

Speldhurst Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON

MONDAY, 21st JULY 2008 at 7.45pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL, ASHURST

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

2067 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Personal Cllr. Mrs Soyke - Ashurst Village Play Area / Registering of Common Ground
Personal Cllr. Ellis – Trustee, Langton Green Charitable Trust
Personal Cllr. Parker – Trustee, Langton Green Charitable Trust

2068 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs. Mrs Podbury, Brown and Langridge – all on holiday

2069 MINUTES: The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th June, having previously been distributed to members, were approved and signed with the following amendment being approved :

Item 1960 – the surgery was on 10th June and not 3rd June as stated.

2070 AGENDA ITEMS

2071 Register of Member`s Interests – Annual Review

Councillors were requested to return completed forms to the Clerk as soon as possible.

2072 Your Parish Council

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys advised that the Clerk had prepared a draft `Your Parish Council` which once approved could be included in village magazines and on the Parish Council web site to give parishioners more of an idea of the role of the Parish Council. The contents were discussed and Cllr. Colley suggested a number of amendments / inclusions which would be further considered.

2073 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations – Adoption by Council

Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys informed the meeting that the clerk had prepared an updated version of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which were already in use by the Council. The revised edition included decisions made by the Council over the last three years and would enable new councillors to be fully updated.

Copies of both documents, having been distributed with the Agenda, were discussed.

Standing Orders : Cllr. Colley suggested a change to the wording of the second main sentence regarding the implementation of Council Policy. A discussion followed and the clerk would obtain clarification.

Financial Regulations : these were unanimously agreed.

2074 Parish Council Questionnaire

Cllr. Langridge suggested that a Parish Council Questionnaire should be sent to all parishioners to enable the Parish Council to be more informed of local concerns. A discussion took place regarding costs and distribution. It was agreed that Cllr. Langridge should prepare a draft questionnaire to be circulated with the September Agenda.

2075 Parish Council Notice Board – Langton Green

The clerk had recently attended a Standards Committee Meeting when it was pointed out that Parish Council notice boards should be placed in a communal place ideally outside the building where the Parish Council meetings took place.

The clerk was asked to contact the Trustees.

Cllr. Mrs Soyke advised that there was no Parish Council notice board in Ashurst.

1825-3 Ashurst Village Play Area / Registering of Common Ground

Cllr. Mrs Soyke asked for the Council's approval to the following way forward :

- Appoint a Committee to consist mainly of Ashurst residents with Parish Council members
- The common ground to be cleared
- Appoint a Playground Consultant to advise on costings, layout and number of pieces of equipment
- Committee to draw up a questionnaire
- Assess questionnaire
- Apply for Planning Permission

The above was unanimously agreed.

1887-4Highways

i) Highways Projects

The clerk's meeting with her new liaison officer had been cancelled as there was nothing to report.

The clerk had met with two Highways Officers regarding the extension to the Lampington Row footpath and by chance one of these officers had taken over from Andy Smart. The Highways Projects list was discussed and the officer felt that there were a number of good and realistic items on this list which he felt could be implemented with Parish funding.

ii) Crossing from the Recreation Ground to The Twitten

The clerk had chased Jacobs but no reply had been received.

iii) Speldhurst Hill – safe crossing

The clerk had chased Jacobs but no reply had been received.

iv) **Barden Road – footpaths**

The clerk had chased Jacobs but no reply had been received.

1935 Heathgate Corner

Highways had completed most of the work. The clerk was asked to request that overgrown vegetation be cut back from the newly placed repeater signs.

1939-7 Langton Green School – Safer Crossing Area

It was unanimously agreed that the Chairman and Clerk should sign the Deed of Easement on behalf of the Parish Council.

1960 Parish Council Surgeries

14th July – attended by Cllrs. Mrs Jeffreys, Mrs Hull, Mrs Paulson-Ellis, Colley, Elis, Parker and the Clerk.

Although no members of the public had attended the surgery, Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys felt that these were extremely useful for Councillors.

1887-7 Play and Teen Areas

Good attendance at the recent Opening and it was good to see the play area being used daily.

Problem with the turf and Cllrs. Mrs Soyke and Ellis would liaise.

2007-2 Ashurst Interactive Speed Sign

Clerk to chase Highways on information for an interactive speed sign.

2015 P.A.C.T. (Partners and Communities Together)

The clerk had asked PCSO Ray Nuttall for an update. Discuss in September.

2028-3 TWBC – Affordable Housing Needs Survey – A meeting, attended by most Councillors, had taken place with Richard Hall and Sarah Lewis.

Although Councillors had some reservations it was unanimously agreed to proceed with a survey and the clerk would inform Richard Hall.

2042 Ball Stop Netting - Installation would start on 24th July.

2043 Trustees of Langton Green Charitable Trust – letter dated 31st March 2008

- i) **Public Liability Insurance** – the Trustees had agreed to increase their Public Liability Insurance to £5M.
- ii) **Transfer to the Parish Council of the strip of land to the side of the former Watson Hall** – Donaldson West had confirmed that Keogh Caisley`s legal fees to act on behalf of the Trustees would be in the region £1,200 - £1,400. Although these fees were unanimously agreed, councillors felt that they were excessive and would not expect them to exceed this amount. It was

unanimously agreed to similar fees for Donaldson West acting on behalf of the Parish Council. Total fees of £3,000 were unanimously agreed.

iii) **Future expansion of the Langton Green Village Hall** - Nothing to report.

2042 BT Telephone Box – Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys advised that only 32 calls had been made during the period September 06 – September 07 and Councillors unanimously agreed to accept BT's decision to remove this kiosk.

2059 Appointment of Parish Council Representative on Langton Green Charitable Trust – it was hoped to appoint a representative in time for the September meeting.

2062-7 Parking Concerns – The Grange – The Parish Council had voiced their concerns regarding parking when the development was first proposed.

Cllrs. Colley, Ellis and the Clerk had made a site visit. It was unanimously agreed that extending the double yellow lines would push the parking problem further into First Street.

2062-8 Parking in Stonewall Park Road – Following a site visit by Cllrs. Colley, Ellis and the Clerk it was agreed to monitor.

2062-11 Repeater Signs – Speldhurst Hill - at the Speldhurst gateway there is a 30mph sign in a prominent position and a distinctive asphalt threshold across the road emphasising the speed restriction. From that point, there are three 30 mph repeater signs visible before the junction with Wallers.

As Kent Highways had confirmed that these signs have been placed in appropriate places it was unanimously agreed that no further action was required and the clerk was asked to inform Mr Bartlett accordingly.

2062-12 Langton Green Charitable Trust

i) **Nursery School Extended Hours** – Following a discussion it was unanimously agreed to the proposed extended hours with a pro rata increase in the Licence fees.

ii) **Retractable Awning / Blind** – There was no objection to this and the Trustees would be asked to keep the Parish Council updated.

2076 MATTERS FOR UPDATING – from the Minutes dated 16th June 2008

1965 Conservation Area – Nothing to report

1975 Parking Concerns – Parish Council signs – The clerk was collecting the signs that week.

2018-3 – Speed hump and Give Way white lining inside the gates to the LGRG – the clerk was asked to obtain a quotation.

2047-2 Barbed wire fencing at the top of Groombridge Hill. Cllr. Stevens would investigate.

2062-1 Draft Housing Allocation Policy – it was agreed that the Clerk should respond to TWBC`s request :

`Speldhurst Parish Council would like the revised Allocation Policy to give priority for all social housing to people with a local connection within the Parish`

2062-2 South East Regional Assembly – The report by Cllr. Mrs Podbury was duly noted.

2062-3 Accident on A264 – a follow up letter to be sent

2062-4 Councillors Information Training Days – Cllrs. Mrs Hull, Brown, Colley and Langridge had attended the training day and found it excellent.

2062-9 Overhanging trees from The Twitten – Roopers – Cllr. Stevens had arranged a site visit by Jonathan Bibby to ascertain ownership.

2077 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

1. Holmewood Ridge East Limited – concerns with increased traffic using Barrow Lane. Delay until after meeting at Holmewood House School
2. Holmewood House School – Development of School – invitation to meeting on 23rd August at 9.45am. As a number of councillors would be attending in their capacity as neighbours, the clerk was asked to request an invitation to be sent to Cllr. Langridge.
3. Langton Green Charitable Trust – increase in fees for users of VH as from January 2009.
4. Twitten opposite LGRG – A copy Highways report had been received advising that the drains had been cleared which should improve the flooding problem. The ditch urgently needed excavating or a pipe put in.
5. Request for convex mirror on the north side of Langton Road opposite Stonewall Park Road – these mirrors were illegal and not recognised by Kent Highways.
6. Copy of letter sent to Greg Clark MP by Speldhurst Village Society – concerns with regard to traffic through the village. The clerk was asked to write to The Chapel asking if the car park could be utilised for residents` parking.

2078 DIARY DATES

2nd September – Parish Council Surgery – Speldhurst Village Hall 2 - 3.30pm

8th September – Parish Council Meeting – Speldhurst Village Hall 7.45pm

2079 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Chairman`s Report. Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys reported on her recent Chairman`s meeting. Area Planning Committees were being reviewed and for a 12 month trial there would be one Chair for both Eastern and Western Committees.

All Parishes were finding Highways frustrating.

William Benson – appointed new Monitoring Officer.

Planning. Cllr. Mrs Paulson-Ellis reported on the meetings held on 18th June and 14th July 2008, the Minutes having previously been distributed to Councillors. Cllr. Mrs Paulson- Ellis expressed the concerns of the Planning Committee that tennis courts could be seen as `previously developed land` and the Clerk was asked to contact TWBC`s planning department for their ruling on this.

As the meeting had reached its 2 hour duration, and there were a number of important issues still to discuss and consider, Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys asked for approval of the Council to continue the meeting.

Finance. The Planning Committee had met on 30th June 2008, the Minutes having previously been distributed to Councillors.

Cllr. Mrs Soyke (Chairman of the Finance Committee) asked for the Parish Council`s approval to the following :

- i) **Delegated Powers of Expenditure** – it was unanimously agreed that the Committee could spend £2,000 before seeking approval of the full Council.
- ii) **Legal fees – Transfer of Land either side of the `Watson Hall`** - it was unanimously agreed to a maximum spend of £3,000 on legal fees.
- iii) **Community Funding Bids as part of the Budget Process** – A lengthy discussion took place and it was agreed that Cllrs. Mrs Jeffreys and Colley should separately put something in writing for the September meeting.
- iv) **Grants outside of the Parish** – as iii) above
- v) **Council`s approval to Finance Committee`s recommendation of Grant to Speldhurst Village Hall** – kitchen island - £1,800 – this was unanimously agreed.
- vi) **Council`s approval to weekly inspection of Play Areas - £1,878 per annum** – details having previously been circulated to all councillors, this grant was unanimously approved
- vii) **The United Parish of Speldhurst with Groombridge and Ashurst – Grant request – replacement amplification system** – a further letter had been received from St Mary`s Church requesting £13,000 towards this cost. The Council felt that this was not something that they could consider at this time and the clerk was asked to obtain further information.

Footpaths. Cllr. Stevens reported that Jonathan Bibby would take a look at the Newlands flooding problems and also The Twitten behind Roopers.

Recreation. Cllr. Ellis advised that the Recreation Ground was looking extremely good and asked if the clerk would chase for a litter bin to be placed alongside the re-cycling bins.

K.A.L.C. Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys advised that both Cllrs. Mrs Soyke and Podbury wished to step down as KALC representatives and Cllr. Colley offered to fill this role and was duly appointed.

2080 Mayor to visit all Parish Council – delay discussion until September meeting.

2081 ACCOUNTS TO BE PAID – July 2008

1.	RIP	£	123.38	Canine Refuse
2.	Langton Green CT	£	11.88	Hire of Hall
3.	Treework	£	481.75	Trees – Pocket Park Roopers
4.	M.R. Lawrence	£	180.00	Grass cutting Roopers
5.	M.R. Lawrence	£	180.00	Grass Cutting - Roopers
6.	M.R. Lawrence	£	130.00	Hedges - Roopers
7.	M.R. Lawrence	£	400.00	Trees and Strimming LGRG
8.	EDF Energy	£	36.61	Street Lighting
9.	Aaron`s Trees	£	200.00	Trees - LGRG
10.	Teambase	£	145.79	Stationery
11.	David Peacock	£	57.81	2 x Posters
12.	BT	£	210.71	Telephone / Fax
13.	Open Spaces Society	£	30.00	Subscription
14.	Speldhurst Netball	£	357.00	Agreed Grant - Affiliation Fees
15.	St John`s Church	£	400.00	Agreed Grant – Churchyard Maintenance
16.	Speldhurst Village Fete	£	500.00	Agreed Grant – Fete Insurance
17.	Cllr. Ron Ellis	£	46.41	Refreshments – Play Opening
18.	Cllr. Ed Langridge	£	52.52	Travel Expenses
19.	Pauline Lambell	£	124.85	Play Area Expenses
20.	Pauline Lambell	£	272.81	Travel, Stamps copying
21.	Pauline Lambell	£	211.50	Signs – Parking on Pavements
22.	C. Worcester	£	2,065.00	Decoration – LGRG Pavilion
23.	C. Worcester	£	134.00	Repairs Guttering / Tiles LGRG
24.	C. Worcester	£	257.00	Gates - LGRG
25.	Pauline Lambell	£	1,235.93	Salary
26.	Inland Revenue	£	454.71	Tax / NI
27.	Speldhurst VH	£	1,800.00	Agreed Grant – Kitchen Island
TOTAL			£10,099.66	

2082 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1. Cllr. Colley reported that the Marchiennes visit had been cancelled.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm

CHAIRMAN