

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP MEETING

Thursday 25th July 2023

2:30pm at Parish Council offices

Minutes

Present: - Cllrs Perry, Hotson, Martin and Arger

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs Sharp, Riordan and Eerdeken plus Deborah Jenkins
- 2. Dispensations** - Na
- 3. Minutes of previous meeting** – agreed accurate reflection of the meeting

4. VAT update – Verbal

Previous advice was to stay as we are but if we build 3G all-sports pitch then consider becoming VAT registered or set up a separate company.

Since then HRMC have conceded to Chelmsford Borough Council that sports provision and management are non-business – see attached summary of the case.

Therefore Council can remain as we are.

Awaiting formal report from VAT consultant – end of August 2023

Agreed to invite VAT Consultant to a EFS group meeting in September 2023 to chat through with him as this is a key issue / risk - RG

5. Preferred contractor list – discuss

Agreed that for small items, especially as we are now managing facilities, office needs list to contact. In effect formalise what we are doing now. Some years ago had a list.

DJ / RG bring back draft list of tasks / preferred contractors for future meeting and then on to Council.

6. Quarterly finance report

Continue with summation suggested that title of “actual” – should be – “Actual / projected year end” to help Councillors understand the Summation

Also should reserves be the same in both columns – the difference would highlight what we have spent from reserves?

(RFO advised that the auditor emphasised that this should remain as £0)

Up coming Contracts

CCTV – on hold while we get specification from police and tender.

Licence for poppies £37 – yes

Subscription to Kent Pond and Trees – further clarification, what do we get? No one could recall using them?

Parish Lights unmetered - yes

PAT Testing – Yes

Telephone – yes for warm Room and SEHT if required

TV licence – where? Yes if required.

Note events report going to Council on Christmas lights, Remembrance Sunday costs and also Christmas Social option of following on from Council meeting 11th December 2023 or another evening that week subject to room availability.

Cllrs felt it worked better as separate evening – 12th, 13, 14th December 2023 subject to room availability.

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Council Noticeboard is in need of replacement – opportunity of a MBC grant felt should look at locating on Youth Club land as we own the land. – EH / JT to liaise and come forward with options back to Council.

7. S137 Grant request attached

Welcomed application, met criteria seeking £1,000 towards a school garden project.

However need a bit more information

- 2nd page of accounts
- What are the actual plans – details maybe photo of existing site and design of what it would look like
- Any match funding PTA?
- Sponsorship from local nurseries etc

Would welcome re-application with more information. – RG feedback

Note on form question 9 emphasise “other funding and add some rows - RG

8. Budget 2024/25

Clerk highlighted process

- Seek any budget implications from working groups
- Review current costs
- Review any known increases – contract uplifts
- Build up expenditure and income before reporting to Council
- The difference is the precept – MBC send information on Tax Base and when we need to submit
- Submit information to MBC – usually by end

Clerk highlighted the need to consider KALC process on staff grades as we take on more services. RG liaise with KALC.

In addition back dated percentage pay rise for this year yet to be confirmed by NALC.

Potential for sinking fund / long term maintenance for facilities – if unused add to earmarked reserves

Cllrs discussion felt maybe 3% increase for 2024/25, but will see as we go through the process.

9. SCENic 23 Terms of Reference – agreed to recommend to Council

10. Dates of next meeting –

Fourth Thursday of the month 7:30pm – 24th August 2023

RG ask GDPR officer to review SPC policy documents

Review draft “Residents Survey”