

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 in Speldhurst Village Hall**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Borough Cllrs Britcher-Allan and Sankey.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were two members of the public present.

**24/168 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."

**24/169 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Davies due to a family illness.

**24/170 Disclosure of Interests**

Councillors' ongoing disclosures were noted:

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

**24/171 Declarations of Lobbying**

There were none.

### **24/172 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes, previously forwarded to members were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **24/173 Public Open Session**

Garry Saunders was attending to hear an update on parish news and Edward Pinnell was attending regarding the Speldhurst Chapel project. He did not wish to speak specifically but advised he would be happy to contribute when this topic was discussed if required.

### **24/174 Borough and County Councillors' Reports**

#### **Borough Cllr Sankey:**

- He had met with a representative from Kent County Council (KCC) in Speldhurst to discuss the inadequate quality of the newly laid road surface on Etherington and Speldhurst Hills as well as discussing Barden Road. He would report back once more information was known.
- It was expected that the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) Planning Committee would meet during September to discuss the 3G pitch application for the Langton Green Recreation Ground.

#### **Borough Cllr Britcher-Allan:**

- She had been working with local agencies and residents over the summer and reported that there is a serious lack of services available to residents – in particular mental health and police services.
- She will be attending the TWBC Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting in September when it was hoped that Town and Country Housing would attend and issues regarding social housing could be addressed.

**Borough Cllr Sharratt** had sent apologies and submitted a report to the Clerk as follows:

- TWBC hold monthly meetings with KCC to discuss any matters arising regarding the expansion of the Northern Runway at Gatwick. TWBC's representation to the Planning Inspectorate opposing the expansion was circulated by the Clerk. Please contact Cllr Sharratt if you have any concerns so that she can pass them onto the appropriate member of staff at TWBC.
- There is a new Community Support Fund available offering approximately 5 one-off grants of up to £20,000 for specific Covid-19 and resulting cost-of-living crisis recovery projects. The deadline for applications is 12 noon on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024. [Community Support Fund \(tunbridgewells.gov.uk\)](https://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)
- She has called in planning application 24/01882/FULL for 9 Dornden Drive, Langton Green (LG) on material planning considerations of design being substantially bigger, concern for trees and loss of privacy after a number of residents had raised concerns.

### **24/175 Chair's Report**

There was nothing to report that wasn't already covered in other areas of the agenda.

### **24/176 Clerk's Report**

- The Trustees of Langton Green Village Hall had requested payment for the approved grant of £15,000 towards their solar panel project which they hoped would be finished by November. Scaffolding would need to be erected surrounding the village hall for 2-3 weeks to carry out the installation which would cause inconvenience to pedestrians and users of the recreation ground.
- EDF Energy had installed a smart meter at the Pavilion.
- TWBC Community Safety Unit had informed Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) that Travellers had left the Ridgeway site in Southborough on 9<sup>th</sup> August. Following their stay, it was necessary for TWBC to carry out tidying up and disinfecting to the local area which was supported by the TWBC Travellers' Fund.

- A thank you had been received from the Air Ambulance Charity for SPC's grant of £400.
- She had participated in a recent Speedwatch session on the Langton Road during which 3 cars were noted as over the limit despite the road being closed.
- The financial reports were in the new Income and Expenditure format (rather than Receipts and Payments).

**24/177 General Matters** – Actionable tasks which do not fall to a committee.

Ongoing				
	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
07/24	Set up meeting to discuss ongoing relationship with LGCSA.	Cllrs Davies, Mures, Chris Allen & James Bowdidge	08/01/24	In progress
20/24	Contact TWBC Licensing regarding alcohol licence for the Pavilion.	Clerk	06/02/24	In progress
56/24	Confirm and pay grant to Air Ambulance Charity KSS.	Clerk	05/08/24	Complete
57/24	Add Cllr Curry as signatory to Hampshire Trust Bank account.	Clerk	05/08/24	Complete
58/24	Add Cllrs Curry and Norton as signatories to Nationwide BS account.	Clerk	05/08/24	In progress
59/24	Transfer £30,000 from Nationwide BS to Unity Trust Bank account.	Clerk	05/08/24	In progress
60/24	Proceed with purchase of Speldhurst Chapel.	Cllr Rowe/Clerk	05/08/24	In progress
61/24	Confirm and proceed with maintenance report on Pavilion.	Clerk	05/08/24	Complete
62/24	Confirm and pay music licence for Pavilion.	Clerk	05/08/24	Complete
63/24	Liaise with LGCSA on wording of possible joint statement.	Cllr Mures	05/08/24	In progress
64/24	Proceed with purchase of two cradle swings for MUGA.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/08/24	Complete
65/24	Confirm and pay refurbishment costs for benches at Groombridge Green.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/08/24	In progress
66/24	Confirm and proceed with rubber matting replacement at Junior Playground.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/08/24	In progress
67/24	Confirm and proceed with additional fencing repairs.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/08/24	Complete
<b>New – Items arising since last Full Council Meeting</b>				
	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
68/24	Confirm the resolution not to seek the renewal as an asset of community value of the current Speldhurst shop / post office.	Clerk	02/09/24	
69/24	Post notice of conclusion of AGAR on website / noticeboards.	Clerk	02/09/24	
70/24	Order wreaths for Remembrance Sunday Services.	Clerk	02/09/24	
71/24	Circulate date options for Annual Parish Meeting.	Clerk	02/09/24	
72/24	Confirm SPC appointed Trustee to LGVH.	Clerk	02/09/24	
73/24	Forward Community Hub Update to councillors when received.	Clerk	02/09/24	
74/24	Publish LGCSA/SPC joint statement on website.	Clerk	02/09/24	
75/24	Confirm reappointment of Internal Auditor.	Clerk	02/09/24	
76/24	Renew website provision subscription when received.	Clerk	02/09/24	
77/24	Dispose of redundant IT equipment via CeX.	Clerk	02/09/24	
78/24	Put Governance Committee ToFR, CCTV and recording of meetings policies on website.	Clerk	02/09/24	

<b>79/24</b>	Write to cabinet member re Highways proposal.	Cllr Norton/Clerk	02/09/24	
<b>80/24</b>	Draft email regarding Emirates flight pattern.	Cllr Tarricone/Clerk	02/09/24	
<b>81/24</b>	Schedule Air Traffic Committee Meeting.	Clerk	02/09/24	
<b>82/24</b>	Notify TWBC Parish Chair that Cllr Tarricone will attend meeting in place of Cllr Curry.	Clerk	02/09/24	

#### 24/178 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Rowe, Finance Committee Chair

There had not been a meeting of the Finance Committee since the last Full Council meeting.

a) Interim payments since the last meeting:

Unity Trust Current A/c				
List of Interim Payments made between 01/08/2024 and 31/08/2024				
Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction Detail
06/08/2024	PPL PRS Ltd	MT2761	334.53	Music License for Pavilion
12/08/2024	Paul Curry	MT2762	*118.19	2 x Docking Stations & Cables
12/08/2024	Air Ambulance Charity	MT2763	400.00	Grant
12/08/2024	My Personalised Clothing Ltd	MT2764	*23.68	SPC Logo Polo Shirt
14/08/2024	Talk Talk Business	DD	27.54	Pavilion Broadband
19/08/2024	Castle Water	DD	55.25	Pavilion Water

Unity Trust Mastercard				
List of Interim Payments made between 01/08/2024 and 31/08/2024				
Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction Detail
02/08/2024	Unity Trust Bank	DD	9.00	Credit Card Charges
03/08/2024	Toolstation	MC447	*13.15	Wood Screws
06/08/2024	Von Wolf K9	MC448	*28.00	Dog Deterrent Spray
13/08/2024	Amazon Business	MC449	*12.98	Black Sacks for New Bin
14/08/2024	Langton Green Service Station	MC450	*58.43	Fuel
14/08/2024	Amazon Business	MC451	*98.97	Natural Roundup

b) Decisions made under delegated authority are starred\* above.

#### 24/179 Accounts for Payment

It was **RESOLVED** that the invoices as listed below and checked by Cllr Leach be paid.

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction Detail
03/09/2024	Michelmores LLP	MT2765	5,400.00	Speldhurst Chapel Legal Fees
03/09/2024	Kate Harman	MT2766	77.39	Expenses
03/09/2024	Katie Neve	MT2767	33.80	Expenses
03/09/2024	The Living Forest Ltd	MT2768	177.00	Treeworks
03/09/2024	Capel Groundcare	MT2769	240.00	Playground Inspection

03/09/2024	Kidman's Ltd	MT2770	61.91	Equipment Maintenance
03/09/2024	JLM Pest Control	MT2771	230.00	Pest Control
03/09/2024	Tivoli	MT2772	140.63	Canine Waste Collection
03/09/2024	Brooklynn Monk	MT2773	162.00	Pavilion Cleaning
03/09/2024	M R Lawrence	MT2774	350.00	Mowing and Strimming
03/09/2024	LGVH	MT2775	20.50	Room Hire
03/09/2024	Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd	MT2776	840.00	Pitch Maintenance
03/09/2023	Capel Groundcare	MT2782	547.20	Replacement Playground Equipment
10/09/2024	Cloudy IT	MT2777	268.32	IT Support
10/09/2024	m:power accounting	MT2778	57.60	Payroll Administration
10/09/2024	Talk Talk Business	DD	27.54	Pavilion Broadband
10/09/2024	N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	DD	739.54	Pensions
10/09/2024	BT PLC	DD	26.93	Office Mobile Phone
10/09/2024	Hallmaster	MT2781	265.00	Pavilion Booking Licence
13/09/2024	KCC (KCS)	DD	52.50	Photocopier
16/09/2024	Unity Trust Mastercard	Credit Car	220.53	To bring balance to zero
20/09/2024	HMRC	MT2779	1,425.23	Income Tax and NI
20/09/2024	Employees	MT2780	5,160.79	Salaries
20/09/2024	EDF Energy	DD	667.00	Pavilion Energy
30/09/2024	BT PLC	DD	69.42	Office Broadband and Phone

#### 24/180 Speldhurst Chapel Project

- Cllr Rowe provided the following update:
  - The Overage Deed has been agreed with SPC's solicitors and a draft Lease and Licence for Alteration has been sent to the shop's solicitors for their review and agreement.
  - Funding was now up to £388,000, with still some other possible sources of funding to be investigated.
  - A Biodiversity Net Gain report was required urgently as it was currently holding up the planning application submission.
  - Discussions were being held with builders with indicative quotes coming in at between £270,000-£450,000.
  - The fees for legal services had increased by approximately £5,000; however, this was still within SPC's original budget. The increase was due to the application for a Licence for Alteration and the length of time the purchase was taking.
- Expenditure to note: Invoice for £5,400 from Michelmores dated 28/08/2024 in relation to Purchase and Lease of Speldhurst Chapel.
- It was **RESOLVED** that the Community Right to Bid listing is not renewed beyond 4<sup>th</sup> January 2026 for the current Speldhurst Post Office and Stores.

#### 24/181 Audited AGAR 2023-24

The notice of conclusion had been circulated and would be posted on the website and noticeboard as required by the audit process.

#### 24/182 Remembrance Sunday

The following councillors agreed to lay wreaths on behalf of SPC at the village Remembrance Sunday services:

**Ashurst:** Cllr Tarricone

**Langton Green:** Cllr Cleaver

**Old Groombridge:** Cllr Norton

Councillors were asked to let the Clerk know if they were available to lay a wreath at Speldhurst's service.

#### **24/183 Annual Parish Meeting 2025**

After much discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the next APM would be held in Ashurst with an environmental theme. The Clerk would invite David Scully from TWBC to give the presentation he made to the Environment Working Group on bio-diversity net gain, together with TWBC's Tree Officer, Rhodri Jones. Consideration was also given to inviting a representative from one of the water boards. The Clerk was asked to circulate a list of possible dates in 2025 for consideration.

#### **24/184 Appointed Trustee to Langton Green Village Hall**

It was **RESOLVED** to reappoint Malcolm Greenslade as SPC's Trustee to Langton Green Village Hall.

#### **24/185 Vacancy on the Council**

There remains one vacancy.

#### **24/186 Planning Committee**

- Report by Cllr Cleaver: A meeting had been held on 12<sup>th</sup> August, the draft minutes of which had been circulated. Members had remained neutral on all applications with the exception of an application for 28 Holmewood Ridge, Langton Green, which they had objected to, based on overdevelopment of the site. Concern had been raised regarding the close proximity to neighbours should the proposal for 9 Dornden Drive be permitted; however, at the time of the meeting, there had been no feedback from neighbours on the planning portal and members had not considered themselves to have the technical knowledge required to object on planning grounds. A decision was therefore left to the Planning Officer.
- An update on the 3G Pitch Application at Langton Green Recreation Ground:  
Cllr Curry said that the application was likely to be discussed at the September meeting of the TWBC Planning Committee. It was agreed that he would endeavour to attend the meeting to represent SPC; however, he would not register to speak.

#### **24/187 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)**

- Community Hub: An update from the Community Hub would be circulated to councillors once it was received by the Clerk.
- Update on the Pavilion Partnership working with Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA): Cllr Muress read out a joint statement which had been agreed between SPC and the Trustees of LGCSA and which would be published if SPC councillors agreed: "A planning application from the Football Foundation via LGCSA for a 3G pitch at Langton Green will be reviewed by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in the coming weeks. With over 550 comments submitted on the Planning Portal so far, it is clear that all viewpoints, both in support of and against the proposal, have been thoroughly expressed and would have been carefully considered by the Planning Authority. While awaiting Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's decision, both Speldhurst Parish Council and the Trustees of LGCSA will collaborate to manage the Pavilion and recreation ground in a way that maximizes benefit for everyone, in alignment with the outcome of the Planning Authority's decision.
- It was **RESOLVED** by a majority of 9 votes for and 2 votes against to publicise the joint statement between SPC and LGCSA on SPC's website.

#### **24/188 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** – Report by Cllr Lyle, Chair: There had been a meeting of the Governance Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, the draft minutes of which had been circulated.

The following resolutions were then made on the recommendation of the Governance Committee:

- **RESOLVED** to re-appoint April Skies as Internal Auditor for SPC.
  - **RESOLVED** to renew the website provision subscription with Hugo Fox.
  - **RESOLVED** to adopt the Governance Committees’ proposal regarding the disposal of redundant IT equipment.
  - **RESOLVED** to adopt the CCTV Policy.
  - **RESOLVED** to adopt the Photographing, Recording and Filming of Meetings Policy.
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  - **RESOLVED** to adopt the updated Terms of Reference.
- b) **Highways Committee** – Report by Cllr Norton, Chair: There had been a meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> August, the draft minutes of which had been circulated. It was becoming increasingly difficult to move items on the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) forward due to various issues, despite the best efforts of all involved. Cllr Norton had therefore drafted a formal letter on behalf of SPC to the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways along with the local KCC Councillor, plus copying in Mike Martin MP, suggesting a pilot project be set up charging a task group with tackling SPC’s top HIP priorities in an intensive and focused way. Other communities may then be able to learn from the pilot. It was **RESOLVED** that the letter as drafted by Cllr Norton be sent from him and the Chair. (Cllr Leach left the meeting at 8.47pm).
- c) **Amenities Committee** – Report by Cllr Lyle, Chair: There had been no meeting, the next one would be held on 30<sup>th</sup> September.
- d) **Air Traffic Committee** – Report by Cllr Tarricone, Chair: There had been no meeting. It was agreed that Cllr Tarricone should draft an email to raise a specific issue with Emirates, the Civil Aviation Authority and Mike Martin MP regarding a particularly large, low flying plane which causes a daily nuisance by flying very low over the parish. He would additionally speak to Neil Barrington-Johnson for advice regarding the most appropriate local opposition groups SPC should consider aligning with.
- e) **Environment WG (EWG)** – Report by Cllr Turner, Chair: There had been no meeting. A report would be made to the Amenities Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> September regarding the next steps in Pocket Park.
- f) **Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)** – Cllr Curry advised that he was unavailable to attend the next KALC meeting. It was agreed that Cllr Tarricone would represent SPC in his place.

**24/189 Diary Dates** – The following dates were noted:

16<sup>th</sup> September – Planning Committee

23<sup>rd</sup> September – Finance Committee

30<sup>th</sup> September – Amenities Committee

7<sup>th</sup> October – Full Council

**24/190 Items for Information:**

There were none.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.59pm.

**Chair**