



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

**NOTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD ON MONDAY 8th APRIL AT 7.30PM
IN LANGTON GREEN VILLAGE HALL**

There were 11 Councillors and two Clerks in attendance along with Borough Cllrs Jukes and Stanyer and KCC member for TW West John Davies.

There were 30 groups and organisations represented and about 100 people in attendance.

Parish Council Chairman Cllr Mrs Jeffreys opened the meeting and welcomed everyone attending. She referred everyone to the brochures of village activities that have been produced and were available this evening and thanked everyone in the Parish who had participated. Copies of the brochure are available from the Parish Council Office. If you would like a copy please contact the Clerk on 01892 862927 or clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys then introduced the evening's speaker, Inspector Simon Wilshaw of Kent Police. She explained that he had kindly agreed to speak tonight following apologies from the scheduled speaker Chief Inspector Nicola Faulconbridge who was unwell and sent her apologies.

Inspector Wilshaw started by saying he is based at Tunbridge Wells Police Station, covering the whole of Tunbridge Wells Borough and that in 2011/2012 Tunbridge Wells was the lowest crime area in Kent (for the previous ten years it had been Sevenoaks District).

He said that the theft of heating oil and scrap metal are currently the biggest theft issues in the area. He urged people to consider property marking, oil tank locks and to be involved in, or set up a local Neighbourhood Watch Group.

He also confirmed that road safety is a big issue, particularly speeding. He currently works in the Community Safety Unit in the Town Hall and said that Cllr Caroline Derrick has set up T.W.I.T.A. (Tunbridge Wells is traffic aware) community road safety.

He advised that the Police Helicopter system is now national and that Kent Police have various sports teams and very much enjoy friendly fixtures against local teams and clubs.

Inspector Wilshaw invited questions:

Q. What is Kent police policy regarding monitoring of burglar alarms?

A. Kent Keylink makes a small charge for monitoring householder alarms and are partners with Kent Police

Q. Can the Police respond when burglar alarm companies call them?

A. Yes, but they always have to prioritise calls

Q. How do the Police deal with underage drinking in Tunbridge Wells?

A. Misuse of alcohol is a problem. The Police are involved with KCC Youth Workers, parents, trading standards, the Community Safety Unit and diversionary programmes.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys thanked Inspector Wilshaw for his interesting and informative talk and for answering residents' questions.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys introduced Kent County Councillor Peter Lake.

Cllr Lake said that until 2nd May 2013 he is the KCC representative on Gatwick and represents residents who have concerns about Gatwick now and in the future. He is standing down on 2nd May after 20 years with KCC.

He advised that currently there are 11,200 night flights during the summer and 6,200 during the winter with accompanying noise and pollution issues, whereas at Heathrow there are very few night flights. He also said he would like to see developments in aircraft to make engines less noisy particularly when landing. He said that the current owners of Gatwick want to build a second runway and would like Gatwick ultimately to be larger than Heathrow.

He explained that residents can attend GATCOM meetings for information but not speak at them and spoke of the good work that the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) does. Speldhurst Parish Council is a member of GACC.

Cllr Lake invited questions:

Q. Why is there a reluctance to develop Manston Airport?

A. Because it is too far from London with poor road communications.

Q. Wouldn't Manston be best for travel to the Europe?

A. In many ways it would but the distance and poor transport from London makes it impractical.

Q. What are the concerns about Gatwick expansion related to oil and emissions?

A. Aircraft are in fact becoming 'cleaner'.

Other points made by residents:

Could a second runway at Gatwick be 'exchanged' for a ban or reduction on night flights?

Will there really be the demand for all these additional flights?

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys thanked Cllr Peter Lake for his interesting and informative talk and for answering residents' questions.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys introduced Rev. Michael Gentry of All Saints' Church, Langton Green.

Rev. Gentry started by explaining the background to the building of All Saints' Church in Langton Green in 1863 and that 2013 is the 150th Anniversary of the Church. He said that they are planning lots of celebrations which are being launched by the Bishop of Rochester on 12th May and will include a children's day in September, re-dedication of the Church in October and the burying of a time capsule at the end of the year. He added that the new heating is currently being installed in the Church.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys introduced Pi Townsend of Tunbridge Wells Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Pi Townsend advised that CAB in Tunbridge Wells has now moved to a new building behind the County Court. She said that we are in a time of unprecedented need for CAB advice in the Borough and that the advice given is not just about benefits and debts as many people assume.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys introduced Peter Brown West Kent Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator.

Mr Brown thanked Inspector Wilshaw for his informative talk and encouraged residents to visit the Neighbourhood Watch table this evening. He stressed the need for security and common sense actions and precautions. He suggested that we should all join Neighbourhood Watch or set one up if there is not one in our immediate area. He also advised that some Insurance Companies give a reduction in premium if you belong to Neighbourhood Watch.

Cllr Mrs Jeffreys thanked all the speakers, all the residents who attended and Cllrs Langridge, Cllr Mrs Podbury and the Assistant Clerk for their hard work in organising this Annual Parish Assembly.

The formal business of the meeting closed at 8.26pm

Chairman