



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

**Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held in the Committee Room,  
Speldhurst Village Hall on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 7.30pm**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cllrs Mrs Lyle (Chairman), Mrs Jeffreys, Mrs Soyke, Mrs Woodliffe (7.45pm), Milner, Ellery, and Barrington-Johnson (ex-officio)

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** There were three members of the public present

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** C May – Clerk

1. **To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting:** No-one present intended to film, photograph and/or record the meeting.
2. **To receive and approve apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Podbury (prior engagement) and Mrs K Harman, Assistant Clerk (illness)
3. **Disclosures of Interest:** Cllr Ellery reiterated that he is a Trustee on behalf of SPC to the Speldhurst Village Hall and has a child at Speldhurst Primary School
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
5. **Minutes: RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting dated **20<sup>th</sup> August 2018**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, be approved and signed as a correct record.
6. **Public Open Session:** Edward Pinnell, Lynsay Bischoff and Chris Straw were attending the meeting on behalf of the Committee for the Speldhurst Community Shop project.
  - Mr Pinnell gave a brief history since Anu (present shop owner) had given notice of her intention to retire back in July. Since then a village meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> September, attended by 110 people and a committee was formed of eight people. He said that at the meeting there was a pledge by 25 attendees for between £20,000 and a maximum of £37,000, with more attendees pledging unspecified amounts, so the committee was confident that more could be raised. They had spoken to the Post Office who agreed that when the current contract ends in December the same terms will be available to the new management, which will enable them to employ a Manager and 2 assistants but they will still rely heavily on volunteers.

- The committee has made a conditional offer to Anu which has been accepted which will entail the raising of a total of £75,000 to pay for a five-year lease of the shop, frontage and store room, buy stock subject to valuation, fixtures and fittings and refurbishment.
- They will be using a Plunkett Foundation template to create a Community Benefit Society which will have Directors, shareholders and hold an AGM. A share offer will then be made to residents with a limited withdrawal facility.
- They will be visiting two successful community shops at Ide Hill and Benenden for ideas.
- A prospectus will be issued to residents and they are confident that funds raised will exceed estimates but that they will still require some grants.
- They asked the Parish Council for a grant, and if this were approved, whether a portion be used to help with start-up costs of about £4,000 and any remainder be applied towards the project.

Cllr Mrs Lyle said that normally, when members of the public attend a meeting on an agenda item, it is brought forward so it can be discussed and decided at that time. However, on this occasion a number of issues needed to be discussed before the Committee ascertained what money is available before a grant can be considered. She also advised them that the Committee only had authority to make a grant of up to £5,000 and anything over had to be approved by Full Council. She advised that the Clerk will notify them of any decision made.

The members of the public left the meeting at 8.08pm

- 7. Interim Payments:** The Clerk advised the following payments since the Full Council meeting: Mastercard: £9.00 bank charges. Current Account: £136.08 transfer to pay balance on Mastercard; £72.86 Waste disposal.
- 8. Budget Virements:** The Clerk advised that these would be discussed under item 15.
- 9. Financial Position as at October 2018 and review of expenditure vs budget to-date:** Summary sheets and detailed reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk then answered Councillors' general queries.
- 10. Financial Position as at October 2018 and review of expenditure for the Pavilion:** The total income was £344 below expense year-to-date. Cllr Mrs Lyle said she expected to break even this year, explaining that expenses were higher than the previous year, with a lot of start-up costs caused by taking on new contracts included. Cllr Barrington-Johnson asked why no budget figures had been allocated and the Clerk responded by saying that they were still on a learning curve and the next financial year would include expected budget figures.
- 11. Banking and Reserves:**
  - a) Two of three bank accounts were within the FCSA limit – the current account at Unity bank was £92, 837 and this would be within limit by November.
  - b) Work was progressing on updating the mandates. Cllr Mrs Lyle asked if this could be taken off the agenda
  - c) The accounts for the Pavilion would be opened once the legal terms had been agreed. She asked that this be taken off the agenda until it was pertinent.
- 12. Committee and Working Group expenditure:**
  - a) Expenditure authorised but not yet invoiced: The Clerk advised the following: renovation at the war memorial (£3,553.63); tree maintenance at The Boundary (£700) and Roopers (£1,280) and playground repairs (£500)
  - b) The BT telephone line has been changed and documentation has been sent to Vodafone for them to take over the broadband.

**13. Grant requests:**

- a) Speldhurst Village Hall application for £4,230 to renew the decking: there was much discussion regarding the application. Members considered that there should be an element of fund raising or use of reserves, also of justification not to use the cheapest quote received. It was **RESOLVED** to grant £3,000 to Speldhurst Village Hall as a contribution towards new decking.
- b) It was **RESOLVED** to grant £5,000 to Speldhurst Primary School towards the installation of new fencing, pathway and running track, being additional expenses required as part of their expansion to a full one-form entry.
- c) There was much discussion regarding the application concerning the Speldhurst Community Shop. Any grant was dependent upon the satisfactory establishment of a Community Benefit Society and the Committee agreed that a total grant of £15,000 should be recommended to Full Council. However, due to the initial need for funds it was **RESOLVED** to make £4,000 immediately available for the start-up costs and recommend that Full Council make a further grant of £11,000. The grant would not be paid until the proper vehicle had been established but to assist the project the Finance Committee agreed that the Parish Council would pay costs up to the value of the initial £4,000 and the Clerk was instructed to advise them that invoices should be made out to SPC and submitted for payment.

**14. Staff and Training:**

- The Clerk is attending the KALC Finance Conference on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018
- Cllrs Mrs Soyke, Mrs Lyle and Pate are attending the Chairman's Conference.
- The Chairman is attending the NALC Conference and the overnight stay is £99.00
- The Assistant Clerk is in the process of organising a KALC Planning workshop which will cost approximately £350.

**15. Setting the budget (precept) 2019-20:** The Clerk had met with Cllrs Mrs Lyle and Jeffreys and had discussed the Clerk's admin budget proposals. The papers had been produced with next year's budget details for discussion ahead of a recommendation to Full Council. The main points to note were:

- Pavilion - the profit from last year (£7,500) is to be transferred from general reserves to establish a new Pavilion RRIM reserve. The original £3,000 agreed for the RRIM account will be added to make a total reserve of £10,500
- Pavilion – conservative budgeting next year predicts a loss of £3,000
- £10,000 set aside for tree management next year
- £15,800 Highways savings carried forward for new projects
- £8,400 added to Sports Clubs expenditure to total £21,000 for possible drainage expenditure
- Contingency account re-instated with £25,000
- Virements will be required for the grants made in 13a) b) and c)
- Recommendation for precept to remain at £148,000

After much discussion it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that there be no increase in the precept and for it to remain at £148,000

**16. Items for Information:**

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Chairman