



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

Minutes of a Finance Committee Meeting held on Monday 15th June 2020 at 7.30pm
conducted online via zoom electronic communication

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Mrs Lyle (Chairman), Mrs Soyke, Milner, Ellery, Mrs Woodliffe and Barrington-Johnson (ex-officio)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

OFFICERS PRESENT

C May – Clerk and Mrs K Harman – 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

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs Podbury and Rowe - both family commitments

3. Disclosures of Interest

There were none

4. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

5. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting dated **27th February 2020**, 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. Interim Payments

The Clerk and Chairman had agreed to upgrade the Zoom subscription to an annual contract to benefit from a 30% discount at a cost of £94.23. A re-deposit of £20,000 was made following the

closure of the 90-day notice account at Hampshire Trust bank. This money was deposited into the 60-day notice account which now stands at £80,000.

8. Financial Position as at 15th June 2020 and review of expenditure vs budget to date

The position was noted by the Committee. Summary sheets and detailed reports had been circulated prior to the meeting which were considered in detail. It was noted that the streetlight in Groombridge had been upgraded to LED which explained the increase in cost. Cllr Mrs Woodliffe queried the balance in the sports club account, and it was noted that that the Committed Expenditure columns had historic figures which needed to be updated. The Clerk will make the necessary amendments. Councillors agreed that the independent drainage expert's fee should be paid from the LGRG Maintenance account.

9. Financial Position as at 15th June 2020 and review of expenditure for the Pavilion to date

The Chairman noted that Castle Water were not charging SPC in 2020 because of the overcharge in 2019 and asked if the account could be accessed online to find out how much it was in credit. She said she was having a meeting with the café proprietor regarding re-opening. The Clerk had obtained some Covid-19 stickers free from TWBC which could be used in the pavilion when it did re-open and he was to investigate purchasing screens to be put at the till.

10. Budget Virements

There were none.

11. Banking and Reserves

Councillors discussed the current savings account arrangements. The Clerk had been updating the signatories and hoped to send them off to be finalised the following day. The current low interest rates on the savings accounts were noted.

12. Financial Standing Orders

The Clerk had circulated the financial standing orders to ensure that all councillors were comfortable with the new banking arrangements. They would go to Governance and then Full Council for final approval.

13. Committee and Working Group expenditure

- a) The clerk advised that the outstanding 2-year tree assessment had been finished and the invoice would be seen in July's payments for about £3,100. He was to chase the CCTV upgrade works.
- b) The clerk advised that the Council's mobile contract had been changed with immediate effect following a bill for £90. He had taken out a new contract with BT for £15 per month for 12 months in an effort to reduce bills as the mobile was now the main parish phoneline but this had made it necessary to remain with BT for the next year. There was much discussion regarding replacing the current mobile because the clerk reported that it was now about 6 years old and was beginning to fail. Options were considered and it was **RESOLVED** that the clerk could purchase an iPhone 6 on a two-year contract with BT at a comparable cost to other companies which ranged up to £22pm.

14. Grant requests

There were none.

- a) There was a brief discussion regarding further contributions to Churches should more requests come in regarding the current Covid-19 pandemic. It was agreed that that all cases would be considered while there was money available.

The clerk said that Speldhurst Village Hall asked if SPC would be willing to assist financially in helping them to upgrade the toilet facilities and make the hall more energy efficient, especially bearing in mind no funds would be received from the fete this year.

Councillors thought it important that all halls were considered. After much discussion Councillors asked the clerk to request further information regarding the shared use and safe-guarding issue of the toilets that had been raised before, before any commitments were made.

15. Parish Council Transport

The Groundsman had recently replaced his car and no longer had a vehicle suitable for transporting vegetation cuttings and tools. It was agreed that a form of transport was vital for him to be able to carry out work in the parish. It was considered that a short-term rental was the best option so that a definitive decision could be made for next year. The Clerk had obtained some quotations for short-term rentals and the cheapest option was discussed. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would investigate renting a suitable vehicle for no more than £1,750 for four months inclusive to include the vehicle and insurance. This would allow time for a longer term, more permanent solution to be investigated.

16. Budget summary for website

The Clerk had updated the SPC website.

17. Staff and Training

The clerk was attending a KALC virtual training session on 18th June.

18. Committee members

Cllr Mrs Podbury had agreed to leave the Finance Committee due to expected commitments when she became Mayor. Cllr Rajah would be replacing her and this would be on the next Full Council agenda for approval. The Finance Committee Chairmanship had been extended to May 2021.

19. Items for Information

- There would be a Governance committee meeting at 2pm on Monday 22nd June 2020.
- The Clerk was planning on carrying out a virtual audit on the morning of 22nd June – he hoped the accounts would be approved in time for Full Council on 6th July 2020.
- Cllr Ellery advised that he would be attending a virtual meeting of the Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee on 4th June 2020. He noted that the existing clubs, societies and users of the recreation grounds had continued to support the village hall with subscriptions despite the fact they were not using the facilities and could expect a discount next year.
- Cllr Mrs Lyle advised that the new owners of Ashurst Place appeared to be carrying out extensive refurbishment works and that it might be a good idea to check for planning permissions.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting closed at 8.49pm.