

Abbots Langley Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance & Administration Committee Meeting held on Monday 24th October 2016 at 6:00 pm in the Council Offices Langley Road, Abbots Langley.

Those Present:

Chairman: Councillor Brenda Kersey
Councillors Councillor Sara Bedford
Councillor Liz Burns (substituted Councillor Lyn Ferguson)
Councillor Jane Lay
Councillor Hitesh Tailor
Officers: Tim Perkins - Clerk to the Council
Gail Kiely - Finance Officer
Bob Watson - Head of Finance - Shared Services Three Rivers District Council & Watford Borough Council. (part of meeting)

The meeting opened at 6:03 pm.

198. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received, accepted and recorded from Councillors Alex Michaels and Lyn Ferguson (both unavailable).

199. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Sara Bedford as a member of Three Rivers District Council declared an interest in agenda Item 5, Election Expenses.

200. Public Participation

Bob Watson from Three Rivers District Council expressed an interest in addressing the Parish Council on agenda item 5, Election Expenses. Susan Heaver from DEMAND expressed an interest in addressing the Parish Council on agenda item 10, Financial Grants.

201. To confirm the Minutes of the previous meeting

It was proposed by Councillor Jane Lay, seconded by Councillor Hitesh Tailor and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th July 2016, copies of which had been sent to all members of the Parish Council and which had been adopted by the Council, be taken as read and were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

202. Election Expenses

Councillor Sara Bedford left the room and took no part in the discussion or decision.

Bob Watson of Three Rivers District Council was invited to speak.

He outlined the issues clarifying the position in relation to the outstanding election expenses invoicing. He apologised to members for the late bills and sketchy invoicing apportionment. He explained that a general election is Government funded, which would offset some of the charges to the Parish Council if a parish election was held on the same day But for standalone parish elections the Parish Council would pay all costs.

It was proposed by Councillor Brenda Kersey, seconded by Councillor Hitesh Tailor and **RESOLVED** that the abated amount of £23,393 from the original invoice of £36,074 be paid, there being no further grounds to dispute the charges.

A vote was requested and all members were in favour.

Members agreed that the Clerk should approve under delegated authority the costs for the by-election held in Leavesden ward in May 2016.

Bob Watson left and Councillor Sara Bedford re-joined the meeting.

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203. External Audit 2015-2016

Members noted the External Audit report for 2015-2016.

The Clerk was asked to post the return on the Parish Council's website and bring the audit closure to the attention of members at the next Parish Council meeting, as raised by BDO in the audit report.

204. Internal Audit 2016-2017

Members considered the first interim Internal Audit Report for 2016-2017 and noted the comments following the audit.

The Clerk was asked to advise Auditing Solutions of this committee's review.

205. Budget Monitoring

Members noted that the draft budget for 2017-2018 includes a column for spend to 30th September 2016, so a separate Quarterly Budget Report was not issued.

Members noted the Budget Tracking Report for Q2.

206. Budget 2017-2018

Members discussed the draft budget for 2017-2018 and actual spend to 30th September 2016. Members noted that this was an early draft with work in progress and:

- Precept change is still at 0% in the budget book and an update on the draft Band D number is awaited from Three Rivers District Council.
- A number of significant spends have been included in the estimated year end for 2016-2017. (Principally replacement of the Works Manager's vehicle, Election Expenses, Manor House patio, Manor House allotments wall.)
- Members noted that it will be necessary to release earmarked reserves to cover some of the above expenditure.
- Members noted that they may want to consider using some of the Capital Reserve to fund the office refurbishments and/or the Manor House patio.
- Reserves will be reviewed at the Finance & Administration committee meeting in November 2016.

Members noted the Clerks report on the Budget 2017-2018.

207. Financial Grants 2016-2017

Susan Heaver of DEMAND was invited to speak. She gave a summary of the work of the charity to accompany the grant application pack received by members.

Members felt the grant application did not meet several of the Parish Councils criteria for awarding grants, so did not make an award.

Susan Heaver left the meeting.

Members asked that all Councillors should be encouraged to look at the grant application packs and raise any questions or concerns on the applications.

The grants policy needs to be reviewed for 2018-2019 and this will be done after the awards in January 2017.

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208. Financial Grant 2017-2018 to the Henderson Hall Trustees and/or Henderson Hub

Report from Councillor Brenda Kersey.

Councillors Brenda Kersey and Alex Michaels attended a meeting with the Henderson Hub and Henderson Memorial Hall Trustees. Members noted that Henderson Hub was not in line with their business plan due to a later start than planned, the delay in getting charitable status approved which impacted grant applications and the unexpected invoicing of business rates by Three Rivers District Council.

Members noted that they would look favourably on the Henderson Hub submitting a grant application. But would seek assurance that the Henderson Memorial Hall Managing Trustees had reviewed the grant application and it was in line with the business plans and commitments made by the Henderson Hub. Members would ask the Managing Trustees to provide a statement supporting any grant application from the Henderson Hub.

209. Parish Council Office Refurbishment

Members noted that they were extremely pleased with the result of the office refurbishment and asked officers to particularly convey their thanks to David Abbott and to all staff for their co-operation during the works.

210. Depot Refurbishment Project

Members discussed the Depot refurbishment for options to upgrading the Depot. The Clerk was asked to add £10,000 to professional fees for this project.

Councillor Sara Bedford left the meeting at 8.15 pm

211. Clerks Report

Members noted the insurance claims related to Langleybury Cricket Club detailed in the Clerks report.

Members discussed the risk of Precept Capping for local councils and noted the consultation report from HAPTC.

The Clerk was requested to respond to the consultation under delegated authority expressing the committee's concern about the risks of precept capping.

The meeting closed at 8.19 pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____