

Local Government Act 1972



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

**Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held on
Monday 10th March 2025 at 7.30pm in the
Parish Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Rowe (Chair), Cleaver, and Ellery (Vice-Chair) with Curry (ex-officio).

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Neve – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

1. To enquire if anyone present intends to record the meeting:

The meeting was recorded by the Clerk for accuracy of the minutes. The recording would be deleted once the meeting minutes are signed off at the next Finance Committee meeting.

2. To receive and approve apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Tarricone (unwell). Cllr Lyle also sent apologies (family commitment).

3. Disclosures of Interest

Councillors' ongoing disclosures were noted:
Cllrs Ellery and Rowe have shares in the original Speldhurst shop and post office.

4. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

5. Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting dated 25th November 2024, 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. Review of Action Points

The Clerk reported that all action points had been completed.

8. Interim Payments

Unity Trust Bank: £316.04 DD Veolia for Waste and Recycling; £19 LGVH for Room Hire; £149.02* Engrave It All for Replacement Jubilee Trophy; £703.86 Commercial Services Trading Ltd for Groombridge Maintenance; £25,000 Transfer to CCLA Public Sector Deposit Account; £35.70 DD Castle Water for Pavilion Water; £94.75 Unity Trust Credit Card; £536.43 TWBC NNDR for Office (to be paid on 1st April 2025).

Mastercard: £9 Monthly Credit Card Charges; £13.49 The Knowledge Store for Legionella Training; £99.98 Alpha Batteries for SID batteries.
Starred items were made under delegated power.

9. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported the following:

Payroll Provider – At the January Governance meeting on 27th January, and confirmed at Full Council on 3rd February, Mulberry & Co had been appointed as the new payroll provider. The monthly cost was £40 which was a slight saving on the previous provider (£48).

Insurance – Quotations were being sought for the insurance renewal.

Waste Contract – Investigations were being made into trying to reduce the monthly bill as excess weight charges were regularly received.

Office PWLB – The last payment would be made in May 2026. The outstanding payments totalled £6,758.60 (27/05/2025 - £2,296.02; 27/11/2025 - £2,252.90 and 27/05/2026 - £2,209.98).

Staff Time – An excel spreadsheet summary of the time staff spend on each area of work was circulated. This would be used to produce a pie chart to accompany information on the precept increase.

VAT – The next VAT claim (approximately £10,300) was due in April.

The Rialtas year-end close down and the internal auditor visit had been booked.

10. Financial position to review expenditure vs budget at 7th March 2025

Summary sheets and detailed reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk said that the figures included most of the payments up until the end of the financial year. The committee reviewed the figures, including the Ear Marked Reserves (EMRs) which were in line with expectations.

It was agreed that the Speldhurst Chapel EMR should be brought to zero as there would be no further expenditure.

11. Financial position to review expenditure for the Pavilion at 7th March 2025

Summary sheets and detailed reports had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors had already agreed to put funds into the Pavilion Maintenance EMR (Ear Marked Reserve) from the 2024/25 budget.

Councillors on the Pavilion Working Group were investigating ways to address the shortfall in running the Pavilion and Community Hub which was currently being subsidised.

12. Budget Virements

RESOLVED – That the following virements be made from the unspent Speldhurst Chapel PWLB (Public Works Loan Board - £30,680):

£15,000 to the Pavilion Maintenance EMR and the balance of £9,574 to the Playground Renewal and Repair EMR.

The Clerk would seek retrospective approval from Full Council for the above virements.

It was also agreed to move £6,106 from General Reserves to balance the deficit on the Pavilion Maintenance budget using the remainder of the unspent PWLB.

13. Banking and reserves – to consider the present banking arrangements.

The Clerk confirmed that all the bank reconciliations had been checked and signed by a councillor, in line with financial procedures.

When the 2025/26 precept was received, councillors requested the Clerk to transfer funds into the Cambridge and Nationwide Building Society accounts up to the FSCS (Financial Services Compensation Scheme) threshold of £85,000. Funds were also to be added to the CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Investment Management Limited) Public Sector Deposit Fund, leaving sufficient funds in the Unity Trust Bank Account to pay monthly invoices and direct debits. The request would be included on the April Full Council agenda.

14. Proposed/Planned/Planned Non-repeating Expenditure – It was agreed that this item was no longer necessary at this time but would be included again at the budget setting period.

15. Committee and Working Group expenditure – to consider expenditure recommended by committees and working groups and be notified of expenditure made under delegated authority.

It was noted that emergency lighting repairs (£202.80) at the Pavilion had been approved under delegated authority.

16. To review the following policies:

The **Financial Regulations** and **Internal Financial Control System** would be considered at a future meeting when their annual review was due.

Transparency Code – This new policy had been approved at the Full Council meeting on 3rd March 2025 with delegated authority to the Finance and Governance Committees to review. Councillors discussed the financial information to be added on the website which included the monthly list of payments, summary balance sheet, income and expenditure and list of grants awarded. The Clerk was asked to seek clarification from the Internal Auditor regarding the publication of the Fixed Asset Register and the budget summary.

17. Grant Requests

The Clerk reported that Ashurst Village Hall Trustees' Chair had recently been in touch about possible funding for an additional/replacement Defibrillator at Ashurst. Advice about which organisations to approach had been provided together with a grant application form should they decide to apply for funding.

The Tunbridge Wells Counselling Centre – **RESOLVED** that a grant of £250 as a one-off amount be paid to the Tunbridge Wells Counselling Centre in March 2025 for the purposes of providing subsidised counselling to those who would otherwise be unable to afford it.

18. Update on the Speldhurst Chapel PWLB – The first repayment was due on 27th May 2025 - £9,018.75 (interest) and £6,500 (repayment). Cllr Rowe reported that he was waiting to hear confirmation from the Speldhurst Chapel Project Team regarding the provision of Work in Progress insurance.

19. Staff and Training

The following training was being explored:

- Conflict Resolution
- Website Accessibility Refresher
- Cyber Security

20. Items for Information

- Date of forthcoming meetings:
 - Monday 9th June 2025
 - Monday 8th September 2025
 - Monday 25th November 2025

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.39pm.

Chair

Finance Committee Action Points

Action Number	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
23/24	Request user access for Cllr Ellery in Unity as signatory.	Clerk	25/11	Complete
24/24	Contact Payroll provider to rectify Clerk's salary underpay.	Clerk	25/11	Complete
25/24	Send Community Hub new 6-month hire agreement.	Clerk	25/11	Complete
26/24	Include item on Full Council to recommend the authorisation of Cllrs Curry, Norton and Rowe as signatories for the CCLA Public Sector Fund application.	Clerk	25/11	Complete
27/24	Contact insurance company for revised quotation on Speldhurst Chapel.	Clerk	25/11	Complete
28/24	Forward copy of CCTV contract to Cllrs Curry and Ellery.	Clerk	25/11	Complete
29/24	Present budget proposals to Full Council for confirmation.	Clerk	25/11	Complete
30/24	Present risk assessment on fraud to Governance Cttee.	Clerk	25/11	Complete
31/24	Advise Full Council of any balance in grants budget.	Clerk	25/11	Complete
1/25	When precept is received, transfer funds into Cambridge/NW BS up to the £85k limit plus a further amount into CCLA leaving sufficient funds in Unity to pay monthly invoices and direct debits.	Clerk	10/03	
2/25	Virement from General Reserves to Pavilion Maintenance and Playground Renewal/Repair EMRs before year end and report at next FC meeting for retrospective approval.	Clerk	10/03	
3/25	Include Financial Regulations on the agenda for the next Finance Committee Meeting.	Clerk	10/03	
4/25	Include Transparency Code on website, subject to further comments from the Governance Committee and clarification from the Internal Auditor re the Fixed Asset Register.	Clerk	10/03	
5/25	Confirm and pay a grant of £250 to the Tunbridge Wells Counselling Centre.	Clerk	10/03	
6/25	Explore the following training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict Resolution • Website Accessibility Refresher • Cyber Security 	Clerk	10/03	