

Local Government Act 1972



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

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

Held at 7.30pm on Monday 8th April 2024 at Ashurst Village Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors Curry (Chair), Cleaver, Ellery, Leach, Norton, Rowe, and Turner.

OFFICERS PRESENT

K Neve, Clerk and C Barrett, Assistant Clerk (CB) (minutes).

IN ATTENDANCE

Borough Cllr Sankey was in attendance.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were at least 20 members of the public present.

24/65 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting

The Chair read out the following statement:

We have a computer here taking an audio recording of the meeting, which is used to ensure our minutes are accurate. The recording will be stored at least until the minutes have been finalised, then disposed of per our data protection guidelines. As with most council-held data, as per guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the recording is considered publicly accessible information, so please consider this a 'hot microphone', as anything you say may be picked up by it and held on inspectable record.

24/66 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence.

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Lyle (holiday), Mures (family bereavement), and Davies (family commitments). Apologies were received from Borough Councillor Allen (work commitments) and County Cllr McInroy (prior commitment).

24/67 Disclosure of Interests

Councillors' ongoing disclosures were noted:

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

24/68 Declarations of Lobbying

Cllrs Curry, Leach and Rowe had been lobbied regarding Langton Green Community Sports Association's (LGCSA) 3G pitch application.

24/69 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 4th March 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes of the 4th March 2024 Full Council meeting, previously forwarded to members, were a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair brought item 8, Chair's Report, forward to this point in the meeting and read out the following:

"Good evening, welcome to Ashurst Memorial Village Hall. We have a reasonably busy agenda tonight including updates from the Langton Community Hub.

I was delighted to attend Project Wave, an event at the Hub offering a dance club for those living in the area who have Down's syndrome. This was an event which Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) were happy to donate the Hub hire cost for, and it was a fantastic high-energy evening with an amazing instructor. I commend the organisers for putting on such an excellent course.

I'd like to thank Andy Thompson for raising with us in advance the possibility of calling a Parish Poll. This has really helped our clerking team, and myself, understand this particular tool, so we can work together on coming to an effective outcome. I hadn't heard of a Parish Poll until Andy raised it. It's an interesting instrument – quite similar to an election, in that it is run by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), rather than SPC internally.

We've also taken advice from Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) – the advisory bodies for councils like us - with regard to a potential poll. Their advice has been useful in understanding the circumstances under which one can be called. There is a minimum number of electors who must "second" the motion and the poll should be related to a question, that is discussed and voted on as part of the meeting. A poll can only be called during a Parish Meeting (for example, the Annual Parish Meeting in a few weeks), and cannot be called during a Parish Council Meeting, such as tonight. Finally, the question can only address matters which are within the Parish Council's remit. For this reason, Parish Polls are generally called during Annual Parish Meetings, which is of the correct kind, and where any question, and thus any reasonable poll, may be raised by an elector in the area.

However, a poll delivers no poll cards, and the polling stations are only open from 4-9 pm. There is no proxy voting, no voting by mail, and no online voting. This usually results in a very low turnout. A poll is also purely informational; the result does not bind any party to any outcome, but of course, it can inform. The Parish Council incurs the running costs, which ultimately comes from the precept via Council Tax - your money.

We've been in touch with TWBC about potential costs, and they have indicated that the national average of £5-8,000 should be used as an indicated minimum. For this reason, TWBC and KALC strongly suggest that other avenues are used rather than a poll. For example, we recently sent a questionnaire in the post to every household in the parish with regard to the Speldhurst Chapel Project. This questionnaire got a commendable response rate. It cost well under £2,000 though in that case the Chapel Project also funded the exercise. We would be happy to explore these other options in lieu of calling a poll, if that is deemed satisfactory, as it may be more effective and better value for parishioners.

I'd also note that SPC's comments so far are solely relating to the planning consideration of the pitch – we haven't provided any opinion to the general support of a 3G pitch, only to the specific circumstances of the application in front of us. Planning is not a popularity contest, it is legislative. That said, if the application is approved by TWBC, then our stance toward the practical stages of any details regarding construction use of SPC land and access should of course reflect the overall view of the community.

We always aim to interact in good faith with the community, and can collate their support, and concerns, to ensure issues are highlighted to the Planning Authority who can address and validate them. We're not planning experts, and Parish Councils aren't expected to be.

The Parish Council should of course represent all who live in the parish, not just those who interact with us directly at meetings. That said, it is useful for us to hear from people – context when provided can be crucial to empathetic understanding. It's been helpful having Andy in the room, but there's little other representation; we have to assume people have been minded to avoid us, as we're not the Planning Authority in this matter, which is fair. But as I say, it IS useful to hear from both sides of any issue, especially if our resulting representations from our meetings are then called into question.

I ask all attending tonight, no matter their view on the 3G application, to assume good faith on behalf of others, and when discussing with the room, to be polite, and to have respect for everyone here who dedicates their time and passion to this community."

24/70 Public Open Session

- Mr James Bowdidge, Chair of Langton Green Village Society (LGVVS), reported on activities at Langton Community Hub which continued to make good progress. Recent highlights included visits by the Parish Council and LGCSA trustees to WAVE dance club. The Patron of WAVE was grateful to the Parish Council for their financial support, and Mr Bowdidge said that the initiative represented exactly what the hub aimed to do for the local community.

Mr Bowdidge added that the hub had enjoyed several productive conversations with LGCSA about how they could collaborate, and were beginning to build a positive working relationship. Cllr Curry thanked Mr Bowdidge for his report, which had also been emailed to councillors.

- Mr Andy Thompson spoke about his reasons for wanting to call for a Parish Poll. He said that a group of residents in Langton Green did not feel represented by the Parish Council regarding LGCSA's 3G pitch planning application. He said this was due to the lies other residents told at previous council meetings when the planning application had been discussed. He said incorrect comments, such as "Langton Green is against the 3G" were made, and these comments were minuted and added to the council website, perpetuating the lies. Mr Thompson added that another factually incorrect assertion made at a previous meeting was that people currently enjoyed access to the field which was the site of the proposed 3G, giving the impression that it was publicly owned. Mr Thompson said this was untrue, that the field was privately owned and leased to LGCSA, who could enclose it if they wished.

Mr Thompson said that a more serious lie had been told by the landowner of the field in question. He said they had claimed they were previously unaware of the planning application and had posted about this on social media. Mr Thompson had accessed the lease between the landowner and LGCSA on the Land Registry website which he said clearly showed that they were aware. He added that the landowner had been paid a large sum of money in return for leasing the land to LGCSA, which he reminded members was a charity.

Mr Thompson said it was important that these lies were publically corrected.

Cllr Curry thanked Mr Thompson for his comments and said the Parish Council welcomed the opportunity to hear from both sides of the debate. He stressed that any meeting minutes published by the Parish Council were published as a record of what was said in the room at any given meeting and there was no fact-checking of what was said. He appreciated that the minutes may be picked up and read by others, but they were designed to be read as a record of the meeting, not as a definitive record of what was correct or incorrect.

Mr Thompson replied that it was unfair that there was no right to reply at council meetings; he said he had previously had to fight to address a comment made by a resident that was incorrect. Councillors made the following comments in reply to Mr Thompson:

- Although frustrating, this is the nature of council meetings everywhere, and there is no right to reply. Public open sessions are not designed to facilitate debate between members of the public, they are there for people to address us. We hear everything that is said and take a balanced view when the time comes to consider and vote on an item. With that said, SPC tries to operate meetings with discretion and flexibility, so if the Chair feels it is appropriate he will allow individuals to speak for longer than the standard 3 minutes during the public open session and to speak again after others have made their points.
- Cllr Norton observed that Mr Thompson had used the word 'lie' several times when speaking. He said he was sure everyone knew the difference between a lie and an unintentionally inaccurate statement, a lie being something that somebody says to deliberately deceive others. While it was Mr Thompson's prerogative to use this word, and Cllr Norton could not comment on whether he was factually correct in using it, he felt it was a strong word to use in a small community at a time when building consensus was more important than ever. Cllr Norton added that he thought there were things that Mr Thompson had said that were also incorrect, but he did not believe him to be intentionally trying to deceive. It was important to remember to express views clearly and factually, and to treat each other with respect.

- Mr Bowdidge said he had been alarmed at the potential cost of a Parish Poll and hoped that a different means of canvassing public opinion could be found. Using the precept, which was tax payers' money, to fund a poll would mean reducing the other services the Parish Council provides.
- Mr Steve Alldis, a trustee of LGCSA, said he wished to ask a question which related to Mr Thompson's comments about incorrect information. He said he did not think the public had always been given correct information by SPC. For example, had LGCSA ever asked for the sports pavilion to be shut, or had they actually indicated that they wished for it to be open to the public more? Cllr Curry replied that no, he did not think LGCSA had ever asked for the pavilion to be shut. Mr Alldis asked, why if this was the case, had SPC not made it clear or attempted to correct those making wrong assumptions at meetings. Cllr Curry replied that he had corrected misinformation about LGCSA in the past when he was absolutely sure it was incorrect and knew without a doubt what LGCSA's position was. But he did not see it as the council's responsibility to do so if they could not be certain. He was happy to discuss this point further at a later date rather than encroach on the public session.

Mr Alldis then asked if SPC themselves had ever considered closing the sports pavilion. Cllr Curry confirmed that they had done so briefly. Mr Alldis asked if the public had been made aware of this. Cllr Curry said yes, during the energy crisis when the pavilion's previous energy systems had led to astronomical costs. He added that it was sensible for a council to consider all of its options when dealing with an asset that it owned, and SPC acknowledged its obligations to LGCSA and the rest of the community to keep the building operating, heated, and available. However, once the Parish Council had undertaken to modify the heating system, it had no longer been necessary to consider any kind of closure.

Mr Alldis thanked Cllr Curry for his answer and said he was now clear that SPC did not feel it needed to defend LGCSA.

- Cllr Curry asked Mr Thompson if he wished to address any of the points that had been made. Mr Thompson said he did not want to be seen as representing or defending LGCSA. He was just one of several residents who wanted to see investment into children and young people in the area so that there was more for them to do. He and others did not understand why, when there was an offer of investment, it would be opposed. With more houses being built, there should be more infrastructure to support them. He added that there was a feeling among those he spoke to that there was little point in attending council meetings as their views would not be listened to, and they would face hostility from other residents. Cllr Curry reiterated that the Parish Council welcomed balance, and hearing from people on both sides of the debate. They genuinely encouraged participation with themselves, and could only try to accurately represent the whole community if residents made their views known. As Chair, he wanted to foster an environment where no matter the view, it could be expressed freely and without fear of repercussion or heckling, with openness, respect, and kindness in the room. He apologised if he had failed to do so in the past.
- Cllr Curry clarified that so far the Parish Council had discussed the 3G planning application in isolation. If the planning application was granted, the conversation would then focus on how the community feels we should move forward. That conversation could not take place until the planning application concluded.
- Mr Guy Lambert, Chairman of LGCSA, asked if councillors had any questions for him to answer on behalf of LGCSA. There were none, and Cllr Curry thanked Mr Lambert for asking. Mr Lambert left the meeting with Mr Alldis at 8.14 pm.
- A member of the public asked to make an observation before Cllr Curry closed the public open session. He said he had observed a couple of sniggers from councillors during the public open session, and felt that this contributed to the difficult dynamics in the council's relationship with LGCSA, which was not necessary. Cllr Curry noted his point and thanked him for his contribution.

24/71 Borough and County Councillors' Reports

- Borough Councillor Sankey reported that the 3G planning application was not likely to be considered by the TWBC Planning Committee until June at the earliest. This was because of the amount of fact-checking that would need to be undertaken for every set of comments on the application. Any comment that was untrue or not relevant to the application would be redacted, and the committee instructed to ignore it. Cllr Sankey did not have anything further to report as TWBC was now in purdah. He added that whatever the outcome of the borough elections on 2nd May, he had very much enjoyed working with the Parish Council.

- Apologies had been received from Borough Cllr Allen (work commitments) and County Cllr McInroy (prior commitment).

24/72 Chair's Report

Referred to above, between items 24/69 and 24/70.

24/73 Clerk's Report

- **Unauthorised Encampments** – The Community Safety Unit had emailed parishes to say that there was a possibility of movement from Travellers over the Easter Bank holiday weekend, and into Spring. They had advised that landowners ensure their land is as protected as possible. The Travellers Reserve (the fund used to process evictions and pay for clean-ups, paid into by Parishes, Commons and TWBC) remained healthy.
- **TWBC Consultation – Town Centre Plan**
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was running a consultation on the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan Draft Vision 2040 document between Friday 23rd February and Monday 15th April. The Draft Vision document along with other evidence-based and procedural documents (about 10 documents in total) were available to be viewed in the Parish Council office.

24/74 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 and James Bowdidge	08/01/24	In progress
18/24	Schedule meeting of the Annual Parish Open Meeting.	Clerk	06/02/24	Complete
20/24	Contact TWBC Licensing regarding alcohol licence for the Pavilion.	Clerk	06/02/24	In progress
22/24	Accept quotation for the replacement of rubber matting in junior playground and replacement of spring clamps on Spring Moon at a total max cost of £13,000.	Asst Clerk (KH)	06/02/24	Re Tendering in Progress
23/24	Submit planning comments to TWBC on 3G Pitch.	Cllr Rowe/ Asst Clerk (KH)	04/03/24	Complete
24/24	Reword item re recording of meetings.	Cllrs Ellery & Curry	04/03/24	Complete
25/24	Undertake EICR report for Pavilion and provide original certificate.	Cllr Curry/Clerk	04/03/24	In progress
26/24	Undertake legionella survey up to a max of £540.	Clerk	04/03/24	Complete
27/24	Send response to KCC on Footpath WT431.	Clerk/Cllr Norton	04/03/24	Complete
28/24	Draft amended Amenities ToR for next FC meeting.	Cllr Lyle/Asst Clerk (KH)	04/03/24	Complete
29/24	Draft amended EWG ToR for next FC meeting.	Cllr Turner/Asst Clerk (CB)	04/03/24	Complete
New – Items arising since last Full Council Meeting				
	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
30/24	Notify Beams of rejection of their grant application.	Clerk	08/04/24	
31/24	If considered necessary by Internal Auditor, create a new EMR for the Langton Green Village Hall Grants.	Clerk	08/04/24	
32/24	Update Internal Financial Control System and Grant Awarding Guidelines on Website.	Clerk	08/04/24	
33/24	Open 95 day business notice account with Hampshire Trust and transfer over the funds in the current Hampshire Trust account and give immediate notice.	Clerk	08/04/24	

34/24	Update the Terms of Reference for the Amenities Cttee and the EWG on Website.	Clerk	08/04/24	
35/24	Notify Megabounce of approval to use the LGRG on 7 th August.	Asst Clerk (KH)	08/04/24	
36/24	Book annual service for defibrillators.	Asst Clerk (KH)	08/04/24	

24/75 Finance Committee

- a) Report by the Chair including any Committee Meetings held since the last Full Council meeting, the minutes having previously been forwarded to all Members – a meeting had been held on 18th March. Cllr Ellery reported that Members had considered a grant request from Beams, a Kent-based charity supporting disabled children and families. It was **RESOLVED** to refuse this request, as the application did not meet the requirements.
- b) Report on budget virements – It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following virements retrospectively:
£8,943 From the Pavilion EMR (Ear Marked Reserves) to General Reserves to cover the deficit from the Pavilion.
£988.01 From the Highways EMR for the payment of the replacement SID (Speed Indicator Device) post. The insurance company had confirmed settlement.
It was **RESOLVED** to approve a further virement of £9,300 to be made from Contingency to the Pavilion. This money would be left in the Contingency account and transferred to General Reserves at the year's close.
- c) It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee for Langton Green Village Hall (LGVH) grants previously approved (£25,000), if considered necessary by the Internal Audit.
- d) Interim Payments:
Unity Trust Bank: JLM Pest Control £230.00 pest control; Langton Green Charitable Trust £46.25 room hire; KALC £84.00 planning Conference; Katie Neve £41.40* travel expenses; Catherine Barrett £64.35* travel expenses; Kate Harman £65.55* travel and other expenses; Talk Talk Business £38.59 Pavilion broadband; Castle Water £43.79 Pavilion water; Unity Trust Mastercard £136.99 to bring balance to zero; Langton Pavilion Café £120.00 KALC meeting refreshments; Tivoli £133.68 dog waste emptying; CPRE £60.00 annual membership; Michelmores LLP £1735.00; Woodsmith Trees Ltd £1560.00 works to Pocket Park; Unity Trust Bank £30.45 bank charges.
Unity Trust Mastercard: Unity Trust Bank £9.00 credit card monthly fee.
- e) Decisions made under delegated authority are starred above.
- f) Minor changes to the Internal Financial Control System (IFCS) were agreed and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Review.
- g) It was **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed amendment to the Grant Awarding Guidelines.
- h) It was **RESOLVED** to approve opening a 95-day business notice account with Hampshire Trust at an interest rate of 4.5%. The Finance Committee had been looking at better ways to get a higher return, and this appeared to be a good rate in the interim while other options were being explored.

24/76 Accounts for Payment

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

Date	Payee Name	Reference	Amount £	Detail
02/04/24	BT	DD	63.54	Phone/Broadband
09/04/24	Southpoint Electrical Ltd	MT	289.00	Installation of Extractor Hood
09/04/24	The Living Forest Limited	MT	540.00	Tree Works
09/04/24	TWBC	MT	536.43	Non-Domestic Rates
09/04/24	Speldhurst Village Hall	MT	19.32	Room Hire
09/04/24	Brooklynn Monk	MT	135.00	Pavilion Cleaning
09/04/24	Knock Out Print	MT	180.00	Notices for APM
09/04/24	Langton Green Village Hall	MT	50.00	Office Rent

09/04/24	Rialtas Bookkeeping	MT	1124.40	Software & Maintenance Support
09/04/24	M:power	MT	111.60	Salary support
09/04/24	Martyn Lawrence	MT	175.00	Ground maintenance
19/04/24	HMRC	MT	1285.63	HMRC
19/04/24	Employees	MT	5097.95*	Salaries
19/04/24	NEST	DD	623.02*	Pensions
22/04/24	EDF Energy	DD	667.00	Pavilion Energy
29/04/24	Veolia	DD	260.68	Recycling
	TOTAL PAYMENTS		£11,158.57	

24/77 Speldhurst Chapel Project – to provide an update on the project

- Cllr Rowe reported that the loan repayment had decreased in price, compared to the calculations made in 2023, however the actual loan repayment amount will not be known until the loan is drawn down when the sale completes.
- Speldhurst Community Shop was in the process of setting up a charity to accommodate funding arrangements. This would mean that it would be necessary for the Parish Council to grant permission for the community shop to sublease to the charity.
- An issue had arisen relating to a restriction on the chapel's proposed change of use from F1 to F2, and it would be necessary to look at a different class. The sellers had not said yes or no to this new arrangement yet.
- The Parish Council would not complete a purchase until the shop signed the lease and the shop would not sign the lease until they had the funding. The loan application was valid until January 2025.
- The council's expenditure to date on was £1,736.89 including VAT in solicitor's fees.
- The Chair thanked Cllr Rowe for his ongoing efforts to progress this project.

24/78 Annual Parish Meeting (APM) 2024

Cllr Curry reported that he and Cllr Leach had worked on the slides for the meeting with input from the Assistant Clerk (CB). A visit to the Primary School was planned to check on the projector, screen and room layout.

24/79 Vacancy on Council – An update

Cllr Curry said that an interview with a prospective candidate was scheduled for the following week. There was a further vacancy to fill and this had been advertised. Cllr Curry also advised those members of the public in attendance that they were welcome to have an informal chat about the role if they were interested in what was involved.

24/80 Planning Committee – report by Cllr Rowe

A meeting was held on 11th March when 16 applications were considered. Members of the public attended to comment on 2 of the applications. Of the 16 applications, 2 were covered at previous Planning meetings, Committee Members supported 1, objected to 1, and were neutral on the remaining 12.

- Cllr Rowe reported that while SPC had voted to remain neutral on application 24/00554/FULL – Manor Court Farm, Ashurst Road, Ashurst it had since received correspondence from 2 residents complaining about the decision to remain neutral when local residents were very much against the application.. Cllr Rowe informed full council that SPC had had no contact from local residents prior to the Planning Committee meeting and no objections had been lodged with TWBC by the date of the Planning Committee meeting. The developer attended the meeting and asked SPC to support the application. One local resident who arrived late spoke against the application. After discussing the application SPC decided to remain neutral but did make reference to concerns raised by the resident to plot 1. A written response was sent to the 2 residents who had complained explaining how SPC reached its decision. Cllr Rowe said this appeared to be an issue of timing with local residents only becoming aware of the application around the time of the Planning Committee meeting and not having time to engage with SPC before our response was submitted.

Cllr Curry said he sympathised with these residents, and that this was a common issue. It had recently been discussed by TWBC, who were considering bringing back written letters to residents when a neighbour submitted a planning application. Although costly, this would guarantee that all residents were informed more effectively than the current method of encouraging them to sign up for online planning alerts.

Those residents who had complaints had been informed that their borough councillors could call in the application for them.

24/81 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG) – To receive an update on the Pavilion.

- To receive an update on the Community Hub: Mr Bowdidge had given his report as part of the public open session.
- To receive an update on the Pavilion Partnership working with LGCSA: A meeting was provisionally scheduled for Cllrs Muress, Curry, Lyle, and Rowe on Friday 19th April.
- To request more volunteer councillors to carry out Pavilion handovers to hirers: Cllr Leach had kindly picked up all the most recent bookings. Cllr Turner had now volunteered to help and would liaise with Cllr Leach about what was expected.

24/82 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** – There was nothing to report.
- b) **Highways Committee** – Report by Cllr Norton: There had been no meeting. Cllr Norton said he was waiting to hear whether County Cllr McInroy had been able to arrange an onsite meeting with a Highways Design Engineer. After following up with Tunbridge Wells Police, officers attended hotspots in Langton Green – at the location of the proposed pedestrian crossing – and Old Groombridge. Cllr Norton noted that although they had carried out speed enforcement sessions, they had not issued fines to drivers.
Footpaths Coordinator Update – Cllr Norton had written to the Kent County Council (KCC) Public Right of Way Officer to endorse the establishment of Footpath WT431 in Groombridge Place.
 The Assistant Clerk (CB) reported that she had liaised with the tenant farmer at Went Farm about replacing 3 damaged stiles on footpath WT78. She had put the KCC Public Rights of Way Officer in touch with the farmer and 3 metal gates had been provided at a subsidized price. These had now been installed to replace the damaged stiles and the Assistant Clerk had received several messages of thanks from residents, one of whom had mobility issues and was grateful to be able to access the footpath once more.
- c) **Amenities Committee** – Report by Cllr Lyle: There had been no meeting.
 - **To consider approval of updated Terms of Reference for the Amenities Committee** – it was **RESOLVED** to approve a change of wording to reflect delegated authority allowing the committee to spend up to £500 a time on individual goods/services.
 - **To consider approval of the use of Langton Green Recreation Ground by the inflatables company ‘Megabounce’ on the recommendation of the Amenities Committee** – it was **RESOLVED** to approve this recommendation; the event would take place on 7th August.
 - **To consider the approval of £417 (excluding VAT) for the annual service of the 3 oldest defibrillators with Seal Calibration** – it was **RESOLVED** to approve this amount.
- d) **Air Traffic Committee** – There was nothing to report.
- e) **Environment WG (EWG)** – Report by Cllr Turner: There had been no meeting.
 It was **RESOLVED** to approve a change in the Terms of Reference to allow Cllr Turner, who had already completed 3 years’ Chairmanship, to remain as Chair of the EWG.
- f) **KALC** – Report by the Chair:
 SPC had hosted the recent KALC Parish Chairs meeting on 5th March in the Pavilion; this had been a successful event with Parish Chairs discussing all that had been happening in their communities.

24/83 Diary Dates – The following dates were noted:

- 15th April – Planning Committee
- 22nd April – Governance Committee
- 29th April – Annual Parish Meeting (Speldhurst School)
- 7th May – Annual Statutory Full Council

24/84 Items for Information:

Cllr Norton had spoken with the director overseeing the planning application for the Pig Hotel at Groombridge Place. The Pig was scheduled to open in 2026. This was later than originally planned, as there had been unanticipated issues with flood surveys. It had been a useful conversation and Cllr Norton looked forward to seeing the planning application.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.53 pm.

Chair