

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Council Offices
Langley Road
Abbots Langley
Herts
WD5 0EJ

21st April 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 27th April 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**
26th January 2015 (previously circulated).
5. **Internal Audit Report**
 - a. To consider the report from the Interim Update Audit carried out on 11th February 2015. (enclosed)
 - b. To consider the report from the Chairman of this committee following the meeting with the internal auditor. (enclosed)
6. **Security of Data**
To consider the report from the Clerk on the Large Scale Data Recovery exercise that took place in January 2015. (enclosed)
7. **College Road Neighbourhood Watch**
To consider if the current arrangements for meetings and photocopying should be extended. (See Clerk's report item 1.)
8. **Three Rivers District Council - Council Tax Support Grant**
To consider the disposition of the higher than budgeted grant. (See Clerk's report item 2.)
9. **Business Rates - Parish Council Depot**
To note the business rate charges for the above. (See Clerk's report item 3.)
10. **Henderson Hall Trust - Grant**
To consider revised payment arrangements for the above. (See Clerk's report item 4.)

Abbots Langley Parish Council

11. Parish Council Offices

- a. To consider the draft layouts and costings for the Parish Council office area. (See Clerk's report item 5.)
- b. To consider costs for repairing the office car park. (See Clerk's report item 6.)

12. Vehicle Fleet

To consider the report from the Clerk on vehicle replacement. (See Clerk's report item 7.)

13. Budget Monitoring Report

To consider the budget monitoring report for Q4 2014-2015. (See monitoring and tracking report enclosed).

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Abbots Langley Parish Council
Clerk's Report - F&A - April 2015

1. College Road Neighbourhood Watch

At the January 2012 meeting of this committee it was agreed that the above would be allowed two meetings a year without charge in the Council Chambers, providing these were held during working hours, or at a time when additional key holding costs would not be required. In addition 550 photocopies were allowed free of charge for resident's newsletters. (min. 433.)

The arrangement has been in place for a number of years and is reconsidered every three years.

The cost of the copies and plain paper is less than £10.

2. Three Rivers District Council - Council Tax Support Grant

The Council Tax Support Grant for 2015-2016 was set by TRDC as £31,617, this was agreed after the Parish Council's budget was set. A low level estimate of £23,595 had been included in the budget (+£8,022 additional funds).

Members need to decide the deposition of these additional funds. They can either be allowed to rest in the General Fund, transferred to the earmarked reserve for play area projects as the original estimate was, or moved to another reserve.

If decided to place in the earmarked reserve for play areas this would take the reserve to £143,600.

TRDC have indicated the Council Tax Support grant for the 2016-2017 financial year will be £16,044. No further grant will be paid.

3. Business Rates - Parish Council Depot

The Parish Council has not previously paid business rates on the depot, not on my watch at least. TRDC have caught up with this and have back charged rates from 10th December 2014 (£2,167) and in addition to the rates for this financial year (£7,200) submitted a bill for £9,367, which has been paid.

A new nominal ledger code "7155 - Rates (Depot)" has been opened on the Playing Fields budget page.

4. Henderson Hall Trustees

The above have asked that the grant paid to them be remitted in two annual tranches on 1st May & 1st November. In principle I have no objection to this, but only as and when they have got their banking arrangements regularised.

We submitted the Q1-Q2 financial summary in November which the trustees agreed to pay (£23.96k), when they submitted their cheque, we were not convinced the trustees who had signed the cheque were on the bank mandate.

It transpired that following the departure of two managing trustees the trustees received new bank mandate forms, which were subsequently "lost" by the trustees or the Cooperative Bank. It was all a bit muddled. Although the Parish Council's cheque for the first grant instalment (£20k) had been raised and signed this has been held in the safe pending resolution of this matter, which we have been assured is imminent.

Richard Baldwin has been appointed Treasurer by the trustees and he will be working more closely with Gail Kiely on the finances. A meeting has been arranged for early in May.

I would recommend that it is agreed to pay the grant in two instalments, as requested by the trustees, but not until such time as the bank mandate and cheque signatory issues are resolved and then only on the understanding that any invoices submitted by the Parish Council for costs incurred on behalf of the trustees are settled with thirty days.

(Update 21/04/2015: The Cooperative Bank have confirmed they received the updated mandate on 13th April, if there are no queries the revised mandate should be in place within 14 days. Any queries will be referred back to the signatories which will delay the implementation of the mandate.)

Abbots Langley Parish Council
Clerk's Report - F&A - April 2015

5. Parish Council Office - Layouts

Enclosed are four layout drafts for the office. Option 1 is the highest cost option as it involves extending the entrance porch to the corner of the building, the building works are uncostered. The other three options are really variations on a theme, the costs of which would be in the order of £16k-£18k and would include:

- Strip out works
- Partitioning
- Decoration
- Flooring
- Electrical and data cabling
- Furniture

The ceiling and new lighting units in the public and front office area is also uncostered.

The cost estimates assume works would be carried out during the working day, our initial thoughts, if this was to proceed, is we would decamp the front desk staff to the chambers for the period of works and use the entrance from the pavement as the public entrance.

The ideal time to do this would be August as this is our quietest time of the year in the office and if the works schedule was carefully planned would probably mean only one committee meeting, either P&H or Leisure, would have to be relocated to probably the Manor House.

We have struggled to get contractor quotes, the job is too small for many of the office refurbishment companies. We are concerned the above costs are high side but they do give a general idea. I need some guidance from his committee on the way forward.

6. Parish Council Office - Car Park

The car park surface has deteriorated badly. When it is raining large puddles collect and when these freeze in the winter further damage occurs. The contractor who undertakes most of our footpath and car park works reported:

"The council car park has reached a point that there is no top surface and is very quickly deteriorating. This surface has been patched up in the past years and even the base course is starting to crack.

The surface being as it is now, will cause damage to car wheels. The wheels turning on the broken up bitumen stones could rip into the tyre, and further undermine to the surface.

The deteriorating surface is also filling the drains with loose materials that have had to be cleared.

Two options are available, option one should only be thought of as a short term repair, for a more permanent solution option 2 is recommended".

OPTION 1

To provide and install approximately 32.00 lm of PCC edgings on concrete bed and backing

To clean area and provide and lay approximately 183.00 m² of 10mm DBM wearing course to a compacted thickness of 40mm

Price £4,666.00 + VAT

OPTION 2

To excavate defective surfacing from car park to a depth of 100mm and dispose of spoil.

To provide and install approximately 32.00 lm of PCC edgings on concrete bed and backing.

To reconstruct approximately 183.00 m² of car park with 60mm thickness of 20mm DBM base course and 40mm thickness of 10mm DBM wearing course.

Price £9,700.00 + VAT

Abbots Langley Parish Council
Clerk's Report - F&A - April 2015

The risk assessment for the offices will be updated this year, as members are aware I do not resort to playing the H&S card but the car park is a risk. A number of staff and MoPs have slipped or tripped at some stage, the car park is particularly dangerous in the winter months when there are large frozen patches of water in many places.

I would recommend proceeding with option 2, which will provide a longer term solution, in addition adding white lines, which will only cost a few hundred pounds. There is not budget available for this in the main R&M code for the offices, but there is £50k in earmarked reserves for Property Repairs and Improvement.

7. Vehicles

David Abbott has put considerable work into looking for a replacement for our tipper, which is the main "workhorse" vehicle. Suitable second hand replacements are few and far between, when they do come on the market they are often sold in days and consequently are fairly high priced. A new vehicle would be in excess of £25k, which is felt to be too expensive.

The current tipper was first registered October 2007, it has 32k miles on the clock and has had no major mechanical issues, it usually averages 6k miles/pa.

For less than £2k the current tipper could be fully externally refurbished, minor dings and scratches removed, some panels resprayed, hazard chevrons replaced and the vehicle returned to a good external appearance. In addition for c.£2.7k the tipper cage which is getting close to end of life could be completely replaced. For well under £5k we would have a vehicle that is in excellent condition well under average mileage and good for at least another 3-4 years.

If members approve this course of action attention will be turned to the Works Manager's vehicle which is getting close to end of life and a proposal for replacement brought to the next meeting of this committee.

8. Website

An initial technical and initial design day is scheduled with Cubik on 6th May. They will then have a lot of "back office" type development to carry out, from which will come some initial design concepts and workflows.

Timings are yet to be clarified, but hopefully by early June some initial designs will be available for members review.

Tim Perkins
Clerk to the Council
21st April 2015