

# Speldhurst Parish Council

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

## **Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held in The Committee Room, Speldhurst Village Hall on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at 7.30pm**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cllrs. Parker (Chairman), Mrs Hull, Mrs Soyke, Pendleton, Wheeler and Cllr. Mrs Jeffreys (ex officio)

**OFFICER PRESENT:** Chris May – Clerk

No members of the public present

1. **Declarations of Interests:** None were received.
2. **Declarations of Lobbying:** None received
3. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Mrs Waters (previous engagement) Cllr Mrs Podbury (holiday)
4. **Minutes** of the meeting dated **26<sup>th</sup> November 2009**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed as a correct record.
5. **Matters Arising and Correspondence** – The Clerk was asked about progress regarding the installation of bollards along the footpath on the LGRG. He said that KCC Landscapes were having difficulty obtaining the oak posts but he had seen them onsite and they were aware where they should go. As soon as they were delivered they had promised to fit them.
6. **Financial Position as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010** - 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. The Clerk said that there were a number of projects that would not be completed before the financial year end and there could possibly be a large balance carried over in to the next financial year 2010-11. It was agreed that any money that had been allocated to projects but not spent would be carried forward to those projects in the next financial year.
8. **Speldhurst Recreation Ground: Pavilion project.** Dennis Gibbs, Chairman of the Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee had written on 29<sup>th</sup> January advising of the difficulty of obtaining the three quotes necessary to proceed with the refurbishment of the pavilion and that work would not be starting until the next financial year and he asked if the money that had been allocated for 2009-10 could be carried forward to 2010-11. This had been agreed previously (item 8).  
**Action – Clerk to write a letter advising that this would be done.**
9. **Land outside the Old Watson Hall; Cost of works.** The Clerk said that £5,000 had been budgeted for this project but so far the Council had received two quotes ranging from £6,600 – to £9,600 and he thought that a third quote was warranted. It was also suggested that he contact the Conservation Officer to discuss the plans and draft a letter to residents advising them of the Council's plans.  
**Action – Clerk to contact another contractor for an additional quote**  
**Action – Clerk to contact the Conservation Officer to discuss the plans**  
**Action – Clerk to draft a letter to residents advising them of the project**
10. **Speldhurst School: Outside Classroom Project. Request for a grant.** Katrina Sigston, Chair of the School's PTA, had emailed a draft proposal of improvements to the outside area of the School and this had been circulated to the committee in advance of the meeting. Stephanie Brushfield, Vice-Chair, had also emailed a request which had more details of the figures that required funding but this had been received too late to be circulated to the committee.

The project is for an outside class room which includes an all weather path, construction of a fenced pond, a greenhouse and a pupil's tool shed and later a wooden gazebo style outside classroom which is being funded by the School, the PTA and other donations. The project is already underway and will take over a year to complete and will be phased in as funds become available.

The committee was happy to support the project and would recommend it to the Full Council. However, it was decided by a majority vote to recommend that we monitor the PTA's fund-raising progress with a view to assisting when they know what their shortfall is, rather than simply donating a fixed sum at this stage.

**Action – Clerk to write accordingly**

- 11. Smiley Face Group: Request for a grant.** Jenny Fitzsimmons, leader of the group, asked if the Parish Council could make a grant towards the cost of a hands free radio microphone. A sum of £100 was agreed by the committee.

**Action – Clerk to write advising the group**

- 12. Purchase of Logo related paper** – Now that the Council had decided on a new logo it was decided that proper headed paper for letters, compliment slips and business cards for the Clerk should be purchased. The best price was still being investigated but the Council voted unanimously that it should be done and the cost allocated to General Admin.

- 13. Purchase of Computer Printer and software** – The Clerk has using his own inkjet printer since he became Clerk and it was obvious that it was not the most efficient using one large black cartridge a month and a large colour one every two months at a total cost of £750 a year. He recommended purchasing a colour laser multi function printer at a cost of £250 and software to enable all files to be copied including email at a cost of £40. Cllr Pendleton suggested he should try another local computer supplier who would recommend cheaper options.

**Action – Clerk to contact Phil Young at Fix My Computer**

- 14. Future Accounting – Accruals of items that need replacing**– The Clerk brought to the attention of the committee that the Council should be considering accruing amounts each year to replace certain assets so that when an item requires repairing/replacing the money will come out of this allocation rather than have to increase the precept in that year. For example the playground equipment totals £100,000 and has a minimum lifespan of 10 years – the Council should be setting aside £10,000 every year for this purpose.

It was proposed and unanimously voted on that this be formally adopted starting 2011-12

- 15. Items for Information** – Cllr Mrs Soyke updated the committee on the proposed Ashurst play area scheme. She said that the project was being slowed down as there was support for the idea that the village should try and establish ownership itself. This would mean that the area should be fenced, and then, if there were no claims of ownership from others during the following twelve years, the land could be registered for the village. Any addition of play equipment would thus be delayed for at least twelve years, when the need could be re-assessed. This would enable the Council to re-allocate the money currently set aside for the project. Cllr Mrs Soyke would be able to report further on this after residents had been asked for their views on this new idea via the next Ashurst Broadsheet.

Cllr Pendleton advised the committee that after an initial conversation with Arrowscape (who had been recommended to design our website) the costs were more than double original estimates. Further investigations would be made and a report made at the next Full Council meeting.

The Clerk advised the committee that he had miscalculated the balance of the current account and the cheques presented which had meant that the Council had been overdrawn in their current account for two days in February.

He had made an initial investigation in to the cost of draining a football pitch and he had been told that it was between £28,000- £35,000 with a £3,000 annual maintenance cost. Further enquiries would be made.

He had received an email from CiLK requesting a donation to help support their work. **Action – The Clerk to write asking for more details of the help it gives our Parishioners.**

The Clerk advised Cllr Mrs Soyke that he had received a quotation from Tate Fencing to fence the proposed play area and it was £4,903.99 plus VAT.

The Clerk said that he had given Treework authorisation to replace the Norway Maple on The Green but the cost had been more than he had expected at £128.

The Clerk said that TWBC had its own salt bins in car parks throughout the Borough and bought the salt/grit direct from Travis Perkins. It was something that the Parish Council could consider for next

winter but there was liability insurance to be clarified first in case a designated person did lay the grit and there was a claim.

Cllr Mrs Hull said there was an urgent need for more salt bins in Speldhurst and Cllr Wheeler said it was the same in Langton Green. The Clerk was corresponding with KHS on this matter.

The meeting closed at 9pm

CHAIRMAN