

## HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Mrs J Hoad  
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1<sup>st</sup> April 2004

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee to be held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2004 commencing at 11.00 a.m. at the Pavilion, Manor Field.

Yours sincerely

Julie Hoad  
Proper Officer

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### AGENDA

**1. Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence.

**2. Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004 (Annexed).

**3. Declarations of interest**

To receive Members declarations of interest.

**4. Accounts for the year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004**

To consider the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004, if available for the meeting.

The Council has received notice from Audit Commission that the Annual Return for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 should be returned by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2004 with the following documentation; (1) a completed annual return, (2) financial year end bank reconciliation and (3) an explanation of any significant variances in the statement of accounts. The Audit Commission has informed the Council that it will be undertaking a basic audit on the accounts.

If the Council's annual income or annual expenditure in the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 was greater than £100,000 then the following additional information will be required; (1) any documentation relating to the arrangements in place for the management of risk, including minutes of action taken (or not taken) to address any risks identified, (2) Annual Report by Internal Audit or Internal Auditor's report on the internal controls, (3) bank statements showing the bank balance for all accounts as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 and (4) any documentation relating to action taken by the Council to address issues raised in Internal and External audit reports.

The Council will be required to complete and approve Section 2 of the Annual Return, which sets out a number of assurances relating to the preparation of the statement of accounts, systems of internal controls, assurance that the Council has not exceeded its legal powers, provision of proper opportunity for the exercise of electors rights, assessment of risks facing the Council, systems of internal audit, action taken on all

matters raised in previous internal and external audit reports and whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments have a financial impact on the Council. A copy of Section 2 Statement of Assurance is circulated for Members information.

Background documents

*Scribe: Statement of the receipts and payments, income and expenditure account, balance sheet, year end working documents, creditors and debtors, year end reconciliation*

*Section 2 Statement of Assurance*

**5. Risk Assessment** (PINK)

To review the Council's financial risk assessment (Annexed).

**6. Assets Register** (GREEN)

To review the Council's assets register (Annexed).

**7. Insurance** (YELLOW)

To review the Council's insurance policy and schedule (Annexed).

**8. Audit 2002/03**

(a) At the previous meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, it was reported that a local elector had raised two further queries on the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003, which required further information to be obtained from solicitors, Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw. The solicitor has now provided the additional information and the Clerk has responded to the local elector accordingly.

To note the Clerk's response to queries raised by a local elector relating to professional fees incurred during the legal action in the High Court and Court of Appeal last year.

(b) A local elector has written to the Audit Manager with further queries relating to expenditure authorised under Section 137 in relation to litter picking. The auditor has responded to the local elector stating that he does not consider the expenditure to be unlawful and will not be taking any further action. The Clerk has written to the Audit Manager to clarify the Council's procedure with regard to expenditure under Section 137 and provided copies of the minutes to provide evidence that it conducts its affairs properly.

To note the actions of the Audit Manager relating to a query raised by a local elector with regard to expenditure under Section 137 and to note the Clerk's responses.

(c) A local elector has written to the Audit Manager concerning legal action taken by the Council and itemised telephone accounts. The Audit Manager has requested a response to the issues raised in the letter and the Clerk has responded accordingly.

To note the Audit Manager's request and to note the Clerk's response to matters raised by a local elector relating to the legal action taken against the Council and to itemised telephone accounts.

**9. Housing Strategy**

To consider the Sevenoaks District Council Housing Strategy 2003

Background document

*Housing Strategy 2003*

## **10. Relocation of the Parish Office**

The architect has been instructed to prepare detailed drawings for submission of a planning application and to provide budget costings of the approved scheme.

If available, Members are requested to consider the information provided by the architect.

## **11. Bank Transfers**

At present the arrangements for the transfer of funds from the Council's Business Reserve Account to the Current Account requires a verbal instruction from the Clerk to the Business Manager at Longfield. The Business Reserve Account is subject to a 7 day withdrawal notice, but this is always waived by the Business Manager and the transfer goes through on the same day as requested. The Clerk has been informed that this arrangement is to be changed and a Business Team will now handle all transfers. Future contact with the Business Team must be undertaken through one of the authorised signatories to the Council's accounts, who are Cllrs Barnett, Harris and Ramsay and at least 7 days notice will be required. The Clerk will no longer be able to make arrangements for any transfers, as she is not a signatory to the Council's accounts. This arrangement will take effect in May.

Members are requested to note the Clerk's report.

## **12. Exclusion of the press and public from the meeting**

Pursuant to Standing Order 66, it may be necessary to temporarily exclude members of the press and public by means of resolution, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under agenda items 14 and 15 in respect of a data subject access request under section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the legal action in the Gravesend County Court.

## **13. Data Subject Access Request**

To receive a report on the current position of a data subject access request under section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **14. Legal Action in the Gravesend County Court**

To consider a report on the current position in respect of the legal action in the Gravesend County Court.

## **15. Date of the next meeting**

### List of circulated documents

1. Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2004. (WHITE)
2. Financial Risk Assessment (PINK)
3. Assets Register (GREEN)
4. Insurance schedule dated 19<sup>th</sup> January 2004 (YELLOW)
5. Housing Strategy 2003 published by Sevenoaks District Council

Committee membership  
Cllr Abraham  
Cllr Barnett (ex officio)  
Cllr Ramsay

Cllr Alford  
Cllr Gaywood (ex officio)



