

Speldhurst Parish Council

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

Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held in The Committee Room, Langton Green Village Hall on Thursday, 27th August 2009 at 7.30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllr. Parker (Chairman)
Cllr. Mrs Hull
Cllr. Mrs Podbury
Cllr. Mrs Soyke
Cllr. Colley
Cllr. Mrs Waters
Cllr. Wheeler
Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys (ex officio)

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris May – Clerk

No members of the public present

- 1. Declarations of Interests:** Personal and Prejudicial: Cllr Mrs Soyke – Item 11 Ashurst McDermott Hall Grant request. She is Chairman of the Trust; Cllr Mrs Waters – Item 20 Babysitting fees; Clerk Chris May – Item 16 Request from Clerk for approval of overtime.
- 2. Declarations of Lobbying:** None received
- 3. Apologies for Absence:** There were none.
- 4. Minutes** of the meeting dated **10th June 2009**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.
- 5. Matters Arising and Correspondence:** The Clerk advised the Committee that a stationery account had been opened at Ryman with a £200 monthly limit – he was the only person with the authority to charge to the account.
Denis Gibbs had emailed the Clerk advising the Council that further work was to be carried out on the refurbishment of the Speldhurst Sports Pavilion and that a request for a Grant would be made in due course.
The Clerk advised the Committee that the work authorised at the Langton Green Sports Pavilion (see Full Council meeting of 20th July) had been completed.
It was requested that the Clerk investigate to see if the quinquennial report had been requested from St John's Church, Groombridge in accordance with the minutes of the meeting dated 10th June.
Cllr Jeffreys reported that she had spoken to the Audit Commission about the fact that the Parish Council had not carried out a review of the internal audit and confirmed that the Council would be rebuked in their report.
Cllr Parker had considered the information about DIS reports; ***It was decided to refer it to the Full Council.***
- 6. Financial Position as at 31st July 2009** - The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Position and this was duly noted by the Committee.
- 7. 2009 – 10 Budget and Supplementary Information** – the Clerk had previously circulated the up-to-date Budget Sheet together with supplementary sheets. There were some adjustments to be made to the year end forecast figures which did not reflect the money paid out. ***The Clerk was asked to look in to the details of a payment of £493 for nine bollards.***

8. **Budget Forecast to 31st March 2010** – This was duly noted.
9. **Committee Terms of Reference:** These were agreed.
10. **Internal Auditor:** Cllr Parker reported that he had tried contacting Mr Funnell on numerous occasions and had one reply to say that would be happy to help the Clerk for half a day free of charge, but had heard nothing since. In view of his unreliability Cllr Parker recommended that the Council look to appoint a new Internal Auditor, but would take up his offer if he confirmed it. ***The Clerk was asked to contact KALC or some local Parish Councils and ask for recommendations and report back.***
11. **Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust – Grant request – extension to Hall.** Cllr Mrs Soyke explained to the Committee that it was unlikely that the £20,000 allocated in the Parish Council budget towards the Play Area would be taken up in this financial year due to problems of ownership of the land. The extension to the Village Hall, however, was to be started ahead of schedule and the Committee was asked if part of the funds could be reallocated to help towards this cost. Cllr Mrs Soyke then left the room. Cllr Parker summarised the request and there followed a discussion. There were two proposals
 - a) That the expenses for the Architect and other fees totalling £7,718.71 be paid.
 - b) That a sum of £10,000 be allocated towards the project.These were then voted on. Proposal a) was defeated by 3 to 4. Proposal b) was carried by 4 to 3. Cllr Mrs Soyke was asked to rejoin the meeting and was advised that it would be ***recommended to Full Council that £10,000 be allocated towards the Village Hall extension.***
12. **Speldhurst Village Fete – change of use of money granted.** The letter from Alex Dawes had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to agree to their request and ***the Clerk was asked to write advising them of the decision and also to convey their appreciation in being asked.***
13. **Speldhurst Netball Club – Grant request – Affiliation fees.** Their letter had been circulated prior to the meeting and it was unanimously agreed to a grant of £357.00
14. **Mileage** – Councillors were advised that they could claim the full mileage allowance of 60p but that anything over 40p was taxable or that they could claim mileage at 40p which would then not have to be declared.
15. **Delegated Powers – Clerk** – The Committee agreed to allow the Clerk to spend up to £100 on items considered necessary when normal procedure could not be adhered to. With the Chairman's authority (or the Chairman of Finance) the Clerk could spend up to £200. ***It was requested that the Standing Orders be changed to reflect this. It would be recommended to Full Council at the next meeting.***
16. **Request from Clerk for approval of payments of overtime** – The Clerk detailed the overtime he had incurred over the six weeks of his employment, which was mostly due to familiarising himself with the job plus the Parish Vision work which is currently at a high level. He expected the need for overtime to tail off as he settles in. He then left the room. Councillors resolved unanimously to grant payment of overtime incurred to date. ***It was also resolved unanimously to recommend to the Full Council that for the next three months the Clerk should bring an overtime schedule to the monthly meeting for approval.*** This arrangement is to be considered again in December. The Clerk rejoined the meeting. Councillors thanked him for the effort he had put into learning the job so swiftly.
17. **Consideration for a Parish Council Laptop and Mobile** – The Clerk had circulated a paper on the subject. The Committee agreed that a sum of £400 could be spent on a laptop for Council work. After a lengthy discussion it was voted that a mobile usb internet connection (dongle) be purchased on a 24 month plan at £18 per month. It was also agreed by 6-1 that the Clerk could have a Blackberry mobile phone on a 24 month plan at £25 per month. The mobile number would be used

in all communication and passed on to the next Clerk so that there would be continuity. ***These continuing expenditures would be put before Full Council.***

- 18. Replacement signs on LGRG** - The Clerk advised the committee that the four signs on the Play Area all had the old Clerk's telephone number and that they would have to be replaced either by a waterproof white strip with the new mobile number on it or at worst, new signs. ***The Clerk would investigate and report.***
- 19. Fencing on LGRG and play area** – A panel had been made loose and had fallen on a child and Cllr Ellis had temporarily fixed it. The Clerk had had a meeting with Tate Fencing for them to fix the panel permanently and to repair the gate and hinges. He had received a quote of £108 but because of the late arrival of the quote he had not had a chance to discuss it and he was unsure that everything was covered. ***He was given authority to have the work carried out as soon as possible once the quote had been discussed and the price was not excessive.***
Tate Fencing had also quoted for the fencing by the side of the teenage play area and by the side of the new footpath adjoining Lampington Row. Again ***these quotes needed to be clarified and he would report back.***
- 20. Baby sitting fees** – Cllr Mrs Waters explained that there had been occasions when it had cost her up to £75 in a busy month to attend meetings. This matter was discussed and it was agreed that payments of £5 per hour would be made to any Councillor who incurred baby sitting costs. They would send an invoice to the Clerk. ***This would be recommended to Full Council at the next meeting.***
- 21. Items for information** – Cllr Parker reminded the Committee that the Rural Society was holding their 50th Anniversary party at the Recreation Ground on Saturday 5th September starting at 4pm until 9pm when there would be fireworks.
KALC is holding a Finance Training Day on 17th October. ***The Clerk would arrange for the interested Councillors to attend.***
Cllr Wheeler asked that all meetings started at 7.30 in future. This would be put on the agenda for the Full Council.
Cllr Mrs Soyke was interested in attending a course at Warwick University run by NALC. It was a three day course and cost £750. This was agreed by the committee.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm

CHAIRMAN