

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE HELD ON 1st DECEMBER 2010 AT 10.40 a.m.
AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr L Abraham
Cllr Mrs J Burns
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby
Cllr B Ramsay (Chairman)

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr C Alford, Cllr A Barnett, Cllr R Coates, Cllr Mrs P Cole, Cllr J Gaywood, Cllr J Minns and Cllr V Sewell.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 17th November 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to Cllr Mrs Burns being recorded as making apologies for non attendance.

4. Parish Office lease

The Committee considered a report on progress to surrender and grant a new lease to Hartley Parish Council on the Parish Office at Hartley Library. The Committee noted that Kent County Council had agreed to delete Clause 7.2.10 from the draft Lease which related to the insurance of the Premises. Kent County Council had requested a copy of Hartley Parish Council's public liability insurance and was seeking further clarification on the limit of indemnity on Hartley Parish Council's insurance policy. The Committee was advised that clarification was being sought from Hartley Parish Council's insurers and this information, when available, would be sent to Kent County Council.

RECOMMENDED: That, Hartley Parish Council gives an undertaking to meet the legal and professional costs of Kent County Council, up to the previously agreed limits of £1,050 for surveyors fees and £1,500 plus disbursements for legal fees payable whether or not the matter proceeds to completion, on the understanding that should Kent County Council withdraw from the negotiations Hartley Parish Council would not be responsible for meeting those costs.

5. Hartley W.I. Hall

The Committee was updated of the current position regarding the Transfer of the Hartley W.I. Hall to Hartley Parish Council.

The Trustees were in the process of collating the outstanding information requested by Hartley Parish Council's legal advisor in relation to the Property and considered a meeting at this stage would not be productive. Furthermore the Clerk has been advised that a further communication was in the process of being drafted on behalf of the Trustees and that this should be available shortly.

The Clerk briefly reported on the new funding stream from the BIG Lottery in relation to community buildings which would be available from December 2010. Funding between £100,000 to £500,000 through the Reaching Communities programme would be available for community buildings within targeted urban and rural settings. Further information on eligibility should be available from December.

The Committee briefly considered whether there were any projects which could be the subject of investigation with a view to making an application for external funding and suggested that such projects could include the provision of new play equipment at Woodland Avenue, improvements and extensions to the Hartley W.I Hall and the new Burial Ground.

RESOLVED: That, the report be received and noted.

RECOMMENDED: That, the relevant Committees be asked to consider whether there were any projects which they considered should be investigated further and put forward as a suitable project to seek external funding.

6. New Burial Ground

The Committee was advised that Messrs H F & J H Glover had agreed the extent of access over the 20 foot strip of land at the entrance to Manor Field for burial purposes and the Council's legal advisor was now able to draft an agreement.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

7. Review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit

The Committee was advised that the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 required, at least once a year, local councils to conduct a review of the system of internal control and to review the effectiveness of their system of internal control. Members of the Committee had been provided with various documents to assist with the process and a copy of last year's review.

RESOLVED: That, a working group consisting of Cllrs Abraham, Mrs Oxtoby and Ramsay undertake a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit and that the findings and any recommendations be reported back to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

8. Longfield Sorting Office

The Committee considered correspondence from the local Member of Parliament in respect of the proposed closure of Longfield Sorting Office.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 22nd November 2010 from the local Member of Parliament in respect of the proposed closure of the sorting office in Longfield be received and noted.

9. United Reformed Church

The Committee considered a letter dated 22nd November 2010 from a resident in respect of the closure of the car park in front of the United Reformed Church. The resident had requested Hartley Parish Council give consideration to renting the car park from the Church Authorities. The Committee was reminded that the Church Authorities had informed the Council that the car park had been secured by means of a collapsible bollard to improve the security of the Premises, which was temporarily being used for storage facilities.

RECOMMENDED: That, the resident be advised that the Council does not have the financial resources to pay rent to maintain the use of the car park for the benefit of local residents and furthermore the Council did not wish to assume responsibility for the condition and use of the car park in front of the United Reformed Church.

10. Kent Fire & Rescue Service

RESOLVED: That, the draft plan published by Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Authority entitled, "Towards 2020", be received and noted.

11. Consultation of the Government's White Paper proposals for the NHS

RESOLVED: That, the consultation documents, (1) Liberating the NHS: Greater Choice & Control and, (2) Liberating the NHS: An Information Revolution, be received and noted.

12. Date of the next meeting

To be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 11.30 a.m.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

