

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Council Offices
Langley Road
Abbots Langley
Herts
WD5 0EJ

20th January 2015.

To Members of the Finance and Administration Committee

Councillors: Jeff Hill (Chairman), Gloria Keaveny, Brenda Kersey, Jane Lay, Owen Roe and Keith Williams.

The next meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee will be held at the above address on Monday 26th January 2015 at 6:00 pm, when your presence is summoned for the purpose of transacting the business outlined below.

The press and public are welcome to attend the meeting.

Tim Perkins
Clerk to the Council

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive and accept apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive declarations of interest in items on the agenda.
3. **Public Participation**
To note if any members of the public have requested to speak at this meeting, in accordance with the Parish Council's Public Speaking Arrangements.
4. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th November 2014 (previously circulated).**
5. **Grants 2015-2016**
To consider the award of financial grants for the coming financial year. (See enclosed report of applications received and the Clerk's report item 1.)
6. **Local Government Pensions Scheme**
To consider the Financial Topic Note from the National Association of Local Councils. (enclosed)
7. **Council Office Refurbishment**
To consider if plans should be drawn up to reconfigure and refurbish the above. (Agenda item requested by the Chairman of the Parish Council.)
8. **Budget Monitoring Report**
To consider the budget monitoring report for Q3 2014-2015. (See monitoring and tracking report enclosed).
9. **Committee Meetings**
To consider if a December 2015 meeting of this committee should be added to the meeting calendar. (See Clerk's report item 2.)
10. **Website**
To consider the proposal on website development. (See Clerk's report item 3 and enclosed proposal ^[1].)

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11. Financial Regulations

- a. To consider the final draft of the above and recommend approval to the Parish Council.
- b. To consider the workplan for items that will require this committee's attention. (See Clerk's report item 4 and draft Treasury Management Strategy Report, both enclosed.)

12. Internal Audit

To consider if the committee Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman want to meet with the Internal Auditor on 11th February 2015.

^[1] *A print copy of the proposal is supplied to committee members only. If any other members require a copy then please advise the Clerk.*

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1. Grants 2015-2016

Report of applications received enclosed, not much to add really, all applicants have submitted accounts and the packs are available for members review.

There is £30 left in the grant pot for 2014-2015, members had notionally ring fenced £2,000 for small grants, but financial grants approved during the year have encroached on this.

Members may want to consider making a further £500 available for small grant applications prior to the end of March, or if applications should just be deferred into the new financial year.

Small grants awarded so far this year:

Ref	Applicant	Award
1	Back to the Front	250.00
2	Royal British Legion - Abbots Langley Branch	120.00
3	Abbots Langley Orchestra	150.00
4	Hillside Residents Assoc.	150.00
5	Abbots Langley Arts Group	250.00
6	DEMAND	250.00
7	Abbots Langley Biz	200.00
8	Village Moonlighters	200.00
		1570.00

2. Committee Meetings

When discussing the calendar at the January Parish Council meeting it was suggested a return to holding a December meeting of this committee may be appropriate.

To fit the meeting into the budget approval cycle I would suggest that if members want to meet in December then Monday 21st December at 18:00 would work. This would be a single item agenda plus any time sensitive business that may have cropped up.

The only comment I will make is that we used to have a meeting in December to further review the budget, but members decided to remove this from the calendar.

3. Website

I have struggled with this I have looked at possibly hundreds of charity, PC/TC and non-profit websites. There is an awful lot of tat out there. Some sites that do look good, when you contact the company it is often a "one person band" and that is something from which we want to get away.

Also, most of the smaller providers say "we take care of everything for you", this may be appropriate for some PC/TCs but we need to move away from this reliance of a web designer for updates and use, as I have reported before, a front end Content Management System (CMS).

I have tried to apply some objective criteria in looking at possible providers:

- Be an SME and not a sole trader. (De-risk the reliance on a single web designer.)
- Have a defined web development methodology that considers different customers' needs and how they access information.
- Works to a standard internal design process, so if staff leave others can easily pick up.
- Ideally WordPress based CMS. (Industry standard.)
- Have experience of the local council, charity or non-profit sectors.

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- A company that has designed only websites for on-line trading follow totally different methodologies that are not appropriate.
- Website must be capable of being updated by staff, after minimal training, who have a working knowledge of MS Word and pdf generation. (Most content update and new content production will be "in-house" rather than reliant on external web designers.)

The Cubik package offers this, using WordPress as its CMS, WordPress is open source software with hundreds of "plug ins" for specific tasks.

4. Financial Regulations Update

The latest version of the above is circulated. It contains all of the amendments considered through the previous discussions. As a "core" set of Financial Regs it is workable document and offers, members, officers and the community a robust level of protection against financial mismanagement.

There are a number of "workplan" items that this committee will need to address.

My recommendation to this committee is that the core Financial Regs. are proposed to the PC for resolution. This committee then addresses the workplan items over its next few meetings and once agreed propose any updates to the PC, of the sections in the regulations that are affected.

Gail has drafted a first pass at a Treasury Management Strategy, this is really for members first comments, it will come back for more detailed consideration on content and what members want to do on spreading investments into providers like CCLA or alternate financial institutions.

In terms of the workplan Items I would prioritise them as follows, with a target meeting for getting reports back to this committee for consideration.

April 2015

- Treasury Management. Intra-account transfers, treasury deposits, CCLA, etc. (Sec. 5 & 8.)

July 2015

- Internet Banking, use for payments. (Sec. 6.)
- Use of cards, Fuel, Staples, Government Procurement Card, etc. (Sec. 6.)

October 2015

- Floats and general business "cash in hand" policy (Sec. 6)
- Contracts. Review of limits. (Sec. 11.)
- Termination payments, terms of ref. Staffing Comm. etc. (Sec. 7.)

Tim Perkins
Clerk to the Council
20th January 2015

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