



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 May 2013 at 7.30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllr Mrs Jeffreys, Cllrs Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, Hemming, Milner, Owen, Parker and Pendleton

OFFICERS PRESENT: C May – Clerk; M Flemington – Assistant Clerk

1. **Election of Chairman:** Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that she was not standing for re-election and asked for nominations for the post. It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Hemming as Chairman of the Finance Committee.
2. **Election of Vice-Chairman:** It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Owen as Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee.
3. **Apologies for Absence:** There were none
4. **Declarations of Pecuniary or Other Significant Interests:** There were none.
5. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
6. **Minutes:** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting dated **18th February 2013**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed as a correct record.
7. **Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public present
8. **Matters Arising and Correspondence:**

An update from the Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee had been sent to Cllr Mrs Podbury. A small grant has been received and they are focusing on local fundraising.

Treadwell's (electricians) have advised that it is not viable to repair the Christmas lights at Groombridge. This matter will be discussed at the next Amenities Committee meeting.
9. **Financial Position as at 20th May 2013** – The clerk said that all financial papers were being circulated so that councillors would become familiar with the different sheets and he urged them to ask any questions they might have. After some discussion the financial position was duly noted by the committee.

10. **2013-14 review of budget v expenditure** –the clerk said that it was early for this paper to be circulated but it was to ensure councillors were familiar with the figures.

11. **Banking arrangements** – The Co-operative Bank has recently been significantly downgraded by Moody's. This was because of a huge jump in the level of bad debts inherited from the Britannia Building Society which it acquired in 2009. The Council has a fixed term deposit of £75,000 with the Co-operative Bank which also owns about 25% of Unity Trust Bank where the Council holds its other funds.
The committee noted the situation and will review it at each meeting. A full report will be made to Full Council at the next meeting.

12. **Email decisions** – The clerk had attended a recent course where he was advised by the instructor that in her opinion email decisions were not best practise because all decisions should be made in public. It was generally agreed that the committee should hold more meetings and this would be reflected by a change in the Terms of Reference. It was agreed that email decisions would be reduced to the minimum while further investigations in to their legality were sought.

13. **Terms of Reference** – changes were suggested and agreed to reduce the number of councillors to seven from eight and to increase the minimum number of meetings from four to six. **RESOLVED:** to recommend the changes to Full Council for adoption at the June meeting.

14. **Standing Orders – Financial Regulations** – changes were suggested to 6.3 and agreed. Further minor changes were made to 4.5, 9.4 and 14. **RESOLVED:** to recommend the changes to Full Council for adoption at the June meeting.

15. **Council Tax Support Grant** – the additional sum of £2,536.62 allocated to this parish had been paid in the first tranche of the precept. Councillors were minded to transfer the money to replenish the shortfall in the election budget and will review the situation in September.

16. **Payroll Manager** – The council is registered with HMRC for RTI but the process is time consuming and small errors have been made. The clerk has been recommended "Payroll Manager" software which will calculate and produce payslips at a one-off cost of £56. It was **RESOLVED** that the clerk can purchase the system if, after investigation, he considers it to be beneficial.

17. **Replacement of posts** – **RESOLVED:** to purchase materials direct and ask the Groundsman to replace the posts at Furzefield Avenue and on The Green.

18. **Items for information** – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys said that she had brought along material from a chairmanship course and that it would be kept in the office should a councillor wish to review it, particularly committee chairmen.

The meeting closed at 8.27pm

CHAIRMAN