

**Local Government Act 1972**



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

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**

**Held at 7.30 pm on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 in the Palmer Room, Langton Green Village Hall**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllrs Curry (Chair), Lyle (Vice-Chair), Cleaver, Dickens, Ellery, Leach, Littlefield, Norton and Rowe.

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

K Neve, Clerk and K Harman (KH) Assistant Clerk (minutes).

**IN ATTENDANCE**

There were no county or borough councillors in attendance.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were 2 members of the public present.

**25/01 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting**

The Chair read out the following statement: "An audio recording has been started. It will be used to ensure our minutes are accurate, but be aware that your voice may be recorded, and the recording could be requested from us via Freedom of Information."

**25/02 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Tarricone and Turner (health reasons) and Davies (prior engagement). Apologies were also received from County Cllr McInroy and Borough Cllrs Britcher-Allan, Sankey and Sharratt.

**25/03 Disclosure of Interests**

Councillors' ongoing disclosures were noted:

Cllrs Curry, Ellery and Rowe have shares in the Speldhurst shop and post office.

**25/04 Declarations of Lobbying**

There were none.

**25/05 Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 – RESOLVED** to approve that the minutes, previously forwarded to Members, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**25/06 Public Open Session**

Andy Thompson enquired if Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) was aware of Dragonfly Farm before it carried out its consultation for the new Speldhurst shop and post office. The Chair directed him to the minutes of SPC's December meeting when this question was discussed, and it had been established that there was no conflict.

Mr Thompson went on to enquire how the parish council intended to meet the £30,000 predicted expenditure for the pavilion in 2025. Councillors explained that various income sources would be considered. Cllr Ellery said that the parish council had always held a reserve account for the pavilion and balanced its books at the end of each year, taking a responsible approach which it would continue to do. Cllr Lyle added that the restrictions put on the lease by the Football Foundation made it extremely difficult for SPC to raise extra income from the facility.

Richard Long was attending in County Cllr McInroy's absence. He raised the matter of devolution and the effects this could have on elections. The Chair explained that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) were providing a training session for staff and councillors on Devolution in the coming week.

**25/07 Borough and County Councillors' Reports**Borough Cllr Sharratt:

- [English Devolution White Paper](#), - restructuring of local government.
- [Parking Strategy: 2025-30 | Talking Point Tunbridge Wells](#) – in particular item 7.5.2 on page 14.

County Cllr McInroy:

- Devolution: More information regarding the accelerated timetable and elections should be known soon. Agreement between Kent County Council (KCC) and Medway Authorities was required before Kent applies for the first tranche in 2027 or is by default placed in the second tranche in 2028.

Borough Cllr Britcher-Allan:

- English Devolution White Paper - the importance of working together with neighbouring parishes.
- Shadwell Woods indecent exposure incident. Do not approach or confront and report immediately to 999.
- Cold weather alert - keep an eye out for elderly/vulnerable neighbours. Rusthall Community Larder is open to all (no referral needed) Fridays 12.30 - 1.15pm.

**25/08 Clerk's Report**

- Devolution Update: Councillors were encouraged to sign up to the update being provided by TWBC.
- Councillor training – Councillors were asked to let the Clerk know if able to attend.
- The Tunbridge Wells Infrastructure Statement 2023/24 regarding Section 106 payments was circulated.
- Information from the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) – Kent Police meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December was circulated.

**25/09 General Matters – Actionable tasks which do not fall to a committee.**

Ongoing				
	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
20/24	Contact TWBC Licensing regarding alcohol licence for the Pavilion.	Clerk	06/02/24	In progress
76/24	Renew website provision subscription when received.	Clerk	02/09/24	Complete
80/24	Draft email regarding Emirates flight pattern.	Cllr Tarricone/Clerk	02/09/24	In progress
81/24	Schedule Air Traffic Committee Meeting. <i>To be closed as ATC is being dissolved.</i>	Clerk	02/09/24	Closed
85/24	Take out a Public Sector Deposit Fund with CCLA.	Clerk	07/10	Complete
99/24	Establish working group to carry out review of the pavilion.	Chair/Clerk	04/11	Closed On agenda

99/24	Investigate parking survey with KCC. <i>To be closed.</i>	Chair	04/11	Closed
103/24	Circulate the following to councillors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better Streets Consultation</li> <li>• Remote Meetings Consultation</li> <li>• Councillor Training Details</li> <li>• KALC Award Details</li> <li>• Toy Appeal Collection Points</li> </ul>	Clerk	02/12	Complete
104/24	Confirm and pay grant to Speldhurst Church and update Grants List.	Clerk	02/12	Complete
105/24	Set up agreed EMRs.	Clerk	02/12	Complete
106/24	Include precept item on January Full Council agenda.	Clerk	02/12	Complete
107/24	Advertise co-option vacancy and contact interested resident.	Clerk	02/12	Complete
108/24	Confirm and pay CCTV renewal.	Clerk	02/12	Complete
109/24	Update committee membership and Standing Orders on website and in councillors' folder.	Clerk	02/12	Complete
110/24	Include item on January Full Council agenda on the future of the Air Traffic Committee.	Clerk	02/12	Complete
	<b>New</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Created</b>	<b>Status</b>
01/25	Notify TWBC of precept.	Clerk	06/01/25	
02/25	Article on precept for Website, Newsletters and Social Media.	Cllr Rowe/Asst Clerk (CB)	06/01/25	
03/25	Include item on Governance Agenda re data on SPC activities.	Clerk	06/01/25	
04/25	Confirm nomination for KALC Community Award.	Clerk/Asst Clerk (CB)	06/01/25	
05/25	Follow up with interested residents for councillor vacancy.	Clerk	06/01/25	
06/25	Contact new Chair of LGCSA to request a meeting and follow up with Working Party. (Cllrs Curry, Davies, Dickens & Leach with Cllr Lyle as an additional resource if required)	Chair	06/01/24	

**25/10 Committees and Working Groups (WG) and other Reports: to include any meetings held since the last Full Council meeting, the draft minutes having previously been forwarded to all Members**

- a) **Governance Committee** – Cllr Ellery: There had been no meeting. Nothing to report.
- b) **Highways Committee** – Cllr Norton:
- 16<sup>th</sup> December meeting: A letter had been sent to the Cabinet member for Highways at KCC explaining the frustration felt by members at the lack of progress despite constant chasing.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> January meeting with Mike Martin MP which had been very constructive and indicated SPC's problems were similar to other parishes. A campaign for a speed camera in each village was also discussed.
  - Meetings were being held with Withyham Parish Council and The Pig regarding a footbridge across the river Grom.
  - A meeting was scheduled with the Head of Langton Green Primary School to move outstanding priorities forward.
- c) **Amenities Committee** – Cllr Mrs Lyle: There had been no meeting; the next would be on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025.
- d) **Air Traffic Committee** – Cllr Curry: Due to the lack of volunteers on this committee, he suggested its dissolution with items requiring action being brought to Full Council on an ad hoc basis. It was **RESOLVED** to dissolve the Air Traffic Committee. Cllr Norton offered to send the letter to Emirates regarding frequent and low-flying planes.
- e) **Environment WG (EWG)** – There had been no meeting.

- f) **KALC** – Cllr Curry. Devolution was a current topic for discussion. The format of meetings was under consideration following feedback from members.

### 25/11 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Rowe, Finance Committee Chair

There had been no meeting of the Finance Committee since the last Full Council meeting.

- a) Report on budget virements: there were none.  
b) Interim payments made since the last meeting:

#### Unity Trust Bank Account

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction Detail
03/12/2024	St Mary's Church, Speldhurst	MT2854	250.00	Grant - Clock on Church Tower
06/12/2024	Speldhurst Community Shop Ltd	MT2855	3,750.00	Lease Payments Reimbursement
06/12/2024	Abacus Playgrounds (South)	MT2856	13,038.00	Wetpour Surfacing Overlay
06/12/2024	The Living Forest Ltd	MT2857	1,800.00	Works and Hedges at Roopers
06/12/2024	Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2858	42.75	Room Hire
06/12/2024	Kidman's Ltd	MT2859	55.37	Oil and Machinery for Stihl
06/12/2024	WJ-Sunstone	MT2860	2,275.50	CCTV Maintenance Agreement
06/12/2024	M R Lawrence	MT2861	555.00	Mowing and Strimming
10/12/2024	Ashford Security	MT2862	124.80	Annual Fire Alarm Maintenance
10/12/2024	Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd	MT2863	420.00	LGRG Pitch Maintenance
10/12/2024	Knockout Print	MT2864	48.00	Warning Sign for LGRG
13/12/2024	Unity Trust Mastercard	Mastercard	410.83	To bring balance to zero
16/12/2024	M R Lawrence	MT2864	190.00	Mowing and Strimming
17/12/2024	Castle Water	DD	38.59	Pavilion Water
20/12/2024	Capel Groundcare	MT2866	707.60	Repair of Playground Spinner
20/12/2024	Scott Partnership	MT2867	304.80	Groombridge Bench Refurbishment
27/12/2024	Rentokil/Initial	DD	149.23	Sanitary Unit Contract
28/12/2024	Veolia	DD	236.39	Waste and Recycling
30/12/2024	Hugo Fox	DD	11.99	Monthly Website Charges
31/12/2024	Unity Trust Bank	DD	11.40	Monthly Bank Charges

#### Unity Trust Mastercard

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction Detail
02/12/2024	Unity Trust Bank	DD	9.00	Credit Card Monthly Charge
02/12/2024	George & Dragon	MC460	313.35	Thank You Reception
02/12/2024	The Knowledge Store	MC461	11.24	Legionella Training
11/12/2024	K&M Citroen	MC462	250.12	Van Service and MOT
11/12/2024	DVLA	MC463	337.50	Vehicle Tax

- c) To note decisions made under delegated authority – there were none.
- d) Renewal of authority to use Direct Debits and Bank Transfers (BACS):  
Two amendments were made: Hugo Fox is paid annually rather than monthly; and the Public Works Loan should be for the chapel and not the pavilion. **RESOLVED** to approve the list of payments.  
**RESOLVED** to continue the use of Direct Debits and Bank Transfers (BACS) as a method of payment.

Name	Frequency	Last Paid	Amount	Last Payment Made
BT/EE – Office Mobile	Monthly	10/12/24	£26.93	£26.93
BT– Office Broadband / Phone	Monthly	30/12/24	£69.42	£69.42
Castle Water – Pavilion	Monthly	17/12/24	Variable	£38.59
Data Protection	Annually	02/08/24	£35.00	£35.00
EDF – Pavilion Electricity	Monthly	20/12/24	£667.00	£667.00
Hugo Fox – Website	Monthly	30/12/24	£11.99	£11.99
KCS – Photocopier	Monthly Quarterly	13/12/24 15/10/24	Variable £126.95	£5.34 £126.95
Lloyds Bank Corporate – Mastercard	Monthly	13/12/14	Variable	£410.83
NEST – Pensions	Monthly	10/12/24	Variable	£703.37
NPower Commercial – Street lights	Annually	25/04/24	Variable	£94.47
Public Works Loan – Office	6 monthly	27/11/24	Variable	£2,339.13
Public Works Loan – Speldhurst Chapel	6 monthly	May 25	Variable	£15,518.75
Rentokil Initial – Pavilion	Annually	27/12/24	Variable	£149.23
Talk Talk – Pavilion Broadband	Monthly	10/12/24	£27.54	£27.54
Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Monthly	28/12/24	Variable	£236.39
Unity Trust Bank – Bank Charges	Monthly	30/12/24	Variable	£11.40

### 25/12 Accounts for Payment

**RESOLVED** that the invoices as listed below and checked by Cllr Littlefield be paid.

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction Detail
03/01/2025	Kate Harman	MT2876	4.99	Expenses
07/01/2025	Katie Neve	MT2868	26.10	Expenses
07/01/2025	Mr L Cooper	MT2869	16.24	Expenses
07/01/2025	Tivoli	MT2870	140.63	Canine Waste Removal
07/01/2025	Viking Direct	MT2871	97.18	Toilet Roll for Pavilion
07/01/2025	m:power accounting	MT2872	57.60	Salary Administration
07/01/2025	Cloudy IT	MT2873	268.32	IT Services
07/01/2025	Brooklynn Monk	MT2877	80.00	Pavilion Cleaning
10/01/2025	BT PLC	DD	26.93	Office Mobile
10/01/2025	Talk Talk Business	DD	27.54	Pavilion Broadband

10/01/2025	N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	DD	858.93	Pensions
16/01/2025	Unity Trust Mastercard	Mastercard	921.21	To bring balance to zero
20/01/2025	Employees	MT2874	5,160.79	Salaries
20/01/2025	HMRC	MT2875	1,873.62	Income Tax and NI
20/01/2025	EDF Energy	DD	667.00	Pavilion Electricity
20/01/2025	Castle Water	DD	55.00	Pavilion Water
28/01/2025	Veolia	DD	312.41	Waste and Recycling
28/01/2025	Hugo Fox	DD	11.99	Website Subscription
30/01/2025	BT PLC	DD	69.42	Office Broadband and Phone
31/01/2025	Unity Trust Bank	DD	13.80	Bank Charges

### 25/13 Precept 2025/26

- It was **RESOLVED** that the precept request would be £245,361 based on a Band D equivalent, an increase of 8.5%.
- Funds received in the precept for the Public Works Loan repayments which had not been used for this purpose due to a delay in the start date could be put towards pavilion maintenance costs.
- In an effort to improve transparency, Cllr Ellery suggested asking staff to keep basic time-logs. This matter would be considered further at the Governance Committee.

### 25/14 Speldhurst Chapel Project

- Update provided by Cllr Rowe:
  - The sale was complete and SPC now owned the chapel building.
  - The shop would be responsible for registering the lease and the sellers were responsible for registering the overage deed.
  - First annual repayment of £31,037.50 (£13,000 capital and £18,037.50 interest which would decrease over time) would be made in May 2025.
  - Interest was due bi-annually in May and November with the loan being over 25 years.
  - SPC should inform its insurers of the proposed building works.
- There was no further expenditure.

### 25/15 Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) Community Awards Scheme 2025

**RESOLVED** to make the nomination as suggested in the meeting pack.

### 25/16 Update on Vacancy on Council

The deadline for the co-option application had been 23<sup>rd</sup> December. **RESOLVED** that a panel of councillors to interview prospective candidates would consist of any three of Cllrs Curry, Dickens, Leach and Lyle. The Clerk would chase any outstanding candidates and organise interviews.

### 25/17 Annual Parish Meeting 2025

A presentation was in the process of being prepared by Cllrs Curry and Turner.

### 25/18 Planning Committee – Report by Cllr Cleaver

A meeting had been held on 9<sup>th</sup> December and the minutes circulated. It was noted that there was often a general lack of information on Tree Preservation Order (TPO) applications for the felling of trees.

**25/19 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)** – To receive an update on the Pavilion.

- Update on the Community Hub had been circulated. Project Wave had been featured on BBC local radio.
- Update on shared matters with Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA): Cllr Curry would contact the new Chair of LGCSA to discuss a mutually beneficial working relationship going forward.
- **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Davies, Dickens and Leach would join Cllr Curry on a new working group to discuss pavilion matters. Cllr Lyle would be a source of historical reference as required.

**25/20 Chair's Report**

There was nothing further to report that had not already been discussed.

**25/21 Diary Dates** – The following dates were noted:

- 15<sup>th</sup> January - Planning Committee (Wednesday)
- 20<sup>th</sup> January – Amenities Committee
- 27<sup>th</sup> January – Governance Committee
- 3<sup>rd</sup> February – Full Council – Speldhurst Village Hall (SPVH)

**25/22 Items for Information**

The Clerk advised that she had received an open letter from the Chair of KALC which had been circulated.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

**Chair**