



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

**Minutes of the Amenities Committee Meeting
held on Monday 19th February 2024 at 7.30pm
In the Palmer Room, Langton Green Village Hall, Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG)**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Rowe (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Leach, Norton and Turner.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Harman – Assistant Clerk (AC).

1. **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.
2. **To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence**
Apologies had been received from Cllr Lyle due to responsibilities in her role as a school Governor.
3. **Disclosures of Interest**
There were none.
4. **Declarations of Lobbying**
Cllr Leach had been lobbied regarding LGCSA's application for a 3G pitch. Cllr Norton had held discussions with Trevor Myles regarding the refurbishment of benches on Groombridge Green.
5. **Minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 30th October 2023**
RESOLVED that the minutes, previously forwarded to Members were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
6. **Public Open Session**
There were 3 members of the public present, all in relation to the Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG). Mr John Jeffrey, resident of Langton Green (LG) for 30 years, raised the following points:
 - He objects to the 3G pitch application saying it is not suitable for the rural village environment of LG. Those benefitting would primarily be from outside of the parish whilst the residents of LG would have to put up with the problems it creates, mainly to do with traffic and parking. They would be removing an existing village asset. The football club have been unsuccessful in getting the existing pitch usable, despite the money spent on that – how do we know they will get a 3G right?
 - Motorists were regularly parking on the pavements on the roads immediately outside of the carpark – often not leaving enough room for those in a wheelchair or with a pram to pass safely.
 - A car was recently left in the carpark with its engine running whilst the owner was nowhere to be seen.

7. **Financial Review**

The finance sheets were noted. Cllr Turner advised that the £1,000 in the budget for Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers was not necessary and that £500 would be more sensible.

8. **Delegated authority for expenditure by the Amenities Committee**

It was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council for the Amenities Committee to be granted delegated authority to authorise expenditure up to a maximum value of £500 per item.

9. **Parish Council Land:-**

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

- To consider an application from Langton Green Charitable and Sports Association (LGCSA) for a 3G pitch adjacent to the recreation ground and the implications to Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) land.

This discussion was brought forward for the benefit of the members of the public.

- Cllr Turner said that the Environment Working Group had discussed the proposal in depth and amongst other things, had issues with the biodiversity plan. He would report to Full Council when the 3G pitch was being discussed.
- SPC were surprised and disappointed that LGCSA felt it was unnecessary to consult with the Council to discuss the proposed building works on Council land before submitting their planning application.
- Paths: Information provided in the application was scant or non-existent. Councillors were concerned about such issues as maintenance; usage; impact on the pavilion; liability; health and safety - unlit paths running next to the swales containing water being used by children was a major concern.

It was agreed to postpone further discussions until it was known if Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) had approved the application. LGCSA would be unable to install paths or works access on SPC's land without first seeking their permission.

- To receive an update on playground maintenance following the recent commencement of the regular playground inspections by Capel Groundcare.

It was **RESOLVED** that the AC would undertake the following actions, for recommendation to Full Council:

- Repairs highlighted in the report should be carried out by either the Groundsman or Capel Groundcare. The AC would prepare a list of repairs including the costs involved.
- Three quotations for the replacement rubber matting in the playground to be obtained, in line with the Financial Regulations.
- A new, safer, gate should be installed at the carpark-side entrance to the playground. Three quotations would be obtained and put to Full Council.
- To consider the implications of third parties using SPC's land for commercial enterprises.
It was **RESOLVED** to charge pitch-holders £5ph for use of SPC's land, to be paid directly into SPC's bank account.
- To consider a request from a soft-whip ice cream van for weekly visits to the LGRG carpark.
It was **RESOLVED** to allow the van to visit the carpark weekly at school pick-up time provided he continued to park near the five-bar gate so that children can queue safely on the path or grass. The proprietor would be asked to pay his pitch fees directly into SPC's bank account.
- To consider a longer-term maintenance and replacement schedule for posts in the LGRG carpark.
It was **RESOLVED** that the AC would initially obtain 3 quotations for the replacement of the 21 wooden posts running along the path down the centre of the carpark with concrete filled steel bollards. The quotations would be put to Full Council for consideration. It was hoped to replace all the existing posts in due course in appropriate tranches.

- To receive an update from the Chair of SPC's Environment Working Group (EWG) about the ongoing weed control trial at LGRG.
Cllr Turner said that he would be meeting with the Assistant Clerk (CB) and the Groundsman to discuss their focus in the coming months. This would include continuing the use of the non-glyphosate weedkiller in a more regular and controlled manner.

b) **The Green at Langton Green**

The crab apple tree had now been planted and the AC and Groundsman had received positive comments of thanks from several passing residents.

c) **The Boundary at Langton Green**

There was nothing to report.

d) **The Green at Groombridge**

A request had been received from Mr Myles who had volunteered to restore the benches on The Green, for SPC to contribute towards his costs. It was agreed in principle to contribute towards the materials for repairing the benches but councillors would require an estimate of costs first. Cllr Norton would ask Mr Myles to send details of the expenses to the AC so that they could be approved.

e) **Pocket Parks at Speldhurst**

Cllr Turner said that a grant of £1,000 had been received from Tesco, in addition to the £1,300 already received from Sussex Lund, towards the environmental enhancements being made. He provided an update including that the bird boxes had been installed and a summary of works to the vegetation following a meeting on site with the contractor. The noticeboard would be installed soon which would contain photos from the archive documenting the new fauna each year.

10. **Items for Information**

Permission was being sought by a member of Groombridge School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) for a traffic control sign to be placed on Groombridge Green ahead of the school's May Fayre. Councillors agreed that the sign could be erected on the condition that it was positioned carefully so as not to obstruct motorists' sightlines and that it is removed promptly after the event.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting finished at 9.10 pm.

Chairman