

Speldhurst Parish Council

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10th DECEMBER 2008 at 10.30am

IN THE VILLAGE HALL, ASHURST

PRESENT: Cllrs. Mrs Julia Soyke (Chairman), Mrs Rosemary Hull, Gerry Colley and Trevor Parker

Reverend Douglas Wren had been invited to attend the meeting to update the Committee on items 7 and 8 of the Agenda.

1. Declaration of Interests:

Cllr. Parker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 10 – Langton Green Rural Society – Grant for 2008 insurance as he is Chairman of the Rural Society

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Mrs Lynn Jeffreys – prior meeting
Cllr. Mrs Charlotte Waters – work commitment
Cllr. Richard Wheeler – work commitment

3. Minutes of the Meetings – 3rd and 11th November 2008

The Minutes were agreed and signed

4. Financial Position as at 30th September 2008

The Financial Position as at 8th December, having previously been circulated with the Agenda, was agreed. Bank account balance - £51,970.06.

5. Income / Grants / Expenditure 2008 – 2009

This information had previously been circulated with the Agenda and was noted.

6. Budget Forecast to 31st March 2009

The Committee noted that taking into account the predicted expenditure for the remaining four months, the balance as at 31st March 2009 would be £37,043.

7. Grant Request – St Mary`s Church, Speldhurst - roofing

Cllr. Mrs Soyke advised the Reverend Douglas Wren of the criteria for granting funds for church renovations and repairs and that funding was limited under this Power. The Clerk advised that grants under this Power could not be made retrospectively.

Although not an Agenda item, the Reverend informed the meeting of the problems regarding the retaining wall around St Mary`s Church. The Church had instructed a

structural engineer to carry out a report and the Reverend advised that the wall was most probably the responsibility of the Church. A ball park figure of £50,000 had been given and they would go out to tender. The Committee asked if a copy of the Structural Report could be forwarded to them via email for information and Cllr. Mrs Soyke advised that as no advance notice had been given to the Clerk of the need for possible funding for this in 2009, no provision had been made in the Parish Council's 2009/10 Budget.

Douglas Wren then updated the Committee on the repairs to the Church roof.

The Church has reserves but this is held mainly in shares and over £30,000 has been lost in recent months due to the economic downturn. It is practice to hold three months expenditure plus £10,000 in reserves.

Although the Committee had requested that Annual Accounts be brought to the meeting these were not to hand and the Reverend would arrange for a copy to be sent to the Clerk together with current balances.

Four tenders had been received (copies already supplied to the Parish Council) and the Church will go with the lowest - £32,426. There is a six month lead in time and Cllr. Colley suggested that consideration should be given to taking out a Performance Bond. The intention is to place a contract within the next six weeks and work to commence May/June 2009.

The Church will set up an Appeal in March for the roof, wall and the various other projects. The Church has a Sunday attendance of 200 plus weddings and funerals. The primary school also uses the Church.

It was the decision of the Committee that they continue to be unable to make a recommendation to the full Parish Council until the following is submitted; Annual Accounts, bank account balances and details of any other grants.

8. Grant Request – St John`s Church, Groombridge - roofing

Reverend Douglas Wren advised that three quotes were being obtained. It was the quinquennial inspection that day which would give a report on the condition of the Church as a whole. The last report five years ago had not picked up the condition of the roof.

A ball park figure of £30,000 for the roof had been given. The Committee suggested that the Church should apply for Listed Building funding.

It was the decision of the Committee that they continue to be unable to make a recommendation to the full Parish Council until the following is submitted; Annual Accounts, bank account balance and details of any other grants either applied for or received.

Reverend Douglas Wren left the meeting.

9. Grant Request – Speldhurst Village Hall – replacement doors

Cllr. Mrs Hull again raised the question of allocation of funds proportionate to population particularly over a five year period. A discussion followed and the Clerk suggested

extending the two year graph which was produced for the Annual Meeting to cover five years.

The Village Hall Committee had appointed a member to apply for grants on their behalf and the Clerk was asked to suggest to the Trustees that they contact Jenny Bradbury of ACRK for advice.

A copy of the full Accounts had been received. It is the Policy to hold six months running costs (£8,500). It was the decision of the Committee that a sum of £5,000 is recommended for approval to the Parish Council with up to a further £4,000 being considered when further funding is known.

10. Langton Green Rural Society – Grant for 2009 Insurance

As 2009 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Rural Society various events were being planned which would increase their annual insurance premium.

The Committee agreed the sum of £750 for the 2009 premium.

11. Kenward Trust – Grant Request

As Kenward Trust had not been able to supply information as to whether they supported residents within the Parish it was agreed that no grant could be awarded. The Clerk was asked to write accordingly.

12. Hospice in the Weald – Grant Request

As more than one resident within the Parish is supported by Hospice in the Weald it was unanimously agreed to a grant of £550.

13. Items for Information

There was nothing further to discuss and the meeting closed at 11.45am.

CHAIRMAN