noise.
5. **Parish Plan** – Cllr Woodward explained that the decision has been made to prepare a Parish Plan as this is more appropriate for the parish than a Neighbourhood Plan. Parish Plans have to be considered in each planning application submitted. He said that the parish plan working group currently comprises four parish councillors and ten parishioners. More volunteers are required and the project needs to be led by a parishioner rather than a parish councillor to enable community-led grants to be accessed. A survey of the whole parish will be carried out and further volunteers will be needed to assist with this. He asked any parishioners interested in helping with and/or leading the project to contact the Clerk.
6. **Langton Green Recreation Ground Pavilion** – Cllr Milner reported that planning permission has now been granted for the rebuilding of the pavilion at Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG). The work will be carried out by Langton Green Sports Club (LGSC) and paid for by grants from the Football Association and fundraising by the Club. Part of the grant agreement is to ensure that LGRG and the pavilion will be used for sports for at least the next thirty years. The new pavilion will be managed by Speldhurst Parish Council and will be let to other users as well as being used by LGSC.
7. **War Memorials** – Cllr Milner reported that Speldhurst Parish Council has organised and paid for the cleaning and re-pointing of the Speldhurst and Langton Green War Memorials ready for 2014. He reminded everyone that references should always be to the First World War and not World War I.
8. **Highways** – Cllr Mrs Podbury reported that during the last year the Parish Council has implemented speed reduction measures on Groombridge and Ashurst hills and installation of an interactive speed sign on Langton Road, Speldhurst. She explained the details of the highway safety works to take place in December at the junction of Barden Road and Speldhurst Hill. She asked residents to report any accidents they witness in the parish to the Clerk and said that more speed watch volunteers are needed.
9. **Langton Green Primary School** – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys introduced Katrina Lyle a school governor and parent. Katrina Lyle said that the governors are aiming for good communication between the school and the local community. She explained that the proposed expansion of the school has not been confirmed but they are assuming it will go ahead and there has been a two class entry into reception this term. She reported that this is already causing a considerable strain on parking and the school are trying to encourage more people to walk to school each day. She said they hope that they have found a ‘lollipop person’, KCC highways are currently assessing the best place for a lollipop crossing and that the school will plan to implement the ‘walking bus’ policy.
10. **Question and Answer Session** - Cllr Mrs Jeffreys invited questions and comments from members of the public to parish councillors and borough councillors on any other matters of interest or concern. She also asked parishioners to leave their email address on the register on the Clerks’ table if they are interested in volunteering for the parish plan and/or speed watch or if they would like to receive agendas of meetings by email.  
Chris Mann asked about Broadband – Cllr Woodward reported that is proving a long complicated procedure, but that the BT program of work is due to be published at the end of October. Nick Critchlow said that he has asked the MP on several occasions to refer BT to the monopolies commission and that BT is refusing to ‘unbundle’ the Langton Green exchange.  
Derek Robinson said that he is increasingly disturbed by aircraft noise and thanked the Gatwick working group and David Howden for all their work. Cllr Mrs Podbury said that David Howden is trying to arrange a meeting with Greg Clark MP in November. Cllr Mrs Soyke said that a letter is being prepared to be sent from Greg Clark’s office to ask councils if they are interested in working together to make representation to the government on Gatwick airport noise and expansion proposals.

Derek Robinson suggested the parish council could have links to email forums on their website.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

CHAIRMAN

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