

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Committee, Group or Sub Group	
FINANCE GROUP	
Meeting Date & Venue	
3.00 p.m. Friday, 6 November 2015, Parish Office, Staplehurst Village Centre	
Report Author	
Sue Bassett – Responsible Finance Officer	
Report	
<p>Present: Councillors Tom Burnham (TB), Paul Kelly (PK), Sam Lain-Rose (SL-R) and John Perry (JP). Sue Bassett - RFO (SB)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Apologies: Councillors Paul Butcher (PB), Neal Kemp (NK), John Reardon (JR) and Rory Silkin (RS).Minutes of last meetings (10/02/2015 & 23/10/2015) had been circulated, noted and agreed. <p><u>ARISING FROM LAST MEETING</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Review of Council Suppliers;<ol style="list-style-type: none"><u>Parish Office Lease from Village Centre</u> - PK reported no progress but it was generally agreed that the existing terms of the Lease would run on with the (previously agreed) addition fee of £150 p.a. for the use of the upstairs meeting room.<u>Bell Lane Toilets Lease renewal</u> – RFO reported that new draft Lease was still awaited from MBC as it wished to align all Borough Public Toilet leases under the same terms.Youth Leader Project –PK reported that he was still working with PB (as Chairman of the Youth Club) to sort out the Youth Club paperwork/banks, etc. Understood that the Club itself was busy but regular checks were needed, particularly DBS checks of Youth Leader Staff. It had not been possible to progress the idea for SPC to take on maintenance of the Youth Club as no details had been made available. Draft terms of Licence had similarly not been progressed. Issues left in abeyance.Village Centre re-building strategy – TB & SL-R reported on progress of the Working Group. It was hoped a report on options would be produced early 2016 for consideration. A Surveyor's quote would be considered by SPC shortly to enable research into potential of the existing building, structural stability, etc. Meanwhile consideration was needed as to the accommodation needs of users to build evidence for future grant applications.Parish Services Agreement 2015-2016 – JP reported that discussions in this area were currently tricky due to changes in staff at MBC. He confirmed that he was still minded to work on MBC over its rationale for not allowing other areas of maintenance expenditure (street lights, footpaths, play areas and open churchyards) to be included within the Parish Services Scheme.Surrenden Playing Field – JP reported that he was still trying to pursue the issue of obtaining the freehold or 125 year Lease with MBC. The SPF Group would monitor, over the winter, how effective the recent drain clearance works had been, before considering further action.	

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OTHER BUSINESS

8. **Draft Budget & Precept requirement 2016/17 – V2** – Councillors discussed each budget head in turn and made various comments and recommendations as follows; Concern was expressed that the Jubilee Field Management Committee had not met recently and its financial position in relation to the repair of the building's water heaters. The slightly increased gang-mowing quote for 2016 was considered acceptable. The pitch maintenance JFMC had undertaken were considered football-related costs and not a public-open space expenditure for this Council to reimburse. Councillors queried whether the SPF CCTV system needed upgrading and asked if JR could advise on this. PK reported that the Churchyard Committee had planned maintenance works on a rolling programme, rather than leaving items to build into a large job intermittently. PK reported that Youth Club Maintenance needed to be more frequent (so costs may increase). The VEGroup was talking about installing a public seating area within the Youth Club grounds (but S106 funding might be applied to this). Agreed the existing list for Donations be applied to 2016. Agreed to add a new heading for Wimpey Field Open Space (as a Reserve - to record the anticipated maintenance grant due to be received). With reserves maintained at existing levels and anticipated unspent funds from the current year carried forward to offset/reduce the precept requirement, a very small percentage increase was currently anticipated for the 2016/2017 Precept requirement.

9. **Internal Audit**

9.1 Clerk's overtime – The Internal Auditor had given verbal feedback that he was concerned at the potential financial liability of the Clerk's build-up of overtime worked but not claimed. Agreed the need for clarity and a strategy to deal with this. SL-R agreed a date to meet with JP & the Staff Group to discuss this.

9.2 Local Government Pension Scheme – The Clerk's telephone update of 28/10/15 was noted.

9.3 Risk Assessments – Documented approach 2015/2016 was noted. TB commented that the Annual Village Litter Pick should be added as a Low Risk item due to the precautions (30mph areas only), equipment and safety briefings given to volunteers.

9.4 Report on Review of Terms of Engagement of Iden Business Services Ltd. JP considered that the Terms agreed in 2003 still remained relevant.

9.5 Appointment of Internal Auditor for the new financial year 2016/17. JP recommended that Tim Kendrick of Iden Business Services Ltd., be re-appointed for the next year.

10. **Date of Next Meeting** – JP to circulate dates for next meeting early in December.