



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 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.30pm**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cllrs Mrs Soyke (Chairman), Mrs Horne, Mrs Podbury, Milner, Parker and Barrington-Johnson (ex-officio)

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** There were no members of the public present

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** C May – Clerk and K Plunkett – Assistant Clerk

1. **To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting:** No-one present intended to film, photograph and/or record the meeting.
2. **To receive and approve apologies for absence:** Cllr Mrs Jeffreys (holiday) and Mrs Lyle (business)
3. **Disclosure of Interests:** There were none.
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none.
5. **Minutes: RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting dated **14<sup>th</sup> December 2015**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, be approved and signed as a correct record.
6. **Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public present.
7. **Matters Arising and Correspondence:**
  - a) Government Finance Settlement 2016-17  
KALC have advised that the Government is not going to cap a Parish Council's ability to raise the precept although it is expected that parish councils will behave responsibly and protect taxpayers from excessive precept increases.
  - b) The Clerk reported that an email has been received from Goodman Nash advising that a refund is due of £2,223.39 for over-payment of non-domestic rates and that Goodman Nash's fee for dealing with the matter is £778 plus VAT. Future rates will also not be payable which will result in a saving of approximately £600pa.

- 8. Interim Payments:** There has been one payment on the ALTO card since the last Full Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> January: £10.01 for petrol. This was approved by the Committee. In addition the two invoices below which are due before the end of January were approved:
- a) To Lake Market Research - £3,054.00 (including VAT) for the balance of the Parish Plan survey costs.
  - b) To A1 Garden Services - £160 for work done in November as the original invoice was never received by the Parish Council.
- 9. Budget Virements:** There had been no budget virements since the last Full Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> January.
- 10. Financial Position as at January 2016 and review of expenditure vs budget to-date:** The Clerk had circulated all the financial papers and the position after ten months of payments and receipts was discussed by the Committee.
- The Clerk noted that overall the financial position is satisfactory, there is a small overspend on salaries due to the training of the assistant clerk but the rebate for rates will offset this. Cllr Milner questioned the overspend on trees and the Clerk explained that the Harraway tree survey had been expensive but necessary. The work identified will not start until April to minimise any further overspend.
- The Committee discussed the Parish Plan receipts and payments where the % of Budget spent is 188%. This is because the grant income is separate to the costs. The remaining amount is expected to be spent on the reports of the survey findings which will be sent to every household later in the year.
- Cllr Milner asked if Broadband remains an issue in the Parish and requires focus once again. Poor mobile phone signal may also be an issue. It was agreed to wait for the results of the survey before deciding where to concentrate efforts.
- The Clerk explained that the committed expenditure column has been amended as expenditure has updated. The c/f figures will all be updated for the next meeting which will be the year end. The Clerk will produce two print outs for the March meeting, one with budget figures and one with actuals.
- The Clerk also agreed to break down the Langton Green Maintenance cost for the next financial year as this is the most significant area of expenditure. The year to date spend is £19,570 which has included £3,600 for the Groundsman, £2,100 Landscape Services, £6,000 CCTV, £1,600 dog bags and dog bag collection.
- 11. Banking and reserves:** The Clerk reported that the balances in Unity and Cambridge BS are within the £75k Financial Services Compensation limit. The £50k balance in HSBC has been moved into a dormant account which is a mistake on HSBC's part which the Clerk is dealing with. HSBC have allocated a complaint reference number and they have 5 working days to respond. An apology for the inconvenience of this is expected.
- The Clerk reported that £68,750 precept monies will be received in April.
- 12. Committee and Working Group expenditure:**
- a) The Clerk advised the Committee of two items of expenditure authorised but not yet invoiced; £1,000 towards two bus stop shelters and £500 for tree planting. Other upcoming costs include the SIDS (approx.£5.5k)
  - b) The Clerk advised the Committee that the Stihl blower needs repairs at a cost of £74.94. This was approved.
  - c) The annual playground report recommended that the cable ride seat is repaired at a cost of £389 plus VAT. This was approved by the Committee.

- d) The Clerk advised the Committee that the intention is to move the trees (the Hornbeam and the Yew Tree) from The Green to LGRG and plant the new tree at LGRG on 25<sup>th</sup> January with assistance from the Groundsman and Cllr Mrs Soyke.

**13. Grant requests:**

- a) It was **RESOLVED** to grant £500 to Speldhurst Scout Group towards the cost of their trip to Sweden subject to the proposed trip taking place. The Clerk would write to the Group advising of this grant and to ask for feedback on the progress of fundraising activities, informing the Group that there is a possibility of a further grant when the Council has a clearer idea of their own finances.
- b) It was **RESOLVED** to grant £250 to Samaritans TW & District.

**14. Staff and Training:**

- a) It was **RESOLVED** to send Cllrs Mrs Soyke, Mrs Podbury and Cllr Barrington-Johnson on KALC's Chairman's Conference on 26<sup>th</sup> February at a cost of £60 (plus VAT) per head.
- b) It was **RESOLVED** to employ Mrs Flemington to cover for the Clerk's attendance at the SLCC Roadshow in February and for part of his holiday in April.

**15. Items for Information:** There were none.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Chairman