

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Committee, Group or Sub Group	
FINANCE GROUP	
Meeting Date & Venue	
2.00 p.m. Tuesday 6 th January 2015, Parish Office, Staplehurst Village Centre	
Report Author	
Mick Westwood – Parish Clerk	
Report	
<p>Present: Councillors Rory Silkin (RS) – Chairman, John Perry (JP), Paul Kelly (PK), Simon Green (SG); Parish Clerk Mick Westwood (MW)</p> <p>Apologies: Councillors Tom Burnham (TB), Paul Butcher (PB), Sam Lain-Rose (SLR) and John Reardon (JR); Sue Bassett (RFO).</p> <p>1. Minutes of last meeting (04/11/2014) had been circulated and were agreed as a true record.</p> <p>2. Review of Council Suppliers</p> <p>2.1. Parish Office Lease from Village Centre – MW will forward copies of previous lease and related correspondence to PK (done) who will propose a new draft and review the current charges: £350 per month for the offices, store room and Staplehurst Society rooms and £150 p.a. for the upstairs meeting room.</p> <p>2.2. Bell Lane Toilets Lease renewal – MW reported that MBC had confirmed that it was prepared to renew the lease (expires May 2015) for a further five years and continue paying the grant of £2,500 p.a. Draft documentation was awaited. Recommended: Full Council agrees to renewal of the lease. MW will ask MBC about including the grant payment, with indexation, in the lease (done – response awaited).</p> <p>2.3. Bell Lane Toilets Cleansing Contract – It was agreed that the RFO be asked to forward a copy of the last tender documentation to Finance Group members. This will be annotated as appropriate to establish criteria for an updated document. Recommended: Full Council agrees that the Parish Office and Finance Group (a) co-ordinate preparation of new tender document to seek quotes for cleansing of Bell Lane Toilets, including any required ‘add-on services such as opening, closing etc., for a period to be confirmed between 3 and 5 years; (b) submit recommendation of the preferred supplier to Full Council in time for the new contract to run from 1st May 2015, being the commencement of the new lease.</p> <p>3. Chapel Lane Street Lights – RS advised that SSE Contracting had inspected the lights and found them to be satisfactory but could not offer an opinion on their likely lifespan. A representative of the residents had met the contractor and is aware of this conclusion. MW advised that a representative of residents had enquired about using parts from Crowther Close lights, following their upgrade, in Chapel Lane. He said that enquiries were being made of SSE Contracting and KHS about the feasibility of such use. Finance Group Recommendation for Full Council agreement: (a) subject to confirmation of feasibility, safety etc. from contractors, any useable spare parts from Crowther Close be given to residents for their own use only; (b) Chapel Lane lights to be included in regular maintenance of remaining Parish Council lights until they cause additional expenditure or become unsafe (when they would be decommissioned). <u>Headcorn Road – Finance Group recommended that the upgrading be discussed with County Councillor Hotson with a view to exploring funding possibilities.</u></p> <p>4. Pensions Policy – Councillors noted the RFO’s report on new legislation relating to employee pensions. They noted that the DCLG’s consultation on the Local Government Pension Scheme contained proposals relating to exit payments (Regulation 32) but that as SPC did not have ‘historic liabilities’ there would be no impact. The Clerk explained that SPC would have to adopt auto-enrolment of eligible staff by a ‘staging date’ of 01/10/16 but could proceed earlier provided it undertook the necessary measures. Finance Group recommends to Full Council that SPC takes such measures to adopt earlier enrolment as soon as possible. The Clerk undertook to circulate for wider consideration his report dated 30/12/14 that sets out</p>	

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a series of project tasks to achieve this aim.

5. **Youth Leader Project** – There was no further news on the review of Youth Club paperwork. **PK is to liaise with PB and enlist assistance from the Parish Office as appropriate.** It was acknowledged that the trustee arrangements also needed to be reviewed.
6. **Village Centre re-building strategy** – After much discussion about how to approach to developing a strategy **Finance Group recommended: PK to draw up an article for inclusion in the Village Update or as a separate flyer to seek volunteers for and input from residents into a working group to investigate funding options, trusteeship, design ideas etc.** The Group's relationship with the Parish Council would be that of a Focus Group and it should contain representatives from the Parish Council and Village Centre Management Committee.
7. **Donations 2015**
 - 7.1 Councillors recommended the proposed total of £2,500 in the 2015-16 budget including specific allocations for:
 - Maidstone Association of Youth (Try Angle Awards) donation 50.00
 - Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau - Annual donation 300.00
 - Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 100.00
 - CCDAS - Debt Advice donation 200.00
 - Kent Air Ambulance - Donation 250.00
 - Kenward Trust - Donation 120.00
 - 7.2 Councillors agreed not to recommend a donation to Tunbridge Wells Samaritans.
8. **Parish Services Grant expenditure** – The Group noted that further information on what would be covered and the amount payable by MBC would be available following a meeting in February.
9. **VEGroup future plans** – MW advised a date was awaited for a meeting with KHS about a project of (saddle-shaped) oblong planters on the metal fencing along the bank on the east side of the A229 opposite the High Street junction with Offens Drive (since scheduled for 13/01/15).
10. **Draft Budget 2015/2016** – Finance Group reviewed version 4 of the draft budget. JP undertook to seek confirmation of the amount to be paid by MBC by way of Local Council Tax Support grant. He asked that the expensed item for the Village Centre Feasibility Fund also be reflected in the Reserves listing. **With these amendments Finance Group recommends that a new Version 5 be approved by Full Council at its meeting on 19th January 2015.**
11. **Subscriptions 2015** – Councillors recommended the following subscriptions for 2015-16:
 - ACRK Subscription - 65.00
 - National Allotment Society - 55.00
 - KALC - Annual Subscription - 1,140.00
 - Parish Online Annual Subscription - 84.00
 - Society of Local Council Clerks - Annual Subscriptions - 312.00
 - Transport Accessibility Group - 25.00

They noted that the following 2014-15 items would not be required:

- Action for Market Towns - Annual Subscription - 125.00 (AMT no longer exists)
- Navigus Planning Journal - 50.00 (Company will offer a free service)

Date & Venue of next meeting

2.00pm 10th February 2015 at Parish Office