



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

Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held in the Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground on Monday 21st May 2012 at 7.30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Hemming, Milner, Owen, Parker, Pendleton and Cllr Mrs Jeffreys (ex-officio)

OFFICERS PRESENT: C May – Clerk, Mrs M Flemington Assistant Clerk

- 1. Election of Chairman** – after much discussion it was decided that Cllr Mrs Jeffreys would join the committee and it was proposed that she become Chairman. This was **AGREED**. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that she did not want her tenure to last three years and would like another Cllr who has not held the post to take over when he/she has more experience. Cllr Hemming was proposed and elected Vice-Chairman.
Cllr Mrs Jeffreys offered a vote of thanks to Cllr Parker for his Chairmanship over the last three years and all Cllrs agreed.
- 2. Declarations of Interests:** There were none
- 3. Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
- 4. Apologies for Absence:** There were none.
- 5. Minutes** of the meeting dated **20th February 2012**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed as a correct record.
- 6. Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public present
- 7. Matters Arising and Correspondence:** Cllr Mrs Jeffreys referred to the previous minutes and asked if any progress had been made regarding the office directional sign. The Clerk said that he had been in contact with Jacobs who are going to cost the item. **Clerk to follow up.**
The Clerk had received notification from the Audit Commission that they were proposing to appoint Littlejohn LLP as our external auditors from September 2012-13. **The letter would be circulated to all Cllrs at the June Full Council meeting for a decision.**
He advised the committee that John Roberts, the Internal Auditor, had visited the office earlier that day and corrected the error on the audit form and initialled it. The Chairman and Clerk then signed the completed audit **and the Clerk will forward it to the Audit Commission after the public consultation period has ended.**
The Clerk had issued some more cheques for approval – they were the two outstanding Diamond Jubilee grants - £500 to All Saints Church and £1,300 to Speldhurst Village; £84 to Engrave it All for the tree plaque and £10,000 to Unity Bank as the opening balance of the new bank account. These were approved.

8. **Financial Position as at 20th February 2012** - The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Position and this was duly noted by the Committee. He pointed out that the report now showed the new balance in the Unity Bank account.
9. **2011-12 review of budget vs expenditure** – The Clerk reviewed the actual figures against budget. As it was only the second month of the year there was little to report. He had moved the Broadband project from Amenities to a separate budget heading. He was requested to set up a separate cost centre for CAB under grants because Councils had a specific power to grant money to this organisation.
10. **Advance notice of a request for a grant from St Mary's Church, Speldhurst** – the Church had requested information on how to apply for a grant and the Clerk had supplied this. The work included the re-fixing and securing of various stones along the top of the retaining wall, relaying of various pavements, the removal of trees to side of steps and the replacement of sections of rotten oak and securing bracing pieces to the Lychgate. **The Clerk was requested to establish the time scale of such a request and possible amounts involved.**
11. **Posts/bollards at The Green** – The committee AGREED to accept the Amenities Committee's recommendation that this enhancement of the conservation area should be carried out to a maximum of £1,900 being 50% of the total cost (TWBC have agreed to fund the other 50%). Funds for this project have been allocated within the budget. **The clerk would inform Tate Fencing that their quotation was accepted.**
12. **The Big Tree Plant** – it was explained that the grant application had failed because of the cost of planting the trees (which included scanning for utilities). The total cost of planting the trees in the two roads was about £2,700 and at the Full Council meeting dated 3rd October 2011 it had been agreed to fund 50% of the project. The committee discussed the merits of the project and agreed that in principle it should be supported because it had the backing of so many residents and met Parish Vision objectives. **It was suggested and agreed that a letter be written to residents asking if they would be prepared to make a contribution now that the grant application has failed.** A final decision would be made at the July meeting and if approved planting would take place in the autumn.
The Clerk advised the committee that the amount of money in the budget for trees would be exceeded because of the urgent work required on trees on the LGRG and that additional money would need to come from the contingency fund.
13. **Assistant Clerk's hours during Clerk's vacation** – The Assistant Clerk left the room. Cllrs AGREED to pay the overtime should it be required and to amend the standing orders to reflect this for future occasions. The wording suggested by Cllr Hemming would be adopted. The Assistant Clerk re-joined the meeting.
14. **Groundsman** – The company recommended by Husson charge £300 for a course and £185 for the exam to qualify as a playground inspector. Maria Cook will charge £195 for up to 4 people and they will be qualified to conduct weekly inspections. The committee AGREED to fund the course conducted by Maria Cook and the Clerks and Cllr Hemming would attend as well as the Groundsman. **The Clerk would find out when the KCC contract expires and advise them that we would be conducting our own inspections thereafter.**
15. **Banking Arrangements** – The Clerk had prepared all the necessary forms for signature and **these would be sent to Unity Bank as soon as possible.**
16. **Non-Domestic Rates** – The payments were AGREED
17. **Public Meeting posters** – it was agreed that advertising public meetings was a necessary administrative expense as were the subscriptions to the village magazines, and these items

will in future fall within the Clerk's spending authority. This too was discussed and it was **AGREED** to increase his spending limit from £150 to £200.

- 18. Items for information** – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys advised that the Broad Band working group would be incurring expenses as they start their "road show" and attendance of Fetes to publicise and garner support for the campaign.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

CHAIRMAN