

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
HELD AT 7PM WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009  
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, VILLAGE WAY, CRANLEIGH

Cllr B Arendell\* (Chairman of Committee)  
Cllr J Bainbridge (Vice Chairman of Committee)  
Cllr BH Cheesman\*  
Cllr Mrs J Dodd\*  
Cllr BA Ellis\*  
Cllr Mrs M Foryszewski

PRESENT\*

Clerk to the Committee Pauline Whitehead was also present and one member of the public.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008 were APPROVED and signed by the Chairman of the Committee as a correct record. A suggested amendment at the meeting was found erroneous on double checking.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

There were apologies for absence from Cllr J Bainbridge.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There was one declaration of prejudicial interest from Cllr Mrs J Dodd in item 12, Trees on Charts Close as a close resident.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Committee Chairman reported that the accounts closedown was undertaken on 6<sup>th</sup> May and two omitted invoices highlighted by the Internal Auditor included retrospectively. The accountants suggested that next year we may wish to avail of the on site closedown.

The precept payment made by Waverley Borough Council in April 2009 has remained in the Lloyds current account rather than being transferred to the Bank of Ireland deposit account, primarily because the Parish Council was looking to open a deposit account which gave a better return on the money and also because of fears for the economic situation in Ireland that may have compromised the safety of any further deposit.

5. REVIEW OF FINANCES TO 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2009

These were not available so the Chairman of the Committee highlighted expenditure of £2,360 tree work in the cemetery not budgeted for and the extreme reduction in interest rates, both of which impact the budget.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT

The internal Audit for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 was received by the Council. Three actions as a result of the internal audit were noted by the Committee and it was agreed to action the issues raised. The first recommendation suggested a sign off sheet to be placed in the front of documentation so that when and by whom it was last reviewed and updated can be easily identified.

An error was noted on the year end P35 produced from the HMRC system for payroll. The Clerk had written to HMRC to notify them of the error. And finally it was suggested that the asset register may benefit from additional information in terms of custodian and location of assets and insurance value etc . Further work on the asset register is scheduled for winter 2009.

7. BANK MANDATE

Members AGREED to open an account with the National Westminster Bank plc and to transfer £50,000 from the Bank of Ireland to a seven month Fixed Rate Bond at an interest rate of 1.6% if it is still available (deadline 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009 on a first come, first served basis), and if the Parish Council is in a position to tie up money for that period of time. If the product is available but the Parish Council's cash resources are limited, then £25,000 will be transferred into the Fixed Bond and £25,000 into a six month Direct Reserve Account which reaps an interest of 1.3% per annum. The fall back position if the seven month Fixed Rate Bond is not available is to deposit £50,000 into a six month Direct Reserve Account which yields an interest of 1.3% per annum.

8. GENERAL RESERVE

The Finance Committee Chairman read a recent letter from RBS Accounting Solutions highlighting their concern that the General Reserve was lower than recommended and which suggested reallocating some Earmarked Reserves to the General Reserve. The Committee felt that inconsistent information was causing difficulties and to that end the Committee Chairman indicated that he would speak with Mark Mulberry, the Internal Auditor, to understand his recommendation on the situation. However, depending on the definition of reserves and whether it includes just the General Reserves or both the General and Earmarked Reserves, the Council's policy of keeping "reserves" between 15% and 25% of expenditure could be being contravened and as a result the Committee Chairman wished to revisit this item at the next Finance and General Purposes Meeting scheduled for October.

9. REVIEW FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (Section 11 in the Member's Handbook)

Members AGREED the Financial Regulations subject to amending the amount in clause 6.7 from £50 to £300. This is to increase the amount that can be paid for goods ordered on behalf of the Parish Council on individual debit/credit cards if no other method of payment is available.

10. ALLOTMENTS AT ELBRIDGE ROAD

Following a letter from an allotment holder requesting an additional standpipe, an estimate (to supply an additional standpipe and hose union bib tap at the far end of the Elmbridge Road allotments, which includes digging a trench and supplying the necessary pipe and fittings) has been received at a cost of £295 plus VAT. The £200 allocated in the 2009/10 budget has been allocated for routine work. Members AGREED to defer the work and to make every effort to include this in next year's budget.

11. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR F&GP

Members AGREED to amend some F&GP meeting dates as they clashed with Waverley Borough Council meetings. The AGREED amended F&GP meeting dates are Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009, Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2009 and Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2010.

12. TREES ON CHARTS CLOSE

*Cllr Mrs J Dodd declared a prejudicial interest and left the Chamber during this item.*

Two residents on Charts Close approached the Parish Council with a request to reduce the bulk of three trees on Parish Council land backing onto their property. The tree surgeon had cut some ivy which was covering the trees and had subsequently examined them. He reported that the trees have a better appearance since the ivy has been removed and appear to be in good health. He gave a quotation for trimming the trees at £300 plus VAT. The Parish Council has a policy that only Health and Safety work is undertaken on their trees. After careful consideration, Members AGREED that due

to additional necessary, but unforeseen calls on the budget so early in the year, it would not be wise to support expenditure on this item. The Committee resolved that the Clerk should write to the residents concerned and indicate that whilst the Parish Council were unable to give any financial assistance, the residents could exercise their legal rights to trim the trees on their side of the boundary and return the wood to Parish Council land, however, they stipulated that this should be done by a qualified tree surgeon so that the tree was not unbalanced and so that any work undertaken would not cause a risk to the safety of the tree in the future.

13. GRANTS/ DONATIONS?MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships were included in this section as two applicants gave an opportunity to donate with the membership fee.

a. Surrey Crimestoppers Donation

The Committee AGREED to donate £40 to the Surrey Crimestoppers under the power to spend money on various crime prevention measures; Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s 31.

b. Surrey Hills Membership and Donation

Members AGREED to continue membership of the Surrey Hills and to donate £25 under the power to maintain land; Public Health Act 1875 s 164/Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 and 10.

c. Wey and Arun Canal Membership and Donation

The Committee in pursuance of the power conferred by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989), AGREED to incur expenditure of £25 in respect of membership of the Wey and Arun Canal Trust, as in the opinion of the Committee the expenditure is in the interests of its area or part of its area or in the interests of all or some of the inhabitants of that area and would benefit them. The committee declined to give any further donation.

d. Campaign for the Protection of Rural England - CPRE

Members followed advice from SCAPT and declined to continue with membership of the CPRE as it is a lobbying group and could cause a conflict of interest when planning applications are discussed.

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

**It was resolved that the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting during item 11, in accordance with section 100A (2) and (4) of the LGA 1972.**

15. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

The Confidential Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009 were APPROVED and signed by the Chairman of the Committee as a correct record.

CONCLUSION

There being no further business the Committee Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10 pm. The next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at 7pm.