

Abbots Langley Parish Council

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26th May 2020.

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 1st June 2020 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

20th January 2020. (previously circulated)

5. Grants 2020-2021

To consider Grants Applications as below:

- i Financial Grant Autumn Fest
- ii Small Grant Abbots Improvement Group

To reconsider the arrangements for the following previous awarded grant.

- iii Financial Grant Abbots Langley Festival (update)

(Clerk's report item 1 and grant applications enclosed. ^[2])

6. Grants Policy

To consider if amendments should be made to the Grants Policy to introduce sustainability aims. (Clerk's report item 2 and Leisure Committee 02/2020 min. 341.)

7. Budget Monitoring Report

To consider the budget monitoring report for Q4 2019-2020. (See monitoring ^[2] and tracking reports enclosed).

Abbots Langley Parish Council

8. Pandemic - Financial Impact on 2020-2021

- i To consider the report from the Clerk. (Clerk's report item 4i.)
- ii To consider if a formal approach should be made to Three Rivers District Council for funding under the arrangements put in place by Secretary of State for Housing Communities & Local Government. (Clerk's report 4ii and enclosed correspondence.)

9. Community Infrastructure Levy

To consider the April 2020 revision of the CIL Tracking Report. (enclosed)

10. Clerk's Report

To note items on the Clerk's report not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

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

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Abbots Langley Parish Council
Clerk's Report - F&A - June 2020

1. Grants 2020-2021

i. Financial Grant - Autumn Fest

The organisers usually apply for a small grant of £250 to support event costs and the hiring of Tanners Wood Hall, as a bad weather fall back option.

This year the organisers are applying for similar funding plus an additional £500 to support the costs of developing and launching an event website. They are proposing using the same web developer as the Parish Council.

For members reference I have a full set of accounts for the 2019 event.

Update: The Autumn Fest has been cancelled in 2020 and a new date set for 2021. The group has done a significant amount of work on establishing a website and would like to proceed even though this year's event has been cancelled.

If members are minded to approve this part of the grant application, to save a further application next year it would be administratively easier if members approve £250 towards cost of next year's festival, with payment delegated to the Clerk/Finance Officer when confirmation is received that the event is going ahead.

ii. Small Grant - Abbots Improvement Group

The group are applying for a small grant to cover the cost of plantings, fertiliser and materials. They have been in existence for a few years now and their equipment such as wheelbarrows and tools need replacing.

Rather than pass this small grant through the usual approval channels I agreed with the group leader that I would bring it to the committee for consideration to see if members would support a higher grant application this year to cover the purchase of new equipment.

iii. Financial Grant - Abbots Langley Festival 2020

The above grant of £2,000 was approved by this committee in January 2020. The festival has been cancelled but it is planned to stage it in 2021. Again, to save a further application, assuming the festival goes ahead in 2021 it is suggested payment is delegated to the Clerk/Finance Officer to release when confirmation is received that the event is going ahead.

2. Grants Policy - Sustainability

The above came up in discussions at the February Leisure Committee meeting, the minute is detailed below.

"..that the Finance & Administration Committee give consideration to the sustainability aims of the current Grants Policy, with particular reference to single use plastics and plastic used by groups applying for grants."

Leisure Comm- 14/02/2020 min. 341.

If members are minded to update the current Grants Policy to introduce sustainability elements, an updated policy would need to be agreed at the July meeting of this committee, to fit in with the usual grants application cycle.

If members want to refresh their memories on the current grants policy, it is included as part of the Financial Grants Application Pack which can be downloaded from the website Menu > Grants > How to Apply.

3. Budget Monitoring Report

This report is "pre-close" and subject to further amendment and update as year-end adjustments are processed. The year-end process is obviously taking longer than normal.

In general, though the report is accurate for the review purposes of this committee.

As the country went into lock down on the 23rd March 2020 the impact on 2019-2020 finances is minimal. The real impact will be in 2020-2021.

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Clerk's Report - F&A - June 2020

4. Pandemic - Financial Impact on 2020-2021

- i An initial review of the impact, primarily on lost revenue, would indicate a first quarter hit of around £31,000, this assumes that we will not be in a position to invoice any pitch hire fees for the first quarter, although this is subject to review by the Leisure Committee.

It is reasonable to assume that the second quarter hit will be a similar number.

Even if the lockdown rules start to be loosened it is expected that the recovery in bookings will be slow, with societies and regular hirers indicating that they probably will not return until at the earliest end of this year and possibly not until 2021.

On the cost side. Any additional costs of operating during the pandemic will be absorbed in normal operating expenses.

Savings wise there is no wages cost for the casual bar staff and no purchases of stock for the bar. Although a write off of keg beer that is close to going out of date and possibly bottled products too, will be a further hit. The Facilities Manager is quantifying the value of stock write off, which is mainly keg beer at this stage.

Although the replacement of the Works Team member that resigned in February has been approved, recruitment has been put on hold as it would have been impossible to effectively recruit and induct a new member of staff at this time.

- ii The National Association of Local Councils made strong representations to the Secretary of State that Parish and Town Councils should be able to benefit from pandemic related funding. The Secretary of State confirmed funding will be made available through principal authorities, copy of his undated letter (issued 30th April) enclosed.

I subsequently wrote to the Chief Executive of Three Rivers District Council (copy enclosed). The Chief Executive has signposted the Parish Council to possible NDR relief and other sources of funds, this is being followed up by the Finance Officer.

The matter was raised at a Herts Clerk's conference call. Some districts are actively engaging on funding with their local councils, others have already said that they will not make funding available. NALC are very concerned that principal authorities are not releasing funding to Parish and Town Councils, as was the Secretary of State's specific promise.

This committee needs to decide if a formal approach is made to the district council for pandemic relief funding.

5. Manor Lodge

The lease to the Herts Police and Crime Commissioner places responsibility for the internal maintenance of the building on the leaseholder and external on the Parish Council.

Some failed pointing and moss build up was discovered on the roof of the Manor Lodge and immediate works were required to prevent further deterioration. The works required scaffolding to be erected.

The works were carried out and the cost of £2,500 is unbudgeted against code 7890 Manor Lodge/R&M.

Tim Perkins
Clerk to the Council
26th May 2020