

Abbots Langley Parish Council

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18th January 2021.

To Members of the Finance & Administration Committee

Councillors Sara Bedford, Liz Burns (Chairman), Ruth Clark, Fran Deschampsneufs, Jane Lay, Owen Roe & John Swallow.

The next meeting of the Finance & Administration Committee will be held virtually ^[1] on Monday 25th January 2021 at 6:00 pm when your presence is summoned for the purpose of transacting the business outlined below.

The meeting will be held on the Zoom platform. Login details are available from the Clerk to the Council.

The press and public are welcome to attend the meeting.

Tim Perkins
Clerk to the Council

^[1] *Permitting legislation - The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.*

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**
23rd November & 21st December 2020 (previously circulated).
5. **Financial Grants 2021-2022**
To consider the award of financial grants for the coming financial year.
(Clerk's report item 1 and enclosed copy applications ^[2].)
6. **Budget 2020-2021**
To consider the budget monitoring report for Q3 2020-2021. (See monitoring ^[2] and tracking reports enclosed).
7. **Internal Audit - Second Interim 2020-2021**
To consider the report from the Internal Auditors. (enclosed ^[2].)
8. **IT Support**
To consider the report from the Clerk. (Clerk's report item 2.)

^[2] *Committee members only, other members on request.*

Abbots Langley Parish Council
Clerk's Report - F&A - January 2021

1. Financial Grants 2021-2022

Only two Financial Grant applications received so I have not produced the usual report. As it is impractical for members to come into the office I have copied the applications for committee members, along with the SLA reports.

The application from the Scouts was very last minute. Received the day meeting papers were being prepared, this had been agreed with the Scouts who had contacted me a few days prior.

For consideration at this meeting:

Financial Grants

- i. Breakspere Community Pre-School - £5,000 replacement play area surfacing.
Full accounts, director's reports and articles of association available for review.
Last grant award to the Pre-School was in 2018, Small Grant (£190) for equipment.
- ii. 1st Abbots Langley & 3rd North Watford - £5,000 Clive Winder Climbing Wall
Full accounts, officer's reports and supporting documents available for review.
Checked back on records and cannot see awarding the group a grant in the past ten years. A grant was made in 2011 to support the Herts County Scouts Phasels Wood project (£500).

Financial Grants - SLA Awards (Final year of three years).

- i. CAB in Three Rivers - £2,000 to support benefits caseworker
- ii. St Paul's Langleybury - £1,500 to support maintaining the churchyard.
- iii. St Lawrence - £2,000 to support maintaining the churchyard.
SLA award to Watford Lions pending decision on the carnival going ahead in 2021.

2. IT Support

In October 2019 this committee agreed to appoint Nixuss to manage the above. I have so far been delighted with their performance, particularly that of the business owner Ian Howarth. The firm has been responsive and easy with which to deal. I am confident that when I am no longer around the Parish Council's IT will be well supported.

A number of projects got delayed when we went into lockdown in March, but so far we have completed:

- Transition from Google Suite to Microsoft 365 which includes persistent licences for most Microsoft desktop products. Remote working much easier than with the legacy Google system as emails stay in sync between office, laptop and mobile, something with which Google struggled. OneDrive supports data sharing when remote working and online chat is much easier with MS Teams.
- Back office stuff. Nixuss upgraded the office network data switch and recabled some areas. The network now supports high speed data transfer and 200mb broadband to all desks in the office.
- Reconfigured network cabling in the Manor House, moved the intruder alarm to a mobile data solution, freeing up one phone line.
- Implemented the VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) phone system, now live. Manor House and Depot are now extensions on the phone system and all staff working remotely can make and receive calls via their laptops. Calls present as the Parish Council phone number. One minor hardware glitch was resolved within half an hour via a Nixuss on-site visit.

Excellent voice quality on the new system, the legacy copper BT cables coming into the building were in a poor condition, which did not help voice calls.

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Project cost savings in line with those reported to this committee (Clerk's report Nov 2020 para. 3).

Still to do is the move to SharePoint for cloud data storage and electronic meeting documents. I only had the capacity to manage one IT project at a time and I prioritised the phone system as we were all really struggling with the downgraded capabilities of the old BT system.

Tim Perkins
Clerk to the Council
18th January 2021

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