



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

Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held in the Ellis Room, Langton Green Village Hall on Monday 21st October 2013 at 7.30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Owen (Chair), Parker, Milner, Pendleton (arrived 7.44pm), Mrs Soyke (arrived 7.50pm) and Cllr Mrs Jeffreys (ex-officio)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were six members of the public present: Cllrs Mrs Blackburn and Cod (Rusthall Parish Council); Mrs Denne (Clerk to Rusthall Parish Council); Mr Hemming; Mark Tompkins (Team Leader TW CFR) and Andrew Strand (trainee CFR for TW)

OFFICERS PRESENT: C May – Clerk

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Mrs Podbury
 2. **Declarations of Pecuniary or Other Significant Interests:** There were none.
 3. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
 4. **Minutes:** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting dated **16th September 2013**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed as a correct record.
 5. **Public Open Session:** Mr Hemming, who had resigned from the Council in the previous week, said that he wanted to say goodbye in person to the committee and thank them for their support. Cllr Owen reciprocated on behalf of the committee. The delegation from Rusthall Parish Council was there to observe and had nothing to add at this point. The Chairman proposed that item 9 on the Agenda be brought forward (this was agreed) and invited Mr Strand, who had made a written application for a grant for a Community First Responder (CFR) to address the committee.
- 9. Grant requests:**
- Community First Responder – start up finance. Mr Strand elaborated on his written application for a grant for a start-up kit for a CFR which came to £1,160. He was a fireman and had volunteered for training as a CFR and would support the Speldhurst Parish area. CFRs carry medical equipment (which includes a defibrillator and oxygen) and there is only so much to go round the TW area. Councillors considered the request and asked several questions. It was **RESOLVED** to grant £1,160 for a CFR start-up kit which would be taken

from the contingency account. The Council's contribution would be acknowledged and photographs would be taken for local magazines and newsletter when he is fully trained.

- An annual grant request had been received from CAB. Cllr Mrs Jeffreys declared a non-pecuniary interest and abstained from the vote. It was **RESOLVED** to grant £1,000 to CAB.

6. Matters Arising and Correspondence:

There were no matters arising or correspondence.

7. Financial position as at October 2013: The clerk had circulated all the financial papers and the position was noted by the committee.

8. 2013-2014 review of expenditure vs. budget to-date: The clerk said that there were no anomalies and expenditure was as expected. The committee noted this position.

10. Banking arrangements: It was noted that the HSBC current account was now open and the opening balance of £25,000 had been transferred. The clerk suggested that further diversification should be made and recommended a transfer of £25,000 from the Unity Trust account. It was **RESOLVED** to transfer £25,000 to HSBC. The number of signatories at HSBC had fallen below the preferred level following the resignation of Cllr Hemming. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Owen becomes the new signatory and he duly signed a new mandate form.

11. Update Council manuals: The clerk advised that the new edition of "Local Council Administration" is available and required. It was **RESOLVED** to purchase the book at a cost of £63.00

12. Amenity expenditure:

- It was **RESOLVED** to install post and wire fencing in the far car park at LGRG at a cost of £583. **The Clerk to instruct Tate Fencing to go ahead with the work during the week beginning 28th October.**
- Trees and hedge bordering Rodborough House at Roopers - there was some confusion regarding the costing in the quotation from Treework. It was agreed that the work was necessary and it was **RESOLVED** to approve such work as needs to be done to a total of £1,540. **The clerk was requested to clarify the quotation with Treework and instruct them to carry out the necessary pruning of overgrown trees and hedges.**
- The estimate from A1 Garden Services to prune back and reduce the hedgerow along the footpath outside The Vicarage in Langton green was discussed. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation of £150 and **the clerk was requested to instruct them to carry out the works.**
- The contract to renew the cleansing and litter bin services for the LGVH car park had been received from Cory Environmental and it was £56 lower than the previous year. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the new contract at a total cost of £766.18 plus VAT.
- It was noted that the contract for maintenance of the street light at Groombridge is now with Streetlights. This is a name change only from Direct Technical Services.
- The estimate from A1 Garden Services for pruning shrubs along the A264 was discussed. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation of £450 and **the clerk was requested to instruct them to carry out the works.**
- The Clerk reported that three quotations have now been received to fell the copper beech tree at The Green and TWBC are dealing with it as a dead and dangerous and have raised no objection to felling. The clerk said that KCC Highways had determined that the tree was not their responsibility. Further to the decision by Full Council it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Treework in the sum of £3,880 plus VAT and arrange to fell the tree as soon

as possible. **The clerk was instructed to ask Treework what level the stump would be cut down to and what will happen to the wood.**

- 13. Langton Life:** Cllr Langridge's report was considered and there was much discussion on the subject. The clerk advised that Withyham Parish Council had been approached about contributing towards their monthly broadsheet. The committee reflected on the need to communicate with residents and therefore it was **RESOLVED** to contribute £250 towards the cost of publicising Council news in each issue. Publications in other villages were debated and further discussions would be held when more information was known. The budget would reflect this.
- 14. Remembrance Day Wreaths:** It was **RESOLVED** to purchase five wreaths (including one for the LGRS who will reimburse) at a cost of £17 each and a donation made of £8 per wreath to come from the Chairman's allowance.
- 15. Local Conferences:**
- KALC Finance Conference Saturday 2nd November in Kings Hill – nobody was available to attend
 - SLCC South East Regional Conference Wednesday 6th November in Maidstone – it was **RESOLVED** that the clerk attend this meeting at a cost of £69
- 16. The Precept 2014-2015:** The budget for the next financial year had been circulated. The clerk and Cllr Mrs Jeffreys had met previously to discuss the figures and were confident that they were viable. It was proposed to maintain the precept at its present level in the financial year 2014-15 but CTS, which is still an unknown quantity, was not taken into consideration. Some figures were adjusted in the light of new information. The clerk suggested that savings this financial year could total £11,500 against an overspend of £9,800 in 2014-15 but he emphasised that a number of issues might arise and the figures may change.
- Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said she was concerned that the Earmarked Reserves (Repair & Renewal) were not accumulating at the necessary speed and it was always the first area to be omitted when the budget was tight. She said the idea behind this account was to put aside money to replace the playground which was already five years old and therefore starting from 2015-16 money needed to be added at a minimum of £10,000 pa otherwise the Council may find itself in a position whereby the precept required increasing at an unacceptable rate and this should be avoided. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to recommend a precept of £125,000 for approval at the Full Council meeting on 4th November.
- 17. Items for Information:** The clerk advised that should Full Council resolve to accept the precept then the meeting scheduled for Monday 18th November would be cancelled and a new meeting scheduled for Thursday 12th December to consider the deposit when it matures in January 2014.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

CHAIRMAN