



**Speldhurst
Parish Council**

*Working for the
whole community*

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

**Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held in Ashurst Village Hall on Monday
26th September 2011 at 7.30pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Parker (Chairman), Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Hemming and Owen

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris May – Clerk, Min Flemington – Assistant Clerk

There was one member of the public present: Mr Andy Halpin of Ashurst and Blackham Sports Association

1. **Declarations of Interests:** Cllr Mrs Soyke declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in item 14 – she is a Trustee of the Ashurst McDermott Hall Trust and involved with the Ashurst and Blackham Sports Association.
The Clerk and Assistant Clerk declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in Item 16 – The Clerks' Contracts and Office Allowance.
2. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
3. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Mrs Jeffreys (holiday) and Cllr Pendleton (illness).
4. **Minutes** of the meeting dated **25th July 2011**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed as a correct record.
5. **Public Open Session:** Andy Halpin of Ashurst and Blackham Sports Association addressed the meeting and it was agreed to bring Item 14 on the Agenda forward:
He referred to the letter sent by the Sports Association to the Parish Council a copy of which had been circulated to all members of the Finance Committee. He gave a background to the fund-raising that had been done in the village and the purchase of the field. He said that the Association was living off the goodwill of the Ashurst McDermott Trust and relying on gift aid to be claimed soon (about £22,000). The Sports Association is seeking funds for immediate urgent works which would have the dual purpose of helping financially and also demonstrating support/partnership for the plan to provide a village and parish facility. This would be useful when applying for more funding from other grant-givers in the near future (e.g. Inspired Facilities, Sport England) when the results of the imminent consultation are known. There were three urgent issues that needed funding at present. They were the pavilion roof, secure storage and better parking facilities

14. Ashurst and Blackham Sports Association – The following questions were put to Mr Halpin:

- Is the work to the roof to make it weather-tight and waterproof – Yes. The work would be guaranteed for 25 years and sealing in the asbestos is approved. This would protect substantial internal work already carried out.
- Is the order of priority of the proposed works; the roof, storage, car parking – Yes but it is the intention for all these works to go ahead this autumn.
- Are there any forecasts for income from the pavilion in the future? – not until the survey questionnaire has been completed. A premises licence is being applied for very soon, to enable the club nights and functions to sell alcohol, as a source of income. The bar licence will only be for special functions not regular opening.
- Will the fishing rights be let? – This will be decided after the survey questionnaire results are known, as to whether to let the fishing rights or to set up a fishing club.

Cllr Mrs Soyke stated that the Parish Council is the only body the Sports Association can apply to for a quick response enabling them to do essential works before the winter and in advance of making an application to Sport England next year. She also repeated that they are looking for funding and also partnership with the Parish Council which will assist in other grant applications.

Cllr Mrs Soyke and Mr Halpin left the room.

After discussion it was agreed that it was a project that the Parish Council should support financially and that its support would help them to make other grant applications.

After further discussion it was **AGREED** to recommend to Full Council that the amount of £6,600.00 be granted to Ashurst and Blackham Sports Association which will meet the cost of the work to the pavilion roof. This included VAT and enquiries would be made to see if the repairs could be paid for by the Parish Council without VAT which would reduce the amount of the grant to £5,500.00. It was decided that these funds would be met from the Contingency Fund.

Cllr Mrs Soyke and Mr Halpin rejoined the meeting, and the Committee's recommendations were explained. Mr Halpin left the meeting.

6. Matters Arising and Correspondence:

Cllr Mrs Podbury advised that work is now completed on the outdoor classroom at Speldhurst School and that several Councillors had attended the Opening on 22nd September.

Cllr Mrs Soyke reported that KHS did cut the verges in certain areas but that a second cut will be required. Cllr Mrs Podbury reported that she had received an email from a Speldhurst resident thanking the Parish Council for their efforts in getting some verges and hedges cut.

7. Financial Position as at 30th September 2011 - The Clerk had previously circulated the Financial Position and this was duly noted by the Committee. The balance of the precept should be received shortly.

8. 2011-12 review of budget vs expenditure – Councillors reviewed the figures that had been previously circulated. The Ashurst maintenance figure has exceeded budget because of expenditure on the new dog waste bin. Langton Green maintenance was under budget; one reason was because Cory Environmental have not yet invoiced for the annual cost of emptying the bins and sweeping the car park. There is an under-spend on the Elections budget as an election was not held this year. A letter of comfort has been sent to St Martin's Church Ashurst in respect of their grant application.

9. Budgeting Procedure – The Clerk had previously circulated blank budget sheets to Councillors and explained that the draft budget figures will be on these sheets for the next Finance Committee meeting on 24th October 2011.

10. Investment of Council Funds – The Clerk reported that £50,000 is to be invested in a one year Bond at 2.5% interest with Nat West Bank. The Mandate and Forms are to be completed with the same three signatories as the Current Account.

11. Terms of Reference – A number of amendments to the TOR were discussed and agreed. The revised TOR will be presented to the next Full Council meeting for approval.

12. Banking arrangements – Further research was to be undertaken before any decision was made to open an account with Unity Trust Bank PLC.

13. Parish Office

- i. The cost of £765 plus VAT (and £80 for fitting) for the Speldhurst Parish Council sign was **AGREED**
- ii. The Office is scheduled for completion in five weeks. There are additional building costs of £3,835 for our share (31.6%) of mutual costs. This would take the spending £1,062 over the contingency amount that was allocated. It was **AGREED** that these additional costs be recommended to Full Council for approval. An email had been received from LGCT advising that there was to be a possible cost involving the lightning conductor but no details were known at present.

15. Open Meeting – The cost of posters to advertise the Open Meeting of £150-£180 was **AGREED**.

16. Clerks' Contract and Office Allowance – The Clerk and Assistant Clerk left the room for the discussion.

It will be recommended to Full Council that the Home as Office Allowances remain in place until 1st April 2012 and are reviewed thereafter on the basis of a pro-rata reduction.

Office opening hours of 2 hours a day, twice a week (at different times), to be reviewed in light of demand, will be recommended at the next Full Council meeting.

17. Items for Information – The Clerk gave out the Finance Committee meeting dates for 2012 (attached)

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

CHAIRMAN