



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 20th February 2012 at 7.30pm

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

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

- 1. Declarations of Interests:** Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys and Soyke declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 – they are both appointed to the advisory committee; Cllr Mrs Soyke and Cllr Hemming declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 – they both have grandchildren attending Langton Green Primary School (LGPS); Cllr Parker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 9 – he is Chairman of the Langton Green Rural Society (LGRS)
- 2. Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
- 3. Apologies for Absence:** There were none.
- 4. Minutes** of the meeting dated **24th October 2011**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed as a correct record.
- 5. Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public present
- 6. Matters Arising and Correspondence:** Cllr Parker said that the old bicycle shed canopy had not been moved because Rusthall Primary School did not have the funds to complete the move.
The Clerk referred to an email from LGRS requesting a grant towards their insurance for the year and he asked that this request be deferred until the new financial year. This was **AGREED**.
He referred to emails from Martyn Lawrence regarding the coming season and the committee **AGREED** to recommend that his services be retained for the year. He has kept his prices the same and is competent and accommodating.
The Clerk informed the committee that the S137 expenditure limit has been increased to £6.80 for the new financial year 2012/13.
- 7. Financial Position as at 20th February 2012** - The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Position and this was duly noted by the Committee. The Clerk was requested to change the following – that the grant to SPVH for audio equipment be moved from the contingency account and a new grant section be set up and the grant to Ashurst Church towards renovation be transferred to S137.

- 8. 2011-12 review of budget vs expenditure** – The Clerk reviewed the actual figures against figures that had been projected when the precept was set last October. The main overspend was the recent grant to SPVH of £2,320.80 however this has been offset by the salary figure coming in below forecast. Other over and under spends offset and the Clerk would produce new print outs once the March invoices have been input. The Clerk said that some money might not be spent this financial year and requested the figures be carried forward and this was **AGREED**.
- 9. Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Celebrations** – The Clerk had compiled a list of eight applications for funding and these had been previously circulated to Cllrs. It was decided that the correspondence from the Deputy Lieutenant of Kent regarding annual school awards and oak tree planting would be dealt with separately and funded by the Parish Council. All applications were considered on merit and Cllrs reviewed them individually. There was much discussion and the amount of detail that was included in the application and number of people involved was considered. The total of £5,000 (50% from TWBC and 50% match funded by the Parish Council) was awarded as follows
- Ashurst Place £100
 - All Saint’s Church £500
 - Ashurst & Blackham Sports Association £1,000
 - Langton Green Families Group £500
 - Langton Green Primary School (with LGRS) £1,300
 - Speldhurst Fete Committee £1,300
 - Girl Guides £300
- The Clerk would apply to TWBC and write to the applicants accordingly
- 10. All Saints Church Langton Green** – A letter had been received from the Church advising that the 30 year old heating system needs to be replaced. They propose to install a wood pellet boiler system and initial quotes are in the region of £37,000 - £50,000. The Church is looking at installing the system in 2013 to coincide with their 150th anniversary. The request was giving notice that a grant would be sought in the next financial year. Cllrs asked the Clerk to write to the Church advising them that in principle the committee would support the grant application. He would send the Council’s grant policy and request that additional information be sent to the Parish Council by September 2012 for consideration when setting the precept for 2013/14.
- 11. CAB** – TW CAB is operating in straitened financial circumstances and is in the process of closing the Paddock Wood office. No request for funding has been received from CAB so far in this financial year. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys advised that Parish Councils have a specific power to support CAB (LGA 1972 142 2a). Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys and Soyke left the room. Cllrs discussed the issue and **AGREED** that upon receipt of a grant request from CAB a recommendation to increase the grant this year to £1,000 would be put to Full Council. Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys and Soyke re-joined the meeting.
- 12. Samaritans** – Cllrs discussed the grant request and **AGREED** a grant of £250 that would be debited from S137.
- 13. Assistant Clerk’s hours during Clerk’s vacation** – The Assistant Clerk left the room. Cllrs **AGREED** to pay the overtime required.
- 14. Assistant Clerk** – Cllrs **AGREED** that the Assistant Clerk should be a member of SLCC. This would increase expenditure by £165 per year.
- 15. Equipment for managing in snow** – It was **AGREED** to purchase snow shovels and a wheel barrow. The Clerk would investigate and revert with quotes.

16. Groundsman – The Clerk advised the committee of the voluntary work that had been carried out by the Groundsman who had cleared the snow from the LGRG footpaths on Sunday 5th February. The Committee **AGREED** that a one-off payment of £50 would be made to show the Council's appreciation.

The Clerk also advised the committee that the Groundsman (who is self-employed) is retiring from his full time employment in May 2012 and there was a discussion on whether his role could be turned in to a two-day a week job. It was decided to look all options, including training for playground inspections, and consider the matter at the May meeting.

17. Council Office directional sign – The matter was discussed and it was **AGREED** that a sign indicating that the office was located on the Recreation Ground be purchased from Highways Department at a cost of about £450

18. Banking Arrangements – The Clerk said that he was dissatisfied with Barclays Bank and the service provided – the only benefits were free banking and internet banking. There is a lot of dissatisfaction among Parish Councils (PCs) with Clearing Banks who do not cater for this type of account. Barclays Bank has no manager based in Tunbridge Wells and will not allow any increase in signatories. He recommended Unity Bank who understand the administration of PCs. After some debate (the idea has been generally discussed since May 2011) it was **AGREED** to recommend to Full Council that an account be opened with Unity Bank and that the day to day running of the Council's financial transactions be transferred, but that the accounts with Barclays be maintained until the Council has determined that it is satisfied with Unity Bank.

19. Change of date of July meeting – it was **AGREED** to change the date of the July meeting to Monday July 30th.

20. Items for Information – there were no items for information

The meeting closed at 9.31pm

CHAIRMAN