



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 17th February 2014 at 7.30pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Owen (Chairman), Parker, Milner, Mrs Horne, Mrs Podbury and Mrs Soyke

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

OFFICERS PRESENT: C May – Clerk and Mrs M Flemington – Assistant Clerk

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Pendleton (prior engagement)
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 **12th December 2013**, copies having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed as a correct record.
5. **Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public present.
6. **Matters Arising and Correspondence:** The clerk reported that section 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 is soon to be repealed removing the statutory obligation for two members to sign cheques. He explained that if parish councils wanted to change this procedure they would have to amend their Standing Orders - Financial Regulations to ensure effective systems were in place before they abandon the two signature rule. He recommended that Speldhurst Parish Council does not change any procedures and that it continues to use the current system. The Clerk advised that two further requests for grants from CPRE and West Kent Mediation have been received after the agenda for this meeting was finalised and will be on the agenda for the next full council meeting.
7. **Financial position as at February 2014:** The clerk had circulated all the financial papers and the position was noted by the committee. The Clerk reported that Langton Green maintenance is slightly over budget because of unforeseen repairs and improvements. The Clerk reported on seven virements all of which were based on previously agreed financial decisions:
Speldhurst village website £100 – Newsletters and Media/Administration

Langton Life magazine £750 - Newsletters and Media/Administration
Groombridge magazine £140 - Newsletters and Media/Administration
Post and wire fencing at Langton Green Recreation Ground (LGRG) £583 – Langton Green Maintenance/Amenities
Hedge planting at LGRG £570 - Langton Green Maintenance/Amenities
Clearing storm damaged trees LGRG £340 - Langton Green Maintenance/Amenities
Purchase of leaf blower and snow shovels £280 - Langton Green Maintenance/Amenities

8. **2013-2014 review of expenditure vs. budget to-date:** The Clerk advised that money not spent at the year-end will be carried over to next year. He reported that the £1,400 budget for notice boards is to allow for a new double notice board at Barden Road, Speldhurst, the £5,000 budget for Churches is to allow for churchyard maintenance grant requests and that money will need to be budgeted for the costs of a possible election.
The Clerk reminded members that it is important that they understand all the figures provided and that if there is anything that they do not understand or is unclear they should ask either at the meeting or at any other time.
9. **Speldhurst Recreation Ground:** The Clerk reported that the Recreation Ground Committee have received a grant of £31,558 from Veolia toward the playground.
10. **Grant requests:**
- a) It was **RESOLVED** to grant £1,000 to Hospice in the Weald
 - b) It was **RESOLVED** to grant £250 to Tunbridge Wells and District Samaritans.
 - c) It was **RESOLVED** To grant £500 to Langton Green Primary School as a contribution to the Marchiennes trip.
 - d) Speldhurst Cricket Club has asked if Speldhurst Parish Council would consider in principle giving some financial support to their plans to install outdoor cricket nets at Speldhurst Recreation Ground. After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to support the project in principle and to consider the amount of any grant when an appropriate well-reasoned application is received and subject to clarification of other grant sources.
 - e) It was **RESOLVED** to pledge £600 as a contribution to TWBC Family Fun Days at Langton Green and Speldhurst recreation grounds in August 2014.
 - f) St Mary's Church, Speldhurst has asked for a grant in connection with various works but has not submitted any financial details. It was **RESOLVED** to consider the request but only when a proper application with detailed figures is submitted. **The Clerk to write to them asking that full financial details are always submitted at the start when a grant request is made.**
 - g) It was **RESOLVED** to pay the reasonable cost of insurance for the Speldhurst pram race.
 - h) A grant request has been received from Langton Green Netball Club but further information is required before it can be properly considered.
11. **Unity Bank:** The Clerk reported that Unity Bank works extremely well for Speldhurst Parish Council and has good security including some additional newly installed security features.
12. **Maturing Deposit:** The Clerk reported that the maturing deposit was repaid on 24th January into the HSBC account. The best interest rate available for a one year fixed term deposit was still with the Co-op Bank at 1.5%. Interest rates varied in other institutions from 1.4% to almost nothing. CCLA (a specialist investment management company for charities, faith organisations, and local authorities) is paying just under 0.5% for instant access and the clerk proposed that £50,000 be invested in CCLA while other avenues are explored. He said that Councillors should not feel under pressure to invest in the highest return and that prudence was needed when investing the

Council's money. He will prepare documentation for a decision at the March Full Council meeting or the next Finance Committee meeting.

- 13. Future Precepts:** The Clerk reported that it has recently been announced that there will be no 'capping' on (application of excessiveness principles to) Town or Parish Councils for 2014-2015. The DCLG is considering 'capping' larger Town and Parish Councils the following year but Speldhurst would not qualify as a 'large' Parish Council because the criterion now being considered is a band D rate of about £160.
- 14. Website domain hosting:** It was **RESOLVED** that the website domain hosting charge payable every two years will be an authorised administrative expense in future and that the invoice of £150 (inc VAT) be renewed.
- 15. Community first responder:** It was **RESOLVED** to transfer the previously agreed grant of £1,160 for a community first responder kit from Andrew Strand to Sam Blith. The Council's contribution would be acknowledged and photographs would be taken for local magazines and the newsletter when he is fully trained.
- 16. Items for information:** The Clerk advised that a request was received from Ashurst Broadsheet after the agenda for this meeting was finalised, for a contribution to the printing costs of the magazine. Further information is required from them and the request will be considered at either the next finance committee meeting or by full council.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

CHAIRMAN