

# STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

<b>Committee, Group or Sub Group</b>	
Finance Group	
<b>Meeting Date &amp; Venue</b>	
2 p.m., Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2014, Parish Office, Staplehurst Village Centre	
<b>Report Author</b>	
Sue Bassett - RFO	
<b>Report</b>	
<p>1. <b>Present:</b> Councillors Rory Silkin (RS) – Chairman, John Perry (JP), Simon Green (SG), Sam Lain-Rose (SLR), Sue Bassett (SB).</p> <p>2. <b>Apologies:</b> Councillors Tom Burnham (TB), Paul Kelly (PK), Paul Butcher (PB) and John Reardon (JR).</p> <p>3. <b>Minutes of last meeting (16/09/14):</b> Circulated and noted. SG considered that Salaries had not been deferred but a recommendation made to change the Assistant Clerk's Contract to include overall cover of any absences by the Clerk with overtime at an agreed rate. It was noted that Staff Appraisals had yet to be finalised.</p> <p>4. <b>Matters arising:</b></p> <p>4.1 <u>Financial Regulations Update</u> – Appendix A was agreed as per the green highlighting. Councillors recommended that the whole clean document now be considered for adoption by Full Council.</p> <p>4.2 <u>Review of Council Suppliers</u> – Councillors noted the Clerk's update and discussed some of the items in red; Village Centre Lease – RS said that the terms of the expired lease would run on, but agreed to inspect it and recommend a way forward. The renewal in May 2015 of the Bell Lane Toilets Lease needed exploring with MBC soon.</p> <p>4.3 <u>Chapel Lane Street Lights</u> – Noted that RS was organising a meeting with residents. Although one lighting column had a slight defect, both were considered good from a safety perspective.</p> <p>5. <b>Deferred items:</b></p> <p>5.1 <u>Pensions Policy</u> – SB had highlighted the policies where a decision was mandatory and others where a decision was discretionary. RS, SG &amp; SLR agreed to look through the papers and report back to next meeting.</p> <p>5.2 <u>Banking Review</u> – SB's report on three banks and their services was considered. SG spoke on his positive experience of Unity Trust Bank. A pre-paid debit card and internet access would be useful but after discussion agreed to recommend staying with NatWest for the time being.</p> <p>5.3 <u>Assistant Clerk Cover Rate</u> – Agreed to recommend that the existing agreement to pay at an enhanced rate for work during the Clerk's absence be honoured and backdated to the revised rate paid by Frittenden Parish Council. To be paid until the pending appraisal and future contract change considerations are agreed.</p>	

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- 5.4 Draft Budget 2015/2016 – Councillors requested additional information to show last year's budget with projected out-turn alongside the proposed new budget. Action by SB. Each item of the draft budget Version 0.1 was considered and some amendments were made and recommendations made to review some of the existing contracts.
- 5.4.1 The Churchyard budget for 2015 was outstanding and Councillors agreed to check the terms of the new Agreement.
- 5.4.2 Recommended that the Bell Lane Toilet contract be reviewed alongside the Lease renewal and that a new tender process be undertaken from January 2015 with notice given to the existing contractor.
- 5.4.3 Assistant Clerk to review and report on the revised annual expenditure costs following completion of the Street light upgrading/removal project.
- 5.4.4 Agreed that the need for parish street sweeping in addition to MBC provision should be reviewed in July 2015.
- 5.4.5 A Third Party review of the Youth Leader project was considered necessary to address behaviour management issues.
- 5.4.6 SLR initiated discussion on the desirability of the Council to build in a reserve to enable an Action Group to work up a Village Centre re-building strategy, an issue being highlighted by the Neighbourhood Plan consultation. It could stay within SPC control and work in tandem with VC Trustees and parishioners. Until costs were known for such a project it would not be possible to ask future developers for contributions. After further discussion it was agreed that the idea should be considered by Full Council. Meanwhile the sum of £10,000 was added to the budget to start the build-up of a reserve. SG commented that there'll always be grant pots available for a properly worked up plan but an Action Group would be needed to drive it forward. RSL agreed to write a background paper for Full Council to consider on 20<sup>th</sup> October.
- 6. Other Business:**
- 6.1 Skate Park Repair quotes – Councillors looked at the quotes obtained but didn't feel able to recommend the type of repair. SLR offered to speak with skaters and report back as to which repair would be better; concrete or tarmac topped? Meanwhile Councillors requested a separation of the quote from Evolution to show a breakdown of the repainting and repair costs. It was understood that a grant from KCC towards the repairs (not running/repainting costs) may be available.
- 6.2 Tree Works at Surrenden Playing Field quotes – Councillors requested that the Surrenden Playing Field Group be asked to comment on the recommendations and quotes. SG requested a copy of the Arboricultural Report with a plan of where the trees were.
- 6.3 Donations 2014 – Councillors recommended the following donations be made:- £100 to Royal British Legion, £120 to Kenward Trust, £250 to Kent Air Ambulance, £150 to ccdas. Councillors agreed to look at the donations policy to draw up next year's budget too.
- 6.4 Audit Commission Return 2013/2014 – SB reported that no concerns had been raised and a copy of the return was being displayed on the Village Centre Notice Board for 14 days and uploaded onto the Council website. JP requested a meeting with the Internal Auditor to review the internal controls. RS asked for the auditor's opinion on electronic signatures.
- 6.5 Churchyard Agreement query – Councillors noted the query and would check through the new Agreement via the website. It was expected that approval of the budget would be needed before payment was made.

## Date & Venue of next meeting

Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014. 2 p.m. meeting room above the Parish Office