

Minutes of a meeting of the **FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION**
Committee held on Monday 28th May 2019 at 7.30pm at
The Old Station, Groombridge

PRESENT: Councillors Diana Kelly, , Marcus Tarling, Richard Thirkell,
Paul Watkins (Chair from item)

In attendance: Deborah Siddle – Parish Clerk
Grant applicants (to item 1)

**1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM,
PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING**

None.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

001672 RESOLVED unanimously to elect Cllr Paul Watkins as Chairman of the
Finance and Administration committee.

*The meeting was closed as time is set aside at the beginning of the meeting
for members of the public and representatives of all grant applications to
address the Committee and to answer questions from Committee
members.*

Representatives for the grant applications addressed the committee.

Clued Up had applied for £2,000. It is an information shop for young people,
is based in Crowborough high street, and serves a wide area for young
people including Withyham parish with around 10% of service users being
from this parish. Services include information, advice, support and
counselling. The most enquiries are to do with mental health. Weekly
Children and Mental Health Services have been withdrawn due to funding
cuts. WPC funding would be towards items like advertising, promotion and
training.

The Air Ambulance was established in Kent and expanded to Surrey and
Sussex in 2007. Two leased helicopters operate out of Redhill delivering a
24/7 service for over 2,000 incidents per year. Annual costs are more than
£11M and no statutory funding is received. The application is for £250.

St Michael's School was seeking up to £900 towards a new shed for their
after school gardening club to operate from and to store the associated
tools and equipment. Produce is sold by the children with proceeds going
to the school. The school would pay for a concrete base and a third quote
is yet to be received.

St John the Evangelist Church was seeking £800 towards the maintenance
of the churchyard, including a path to the remembrance garden. The
majority of costs are for materials and maintenance of equipment as work
is carried out by volunteers.

Groombridge WI were requesting £237 to make the telephone box at the Victoria roundabout into an information point. This would be done with the help of Men in Sheds, which would also act as bankers.

The applicants were thanked for their presentations and the meeting opened.

The meeting was opened. *All grant applicants left the meeting.*

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Deferred to next meeting.

3. APOLOGIES None

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – Cllr Kelly and Cllr Thirkell are members of WI and Men in Sheds respectively.

4. MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2019

001673 **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2019, and these were duly signed by the Chairman

4.2 Matters outstanding from these minutes

- Clerk to research whether Junction Inn can be registered as an Asset of Community Value.

Completed actions from previous minutes

Page No	Who	Action
Pg. 1772	Clerk	Meeting with the superior landlords to discuss a lease extension arranged
001612	Clerk	F&A Terms of Reference went to May ASM
001613	Clerk	Business Continuity Policy went to May ASM
001614	Clerk	Risk Management Policy went to April Council
001615	Clerk	Grants totalling £4,985 awarded from 2019/20 budget
Pg. 1824	Clerk	Fire safety quotes agreed by F&A by email
001616	Clerk	Tree survey quote from Quaife Woodlands accepted
001617	Clerk	Suggestions of land or properties to list as Assets of Community Value provided to Council
Pg. 1825	Clerk/ Highways Coordinator	LED lantern replacements in Newton Willows instructed, LEDs are not available in lower wattage

Pg. 1825	Clerk	Leases provided to F&A members and a follow up meeting arranged
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Outstanding items not on this agenda

Page No	Who	Action
Pg. 1228	Assistant Clerk	Pursue free opportunities for marketing the meeting rooms wider
Pg. 1275	Clerks	Source connectors for Coleman event shelters
Pg. 1535	Assistant Clerk	Room hire usage to be monitored over the next six months
Pg. 1739	Clerks	Compare photocopier usage between 17/18 and 18/19
Pg. 1772	Clerk	Seek quotes for legal fees for a lease extension
Pg. 1821	Clerk	Consider Sussex Resilience Forum proforma
Pg. 1824	Clerk	Incorporate requirement for monitoring forms in to grant offer letters
001619	Clerk	Agree a 3 year insurance renewal under delegated authority

Actions from this meeting

Page No	Who	Action
Pg. 1863	Clerk	Election of Vice chair deferred to next meeting
Pg. 1863	Clerk	Research whether Junction Inn can be registered as an Asset of Community Value
Pg. 1866	Clerk	Make grants totalling £3,950 to Air Ambulance, St John's Church, Clued Up and St Michael's School
Pg. 1866	Clerk	Recommend to Council to fund Groombridge WI by a separate budget line
Pg. 1866	Clerk	Recommend the Email and Internet Usage policy to Council
Pg. 1866	Assistant Clerk	Look at how SME can further assist councillors, possibly with one to one sessions
Pg. 1866	Clerk	Recommend the Community Engagement policy to Council
Pg. 1867	Clerk	Arrange fire alarm and emergency lighting installation
Pg. 1867	Clerk	Check TPOs against the tree inspection report
Pg. 1867	Clerk	Clarify whether the instruction on T5985 is to fell the tree or the stem

Pg. 1867	Clerk	Go out for quotes on all trees highlighted in the tree inspection report
Pg. 1867	Clerk	Consult local Blackham residents regarding whether a new shelter or a community noticeboard would be preferred and obtain quotes
Pg. 1867	Clerk/Cllr Thirkell	Take forward Park Corner project as a volunteer project
Pg. 1867	Clerk/Administrative Assistant	seek support and a councillor lead for litter picks in Groombridge, Withyham and Blackham
Pg. 1867	Clerk/Administrative Assistant	Gauge volunteer support for cutting back epicormic growth and if feasible as a WPV project to identify a councillor lead
Pg. 1867	Clerk/Administrative Assistant	Put a notice on the Balls Green community space gate asking for volunteers and seeking feedback on the community space.
Pg. 1867	Cllr Tarling	Speak with young people about Balls Green community space
Pg. 1868	Clerk	Obtain quotes for a contractor to remove the wire fencing at Groombridge Station Road, and for the hedge to be cut back
Pg. 1868	Cllr Kelly	Ask residents their views on part-night lighting the Oaklands streetlight
Pg. 1868	Cllr Watkins	Research PV equipment alternative to current streetlights
Pg. 1868	Clerk	Seek advice on suitability and feasibility of PV lights and the Council's legal responsibility for retaining streetlights
Pg. 1868	Clerk	Instruct ESCC to repaint the parish's cast iron columns
Pg. 1869	Clerk	Audit report, governance statement and annual return to be on the June Council agenda
Pg. 1869	Committee members	Sign the bank mandate
Pg. 1869	Clerk	Three year budget, cashflow, Key agreements/access and streetlight columns to be on next agenda

5. GRANTS - To receive and agree grant applications

Air Ambulance Kent Surrey Sussex – the Committee agreed that this is a very modest request and that Air Ambulance provides a very important service. Agreed to support at £250.

St John the Evangelist Church – the Clerk confirmed that this would be eligible expenditure as Councils are restricted as to what church expenses they can contribute to. Agreed to support at £800.

Clued Up – the Committee commended the presentation and recognised the lack of similar services and funding for young people. Agreed to support at £2,000. As Clued Up had been granted a similar amount in the previous year the Clerk was asked to remind the agency that it is not an annual grant.

Groombridge WI/Men in Sheds – the Clerk reminded the Committee that the decommissioned telephone box was adopted by WPC and is on its asset register, but that there is an agreement with the WI for them to utilise it. The Committee noted that it is in a good position to be an information point as it is adjacent to a bus stop. Agreed that as the responsibility for the telephone box is the parish councils, to recommend to Council to fund from budget line 4403 'Roadside Shelters' with the funds taken from Earmarked reserves 337 'Parish Assets'.

St Michael's School – the Clerk confirmed that this would be eligible expenditure as it is not a statutory provision. Agreed to support at £900 or less, at the same amount as the lowest quote. Grant to be released once third quote is provided.

001674 **RESOLVED** to agree grants totalling £3,950 of the remaining 2019/20 Grants budget of £5,015 and to recommend Groombridge WI to Council to be funded by a separate budget line.

6 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

6.1 Email and Internet Usage Policy

It was noted that this policy requests the use of WPC email addresses at all times by Councillors but that there are technological incidents when this may not be possible. Other means of communication including personal email addresses could then be used until rectified.

001675 **RESOLVED** to recommend the Email and Internet Usage policy to Council.

The Committee also noted that some Councillors still experience issues with their WPC email configuration. The Clerks were asked to look at how SME can further assist, possibly with one to one sessions.

6.2 Community Engagement

001676 **RESOLVED** to recommend the Community Engagement policy to Council

7. HEALTH & SAFETY

7.1 To report on Fire Safety

Following the fire risk assessment previously reported to Finance and Administration Committee, the Clerk reported that as per the delegated

authority granted by the Committee previously, Committee members had received quotes for fire alarm and emergency lighting installation and one of the quotes had been agreed. The Clerk was in discussion with the sub-tenants and they had confirmed they would contribute one third to the fire alarms but already have emergency lighting.

7.2 To report on Tree Inspections

The tree inspection report for Groombridge Recreation Ground and St John's Reading Room had been received by the Clerk. The Clerk was asked to check TPOs against the report and to clarify whether the instruction on T5985 was to fell the tree or the stem. The Clerk was instructed to go out for quotes on all trees highlighted in order that the Committee can consider whether the lesser priorities are commissioned this financial year or next.

8. WITHYHAM PARISH VOLUNTEERS – to consider responsibilities and projects

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting containing suggested lines of responsibilities and information about potential projects.

The Committee AGREED that prospective projects should be agreed in principle by Finance and Administration Committee, that the Clerk is then delegated authority to identify councillor leads, instruct the Administrative Assistant on tasks required and authorise any equipment/material purchases within the WPV budget. The Lead Councillor is responsible for identifying with the Administrative Assistant how to attract volunteers, what items are required for the project, and to be present on the day of the project.

Regarding the prospective projects, the following were AGREED:

Blackham bus shelter – Clerk to consult local residents regarding whether a new shelter or a community noticeboard would be preferred and quotes obtained. This is not a project for WPV.

Groombridge Recreation Ground footpath – clearance behind the fence line adjacent to the car park is not required as people walk in front of it. This is not a project for WPV.

Park corner – pond warden has advised works that could be done by volunteers and Cllr Thirkell offered to be councillor lead. This is a project for WPV

Litter picks – Clerk/Administrative Assistant to seek support and a councillor lead for litter picks in Groombridge, Withyham and Blackham following the successful one at St John's. This is a project for WPV

Trimming the epicormic growth of the lime trees on Groombridge recreation ground - Clerk/Administrative Assistant to gauge volunteer support for cutting back and if feasible to identify a councillor lead. This may be a project for WPV

Flowerbeds at Balls Green Community Space – A notice to be put on the gate asking for volunteers and seeking feedback on the community space. Cllr Tarling to speak with young people.

9. STATION ROAD GROOMBRIDGE FENCE/HEDGE LINE

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting suggesting that quotes are obtained for a contractor to remove the wire fencing but retain the concrete posts, and for the hedge to be cut back. The Committee asked the Clerk to obtain quotes.

Due to the proximity to the road the Clerk explained that this could not be a project for volunteers.

10. STREETLIGHTING

The Clerk had provided a paper prior to the meeting and this followed a meeting with ESCC streetlighting and quotes received for works required.

The Committee was reminded that at its March 2019 meeting, it agreed that the Clerk and Highways Coordinator should continue the lantern replacement schedule with six LED lantern replacements in Newton Willows in 2019/20. The Clerk and Highways Coordinator have reviewed the list and intend to instruct replacement of those outside houses 3, 5, 11, 16, 22 and 28.

The Clerk had also queried the recent replacement LED at Oaklands as householders feel it is too bright. It is not possible to replace with a lower wattage or to screen it. Cllr Kelly agreed to ask residents their views on part-night lighting that streetlight.

Two columns require replacement and it had been raised to the Clerk and Highways Coordinator that neither are a straightforward replacement. Corseley Rd (junction Meadow Road) requires disconnection from fifth core and reconnection, Withyham Road outside Conifers is a decorative column and requires either replacement with a galvanized column or to retain the decorative column and site a pillar next to it. The Committee was surprised by the costs and queried whether they could be removed or PV lighting used instead. Cllr Watkins offered to research equipment and the Clerk would seek advice on suitability and feasibility, and the Council's legal responsibility for retaining streetlights.

The Committee AGREED to request that the 9 cast iron columns are repainted.

001677 RESOLVED to instruct ESCC to repaint the parish's cast iron columns.

11. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

11.1 To note expenditure against budget report to May 2019 (to be circulated prior to the meeting)

The budget had been circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors noted that there are funds in the Community Infrastructure Levy Earmarked Reserves budget that could be used for streetlights.

11.2 To consider virements and journals required

None identified.

11.3 Quotes

None.

12. -CLERK/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

The Clerk reported the recent, successful internal audit. The audit report, governance statement and annual return would be on the June Council agenda.

The bank mandate would be updated to reflect the current Committee membership, and new committee members were asked to sign the paperwork.

13. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA – Three year budget, cashflow, Key agreements/access, streetlight columns

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS –29th July 2019 at 7.30pm at The Old Station

The meeting ended at 9.35pm