

**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 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 in Langton Green Village Hall**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Councillors Cleaver, Curry (Chair), Davies, Muress, Norton, Rowe 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 Sankey and Britcher-Allan.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There was one member of the public present.

**24/149 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.

**24/150 To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence.**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Dickens, Ellery, Leach and Lyle due to holidays and Tarricone due to a family commitment.

**24/151 Disclosure of Interests**

Councillors' ongoing disclosures were noted:

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

### **24/152 Declarations of Lobbying**

There were none.

### **24/153 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

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

### **24/154 Public Open Session**

No one wished to speak.

### **24/155 Borough and County Councillors' Reports**

Borough Cllr Sharratt:

- The Love Where We Live Awards are now live for residents to nominate local heroes. A link could be found on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) website or from the Clerk.
- The Borough Climate Change Strategy is currently open for consultation from the community. The Clerk has details which she would circulate.
- Gatwick Airport have stated during the recent consultations that they are against the proposed expansion and were liaising with Kent County Council (KCC). She would forward information to the Clerk.
- Following an increase in recent indecent exposure incidents on Rusthall and Tunbridge Wells Commons, more police patrols were in action.

### **24/156 Chair's Report**

Cllr Curry (Chair) reported the following:

- He and the Clerk had attended Speldhurst Primary School to present the Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) Jubilee Awards for Olympic Spirit.
- He had been updating the Technology Asset Register and was confident he could bring the office technology up to date for minimal expenditure. His proposal to dispose of anything unused and out of date safely and to sell equipment where appropriate would need to be approved by the Governance Committee.

### **24/157 Clerk's Report**

- **Love Where We Live Awards:** Nominations can be made on the TWBC website. [This year's Awards \(tunbridgewells.gov.uk\)](https://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)
- **Ashurst Village Hall Trustees Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024:** The agenda and minutes had been circulated.
- **Langton Green Village Hall:** From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024 the 75p per hour energy supplement for hirers will no longer be charged.
- **Pavilion Cleaners:** From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024, the rate for the Pavilion cleaning will increase from £18 to £20p/h due to the recent increase in the minimum wage. The cleaners had suggested a shorter clean on a Monday morning which would help balance out this increase.
- **Kent County Council Local Transport Plan Consultation:** This county-wide consultation on KCC's new Draft Local Transport Plan is now live and closes on 8<sup>th</sup> October. Full information can be found on [www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5](http://www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5).
- **Kent County Council Annual 2025-26 Budget consultation:** This consultation closes on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024 [www.kent.gov.uk/budget](http://www.kent.gov.uk/budget).
- **Rialtas Conversion:** This is now complete.

**Attendance at Meetings:** There have been occasions recently when some councillors have either sent late apologies or not turned up to meetings with no apologies at all which has a knock-on effect for the committee chairs and clerks who have spent time on meeting preparations as well as the effectiveness of the committee/working groups. It also leaves the meeting at the risk of being inquorate. Councillors were asked to email apologies to the relevant clerk giving as much notice as possible.

**24/158 General Matters** – Actionable tasks which do not fall to a committee.

<b>Ongoing</b>				
	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Created</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>07/24</b>	Set up meeting to discuss ongoing relationship with LGCSA.	Cllrs Davies, Muress, Chris Allen & James Bowdidge	08/01/24	In progress
<b>20/24</b>	Contact TWBC Licensing regarding alcohol licence for the Pavilion.	Clerk	06/02/24	In progress
<b>40/24</b>	Transfer funds from Cambridge BS to Unity Trust Bank account (£20,000 per month for 3 months).	Clerk	03/06/24	<b>Complete</b>
<b>41/24</b>	Add Cllr Norton as a signatory on the Cambridge BS account to replace retired RFO.	Clerk/Cllr Norton	03/06/24	<b>Complete</b>
<b>51/24</b>	Update Financial Regulations on Website & in Cllrs' Folder.	Clerk	01/07/24	<b>Complete</b>
<b>52/24</b>	Confirm and pay, where applicable, the following grants: Speldhurst Village Fete – £613.20 Baby Umbrella – Refused Ashurst Broadsheet – £500	Clerk	01/07/24	<b>Complete</b>
<b>53/24</b>	Book Rialtas Accounting System Conversion.	Clerk	01/07/24	<b>Complete</b>
<b>54/24</b>	Respond to TWBC on Scriventon planning application.	Asst Clerk (KH)	01/07/24	<b>Complete</b>
<b>55/24</b>	Consider rearranging date of next Governance Cttee Mtg.	Clerk	01/07/24	<b>Complete</b>
<b>New</b>				
	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Status</b>	
<b>56/24</b>	Confirm and pay grant to Air Ambulance Charity KSS.	Clerk	05/08/24	
<b>57/24</b>	Add Cllr Curry as signatory to Hampshire Trust Bank account.	Clerk	05/08/24	
<b>58/24</b>	Add Cllrs Curry and Norton as signatories to Nationwide BS account.	Clerk	05/08/24	
<b>59/24</b>	Transfer £30,000 from Nationwide BS to Unity Trust Bank account.	Clerk	05/08/24	
<b>60/24</b>	Proceed with purchase of Speldhurst Chapel.	Cllr Rowe/Clerk	05/08/24	
<b>61/24</b>	Confirm and proceed with maintenance report on Pavilion.	Clerk	05/08/24	
<b>62/24</b>	Confirm and pay music licence for Pavilion.	Clerk	05/08/24	
<b>63/24</b>	Liaise with LGCSA on wording of possible joint statement.	Cllr Muress	05/08/24	
<b>64/24</b>	Proceed with purchase of two cradle swings for MUGA.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/08/24	
<b>65/24</b>	Confirm and pay refurbishment costs for benches at Groombridge Green.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/08/24	
<b>66/24</b>	Confirm and proceed with rubber matting replacement at Junior Playground.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/08/24	
<b>67/24</b>	Confirm and proceed with additional fencing repairs.	Asst Clerk (KH)	05/08/24	

**24/159 Finance Committee – Report by Cllr Rowe**

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 01/07/2024 and 31/07/2024**

Date	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction
02/07/2024	KALC	MT2733	36.00	VAT Training
03/07/2024	St Martin's Church, Ashurst	MT2734	500.00	Ashurst Broadsheet Grant
03/07/2024	Speldhurst Village Fund	MT2735	613.20	Grant - Insurance for Fete
03/07/2024	Tate & Tonbridge Fencing	MT2736	418.80	Playground Self-Closing Hinge
03/07/2024	The Living Forest Ltd	MT2737	120.00	Emergency Tree Works
10/07/2024	BT PLC	DD	26.93	Office Mobile
15/07/2024	Talk Talk Business	DD	27.54	Pavilion Broadband
16/07/2024	Castle Water	DD	50.49	Pavilion Water
16/07/2024	Unity Trust Mastercard	Mastercard	173.54	To bring balance to zero
23/07/2024	Engrave It All Ltd	MT2738	106.62	Jubilee Awards and Engraving
29/07/2024	Veolia	DD	222.04	Waste and Recycling Removal
30/07/2024	BT PLC	DD	69.42	Office Broadband and Phone
31/07/2024	KCC (Procurement Services)	DD	126.95	Photocopier Rental

**List of Interim Mastercard Payments made between 01/07/2024 and 31/07/2024**

Date	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid £	Transaction
02/07/2024	Unity Trust Bank	DD	9.00	Credit Card Charges
03/07/2024	Lockshop Warehouse	MC444	145.80	Internal Office Door Lock
24/07/2024	Sainsbury's	MC445	24.00	Black Sacks
26/07/2024	Toolstation	MC446	7.99	WD40

- b) Decisions made under delegated authority: there were none.
- c) It was **RESOLVED** to award Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex a grant of £400.00.
- d) It was **RESOLVED** to add Cllr Curry as a signatory on the Hampshire Trust Bank account.
- e) It was **RESOLVED** to add Cllrs Curry and Norton as signatories on the Nationwide Building Society account.
- f) It was **RESOLVED** to transfer £30,000 from the Nationwide Building Society account to the Unity Trust account.

**24/160 Accounts for Payment**

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

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Transaction Detail
02/08/2024	ICO	DD	35.00	Data Protection Fee
06/08/2024	The Play Inspection Company Ltd	MT2739	204.00	Annual Playground Inspection
06/08/2024	Michelmores LLP	MT2740	1,677.00	Speldhurst Chapel Legal Fees
06/08/2024	RBS Software Solutions	MT2741	718.80	Accountancy Conversion
06/08/2024	Brooklynn Monk	MT2742	225.00	Pavilion Cleaning

06/08/2024	KALC	MT2743	60.00	Planning Training for Cllr
06/08/2024	KALC	MT2744	60.00	Planning Training - Asst Clerk
06/08/2024	Ashford Security	MT2745	390.00	Emergency Lighting Repairs
06/08/2024	M R Lawrence	MT2746	350.00	Mowing and Strimming
06/08/2024	Katie Neve	MT2747	15.30	Mileage
06/08/2024	Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd	MT2748	840.00	Pitch Maintenance
06/08/2024	The Living Forest Ltd	MT2749	354.00	Treeworks
06/08/2024	Langton Life	MT2750	375.00	Advert for Aug/Sept
06/08/2024	Langton Green Charitable Trust	MT2751	20.50	Room Hire
06/08/2024	Kidman's Ltd	MT2752	40.87	Strimmer Oil and Line
06/08/2024	Knockout Print	MT2753	48.00	No Horses Sign
06/08/2024	Tivoli	MT2754	140.63	Canine Waste Removal
06/08/2024	Viking Direct	MT2757	121.17	Toilet Roll and Notepads
06/08/2024	Tate & Tonbridge Fencing	MT2758	497.03	Fencing Materials
06/08/2024	Cloudy IT	MT2759	268.32	IT Support
06/08/2024	m:power accounting	MT2760	57.60	Payroll
10/08/2024	BT PLC	DD	26.93	Office Mobile
16/08/2024	Unity Trust Mastercard	186.79	186.79	To bring balance to zero
20/08/2024	N.E.S.T. Pension Scheme	DD	739.54	Staff Pensions
20/08/2024	Employees	MT2755	5,538.16	Salaries
20/08/2024	HMRC	MT2756	1,427.43	NI and Tax Contributions
20/08/2024	EDF Energy	DD	667.00	Pavilion Electricity
28/08/2024	Veolia	DD	268.82	Waste and Recycling Collections
30/08/2024	BT PLC	DD	69.42	Office Broadband and Phone

### 24/161 Speldhurst Chapel Project

Cllr Rowe provided the following update:

- £150,000 had been raised from the local community and a grant from Elba Foundation of £228,000 has been funded bringing the total cash in the Shops bank account to £378,000. This figure represented well over 90% of the target of £400,000 and SPC was satisfied the Shop now had sufficient money to fund their proposed building works.
- It was hoped the planning application would be submitted by the end of the week.
- He had spoken to the current owners of the chapel, providing an update, and they reconfirmed that they agree to sell the chapel site to SPC.
- He and the Clerk had spoken to SPC's solicitors to bring them up to date. They were close to finalising the Licence for Alteration and the lease which would be forwarded onto the Shop's solicitors.
- There was one search outstanding (from SPC's perspective) and all searches received to date were acceptable.
- The expectation was to exchange and complete on the same day.
- The Clerk had been in touch with the Debt Management Office regarding the Public Works Loan. They had advised that an allowance should be made of two weeks for the transaction to go through.
- Cllr Turner: Does the £20,000 shortfall have an impact on the project? Cllr Rowe: The working group were still investigating other sources of funding but indications from discussions with builders were that the money raised so far was adequate when taking into account the cost estimates included a contingency of £80,000.
- The interest rate for the loan had reduced which would mean lower loan repayments.

- The latest invoice from Michelmores is for £1,677.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the purchase of Speldhurst Chapel and the issue of a lease to Speldhurst Shop.

#### **24/162 Vacancy on the Council**

There remains one vacancy.

#### **24/163 Planning Committee**

- Report by Cllr Cleaver: A meeting was held on 15<sup>th</sup> July, the draft minutes of which had been circulated. Members had remained neutral on all applications. One of the applications related to Burrswood and concern was raised about the dwellings being sold off individually. Cllr Norton said that David Martin of Martin Homes had stepped down. He had emailed his replacement and received a response saying he would be in touch.
- An update on the 3G Pitch Application at Langton Green Recreation Ground:  
Cllr Curry said that he had heard the 3G application would be considered by TWBC in September at the earliest. The current hold-up was the new blanket of Tree Preservation Orders on all the trees around the recreation ground which SPC had not been involved in.

#### **24/164 Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)**

Update on the Pavilion

- Community Hub: All the usual activities had been enjoyed by the community. Additionally, a successful event had been held marking the end of the school year as well as another community lunch. Discussions were taking place regarding joint community events between the Hub and café as well as a Christmas fayre and the usual mix of dance, art and music classes.
- Update on the Pavilion Partnership working with Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA).
  - Cllr Muress said that in an effort to understand SPC's future financial responsibilities for the pavilion, he had sought quotations from 3 Building Surveyors to carry out an inspection of the building and provide a report with recommendations. It was **RESOLVED** to instruct Ben Carey, Building Surveyor to carry out an initial inspection of the pavilion at a cost of £525 as well as a similar cost to obtain a report with the results.
  - Ongoing relationship with LGCSA: The final decision by TWBC on the 3G application could provide an opportunity to move on and work together amicably. TWBC's decision should be respected, and it was agreed SPC should support the result of the planning process. It was hoped LGCSA would, in return, consider the same approach towards SPC. After much discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Muress would suggest to the Chair of LGCSA that they work together on a joint statement/way forward which would be ratified by LGCSA and then SPC before being published.
- It was **RESOLVED** to pay £594.11 excl. VAT for a music licence for the Pavilion.

#### **24/165 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, the next meeting will be on 22<sup>nd</sup> August.
- b) **Highways Committee** – Cllr Norton reported: There had been no meeting, the next would be on the 19<sup>th</sup> August. Lots of work on the outstanding tasks had been done by the Clerks however it remained difficult getting any real progress on the top priorities which was frustrating. Consideration would be given at the meeting to ask: What are our obstacles? What can we do to move forward? Should we have bigger ambitions?
- c) **Amenities Committee** – There had been no meeting.
  - It was **RESOLVED** to spend £456 (excl VAT) on replacement swing seats and MUGA accessories on the recommendation of the playground inspectors.
  - It was **RESOLVED** to give Trevor Myles the go ahead to spend up to £500 on refurbishment costs for the benches on Groombridge Green.
  - It was **RESOLVED** to instruct Abacus Playgrounds to replace the playground rubber matting in the junior playground on the LGRG at a cost of £10,865 (excl. VAT) on the recommendation of the Amenities Committee. There was £53,000 in the EMR account to cover this expenditure.

- It was **RESOLVED** to spend an additional £420 on materials to repair the fences around the play areas on the LGRG.
- d) **Air Traffic Committee** – There had been no meeting. Cllr Curry had handed the Chairmanship back to Cllr Tarricone. Advice was being sought from Neil Barrington-Johnson, ex-councillor and previous Chair of the committee, regarding the best lobbying groups for SPC to partner with to be as effective as possible.
- e) **Environment WG (EWG)** – A meeting had been held on 30<sup>th</sup> July. Thanks were expressed to Borough Cllr Jane Sharratt for participating and to David Scully, Landscape and Biodiversity Officer of TWBC for giving an excellent presentation. After six months of chasing, data had finally been received regarding the usage of the Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers in the carpark which are getting on average 15 charges per month which was considered a good start.  
Pocket Park: Credit and thanks were expressed to Alan Ford, Speldhurst resident and very active member of the EWG who, amongst many other things, had been recording changes in the park's environment for SPC's archives. More work was planned for the autumn which would be reported at September's Full Council meeting.  
Attendance at meetings: There was a very disappointing turnout at the meeting with last minute or no apologies and Cllr Turner being the only councillor to attend. The Assistant Clerk (CB) had done a vast amount of preparation work for the meeting and with so few councillors on board, progress and actions from the meeting would be very limited. A meeting would be held in the Autumn between Cllr Turner and the Clerks to consider the best way forward.
- f) **KALC** – There was nothing to report.

**24/166 Diary Dates** – The following dates were noted:

- 12<sup>th</sup> August – Planning Committee
- 19<sup>th</sup> August – Highways Committee
- 22<sup>nd</sup> August – Governance Committee
- 2<sup>nd</sup> September – Full Council

**24/167 Items for Information:**

- Cllr Muress reported that the verge along the edge of the Speldhurst Road in Langton Green, where visitors to the Hare Public House park, is in a very poor state of repair which could be dangerous to pedestrians. KCC Highways had advised that it was not their responsibility, and no further progress had been made to date.
- The Assistant Clerk (KH) advised that Megabounce may be forced to cancel their hire of the LGRG due to high winds which was disappointing as it would have proved profitable.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.54pm.

**Chair**