

Local Government Act 1972



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

**Draft Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held on
Monday 20th November 2023 at 7.30pm in the
Parish Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground**

Due to an overrun of an Emergency Full Council meeting the Finance Committee meeting did not start until 8.02pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Ellery (Chair), Cleaver, Rowe with Curry and Lyle (both ex-officio).

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mr C May – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

1. To enquire if anyone present intends to record the meeting:

The meeting was not recorded.

2. To receive and approve apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Davies and Tarricone (both work commitment). Apologies were also received from the Clerk (illness).

3. Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

4. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

5. Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting dated 9th October 2023, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, be approved, and signed as a correct record.

6. Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present.

7. Review of Action Points

The RFO reported that all action points had been completed or were in progress.

8. Interim Payments

Unity Bank: £32.38 Langton Green Village Hall for Meeting Room; £500 Cooper Burnett for additional fees for Counsel; £74.39* Viking for toilet paper for Pavilion.

Mastercard: £13.52* Amazon for computer mouse for Asst Clerk.

Starred items were made under delegated power.

9. Financial position to review expenditure vs budget at November 2023:

Summary sheets and detailed reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. The RFO said that the figures included payments for November (eight months' expenditure). The committee reviewed the figures which were in line with expectations.

10. Financial position to review expenditure for the Pavilion at November 2023

Summary sheets and detailed reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. The RFO again reported that there was going to be a deficit this year which will exceed the money in the Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) Pavilion account. The main reason for the deficit was the significantly higher energy bills and he estimated that the total would be in the region of £15,000 and would need to be taken from EMR Contingency this year.

11. Budget Virements

There were no new budget virements.

12. Banking and reserves – to consider the present banking arrangements.

The RFO reported that all accounts were now within the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) protection limit. The RFO indicated that many Financial Organisations do not deal with parish councils but had been given the name Arbuthnot which he would investigate.

13. Committee and Working Group expenditure – to consider expenditure recommended by committees and working groups and be notified of expenditure made under delegated authority. To make recommendations to Full Council where necessary.

The Amenities committee had submitted a budget request to spend up to £30,000 on new fencing around the playground and nursery areas in 2026. This was noted and future budgets would make sure this was taken into consideration.

14. Finance Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) – there was one amendment to item 12. The spending limit had been increased to £7,500. With this amendment the TOR would be submitted to Full Council for approval.

15. Financial Regulations – The Internal Auditor advised that NALC were going to issue an updated template for Financial Regulations next year so the committee decided against a major review. It was noted that although still valid the references to the RFO would need to be changed in April 2024. Cllr Lyle suggested that the amounts under 11. (Contracts) required updating but this should be amended in the new NALC update.

Cllr Rowe noted that under 6 (Payment of Accounts) 6.5 was too specific and should not specify certain types of business because Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) was using Direct Debits for other companies such as bank charges and waste disposal.

16 Grant Requests

- Update on Speldhurst Community Shop PWLB (Public Works Loan Board) – The RFO reported that, since the last meeting, the interest rate had come down from 5.8 to 5.4% which reduced

the annual repayments to £30,680 (£13,000 capital and £17,680 interest reducing over the term). These figures would be used in the budget calculation.

- All Saints' Church, Langton Green, request for churchyard maintenance. **RESOLVED** to grant £1,000 towards maintenance.

17 Budget 2024-25

The budget recommendations for the precept for 2024-25 were again reviewed. The committee noted the figures and made small adjustments (CCTV (4210) carried forward £2,000 and the budget figure of £2,000 deleted; LGRG Pitch (4204 reduced to £6,800 and Canine refuse increased by £500).

The RFO proposed a budget for the pavilion next year that did not include any income because the café licence was in a state of flux. Keeping expenditure to a minimum, it could still cost £10,000.

The committee considered the amount in EMR Highways (£30,000) and the time the money had been held unspent (3-4 years). They would make a considered decision at some stage in the future if some funds were needed elsewhere within the budget and later reinstate the EMR total when pressure eased.

The RFO suggested an increase of 8.9% in the precept to £195,000 which would give £15,000 contingency, although most of this will be needed to offset the pavilion budget deficit. With the PWLB included it would make the precept £225,680 an increase of 25.9%. This would be put before Full Council in the December meeting.

18 Staff and Training

The training cost for the Assistant Clerk was noted.

19 Items for Information

- Date of next meeting Monday 3rd January 2024 (only if precept is not agreed at the December Full Council meeting) and Monday 18th March 2024.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 9.46pm.

Chair

Finance Committee Action Points

Action Number	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
21/23	Follow up dissolution of SPC Pavilion Ltd so that we can apply to TWBC for 0% rateable value.	Clerk	09/10	Complete
22/23	Look at interest rates of accounts to see if a better rate of return can be achieved.	RFO	09/10	In progress
23/23	Include item on FC regarding caution on future expenditure.	Clerk	09/10	Complete
24/23	Provide estimate of annual energy bills.	Cllr Curry	09/10	Complete
25/23	Include Precept 2024/25 on next Full Council Agenda.	Clerk	09/10	Complete
26/23	Include the renaming and transfers of the EMR on next Full Council Agenda.	Clerk	09/10	Complete
27/23	Include Committee membership on next Full Council Agenda.	Clerk	09/10	Complete

28/23	Include Internal Financial Control policy alterations for approval on next Full Council Agenda.	Clerk	09/10	Complete
29/23	Amend TOR per minutes and submit to FC for approval.	Clerk	20/11	
30/23	Amend Fin Regs 6.5 to be non-specific and submit to FC for approval.	Clerk	20/11	
31/23	Pay grant of £1,000 to All Saints' Church, Langton Green for churchyard maintenance.	Clerk	20/11	

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