

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SPELDHURST PARISH COUNCIL'S

FINANCE COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY, 30th JUNE 2008 at 7.30pm

IN THE VILLAGE HALL, ASHURST

PRESENT: Cllrs. Mrs Rosemary Hull, Mrs Julia Soyke, Mrs Charlotte Waters, Gerry Colley, Trevor Parker and Richard Wheeler

1. Appointment of Committee Chairman

Cllr. Wheeler proposed, and all agreed, that Cllr. Mrs Julia Soyke be appointed Committee Chairman. Cllr. Mrs Soyke duly accepted this position.

2. Declaration of Interests:

Cllr. Mrs Hull declared a personal interest in item 12 as she personally knows Alex Dawes

3. Apologies for Absence

All Committee Members were present

4. Minutes of Meeting – 25th February 2008

The Minutes were agreed and signed

4. Financial Position as at 18th June 2008

The Financial Position as at 18th June, having previously been circulated with the Agenda, was agreed. Bank account balance - £159,858.93.

5. Grants / Expenditure 2008 – 2009 and Budget Forecast to 31st March 2009

The Committee agreed that should items noted (but not agreed) for the current financial year be called upon in the current financial year, the end of year Financial Position would be at an exceptionally low level of just under £7,000.

A discussion took place regarding previous high balances being carried forward. It was explained that this was due to the Finance Committee (and the Parish Council) being fully aware of funding that would be required for major community projects and a build up of funds was necessary to fulfil this commitment.

It was agreed that an acceptable level to carry forward from one year to another should be in the region of £25,000 which would allow for any unplanned expenditure that the Parish Council may be called upon to assist with.

The Clerk advised that she was extremely concerned that large amounts of money would be paid out in the next few months (play area £110,000 and ball stop netting £10,000) and that both payments would incur VAT totalling £21,000 which would be paid out but re-claimed at a later date. These two large payments would be made prior to the second half Precept being received in October.

6. Delegated Powers – expenditure

The clerk advised that the Committee had delegated powers of expenditure of £1,000 without agreement of the Parish Council.

It was agreed to request that the Parish Council consider increasing this spending level to £2,500.

7. Legal Fees – Transfer of Land either side of the `Watson Hall` to the Parish Council

The Parish Council have agreed to the legal fees in respect of the transfer of this strip of land to the Parish Council. The Committee would formally request the Council's agreement to the sum of £2,000, representing a total for legal fees for Donaldson West to act on behalf of the Parish Council and also reasonable legal fees in respect of the Trustees.

8. Ball Catch Netting – Langton Green Recreation Ground

The clerk advised that Jacksons Fencing have queried the formal agreement given to the Parish Council and had requested a further surveyor's site visit. Jacksons were concerned that the current contract was for a `straight line of fencing` which would intrude into the cricket boundary. The fencing would need to be slightly offset and would need a further 6M pole. The committee agreed to an additional payment not exceeding a total cost of £10,000.

9. Grant Request – Kenward Trust

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the Parish Council's grant awards. Cllr. Colley felt that the Committee re-acted to a grant request rather than applying a proactive approach and suggested that the Parish Council invite funding bids as part of the Budget process. Cllr. Colley suggested that he prepare a paper for discussion by the Committee.

The committee further debated as to whether the Parish Council should only support organisations and groups within their own Parish.

It was unanimously agreed that this was not a decision that the Committee could take and the matter would be referred to the full Council.

It was agreed that no grant be awarded to Kenward Trust at this time.

10. Grant request – Hospice in the Weald

See 9 above

It was agreed that no grant be awarded to Hospice in the Weald at this time.

11. Grant request – Speldhurst Village Fete 2008 Insurance

The clerk had received a request from Speldhurst Village Fete for assistance with coal for the steam engine, this had arrived too late to be an Agenda item.

It was unanimously agreed to a grant of £500 for the Speldhurst Fete insurance. The clerk was asked to advise the Fete organisers that their insurance seemed excessively high compared with Langton Green`s.

12. Grant request – St John`s Church, Groombridge – Maintenance of Churchyard

It was unanimously agreed to a grant of £400.

13. Grant request – Speldhurst Netball Club – Affiliation fees

It was unanimously agreed to a grant of £357.

14. Grant request – St Mary`s Church, Speldhurst

The Committee had received a request to assist in a major investment programme being undertaken by the church which included external works and replacing the amplification system the latter costing in the region of £26,000.

The clerk was asked to enquire how the church intended to raise these funds before considering this request further.

15. Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee – financial update

The clerk advised that the Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee were experiencing a period of financial difficulty. Their main source of funding was from the Village Fete which had experienced two difficult years due to bad weather.

Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee would be looking to the Parish Council to support them in replacing showers and outside re-decoration of the Pavilion. Quotes were being obtained and other means of funding / grants being applied for.

The Committee had set aside a provisional sum of £5,000 (not agreed) when setting the Annual Budget.

16. Grant Request – Speldhurst Village Hall

The Parish Council had received a request to assist with two projects:- the sanding of the village hall floors and the installation of a central kitchen island.

It was considered that the flooring should be budgeted for as part of an on-going maintenance programme by the Trustees.

It was unanimously agreed to a recommendation to the Parish Council of a grant of £1,800 for the kitchen island.

17. Weekly Inspection of Play Area – Langton Green Recreation Ground

The Parish Council had a duty to ensure that the new Play and Teen Areas were weekly inspected.

It was unanimously agreed to a recommendation to the Parish Council appointing KCC Inspection Services :

49 x weekly visits (routine visual including minor adjustments)	£1,715
3 x Operational Inspections at £50.00 each	£ 150
Less 10%	£ 187

	£1,678
Detailed Annual Inspection	£ 200

Cost per annum	£1,878

The clerk was asked to confirm that public liability insurance would be covered by KCC.

18. Highways Maintenance

A discussion took place regarding the Parish Council undertaking routine Highways maintenance. It was agreed to take this out of the current budget and review in November.

19. Review – Grounds Maintenance – Langton Green Recreation Ground

The clerk had met with KCC Landscaping Services who had agreed to carry out additional work (including box mowing instead of strimming) the new play and car park areas for the same contract price. KCC would review this contract in April 2009.

Urgent tree work needed to be carried out prior to the opening of the play area and the clerk had obtained two quotations. It was unanimously agreed to accept Aaron Trees quotation of £200.

20. Annual Strimming – Langton Green Recreation Ground

It was agreed to accept a quotation of £400, which would include the hedges along the pathway leading to the Langton Primary School. This work would be carried out prior to the opening of the play and teen areas.

21. Annual Strimming – Pocket Park, Roopers

It was agreed to accept a quotation of £200.

22. Review – Annual Insurance

A revised quotation had been obtained from Allianz to include the new teen and play equipment and the ball stop netting. It was unanimously agreed to accept a pro-rata increase of £713.20.

23. Ashurst – Interactive Speed Sign

The clerk was making enquiries from Kent Highways regarding the possibility of installing an interactive speed sign in Ashurst. It was considered that this would be Parish funded and the Committee agreed to note in their budget. Cllr. Parker felt certain that if this proved successful in Ashurst, the other three villages would request similar equipment. He suggested that the Rural Society may consider some funding.

25. Speldhurst – Barden Road footpaths

The Parish Council had recently met with Jacobs and this project would be part of their final report to Kent Highways. Should Kent Highways not regard this as essential work the Parish Council may need to consider part / full funding of this project.

26. Matters Arising from Minutes of meeting dated 25th February 2008

Repainting Pavilion – LGRG

Work had started on removing the moss from the Pavilion roof and cleaning and painting would follow.

CCTV - LGRG

This would be reviewed by the Recreation Ground Committee following the installation of the Play and Teen Areas.

Extension of footpath – Langton Green Primary School

The clerk had met with Kent Highways and they may have a budget to fund this project. As a grant had been received via the good offices of County Councillor John Davies this would have to be discussed with him. Kent Highways felt that if the Parish Council did not have to fund this project they could fund items from their Highways Projects List.

27. Items for Information

The clerk informed the Committee that the new Mandate appointing Cllrs. Mrs Waters and Ellis as signatories had been lost by Barclays Bank.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

CHAIRMAN