

# STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Committee, Group or Sub Group</b>   |  |
| FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP   |  |
| <b>Meeting Date &amp; Venue</b>  |  |
| 11 a.m. Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> April 2018, Parish Office, Staplehurst Village Centre  |  |
| <b>Report Author</b>   |  |
| Deborah Jenkins – Deputy Clerk & Finance Officer   |  |
| <b>Report</b>  |  |
| <p><b>Present:</b> Councillors Tom Burnham (TB), John Perry (JP), Paddy Riordan (PR) and Rory Silkin (RS). Mick Westwood (MW), Parish Clerk; Deborah Jenkins (DJ), Deputy Clerk &amp; Finance Officer.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Apologies:</b> Cllr Sam Lain-Rose (SL-R).</li><li><b>Minutes of last meeting</b> (08/01/2018) had been circulated and were agreed.<br/><br/><u>ARISING FROM MEETING of 26/10/2017 b/fwd:</u></li><li><b>Youth Leader Project</b> – SL-R update re: formal agreement to clarify Management and Maintenance issues of the building and land and a Service Level Agreement to establish the standards, principles and scope of the Youth Worker provision. <b>Deferred as SL-R not present.</b></li><li><b>Jubilee Playing Field</b> – SL-R update re: JFMC 3-year Business Plan (including a strategy for mower breakdowns/servicing). Update/progress report on the completion of the Maintenance Agreement. <b>Deferred as SL-R not present.</b></li></ol> <p><u>OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Annual Statement 2017-2018 and Annual Audit</b> – A copy of the accounts had previously been circulated to all Councillors. It was noted that the figures for General Reserves and 'budget carry-forward' in the Statement of Accounts would be confirmed with the Internal Auditor. Subject to final confirmation of these figures, <b>it was agreed to recommend to Full Council the approval of the Statement of Accounts and the draft Annual Return.</b></li><li><b>Internal Auditor</b> – DJ advised she had chased Tim Kendrick to complete the Internal Audit and to arrange a date for a meeting to discuss the arrangements for a Review of Internal Audit Controls. A response was awaited.</li><li><b>Bank Account</b> – DJ reported that the transfer of the account to Lloyds Bank had taken place and that the new arrangements were working well. TB and PR volunteered to become signatories on the account following the resignation of Cllr Spearink. <b>It was agreed to recommend to Full Council the approval of TB &amp; PR as additional signatories.</b></li><li><b>Footpath KM312</b> – DJ reported that she had been in contact with Patrick Siese from Carillion who had confirmed that the company had gone into liquidation and would not be completing the work on the footpath as previously advised. Carillion had agreed that SPC could proceed with works to the path if they desired. Carillion had also offered to gift the footpath to SPC. <b>It was agreed to recommend to Full Council for the Parish Council to take ownership of the footpath and undertake the drainage and tree work required.</b> PR would seek further</li></ol> |  |

# STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

quotes for the recommended work as per the Gristman Tree Surgery Ltd tender sought by Carillion.

9. **Quotations, Subscriptions & Next Quarter Reviews for Recommendation to Full Council** – A schedule of forthcoming contracts and subscriptions for renewal had been circulated to all Councillors. **It was agreed to recommend to Full Council the annual renewal of contracts to Maclin Pumps £392.00, Bell Lane Toilets waste water with Business Stream £265.00, Iden Business Services £400.00, and Arron Services £450.00 and to accept the quote from Aylesford Electrical Contractors to install and take down the festive lighting at £1,650.00 per annum for a three year contract; to pay annual subscriptions to KALC £1,275.00, County Playing Fields Association £20.00, Norton Internet Security £70.00, ALCC £20.00, SLCC £ 377.00 and Parish Online £84.00.** A quote had been received from KCC via their contractors to carry out an electrical and structural inspection of 11 of the parish owned street lights situated in Maidstone Road and Nicholson Walk. **It was agreed to recommend to Full Council to accept the quote for £597.00 and in addition to include two street lights in Chapel Lane for which a quote would be sought.**
- To comply with General Data Protection Regulations\* a number of quotes had been sought for the engagement of a Data Protection Officer. MW and RS had held conversations with two service providers and had agreed that they preferred GDPR-info. **It was agreed to recommend to Full Council the appointment of GDPR-info as Data Protection Officer for Staplehurst Parish Council on a one-year contract at £500.00 plus mileage at £64.80.** *\*Note: after the meeting it was reported that HM Government was proposing an amendment to the legislation to the effect that parish councils would not be obliged to appoint a Data Protection Officer; however, whatever the outcome of the proposal, KALC had encouraged councils to make such an appointment to demonstrate best practice.*
10. **Donation Requests** – Five Acre Wood School, Involve Maidstone, Helping a Maidstone Child & Heart of Kent Hospice: Correspondence had been received from the above organisations requesting support from the Parish Council. It was acknowledged that when setting the budget Full Council had previously agreed the donation recommendations for the year from Community Enhancement Group. **It was agreed to recommend a donation of £250.00 to Five Acre Wood School and £100 to Heart of Kent Hospice to be paid from the donation budget reserve of £1000. It was agreed to request further information from Involve Maidstone on the benefits of their service to Staplehurst residents before making a recommendation.**
13. **Surrenden Playing Field & Nicholson Walk Freehold** – Update (JP) No further progress had been achieved since MBC's rejection of SPC's offer. The lease expires in March 2019 and it was noted that no notice was required to be given to MBC if SPC decided not to renew. RS suggested that SPC offer MBC for example £500.00 per annum for the next 50 years to purchase the freehold and to continue with the on-going maintenance of the site. The Group agreed this approach was worth exploring. JP offered to speak to Mark Green, without commitment, about the proposal.
14. **Publication of Financial Information** – DJ advised the Group that, having gone over the £200,000 threshold for gross income and/or expenditure, SPC would be required to supply additional information to the external auditor and to publish on their website particular financial information to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. It was acknowledged that this would involve the parish office in an additional work load.

# STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

15. **Draft Investment Strategy** – MW informed the Group that at a recent KALC conference councils had been advised that they should have in place an Investment Strategy, for the security and liquidity of their funds. The Strategy should be published and reviewed annually. The Group noted the strategy written by MW. **It was agreed to discuss the paper with the internal auditor before recommending approval to Full Council.** MW suggested that, assuming approval of the strategy, SPC may wish to consider opening an account with a second institution, as individual bank groups only guaranteed funds up to the sum of £85,000.00 per account holder.
16. **Updated Standing Orders** – MW advised that the NALC Model Standing Orders had recently been updated. SL-R and MW were to liaise with regard to updating SPC's standing orders. This was noted by Finance & Strategy Group.
17. Dates of Next Meetings –19th July 2018, 25th October 2018