



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

Draft Minutes of the Highways Committee Meeting held on Monday 19th August 2024
In the Palmer Room at Langton Green Village Hall, Langton Green

MEMBERS PRESENT Cllrs Norton (Chair), Turner (Vice-Chair) and Cleaver, with Mr Langridge (until 8.30pm).

BOROUGH COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Borough Councillor Sankey.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were none.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs K Neve, Clerk.

1. Election of Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr Norton be Chair of the Highways Committee.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr Turner be Vice-Chair of the Highways Committee.

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

The Clerk recorded the meeting for administrative purposes.

4. To receive and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Ellery (family illness) and Muress and Mrs Dooley (holiday). Apologies were also received from the Assistant Clerk (CB) (family illness).

5. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

6. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2024 – RESOLVED that the minutes of the Highways

Committee meeting dated 27th February 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8. Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present. Borough Cllr Sankey spoke about his disappointment regarding the recent road surfacing at Etherington Hill and Barden Road, Speldhurst, and with the response received from Kent County Council (KCC) to his complaints. Cllr Norton agreed to communicate the parish council's disappointment to KCC and would copy in the Borough and County councillors.

9. How can we have a Bigger Impact?

CLlr Norton led a discussion on the way forward bearing in mind the limited budget, bureaucracy and increasing number of actions required as road safety was residents' top priority. It was agreed to develop a more ambitious strategy to deliver significant improvements in local road safety by involving senior stakeholders, particularly KCC at Cabinet level and Mike Martin MP. Engaging other potential partners like Rusthall PC should also be considered.

- **Safety/Speed Cameras** – As an element in this ambitious strategy, the committee discussed the possibility of a Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) led campaign to get at least one safety camera in each village (including an additional one for Langton Green by the primary school). KCC had advised that the cameras were installed where there had been speed-related personal injury crashes (serious or fatality) and were only used as a last resort once other speed reduction methods had been tried. Cost would be in the region of £150,000 and KCC had informed SPC that none of the roads within Speldhurst parish fall into the required category. CLlr Norton noted that these figures were for average speed check systems, which were considerably more expensive than single cameras (that could cost as little as £40,000). Acting ambitiously would require us to challenge conventional thinking and ways of doing things by KCC.
- **Funding for SIDS** – There had been a recent parish clerks email exchange on possible funding to buy a SID. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) Community Safety Unit (CSU) had suggested they could apply to the Police and Crime Commissioner for funding if a group needed to activate and had no access to kit but there was no guarantee. They also said that the KCC member grants would be more suited to this type of endeavour.

Mr Langridge agreed to contact the Langton Green Speedwatch team to request concentrated Speedwatch sessions outside the entrance to the village hall car park over the next few months.

10. Review of action points

The updated Action Points Table had been shared with councillors. The newly updated list of action points, incorporating the additional actions from this meeting, are shown at the end of these minutes.

11. Review of Highways Committee's Budget – to review the expenditure to date.

There had been no recent expenditure since the last meeting. A budget of £30,000 was in earmarked reserves for the committee's use.

- **Identify list of potential future expenditure for the next 3 years** – As requested by the Finance Committee. A highway design fee of £1,006 for Old Groombridge to install raised 30mph repeater signs on Groombridge Hill and near the entrance to Groombridge Place had been agreed by Full Council on 5th February 2024; however, KCC had now agreed to waive this fee. No future expenditure was envisaged at this time, but councillors requested that the Highways budget continue to be built up towards the HIP priorities. The Clerk would update the Finance Committee.

12. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) (including consideration of any new issues by village taking into account correspondence, recent accidents, Speedwatch, and media)

a) Ashurst - HIP item A3, A264 into Ashurst

- **Speed Watch:** CLlr Tarricone had been trying to progress with Speedwatch but only one volunteer from Ashurst had come forward. Councillors agreed that this action should now be closed until such time as residents were able to get involved.
- **Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) Traffic Survey:** The recent KCC ATC traffic survey at Ashurst Hill had shown that the average speeds were 30.1mph and 30.9mph with 85th percentile showing at 34.8mph and 35.4mph. KCC had advised it did not offer any further engineering interventions unless the figures were significantly over the 35mph enforcement threshold. A 30mph speed toolkit had been offered. Councillors were surprised by the results and asked the Clerk to raise this with CLlr Tarricone, who represents Ashurst.

Item for Information

- **Speed Indicator Device (SID) Readouts for Ashurst:** The committee noted the recent reports.

b) Old Groombridge - HIP item OG5, B211 Groombridge Hill

Cllr Norton explained that KCC had indicated that traffic speed on Groombridge Hill was too high for traffic calming and had suggested installing raised 30mph repeater signs on Groombridge Hill and near the entrance to Groombridge Place. As explained in minute 11 above, the highway design fee had now been waived. Cllr Norton would arrange a meeting with the KCC traffic engineer to further discuss traffic calming measures.

- **Update on The Pig Hotel at Groombridge Place:** Cllr Norton had raised the possibility of developer contributions to local highways improvements with the relevant Director at Pig Hotels.
- **Items for Information**
 - **Bird in Hand Street, Groombridge:** Former councillor Trevor Myles had reported that Bird in Hand Street leading into Groombridge Road had become a real danger zone. The street was used by very large HGVs to access the A264 at Stone Cross and recently, 8-wheel heavy goods vehicles (HGV) belonging to Go Green Waste were using the shortcut several times a day which was a danger to residents and pedestrians. The residents would like to start a campaign to get an HGV restriction and a 20mph zone in place past the cottages. Cllr Norton advised that Mr Myles would be contacting the waste company. Cllr Cleaver also suggested that weight restrictions might apply to this road and the Clerk agreed to investigate with KCC.
 - **SID Readouts for Groombridge:** The committee noted the recent reports.

c) Langton Green – HIP items LG8, 9 & 10, Farnham Lane and Speldhurst Road/Lampington Row/Winstone Scott Avenue and Langton Road

- **Land at Farnham Lane under the ownership of Miller Homes/permissive path:** The committee agreed to close this item because of the liability and potential insurance issues and the fact that it was too dangerous. The Farnham Lane HIP item would remain, in the hope that an ATC could be positioned, although KCC say there is currently nowhere under their ownership to secure it.
- **Pavement Parking, Lampington Row:** “No Parking” signs had been put up on the wooden posts at Lampington Row to discourage pavement parking.
- **Layby on Langton Road:** The Committee noted the improvement achieved by the installation of planters and Cllr Turner's suggestion that this be kept in mind for other locations.
- **Update on Courtenwell from Definitions Team:** Councillors were frustrated to learn that Kent County Council had informed them that it does not have ownership of the land. The Clerk agreed to contact one of the residents for an update on their views, as their solicitor had indicated that the land was KCC owned.

The Clerk would seek an update on the following items from KCC: Langton Green Primary School (LGPS) Travel Plan; Barriers and zig zag lines outside LGPS.

Items for Information

- **Double Yellow Lines at the Corner of Stonewall Park Road, Langton Green:** These have now been refreshed.
- **Speed Reduction from 40-30mph on A264:** Rusthall community had been campaigning for a reduction in speed on the A264 Langton Road from the junction with Rusthall Road to The Hare in Langton Green. KCC had advised that this did not meet the criteria required. Their preference had been a pedestrian crossing but traffic speeds needed to be reduced first and the costs were prohibitive. Cllr Muress was the main advocate for this item and as he was not in attendance, councillors would wait for an update from him.
- **Accident at The Hare Crossroads:** A Rusthall resident had been involved in a collision at the crossroads by The Hare and had made suggestions for traffic improvements in this area.
- **SID Readouts for Langton Green:** The committee noted the recent reports.

d) Speldhurst – HIP item SP12 & 13, Penshurst Road between Northfields and Langton Road and Etherington Hill

- **Parking on Northfields:** A resident had contacted SPC regarding the ongoing parking problems in Northfields saying that pavements were being blocked, restricting access to pedestrians who were having to walk in the road as cars were parked on the pavements. As this item was linked to school

parking, the Clerk would follow up with Speldhurst Primary School on progress with their Travel Plan.

Borough Cllr Sankey reported that the access problem along Penshurst Road for the 285 bus service seemed to have abated. He also said that parking for the recreation ground and Dr's surgery and the growing number of cars per household (including larger cars) had added to the parking problems. He would unofficially discuss with residents.

- **Road Surfacing at Etherington Hill:** There had been a number of complaints about the newly surfaced roads at Etherington Hill and other locations in Speldhurst. The surface dressing used was already showing defects and the drains had been blocked. KCC said they would liaise with the contractors.
- **Update on Double Yellow Lines at Cobham:** The double yellow lines had now been painted.

Items for Information:

- **20mph Signs at Wallers:** A resident had asked if he could put one of the SPC 20mph signs up at Wallers. The resident was advised that KCC might take the sign down as it was classed as unofficial, which was indeed what happened. The resident had also cut back vegetation that obscured the existing signs. He suggested that two more reflective reminder signs were needed and further suggested a change from the junction of Speldhurst Hill and Barden Road to a mini roundabout. KCC had offered to provide a 20mph speed toolkit banner and bin stickers (which the Clerk would follow up) and suggested a HIP item to review the signage and compliance of the current 20mph with possible addition roundels.
- **Warning Sign Request at Junction of Penshurst Road and Southfields/Northfields:** A request had come in via a Facebook message asking for a warning sign at this junction. It was logged on the KCC portal but we were informed that this should be added to the HIP. Borough Cllr Sankey would discuss this with the resident who put in the request.
- **Speldhurst Primary School – Travel Plan Enquiry:** Speldhurst Primary School had been in contact regarding road safety concerns and we have put them in touch with the KCC Road Safety and Active Travel Group regarding their School Travel Plan.
- **SID Readouts for Speldhurst:** The committee noted the recent reports.

13. Footpaths/Public Rights of Way (PROW) – A footpaths update was provided which included information on damaged stiles; support from KCC's PROW Officer; updates on Facebook; fallen trees; boardwalk repairs; strimming of overgrown twittens by our Groundsman and reminders to residents about overgrown hedges.

14. Risk Assessment – Car Parks – The Governance Committee had requested that a risk assessment be undertaken relating to car parks. Cllr Norton volunteered to undertake the risk assessment.

15. Items requiring Full Council approval – There were none.

16. Issues for Communication to the Public – There was nothing at present as a highways article had recently been included in the village magazines.

17. Items for information

- www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem - Reminder.
- **Near Miss Register –** An update had been sought from TWBC CSU on the Near Miss Register. They said that extracting data had been time-consuming, and they had met with the digital team to work towards making it more functional and accessible. KCC had never committed to using the data as part of their casualty reduction programme but it should be useful for local projects and awareness raising of junctions and other places where the risk is higher than normal.
- **SID Post at Old Groombridge –** This was knocked down yet again and we are now in contact with the Police who are dealing with the incident. The Clerk would chase KCC regarding a replacement.
- **Highways Information Pack 2024-25**

- **Kent County Council Local Transport Plan Consultation** – KCC has launched a county-wide consultation on its new draft Local Transport Plan which closes on 8th October. The project team will be hosting drop-in events of the proposals for the relevant district of Kent. The Tunbridge Wells Drop-in Events will be held on:
Thurs 19th Sept – 3pm-7pm - Edenbridge Village Hall, WI Hall, Station Rd, Edenbridge TN8 5LX
Thurs 3rd Oct – 12pm-4pm - The Amelia Scott, Mount Pleasant Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1AW
Link to the consultation - www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5
- **Date of Next Meetings** – 21st October and 16th December 2024. The Clerk would liaise with councillors for meeting dates in 2025.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting ended at 8.47pm.

Chairman

Action Points

Action Number	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
1/24	Set up Speedwatch Sessions in Ashurst with Mr Barrington-Johnson.	Mr Langridge	27/02	Closed – not relevant for now
2/24	Email KCC to thank them for the work done in Old Groombridge.	Clerk	27/02	Complete
3/24	Identify and ask a senior KCC engineer to meet with the parish council at road safety hot spots in Langton Green and Old Groombridge. Not possible, only meeting with Emma and Nigel.	County Cllr McInroy	27/02	Closed
4/24	Contact Economic Development Manager at TWBC about central government funding for active travel initiatives (eg. pedestrian crossing on Speldhurst Road). No funding available.	Clerk	27/02	Complete
5/24	Follow up with Mr Myles about Speedwatch sessions in Old Groombridge.	Cllr Norton	27/02	Complete
6/24	Follow up on all points relating to HIP Item LG9 – Speldhurst Rd/Winstone Scott Avenue/Lampington Row.	Clerk/Assistant Clerk	27/02	In progress
7/24	Seek advice from the legal department at KCC about grass verges at Farnham Lane and contact Miller Homes again to clarify their position.	Clerk/Cllr Norton	27/02	Closed – too dangerous
8/24	Chase Hams Travel to ask about meeting the 285-bus driver to look at Penshurst Road.	Assistant Clerk	27/02	Closed
9/24	Write to residents of St Mary's Lane, Speldhurst asking their thoughts about signage at the junction with Northfields.	Clerk/Asst Clerk	27/02	TBA

10/24	Put Large SID at bottom of Groombridge Hill The SID post is only set up for the small SID.	Clerk	27/02	Closed
11/24	Write to the Definitive Map Officer at KCC endorsing the establishment of a new Public Right of Way – numbered WT431 – at Old Groombridge.	Cllr Norton	27/02	Complete
12/24	Write a Highways update for the next parish magazines.	Assistant Clerk	27/02	Complete
13/24	Write to KCC regarding the road surfacing in Speldhurst.	Cllr Norton	19/08	
14/24	Write to KCC Cabinet Member regarding a strategy for road safety.	Cllr Norton	19/08	
25/24	Contact Langton Green Speedwatch team to request concentrated sessions outside the entrance to the village hall car park over the next few months.	Mr Langridge	19/08	
26/24	Update Finance Committee regarding future expenditure for Highways.	Clerk	19/08	
27/24	Update HIP document.	Clerk/Asst Clerk Cllr Norton	19/08	
28/24	Raise the results of the ATC survey in Ashurst with Cllr Tarricone.	Clerk	19/08	
29/24	Investigate weight restrictions of Bird in Hand Street.	Clerk	19/08	
30/24	Contact Courtenwell resident for an update on issue of ownership of land.	Clerk	19/08	
31/24	Seek update on the following items from KCC: Langton Green Primary School (LGPS) Travel Plan; Barriers and zig zag lines outside LGPS.	Clerk	19/08	
32/24	Seek an update from Speldhurst Primary School on progress on their Travel Plan.	Clerk	19/08	
33/24	Discuss parking issues with residents of Northfields and Penshurst Road, Speldhurst.	Borough Cllr Sankey	19/08	
34/24	Request ATC at bottom of Etherington Hill, Speldhurst.	Clerk	19/08	
35/24	Follow up 20mph speed toolkit banner and bin stickers with KCC for Speldhurst.	Clerk	19/08	
36/24	Discuss warning sign request at junction of Penshurst Road and Southfields/Northfields with resident who put in request.	Borough Cllr Sankey	19/08	
37/24	Undertake car park risk assessment.	Cllr Norton	19/08	
38/24	Chase KCC regarding replacement SID post in Groombridge.	Clerk	19/08	
39/24	Liase with councillors for meeting dates in 2025.	Clerk	19/08	