

**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 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 in Ashurst Village Hall**

---

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councillors Cleaver, Leach, Lyle (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Rowe, Tarricone and Turner.

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Apologies had been received from County Cllr McInroy and Borough Cllrs Britcher-Allan, Sankey and Sharratt.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There was one member of the public present.

**24/130 To enquire if anyone intends to record the meeting**

The Chair summarised 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 an inspectable record.

**24/131 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Curry, Muress and Norton (holidays), Ellery (work commitment), Davies and Dickens (personal reasons).

**24/132 Disclosure of Interests**

Councillors' ongoing disclosures were noted: Cllr Rowe has shares in the original Speldhurst shop and post office.

**24/133 Declarations of Lobbying**

Cllr Lyle was approached regarding the 3G pitch application with a request that SPC changes its stance to neutral.

### **24/134 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024**

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

### **24/135 Public Open Session**

No one wished to speak.

### **24/136 Borough and County Councillors' Reports**

The Clerk read out the following updates from Borough Cllrs Sharratt, Britcher-Allan and Sankey:

#### **Borough Cllr Sharratt –**

- Unfortunately, the Joint Transportation Board meeting at which the petition in favour of reducing the speed limit on the A264 is to be considered has been postponed. A link to the petition can be obtained from the Clerk.
- She was contacted by a member of the Ripple Project at the University of East Sussex regarding pollution in local rivers, particularly The Grom which was showing strong indications of raw sewage. Findings have been reported to the appropriate bodies.
- The Borough Climate Change Strategy document is to be consulted on over the late summer and autumn. This is a strategy aiming at encouraging individuals, organisations and businesses across the Borough to work towards greater sustainability and being 'net zero compatible' by 2030.
- Information on the new Family Hub model for children aged 0-18 which will replace the now closed Harmony Children's Centre in Rusthall has been published. The new facility isn't as comprehensive or accessible as the previous provision due to cost reductions. It is hoped that the new Community Development Worker, once recruited, will be able to develop links within the local community.

#### **Borough Cllr Britcher-Allan –**

- More widely in the Borough, problems have been experienced with developers unable to provide S106 contributions.
- Town and Country Housing would be attending the TWBC Overview & Scrutiny committee meeting to discuss their ongoing maintenance and management proposals.

#### **Borough Cllr Sankey –**

- He is still working on the planning application for 17a Holmewood Ridge, Langton Green.
- The second planning application for Myra, Furzefield Avenue in Speldhurst had been rejected. It is expected that the application will go to appeal.
- Committee work starts this month with meetings for the Licensing, Finance and Audit committees.
- He has now been confirmed as a member of the Commons Conservators, which brings the Ward Cllrs up from one to two. With the cycle path work ongoing and many other issues to come he is pleased to have been selected to help ensure residents voices are heard on this most important part of the neighbourhoods.
- He is liaising with County Cllr James McEnroy about the condition of Etherington Road in Speldhurst.

### **24/137 Chair's Report**

In Cllr Curry's absence, there was nothing to report.

### **24/138 Clerk's Report**

- **Safety of Lithium Batteries used in e-bikes and scooters:** An email had been received regarding Lord Foster's campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries. It was **RESOLVED** it was not appropriate for SPC to join the campaign.
- **Parish Chair's Group:** The minutes from the Parish Chair's meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024 had been circulated.
- **Tunbridge Wells Public Transport Forum:** The date had changed to Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July.
- **Annual Leave:** The Clerk advised that she would be on leave from 5-12<sup>th</sup> July.

**24/139 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
40/24	Transfer funds from Cambridge BS to Unity Trust Bank account (£20,000 per month for 3 months).	Clerk	03/06/24	In progress
41/24	Add Cllr Norton as a signatory on the Cambridge BS account to replace retired RFO.	Clerk/Cllr Norton	03/06/24	In progress
42/24	Allocate £30,680 in accounting system to the Speldhurst Chapel EMR. <b>Finance Cttee not actioning at present.</b>	Clerk	03/06/24	Closed
43/24	Confirm Cloudy IT Renewal.	Clerk	03/06/24	Complete
44/24	Confirm and pay grant of up to £1,000 to Langton Green Fete on provision of invoices. <b>£816 was paid.</b>	Clerk	03/06/24	Complete
45/24	Attend Speldhurst Chapel Project Meeting on 18 <sup>th</sup> June.	Chair	03/06/24	Complete
46/24	Send SPC response on parking document on 3G pitch application.	Cllrs Curry and Lyle	03/06/24	Complete
47/24	Investigate budget for Utilities.	Clerk	03/06/24	Complete
48/24	Ask each committee/WG to consider the short risk assessments for their specific areas.	Clerk	03/06/24	Complete
49/24	Accept quotation for replacement bollards in the LGRG car park and create a new accounting code under Amenities.	Asst Clerk (KH) and Clerk	03/06/24	Complete
50/24	Circulate to councillors, wording regarding Air Traffic response to be sent to the Telegraph Reporter. <b>Cllr Tarricone has made contact but not response so this action will be closed.</b>	Cllr Tarricone	03/06/24	Closed
<b>New – Items arising since last Full Council Meeting</b>				
	Summary	Owner	Created	Status
51/24	Update Financial Regulations on Website & in Cllrs' Folder.	Clerk	01/07/24	
52/24	Confirm and pay, where applicable, the following grants: Speldhurst Village Fete – £613.20 Baby Umbrella – Refused Ashurst Broadsheet – £500	Clerk	01/07/24	
53/24	Book Rialtas Accounting System Conversion.	Clerk	01/07/24	
54/24	Respond to TWBC on Scriventon planning application.	Asst Clerk (KH)	01/07/24	
55/24	Consider rearranging date of next Governance Cttee Mtg.	Clerk	01/07/24	

**24/140 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Rowe**

- a) There had been a meeting of the Finance Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> June, the minutes of which had been circulated. Cllr Rowe informed Council he will be introducing a new requirement for all Committees and Council to maintain a schedule of future one-off or non-standard expenditures above £5,000 for the next 1, 2 or 3 years plus unbudgeted expenditure above £5,000 for the current financial year. A summary schedule will be maintained by the Finance Committee and reported to Council to ensure proper oversight and transparency in terms of how this impacts Council reserves and future budgets.

- b) Interim payments since the last meeting:  
**Mastercard:** £104.97\* Amazon for Natural Roundup.  
**Unity Trust Bank:** £37.20 DD Unity Trust Bank for charges.  
 The remainder of the interim payments had been reported to the Finance Committee.
- c) Decisions made under delegated authority are starred above.
- d) It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the updated Financial Regulations as reviewed by the Finance Committee with the inclusion of the Amenities Committee's delegated powers to spend up to £500 and an annual review by the Governance Committee.
- e) It was **RESOLVED** to grant Speldhurst Village Fete Committee £613.20 towards insurance costs.
- f) It was **RESOLVED** not to make a grant to Baby Umbrella on the basis that grants should be awarded to charities based within the parish.
- g) It was **RESOLVED** to grant £500 of the £800 requested towards Ashurst Broadsheet. Cllr Tarricone would speak to the publishers to investigate ways to reduce future costs.
- h) It was **RESOLVED** to pay £599 (excl VAT) for the Rialtas Accounting System Conversion.
- i) Cllrs were provided with information on decisions made by the Finance Committee which are detailed in the minutes of the recent meeting.

#### 24/141 Accounts for Payment

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

Date	Payee Name	Amount	Detail
01/07/24	BT	£69.42	Office Phone and Broadband
02/07/24	St John's Church, Groombridge	£1,000.00	Grant for Churchyard maintenance
02/07/24	St Martin's Church, Ashurst	£1,000.00	Grant for Churchyard maintenance
02/07/24	St Mary's Church, Speldhurst	£1,000.00	Grant for Churchyard maintenance
02/07/24	Deborah Hargreaves	£384.00	Grant for toilets for Fringe Festival
02/07/24	Michelmores LLP	£4,200.00	Legal Fees for Speldhurst Chapel
02/07/24	The Living Forest Ltd	£354.00	Urgent Treeworks
02/07/24	Seal Calibration Ltd	£500.40	Servicing of 3 x defibrillators
02/07/24	Martyn Lawrence	£350.00	Mowing & Strimming (LG & Speld)
02/07/24	Viking Office UK	£116.11	Toilet Roll for Pavilion & Stationery
02/7/24	Brooklyn Monk	£210.00	Pavilion Cleaning
02/07/24	Capel Groundcare	£72.00	Quarterly Playground Inspection
02/07/24	Agrifactors	£1,260.00	Pitch Maintenance
02/07/24	Langton Green Village Hall	£20.50	Meeting Room Hire
02/07/24	Parish Online	£240.00	Mapping Software
02/07/24	Tivoli	£140.63	Canine Waste Collection
02/07/24	Cllr S Norton	£12.75	Post Office Document Certification
02/07/24	Mrs K Neve	£22.95	Mileage Claim
02/07/24	Zurich Insurance	£3,569.62	Annual Insurance Renewal
02/07/24	M:Power Accountancy	£57.60	Payroll Administration
02/07/24	Cloudy IT	£268.32	Monthly IT Support Services
20/07/24	EDF Energy	£667.00	Pavilion Energy DD
20/07/24	N.E.S.T.	£851.14	Employees Pensions DD
20/07/24	Employees	£5,535.96	Employees' Salaries
22/07/24	HMRC	£1,801.54	Income Tax and NI Contributions

#### 24/142 Speldhurst Chapel Project

Cllr Rowe provided the following update from the Chapel Project working group:

- Finances are currently being raised from pledgers and others. Approximately £46,000 had been raised to date.
- A Planning Statement is being prepared with hopes of a planning application soon. The drawings are finalised and Ecological and Bat surveys all complete.

- Meetings are being held with builders to confirm costs.
- It was hoped a grant agreement with ELBA would be finalised soon.

Update from Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC):

- SPC was working towards completion of the Licence for the lease and Licence for Alteration.
- The results of the fundraising and grant from ELBA will be known by the third week of July with a decision to proceed being put to Full Council in August. If insufficient funds are raised, the Chapel project team have been informed that SPC would likely withdraw its offer to purchase the property if finances are not in place by September Full Council.
- Costs to date: The latest invoice for £4,200 was circulated.

#### **24/143 Vacancy on the Council**

There remains one vacancy.

#### **24/144 Planning Committee**

- Report by Cllr Cleaver: A meeting was held on 17<sup>th</sup> June, the minutes of which had been circulated. Members had remained neutral on all applications with the exception of the application for Scriventon Farm. Bearing in mind the level of opposition to a previous application on this site, comment was deferred until Full Council by which time the application would have received more publicity to make sure that any response submitted by the parish council represented the parish's views.
- An update on the 3G Pitch Application at Langton Green Recreation Ground: A document providing an update on the misleading 2019 document which had been uploaded onto the planning portal regarding the parking availability on the LGRG for the 3G pitch had been uploaded to the TWBC planning portal and sent to KCC Highways
- **24/01278/FULL** – Scriventon House, Franks Hollow Road, Speldhurst  
**Proposal:** Conversion of 2 no. farm buildings to single dwellinghouse and ancillary accommodation  
**Decision:** Remain neutral, leave to Planning Officer.

#### **24/145 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)**

- An update on the Community Hub had been received which included news of a Community Lunch, various family group events, Project Wave, Thrive Langton events, a foodbank and book swaps.
- There was nothing substantive to report from the pavilion working group at this time.

#### **24/146 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 had been no meeting and there was nothing to report.
- b) **Highways Committee** – There had been no meeting and there was nothing to report.
- c) **Amenities Committee** – There had been no meeting and there was nothing to report.
- d) **Air Traffic Committee** – There had been no meeting and there was nothing to report
- e) **Environment WG (EWG)** – There had been no meeting; the next meeting was scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> July.
- f) **KALC** – The previous meeting minutes had been circulated.

#### **24/147 Diary Dates** – The following dates were noted:

30<sup>th</sup> June-16<sup>th</sup> July – Paul away  
6<sup>th</sup> July – Langton Green Village Fete – 12pm-5pm  
5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July – Katie on annual leave  
15<sup>th</sup> July – Planning Committee  
22<sup>nd</sup> – Governance Committee  
30<sup>th</sup> July – Environment Working Group  
5<sup>th</sup> August – Full Council

#### **24/148 Items for Information:**

There was nothing to report.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.49pm.

**Chair**