

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Committee, Group or Sub Group	
FINANCE GROUP	
Meeting Date & Venue	
10 a.m. 18 th December 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), John Perry (JP) and Rory Silkin (RS). Sue Bassett - RFO (SB)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Apologies: Councillors Paul Butcher (PB), Neal Kemp (NK) and John Reardon (JR).Minutes of last meeting (06/11/2015) 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 change to the status quo reported at previous meeting.<u>Bell Lane Toilets Lease renewal</u> – RFO reported that new draft Lease had been received and was being scrutinised by the Clerk. A report would follow shortly. It was understood that the MBC Grant towards upkeep would not form part of the Lease but in future be addressed through Parish Services.Youth Leader Project –PK reported that he was still trying to progress forward with the issues raised at the previous meeting.Parish Services Agreement – JP reported that discussions in this area remained unresolved, but requested this matter be kept on the Agenda. A liaison meeting with KALC & MBC would be held in the New Year.Internal Audit – RS reported that the Clerk’s overtime issue had been resolved through an agreed payment to the Clerk in lieu of writing-off the timesheet overtime hours. A formal letter would shortly be sent by the Chairman to the Clerk to confirm the agreement. <p><u>OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Reviews of Council Suppliers 2016 – Councillors considered the RFO’s report and made the following recommendations for agreement by Full Council:-<ol style="list-style-type: none"><u>Gang-mowing Surrenden PF</u> – Three quotes were considered. <i>Recommended that Landscape Services continued this work.</i><u>Printing</u> – Two quotes were considered for the printing of Village Updates and the Annual Report. Councillors discussed in-house compilation and design in future. SL-R offered to advise and recommended InDesign Software. Agreed to keep this under review. <i>Recommended that Paxman Printing Service continues printing work for now.</i><u>Bell Lane Toilet Cleansing & Opening</u> – Councillors noted the (held since 2014) 8% and 5% increases in the proposed costs for 2016. <i>Recommended that Paxman Services (UK) Ltd., continues this contract.</i>	

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

7.4 Street Cleansing – Councillors noted the .5% proposed increase in this contract and the difficulty in finding other contractors for this work.

Recommended that Paxman Services (UK) Ltd., continues this contract for 2 years.

8. **Parisfield Section 106 Funds** – Councillors considered the RFO's report of 04/12/2015 with recommendations. After discussion Councillors agreed to make recommendations to Full Council as follows:-

8.1 Retrospective Claim – Regarding funds previously spent on maintenance at Surrenden & Jubilee Playing fields since November 2012 (and not covered by Parish Services Grant).

Recommended that a retrospective claim be made for £2,666.16.

8.2 Guide Centre Roof Appeal – Details of project cost and funding sources were supplied.

Recommended to support the Guide Centre Roof Appeal with the application of £4,000 from the Section 106 Parisfield fund.

8.3 Youth Club "Bridge" Project – PK explained that the project would give public access to the Youth Club site direct from the High Street footpath where a remembrance garden may be created in future.

Recommended that £519 from the Parisfield Section 106 Fund be applied to the Youth Club "Bridge" Project.

8.4 Parish Council future projects – TB reported that work was still ongoing to formulate proposals with up to date costings for works at Surrenden PF; a southern pathway, resurfacing of children's play area and replacing/refurbishing some of the equipment. Anticipated this would cost in the region of £15,000.

Recommended that the remainder of the Parisfield Section 106 Fund be applied to support improvement works at Surrenden PF.

9. **Draft Budget & Precept requirement 2016/17 – V4** – Councillors discussed a number of budget proposals and the following recommendations were made:-

9.1 Donations – The existing year's list was carried forward with the addition of CAB Cranbrook £130, Five Acre Wood Special School £500, Heart of Kent Hospice £100 and Tunbridge Wells & District Samaritans £100.

Recommended to increase the donations budget to £2,900.

9.2 Subscriptions 2016/2017 – The current year's list was carried forward with slight uplift for potential increases in some cases.

Recommended that subscriptions in 2016/17 be made to:- ACRK, KCPFA, KALC, Parish Online, SLCC, National Allotment Society and Transport Accessibility Group.

9.3 Speedwatch Upgrade – Councillors discussed the request to replace the existing Speed Indicator Device.

Recommended that £2,200 be added to the budget for replacement Speedwatch equipment.

9.4 Christmas Lights 2016 – Councillors commented that the Christmas Lights display 2015 was disappointing. The RFO's report was welcomed and RS expressed preference for a rolling programme to replace the existing stock over a number of years.

Recommended that £1,000 be added to the Christmas Lights Budget 2016 to enable the purchase of some new Christmas motifs.

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

9.5 Draft Budget & Precept - Version 5 of the draft budget & precept calculations would be circulated to all Councillors for information. Councillor comments would need to be submitted for consideration by the Finance Group at its 15th January meeting. The Parish Precept would need to be set by Full Council on 18th January 2016.

Recommended that the Parish Rate per band D home be maintained (as close as possible) to that paid in 2015/2016 (approximately £55 per annum or £1.06 per week). Any adjustments to be applied to the General Fund.

10. **Appointment of External Auditor 2016/2017** – Councillors noted the information supplied by NALC, which had procured audit services, after the abolition of the Audit Commission. After consideration RS proposed that this Council remains opted-into the new arrangements but review this after three years.

Recommended no action (i.e., this Council would automatically be included in the NALC External Audit arrangements for the next 5 years as stated in the regulations).

11. **Date of Next Meeting** – Friday 15th January 2016. 10 a.m. Parish Office, Village Centre.

POST MEETING NOTE FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION: County Councillor Hotson was in discussion with Frittenden Parish Council regarding a highway improvements project for Knoxbridge (possibly gateways and 50 mph speed restriction costing £5,000). He was likely to make a grant from the KCC Member's Highway Budget towards this and hoped that Staplehurst and Frittenden Parish Councils would consider sharing the remainder of the costs (estimated at £2,000).