**Local Government Act 1972**

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

# Minutes of the Highways Committee Meeting

# held on Monday 29th June 2026 in the Parish Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cllrs Norton (Chair), Cleaver, Farley, Turner (Vice-Chair), with representatives from the villages - Mr Myles and Mr Langridge.

**BOROUGH COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** There were none.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** One member of the public was present

**OFFICERS PRESENT**: Mrs Alison Dry (Administration and Communications Coordinator - AC&C).

1. **TO ENQUIRE IF ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING**

   The AC&C recorded the meeting for administrative purposes. The meeting started at 7.30. The Chair welcomed those present.

2. **TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE**

   Apologies were received from Cllrs Barrington-Johnson (holiday), Littlefield (work commitments), and Mrs Dooley (unknown reason). It was agreed that Committee attendance should be reviewed.

3. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

   There were none.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING**

   There were none.

5. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23rd FEBRUARY 2026**

   It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes previously distributed to all Members be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair at the end of the meeting.

**6. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

A resident presented his concerns regarding the 20mph zone in Speldhurst, highlighting the lack of reliable speed data. He had previously submitted a video outlining these, together with a suggestion for a placing a Speed Indicator Device (SID) on his land.

Key points raised:

- Despite a widely held perception that vehicles regularly exceed the speed limit, there is currently no reliable data on this**.**
- Thus requests for enforcement or highway improvements lack the necessary supporting evidence.
- The Parish Council already owns Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)**,** which record speeds and display them to drivers.
- But as the 20-mph zone lacks suitable mounting sites, SIDs cannot be deployed there.
- So the Council is unable to collect data about speed compliance.

The resident proposed installing a new SID mounting post, highlighting that:

- His land offers the best location**,** removing potential complications around permissions.
- The proposed site offers improved sightlines**,** allowing the device to monitor a longer stretch of road and capture more representative data.
- The location would also provide better coverage of a nearby junction (Wallers)
- The proposal is not about enforcement but establishing a robust evidence base**.**
- Accurate data would support future decisions about whether additional measures (e.g. signage, traffic calming, or other improvements) are justified.
- This would align with a phased approach, where data collection is the first step before considering further intervention.

The Committee discussion highlighted:

**a)** Importance of Evidence-Based Decision Making
The Committee emphasised that demonstrating a clear problem through data is essential before prioritising resources or requesting changes from Kent County Council (KCC).
It was noted that similar speeding concerns exist across multiple parts of the parish**,** so objective data is needed to determine relative priority.

**b)** Use of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)
It was noted that SIDs serve two purposes:
  - Collecting speed data
  - Influencing driver behavior (encouraging compliance)

There was discussion about whether displaying speeds affects data accuracy; however, it was agreed that for consistency, the device should be used in the same way as elsewhere in the parish.

**c)** Alternative Data Sources
Members highlighted other ways of gathering data, including:

  - Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs) (road tubes)
  - Police-approved Speedwatch sites
  - Data collected via vehicle-based systems (GPS/spatial datasets) available through KCC

It was agreed that no single method is sufficient on its own and that a combined approach would be best.

**d)** Police Engagement
It was agreed to approach police officers operating speed enforcement vans for practical advice on siting devices.

**e)** Data Analysis Capability

- Members acknowledged that while large volumes of SID data can be generated**,** analysis had proved time consuming**.**
- It was suggested that modern tools (including AI or supplier software) could make analysis more efficient, and Mr Bartlett offered to assist given his professional background.

It was recognised that this proposal forms part of a wider strategic goal**:**

- To determine whether the 20mph zone is effective
- To assess whether further safety interventions are required

The Committee agreed to progress the issue on a data-led basis**,** with the following actions:

- **Police Liaison**
  - Cllr Farley to identify and contact the appropriate Kent Police representative (likely linked to speed enforcement teams).
  - Arrange for informal advice on the proposed SID location.
  - If feasible, arrange a site visit with the resident.
- **SID Deployment**
  - Explore the feasibility of installing a new mounting post at the proposed location.
  - Assess whether this would improve both:
    - Data collection quality
    - Driver visibility and behavioural impact
- **KCC Data Request**
  - Chair to contact Kent County Council to request any available speed or spatial data for the area.
  - Use this as a baseline dataset alongside future SID readings.
- **Wider Review of Data Use**
  - Review how SID data is currently collected, stored, and analysed.
  - Investigate improved or more efficient methods of interpreting the data.

The Committee agreed that once sufficient data has been gathered, the issue can be:

- Assessed comparatively against other parish priorities
- Considered for inclusion or elevation within the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) if justified

The Chair thanked the resident for his contribution and offer of further support (he stayed for the reminder of the meeting as an observer). Another Speldhurst resident was offering land for a speed device in the 20-mph zone and this should be taken into account.

**7. REVIEW OF ACTION POINTS**

11 of the 17 Action Points from the previous meeting had been completed. The remaining and newly added actions would be considered by village at item 9.

**8. REVIEW OF HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE'S BUDGET**

No expenditure had taken place since the previous meeting. Funds remain available to address SPC's highways priorities (£15k for financial year 2026/27, with an earmarked reserve of £30k). TWBC's Rural Grant money should be spent on 2 of the HIP projects this financial year, but the remaining HIP priorities required SPC expenditure.

**9. HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP) (INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF ANY NEW ISSUES BY VILLAGE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT CORRESPONDENCE, RECENT ACCIDENTS, SPEEDWATCH, AND MEDIA)**

Cllrs Norton, Turner and the A&CC had updated the HIP in preparation for formally revising it with KCC later in the Summer.

The Committee agreed to:

- Focus on evidence-led priorities
- Use all available data (e.g. ATC, SID, accident records)
- Balance localised issues affecting individuals with wider community benefit
- To progress smaller non-HIP items alongside larger projecte where possible

The Committee reviewed progress across the four villages, considering both formal HIP schemes and non-HIP local issues**.** The HIP remains the Parish's primary mechanism for identifying, prioritising, and progressing highway improvements with KCC, with discussion focused on evidence, deliverability, funding, and priority.

KCC had confirmed funding for SPC's bid for Tunbridge Wells Rural Parish Grant scheme:

Groombridge Hill - Signing and lining enhancements – £10,105
Speldhurst Road – 30mph speed limit enhancements - £9681
Totalling £19,786.

KCC clarification had been requested over process and timeline: the AC&C to chase this with KCC.

**a) Langton Green**

- **Informal Consultation Lampington Row**
  KCC had not responded to the consultation results given them by SPC. Further chasing is required and will be done by the AC&C in the first instance.

**NON-HIP Items**

- **Safer Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Links between Langton Green, Rusthall, the Commons and Royal Tunbridge Wells**
  A site walk took place on 10th June with stakeholders to review proposals for improved walking, wheeling and cycling links between Tunbridge Wells, Rusthall and Langton Green.
  The walkthrough was considered constructive, highlighting practical challenges along the route and opportunities to improve accessibility and safety. Focus was given to Farnham Lane where issues include:
  - Narrow carriageway and land ownership complexity
  - Lack of pedestrian space
  - Vehicle speeds creating safety concerns

Residents with specific accessibility needs (including mobility scooter users and visual impairment) have been identified to ensure their needs are reflected.

The Committee welcomed an offer from the resident at the meeting to contribute to this work. The AC&C would check on progress with a related access issue involving a chicane which had been raised with Cllr Turner.

- **The Grange Parking Issues**
  It was agreed the AC&C would advise the resident who raised the matter to encourage residents to lobby KCC and report all incidents to Kent Police to build evidence. The council will continue to challenge KCC for "keep clear" markings and follow up previous requests.
  The Committee discussed the Grange issue's place in SPC's plans.
  It was noted that:
    - There are strict limits on the number of HIP priorities that can be advanced at any one time
    - The Grange issue significantly affects a relatively small number of residents, rather than the wider parish

  As such the issue will continue to be actively pursued but not made a formal HIP priority at present.

- **Verge and Pavement Parking – Longmeads**
  A resident had noted that the verges at Longmeads were being destroyed by parked cars, particularly in winter. It was **RESOLVED** that the Groundskeeper would erect" "No parking" signs for the Autumn.

- **Proposed deer warning sign on Speldhurst Road, Langton Green**
  A resident had proposed deer warning signs for Speldhurst Road. As there had been no responses to requests for residents' views via social media channels it was **RESOLVED** not to pursue the matter further at present.

**b) Groombridge**

The Committee noted improvements due to be funded through the TWBC Rural Grant:

- Village centre speed signage improvements
- Entry markings (30mph zones)
- Road narrowing signage planned

Members welcomed this but noted some requested measures (e.g., additional red strip calming) had been declined.

**NON-HIP Items**

- **HGV Routing and Traffic Impact**

There had been concerns about HGVs using inappropriate village routes (e.g., Bird in Hand Street). Investigations confirmed:

- Major navigation apps (e.g., Waze) are not directing traffic via these roads.
- Increased traffic likely linked to local construction activity.
- The developer at Court Lodge has taken steps to redirect construction traffic appropriately (turning within site)

The Committee noted that as development proposals may increase traffic here, SPC's Planning Committee should be asked to push for traffic management conditions.

- **Proposed Footbridge (River Grom)**
  The idea of creating a pedestrian bridge across the river remained attractive on safety grounds but now seemed unlikely given the sale of Groombridge Place. It should not be removed from the plan just yet.

It was dependent on:

  - Agreement of new landowner
  - Future maintenance responsibilities (potentially KCC)

- **Blocked Drain at Groombridge Green**
  Mr Myles reported that the recurring issue of the drains at Bird in Hand Street was continuing despite being reported. Mr Myles and the A&CC to chase for investigation.

**c) Speldhurst**

- **Etherington Hill**
  Automatic Traffic Counter data had been collected, with speed data lower than anticipated. However, a cluster of recorded accidents at the junction contradicts speed data alone. KCC acknowledged ongoing safety concerns but concludes there is no scope for significant infrastructure changes due to cost. Likely interventions will therefore focus on improved warning and speed related signage.

  It was agreed to:

  - Gather further evidence (police reports, updated accident records)
  - Explore targeted safety signage solutions
  - Consider funding contribution if required
  - Cllr Cleaver to get examples of Slow Down/Hazard signage in Dorset to present to KCC.

**NON-HIP Items**

- **School Parking/Dragonfly Farm**
  Cllr Farley will revisit the request to keep Dragonfly Farm's car park open on Mondays for school drop off and collection.
- **Speed Monitoring/SID siting (Speldhurst Hill)**
  See Item 6.

**d) Ashurst**

**NON-HIP Items**

- **SpeedWatch**
  Cllr Cleaver noted there had been various unsuccessful attempts to get a scheme going. It was agreed that reviewing data from SIDs would be the best step forward.

**10. FOOTPATHS/PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)**

The Clerk had proposed that each councillor be assigned a footpath, inspecting it twice yearly. The Committee supported this but asked for more user-friendly maps. Once these were provided path allocations/inspection dates would be confirmed.

Engagement with the Burrswood landowner regarding access was improving. There was now willingness to allow a degree of local access although nothing formal had been agreed. It was agreed to keep a watch on developments, with the option of a formal PROW application.

**11. ITEMS REQUIRING FULL COUNCIL APPROVAL**

There were none.

**12. ISSUES FOR COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC**

The A&CC reported leaflet drops to houses bordering footpaths (Langton and Speldhurst) plus a social media post about overgrowing vegetation obstructing the footway. Responsibility lies with the property owners and not the Council. It was **RESOLVED** to make regular social media posts to highlight the issue.

The A&CC reported no pavement parking signs had been put up near the school and along the road in Longmeads (as discussed under Item 9).

**13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- Waste Bins along the A264 – Ed Langridge explained that several small litter bins, originally installed by the Langton Green Village Society, are being used inappropriately. It was agreed to pass this to the Amenities Committee.

- The next meeting would be 26th October 2026 7.30 pm in the Parish Office

With nothing further to discuss the meeting ended at 8:52 pm.

**Chair**