

HARTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Mrs J Hoad
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18th November 2004

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee to be held on Wednesday 24th November 2004 commencing at 10.05 a.m. at the Pavilion, Manor Field.

Yours sincerely

Julie Hoad
Proper Officer

AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of interest

To receive Members declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 14th September 2004 (Annexed).

4. Audit 2003/04

(a) To note that the audit of the Council's accounts for the year ended 31st March 2004 has been concluded and that the notice of conclusion of audit and right to inspect the annual return has been displayed in accordance with Section 14 of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and The Account and Audit Regulations 2003.

(b) To receive and note the external auditor's certificate and opinion, which states that "the information contained in the annual return is in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met." No further action is required.

5. Income and Expenditure

To review the Council's income and expenditure from 1st April to 18th November 2004 (Annexed – Financial report indicating the Council's net position at 18th November 2004)

6. Budget 2005/06

To consider the budget and precept for the financial year 2005/06. (Annexed – Draft budget)

7. Office Accommodation

To receive a progress report on the relocation of the Parish Office (Annexed).

8. Proposed purchase of land at Manor Field

To receive a progress report in respect of the sale of two strips of land at Manor Field and if necessary consider a course of action (Annexed).

9. Donations

To consider requests from organisations as set below:

(a) Swanley District Volunteer Bureau – To support the work and services to the local community provided by the Bureau.

(b) Kent Wildlife Trust – To support the extension and restoration of Hothfield Common near Ashford.

(c) The John Aspinall Foundation – To support the work carried out at the Wild Animal Parks at Port Lympne, Hythe and Howletts, Canterbury, Kent.

10. Internal Audit

To note a letter from the Council's internal auditor informing the Council of an increase to his scale of charges.

11. Public Works Loan Boards

To consider a letter dated 7th September 2004 from the Council's internal auditor, Wealden Consultancy Ltd, expressing his opinion on the early repayment of the Council's loans. The internal auditors view is that the Council would gain no great benefit in clearing all its loans as the debt charges are known, manageable and part of the budget each year. Therefore the capital fund may be maintained for any future projects the Council may wish to carry out.

12. Subscriptions

To consider a letter from the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Ltd asking if the Parish Council wishes to consider subscribing to the Sussex Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group at a cost of £35.00 per annum.

13. Swanley and District Citizens Advice Bureau

To consider a letter dated 27th October 2004 from the Swanley and District Citizens Advice Bureau advising the Council that it has been restructured from unincorporated to incorporated status as a limited liability company with effect from 25th October 2004. As a result, the Bureau is inviting stakeholders, Sevenoaks District Council, Swanley Town Council, Parish Councils and West Kent Housing Association to nominate representatives to be co-opted onto the Board as Trustees without liability. The Bureau has allocated two places on the Board to be filled by the Parish Council's nominees and is inviting nominations from each of the eight Parish Councils within its District.

14. Fidelity Guarantee

At its meeting held on 12th July 2004, the Council approved the Committee's recommendation that the Clerk be authorised, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, to increase the fidelity guarantee cover to a level recommended by the internal auditor, provided the increase in insurance premium was reasonable.

In response to the Council's enquiry to raise the fidelity guarantee cover to £144,000, the Council's insurers requested confirmation of a number of financial checks and controls undertaken by the Council. This has been confirmed and implemented, where necessary, and the Chairman of the Council has signed the accompanying declaration form.

Notification has been received from the Council's insurers that they have increased the fidelity guarantee cover to £144,000 at a cost of £53.78.

The Committee is requested to note this report.

15. Date of the next meeting

List of circulated documents

1. Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 14th September 2004
2. Financial report indicating the Council's net position at 18th November 2004
3. Draft budget 2005/06
4. Progress report on the relocation of the Parish Office
5. Progress report on the sale of two strips of land at Manor Field

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

Cllr Alford
Cllr Gaywood (ex officio)