



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 Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 at 7.30pm**

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

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** There were no 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 received from Cllr Mrs Podbury (prior engagement)
3. **Disclosures of Interest:** There were none
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none
5. **Minutes: RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting dated **12<sup>th</sup> December 2017**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, be approved and signed as a correct record.
6. **Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public present.
7. **Matters Arising and Correspondence:** There were no matters arising
8. **Interim Payments:** The Clerk advised the following: Mastercard: £47.98 waterproof clipboards; £6 monthly charge; £246 new Stihl blower; £25 additional keys for 5 bar gate lock. Current account: £487.54 transfer to pay balance on Mastercard; £26.79 new payment for pension; £180.00 Pavilion premises licence and £69.60 waste collection.
9. **Budget Virements:** Recent repairs to the playground had cost £3,142.00 (after VAT deducted). The Clerk recommended a virement of £2,850 from the EMR Repair & Renewal account, this would balance the EMR account at £50k. **RESOLVED** that a transfer of £2,850 is recommended for approval by Full Council.

- 10. Financial Position as at January 2018 and review of expenditure vs budget to-date:** The Clerk had circulated summary and detailed reports which were considered. The financial position was noted by the committee and a few questions were asked about the accounts. The Clerk said it was important that members did ask questions but asked if he could be notified in advance, so he could investigate any queries and try and have the answers ready for the meeting. It was agreed that a new section under Pavilion be set up for licences which will come under Admin. The Clerk will investigate a query raised on why no money had been spent under data back-up. The Clerk said the next meeting is scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup> to review the final expenditure before year-end however any virements could not then be approved by Full Council within the financial year, so he would make suggestions prior to the March Full Council meeting. The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS), the UK's deposit guarantee scheme limit of £85,000 is to be reviewed annually on 31<sup>st</sup> January. No new limit has been advised yet.

**11. Banking and Reserves:**

- a) Present banking arrangements were satisfactory and all balances within the FSCS limit. The Clerk reported that opening the new pavilion bank account has been slow. The Clerk will ensure that the account is held by Speldhurst Parish Council rather than the management company, with the name SPC (Pavilion). The clerk will contact Unity Bank again to establish whether we can have this second account with different signatories and viewing rights that will not link into the council's main account.
- b) The Clerk had circulated NALC's letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> January advising that the Secretary of State has announced that the Government had no intention of applying referenda principles for the next three years to Town and Parish Councils. This will enable all Parish Councils to set precepts with more confidence and certainty. The Clerk was requested to circulate "The Good Councillors Guide to Finance & Transparency"

- 12. Internal Auditor (IA):** The IA had suggested in his report that the budget should be made available on the website. The Clerk had circulated a suggested budget summary for 2018-19 instead of the complicated financial records used by the Council. Comments and changes were made, and he would present the changes at the next meeting.

**13. Committee and Working Group expenditure:**

- a) The Clerk advised that two items were outstanding: payment for the burglar alarm and a pole for the SID.
- b) The Pavilion Management were now investigating other ways to maintain the building and carry out checks such as PAT testing. The Groundsman, Mr Cooper, would be asked to advise what assistance he could offer in relation to the alarm, alarm testing, emergency lighting testing and fire regulations
- c) Councillors considered the new costings for the gateways; one installation was considerably higher because a road closure was considered necessary but another less money. It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the new prices from KCC Highways.
- d) The Clerk advised Councillors of the new pension contribution rates to be introduced from April 2018: Employer contribution is to go up from 1% to 2%.
- e) **RESOLVED** to renew membership of the CPRE at a cost of £36.
- f) See item c) above – duplication
- g) The Clerk explained that Mr Lyle had given expert unpaid advice and had hosted the Council's emails on his company's server free for many years. **RESOLVED** to buy him a bottle of his preference from the Chairman's allowance. Note Cllrs Mrs Lyle and Soyke abstained.

- h) The VoIP system decision was deferred pending information regarding a possible cancellation fee and/or minimum current contract length. Cllr Ellery explained that it would reduce bills if the Council switched supplier from BT. Immediate action: It was **RESOLVED** that:

- the Clerk switch mobile to Vodafone SIM only monthly contract
- the office number 01892862927 be moved from a “featureline” to a standard BT business line with caller ID and unlimited calls unless the charges are prohibitive. If the charge is considered reasonable this can be approved by delegated authority.
- To wait until the contract on 01892864548 expired in June before terminating the line, unless detailed cost/benefit analysis proves otherwise

The chairman thanked Cllr Ellery for his work in researching and explaining the options and savings regarding the office phone system.

**14. Grant requests:**

- a) **RESOLVED** to grant £250 to Samaritans TW&D
- b) Councillors considered the request from ABSA towards the play area refurbishment and it was **RESOLVED** to grant £2,500 towards the project. Councillors requested the Clerk to ask ABSA to keep them informed on how the project develops.

**15. Staff and Training: RESOLVED** to send the Clerks on an SLCC Regional Training Seminar at East Sussex National Resort, Little Horsted at a cost of £75pp.

**16. Items for Information:** There were none

The meeting closed at 9.02pm

Chairman