



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

**Minutes of the Amenities Committee Meeting
held on Monday 20th May 2024 at 7.30pm
In the Council Offices, Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Lyle, Norton, Rowe and Turner.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk (AC).

1. Election of Chair

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Lyle as Chair of the Amenities Committee.
Cllr Turner said that he would consider taking over as Chair in 2025.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Rowe as Vice-Chair of the Amenities Committee.

3. To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting

The Clerk would be recording the meeting for the purpose of accuracy of the minutes. The recording would be deleted once the minutes had been signed off at the next meeting.

4. To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Leach due to a family emergency.

5. Disclosures of Interest

Cllr Turner is a member of the Langton Green Fete committee and would therefore refrain from discussions regarding item 11 regarding access to the recreation ground for the fete.

6. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

7. Minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 19th February

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

8. Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present.

9. Financial Review

The finance sheets were noted. Cllr Turner reminded members that the £1K in the EV chargers' budget was not required. Cllr Lyle suggested leaving the funds in place for the present time to be reallocated as required.

10. **Volunteers to research grant opportunities**

The AC said that she had received details of various grant opportunities however, having spent some time researching one in particular, it had become clear that completion of an application required more time than she was able to commit within her working hours. Members discussed employing a grant researcher whose sole role is to investigate suitable grant opportunities and who would be paid according to the funds raised. Cllr Lyle suggested, and it was agreed:

- AC to reach out to other clerks regarding any successful grants they had received;
- AC to keep emails with grant opportunities in a file to be considered as and when required;
- If a project arises that could benefit from a grant, Full Council would be consulted to see if any members would be prepared to research grant opportunities at that time. If no volunteers come forward, employing a grant researcher would be considered.
- AC to find out more details of a possible grant researcher.

11. **Parish Council Lane**

a) **Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG) including carparks and playgrounds**

- The AC ran through her list of outstanding playground matters as follows:

Replacement Rubber Matting in the Junior Playground

The AC had obtained three quotations, in line with a request from Full Council. The cheapest quotation was from an unknown supplier whom members were uncomfortable using without further information. It was **RESOLVED** that the AC would ask Soft Surfaces Ltd for three references and go out to other parish council clerks to enquire if they had any experience of the supplier. A recommendation would then be made to Full Council in June or an interim Amenities Committee meeting held to agree which contractor should be used.

Self-closing gates in the Junior Playground

It had been raised by playground inspectors that whilst having self-closing gates was not a health and safety requirement, it was considered sensible, particular on the gate opening into the carpark. Quotations had been obtained by the AC for new self-closing gates at approximately £2K. Tate & Tonbridge Fencing had suggested installing self-closing hinges on the existing gates at £450. It was **RESOLVED** to instruct Tate & Tonbridge Fencing to install self-closing hinges on the junior playground gates under the Amenities' Committee new spending authority to spend up to £500 on any individual matter falling within its responsibility.

Replacement bollards in the LGRG carpark

The AC had obtained quotations from three suppliers and members considered all the options. It was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council that KBS Depot be instructed to install 21 Galvanised Plain Steel Bollards, 1m above ground, (Option 2), 139mm width with 50mm Hi-vis tape in the centre of the LGRG carpark at a total cost of £5,572.30 as the first phase of replacement bollards for the car park.

- Zurich insurance model risk assessments:

Risk assessment documents had been circulated. Cllr Lyle said it is good practice to complete risk assessment on several occasions throughout the year. She was keen for all the committees and working groups to participate and would liaise with the Groundsman and clerks. Cllr Leach had volunteered to carry out a risk assessment of the playground on behalf of the Amenities committee.

- Vehicular access to the LGRG.

A request had been received from the LG Fete committee to allow vehicular access to the recreation ground for parking for the village fete. Members were extremely nervous about allowing access to the recreation ground which hadn't been done for the fete for several years and not since the drainage works were carried out and the football club commenced their enhanced maintenance programme. Any permissions would have to be weather dependent which was unreliable. It was therefore **RESOLVED**, extremely reluctantly, that

permission to gain access to the rec via the removable bollards should not be permitted. Alternative options were discussed.

- **General waste bin for LGRG**

The AC reported that problems with general waste filling a dog bin on the recreation ground continued with the Groundsman regularly having to clear up the resulting mess. It was **RESOLVED** to purchase an additional general waste bin in the same style as existing under the committee's spending authority.

- **Horses on the LGRG**

The AC reported that horses had been seen on the LGRG in February which the clerks were concerned about with regards to health and safety, particularly at school pick up time. The Groundsman had reported that some of the recreation ground had been churned up and manure left in public places.

Cllr Lyle said that the LGRG was not a bridleway or a public highway and was therefore not a suitable place for horses. The AC was asked to install a sign at the entrance to the LGRG carpark advising members of the public that no horses are allowed in the grounds.

- **Bees in the Junior Playground**

A member of the public had raised concern that bees had been seen around the large climbing frame. The Clerk had called in a pest control expert who had suggested remedial action which included closing the playground. Cllr Rowe said it was important to follow-up with updates on social media to keep members of the public informed.

b) **The Green at Langton Green**

There was nothing to report.

c) **The Boundary at Langton Green**

There was nothing to report.

d) **The Green at Groombridge**

Cllr Norton had circulated photos of the Green illustrating the various mowed and unmown areas in line with the hopes to improve biodiversity.

e) **Pocket Parks at Speldhurst**

- Cllr Turner, Chair of the Environment Working Group provided an update on the recent works to improve the biodiversity in the park. The invasive laurels had been removed and did not appear to have grown back. There was more tidying up to do and plans were being formed to plant native trees, hedging and wildflower seeds in the Autumn. Alan Ford was keeping an archive of any new species, the bird boxes had been installed and the display unit would be updated imminently.
- It was **RESOLVED** retrospectively to allow 21 native orchids to be replanted from a local resident's own garden in Roopers into Pocket Park. It was noted that this was permitted under regulations regarding protected species as the landowner's actions provided the requisite licence.
- Cllr Turner said that the old compost pile had been removed in an effort to keep the area tidy. The AC was asked to advise the maintenance contractor and it was acknowledged that this could have a financial implication as he would have to remove any waste matter from site.

12. **Items for Information**

A letter had been received from a resident of The Green, Langton Green advising that a telecommunications company had tried to install a telegraph pole on The Green. Cllr Lyle asked the AC to find out more information and make it clear to the telecommunications company that the parish council's prior permission would need to be obtained. The pole could cause considerable damage to the visual amenity of the heart of the village.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting finished at 8.41 pm.

Chairman

DRAFT