

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Committee, Group or Sub Group	
FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP	
Meeting Date & Venue	
10 a.m. Monday, 8 th January 2018, Parish Office, Staplehurst Village Centre	
Report Author	
Mick Westwood – Parish Clerk	
Report	
<p>Present: Councillors Tom Burnham (TB), Sam Lain-Rose (SL-R) and John Perry (JP). Mick Westwood (MW), Parish Clerk; Deborah Jenkins (DJ), Deputy Clerk & Finance Officer.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Apologies: Cllr Paddy Riordan.Minutes of last meeting (14/12/2017) had been circulated and were agreed. <u>Banking Arrangements:</u> The Deputy Clerk & Finance Officer said that she had liaised with Lloyds Bank about the account transfer. The next step was for an account signatory to speak to Lloyds and for personal details of all signatories to be collated and provided to Lloyds. <u>Churchyard Liaison Group</u> – TB said he had yet to speak to members of the CLG about the Group's budget forecast. <u>Allotment Society Subscription</u> – attendees considered that with the proposed provision of allotments on the Hen & Duckhurst Farm site it would make sense to recommend that the Parish Council <u>renew the subscription of £55 to the Allotment Society.</u>Draft Budget 2018-2019 – A new draft of the budget had been circulated to all Councillors and this draft was reviewed by Group members. Members recapped that at the meeting of 14/12/17 the Group had proposed a recommended precept of £141,000 (being an estimated expenditure requirement of £147,000 less £6,000 to come from the Wimpey Field reserve). Since that time further expenditure in 2017-18 had been approved (e.g. container for Jubilee Field). Members felt it would be prudent to reflect the additional expenditure in the current year's deficit and the budget calculation for next year. They also felt it prudent to allow for some expenditure on preparatory work for longer term projects identified at the meeting of 14/12/17 (meeting note item 3). <u>It was agreed to recommend to Full Council a precept figure of £145,000.</u> Per Band D property, this would equate to £60.30 per year or £1.16 per week (an increase of £1.19 per annum/2p per week/+2%). <p><u>OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Surrenden Playing Field & Nicholson Walk Freehold: JP said he had discussed with MBC's Director of Regeneration and Place the difference between MBC's valuation of the freehold and SPC's offer for the freehold pursuant to Council decision 20/11/17 (Min1664). Given that MBC had responded that it was not prepared to accept a figure lower than its valuation and SPC considered that the basis of MBC's valuation was flawed in that it was an agricultural value and also ignored the maintenance costs associated with the site, the Group agreed to <u>recommend to Full Council that it brief an independent professional valuer to obtain a new valuation.</u> The Group considers that such a valuation would better inform MBC and facilitate a resolution of the current impasse. JP and SL-R said they would obtain contact names to approach.Donation Request – Kent Tree and Pond Partnership: Correspondence had been received from the Kent Tree and Pond Partnership setting out how it can help recruit and support tree and pond wardens and requesting that the Council consider a donation to support the	

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partnership's running costs. The Group noted that the resident who until now had undertaken informal inspections of village trees was not in a position to continue and therefore felt it would be useful to seek volunteers for tree/pond warden activities. The Group also agreed to **recommend to Full Council that a donation of £50 be made to the partnership. The Council can choose how this donation be allocated (i.e. to support tree warden work, pond warden work or both).**

6. **Other Business:** (a) Street Sweeping – JP suggested that SPC's provision of street sweeping be reviewed. DJ advised that the contract was scheduled for review in H2 2018. MW advised he had sought information about MBC's sweeping programme: MW and JP will pursue the request. (b) Footpath KM312 - DJ advised that she had pressed Carillion for completion of works to footpath KM312 before transfer of the land into SPC's name (Council decision 06/11/17 Min 1658). Note: following the meeting Carillion confirmed works were scheduled for 26-27 February.
7. **Dates of Next Meetings** – Regular meetings: 26th April 2018, 19th July 2018 and 25th October 2018.