

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES  
COMMITTEE HELD ON 25<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2008 AT 10.30 a.m.  
AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr L Abraham  
Cllr Mrs P Cole  
Cllr Mr J Gaywood  
Cllr Mr B Ramsay (Chairman)

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)  
Cllr Mr J Minns  
3 members of the public

**Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mr C Alford, Cllr Mr A Barnett, Cllr Mrs J Burns, Cllr Mr M Harris and Cllr Mr V Sewell.

**1. Election of Chairman**

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr B Ramsay be elected Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2009.

**2. Election of Vice Chairman**

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr L Abraham be elected Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2009.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Mr B Ramsay declared a personal interest under minute item 10, Rural Age Concern Darent Valley, as the Parish Council's representative on the Member Body.

**4. Minutes**

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**5. Terms of Reference**

The Committee reviewed its Terms of Reference as approved by the Council at its meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 and was satisfied they required no further amendment.

RESOLVED: That, the Terms of Reference of the Finance and General Purposes Committee as approved by the Council at its Annual meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 be noted.

**6. Receipts and payments**

The Committee examined a report setting out the receipts and payments for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008 and noted an overspend on the cost code for legal fees. This was due to monies spent for the professional services of the Council's legal advisor in respect of the application to register land at Hartley Wood as a village green.

RESOLVED: That, the report setting out the receipts and payments for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008 be noted.

## **7. Order of business**

RESOLVED: That, pursuant to Standing Order 26 (a) the order of business be altered so that agenda item 7 in respect of the 2008/09 Budget be considered at the end of the meeting.

## **8. Internal audit report**

The Committee considered an internal audit summary report from the Council's internal auditor for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008. The auditor had provided the Council with a number of working papers in respect of the internal audit which had been circulated by e mail to each Member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Committee considered the internal auditor's advice to increase the Fidelity Guarantee cover in line with balances retained in the Council's reserves.

RECOMMENDED: That, the Council's insurers be asked to increase the Fidelity Guarantee cover as advised by the Council's internal auditor.

## **9. Request for information**

The Committee considered a letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008 from a resident requesting written evidence from a solicitor that pedestrians passing through the kissing gate at Manor Field had a legal right of access to cross the strip of land owned by Messrs HF & J H Glover. The resident also requested to be informed of the Council's legal rights of use at Manor Field.

The Committee was satisfied that the Council had acted properly in respect of the provision of a new gate and kissing gate at Manor Field. The Committee was informed of advice from the legal department at Sevenoaks District Council confirming the Parish Council was not required to seek a legal opinion on behalf of a resident.

RECOMMENDED: That, no further action be taken in respect of a request from a resident to provide written advice from a solicitor on its legal rights of access and use of Manor Field.

## **10. Rural Age Concern Darent Valley**

The Committee considered a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> June 2008 from the Chief Executive of Rural Age Concern Darent Valley expressing concerns about the Council's departure from the annual cash donation to the charity.

The Committee was advised that the Council had resolved at its meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 to purchase an electronic bingo machine for the Cottage Day Centre at Fawkham and that the decision could not be reversed without a special resolution requiring written notice from 5 members of the Council.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> June from RACDV be noted.

## **11. Donations**

The Committee considered requests for donations from the following charitable organisations: Vitalise, Kenward Trust and Kent Wildlife Trust.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) requests for donations from Vitalise and the Kent Wildlife Trust be declined and,

(2) in accordance with powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a sum of £50 be donated to the Kenward Trust.

## **12. Hartley Primary School**

The Committee considered a letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008 from the Headteacher of Hartley Primary School expressing concerns about the stability of a boundary wall on the access to the school in Round Ash Way.

The Committee was advised that Sevenoaks District Council would be inspecting the boundary wall to assess its condition.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008 from the Headteacher be noted and the outcome of the inspection to be undertaken by Sevenoaks District Council be awaited.

### 13. Kent Police

The Committee considered a letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008 from the Kent Police advising of changes to the neighbourhood policing areas.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008 be noted.

### 14. Exclusion of the press and public

RESOLVED: That, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of minute item 15, Budget 2008/09, on the grounds that the likely disclosure of exempt information would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

### 15. Budget 2008/09

The Committee considered advice from solicitors and in light of this advice considered sums to be transferred from the Council's reserves to meet the costs involved in the following:

- (1) Hartley Wood in respect of the application to register land at Hartley Wood as a village green,
- (2) New Burial Ground in respect of the application to the Lands Tribunal to modify the covenants at Manor Field to allow the land to be used for burial purposes and,
- (3) Hartley WI Hall in respect of the transfer of the freehold title to the Council.

RECOMMENDED: That,

(1) a total sum of £20,000 be transferred from the Council's general reserve to meet the legal costs of the Hartley Wood village green application (£13,000), New Burial Ground Land Tribunal application (£5,500) and the transfer of title of the Hartley WI Hall (£1,500) and,

(2) through the Burial Grounds and Gardens of Remembrance Committee the services of Beachcroft LLP be engaged to act on the Council's behalf in respect of the application to the Lands Tribunal to modify the restrictive covenants at Manor Field.

### 16. Date of the next meeting

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 11.40 a.m.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee





