



Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Wednesday 17th August 2022 at 7:30pm

PRESENT Cllr. J Britt Chairman presiding.
Cllrs. N Osborne, A Ratcliffe & K Hammond
J Bate, (RFO)

Public Participation:

1 member of the public present, no comments to make.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr. A Walmsley and L Westcott (clerk).
Cllr. K Hammond acting as substitute for Cllr. A Walmsley.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON THE AGENDA

Cllrs. N Osborne and A Ratcliffe declared an interest in Lenham Nursery School.
Cllrs. J Britt and A Ratcliffe declared an interest in Platts Heath dog waste bin.
No other interests declared.

3. MINUTES FROM F&GP 20th JULY 2022

The minutes of the F&GP meeting held on 20th July 2022 were agreed as being accurate.
Points to note not included on the agenda:

- a. Payment Card – J Bate reported that the form was completed and sent, users will be electronic signatures.
- b. Operation London Bridge items – frame/picture/cloth and pages for book of memory. Cllr. J Britt to check with L Westcott on her return from holiday.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT (by RFO J Bate)

- a. Balances during period: LPC income of £561.00, LPC expenditure of £12378.28 this includes BT bill, emergency tree work, CPRE membership, electrical bill, replacement of Lenham Heath notice board and Apr-June PMC quarterly bill.
- b. J Bate confirmed submitted VAT return for 4 months – equating to £4010.67, anticipated 10-14 days' response.
- c. Utilities review: J Bate reported that this is an awkward project but underway. Each location will be noted on Parish Online mapping system with information of each provider. Waiting for information from EDF – ref new accounts. Then looking to have a list of opportunities to better accounts. Cllr. N Osborne noted that all accounts should be moved to D/D as soon as possible and BEFORE September as after this it will not be possible, and charges will increase with the next sector price increase. Where possible these should also be fixed term contracts. There should ideally only be four accounts – office, ham lane, streetlights (inc pop up power), and toilets. Formal report to include unit charges for each type and the units used in the last 12 months – as this will permit more accurate financial planning.
- d. Pensions/hours – J Bate reported that when starting with LPC the RFO weekly hours allowed 'headroom' below pension contribution levels. It is now evident that more work is being done and this will result in moving into the realms of pension contributions. J Bate noted that his logged hours (and those of the Clerk) were less than the hours logged for the previous Clerk.

5. UPDATE ON S106 AND CIL MONIES DUE

J Bate reported that no CIL money is due at present. There is still a pending amount of S106 monies of £204,979 available. S106 monies have been applied for from the Paddocks to cover what has been spent at Cherry Downs picnic site.

6. PROJECTS UPDATE

- a. Skate ramp – Cllr. J Britt reported that at the last LPC meeting it was agreed to spend £12k (£10k less VAT) on a new surface. Post meeting there is a review under due diligence to confirm options having resolved the upper limit for the new surface. An equal surface has been proposed at a more favourable rate. The company are attending site to assess the process of the work and the condition of the existing surface. They have offered an annual maintenance contract of £220.00/per year plus VAT.
ACTION: F&GP recommendation to full council to agree to annual maintenance contract.
- b. The Cross – Cllr. A Ratcliffe reported of recent works and the proposed event on the 6th September.
ACTION Cllr. A Ratcliffe to circulate press release and program of timings on the date – so that this can be shared with social media.
- c. Lenham Nursery – Cllr. N Osborne reported that there have been some enquires on how the CIL application is progressing – not a negative response and hope to hear by mid-October. The fundraising event had lots of attendance – including families looking for nursery spaces who cannot currently be accommodated due to capacity and there were lots of enquires for wrap around services - which the nursery cannot offer until the new building is available. There were also offers of help with fundraising. Future meeting has not yet happened, and no other dates provided by HLAA. Cllrs. N Osborne and A Ratcliffe will offer to attend HLAA committee to clarify matters.
- d. Allotments – Cllr. N Osborne reported a letter from HLAA related to ownership and leases. HLAA had written to the Allotments Advisory Association who advised that when entering into the lease the PC solicitors should have advised that the lease should have registered the lease.
ACTION Cllr. A Walmsley to review lease for discussion and clarification.
- e. Cherry Downs Picnic Site – Cllr. N Osborne received an email from member of the public concerned about the work done and that LPC should not be doing mowing as it is believed that there are orchids present. Cllr. N Osborne met and discussed that it was only meant to be a picnic site. The routes need to be planned through the nut hatch and around the trees in the orchard. The lower level should possibly be cut in the autumn. The second level needs some tree planting and kept mown. Cllr. N Osborne has agreed to devised a 5-year plan with the member of the public.
ACTION Cllr. N Osborne to devise written plan with sketch layout to illustrate the proposals.
- f. The Paddocks S104 – Cllr. J Britt reported that he has been chasing Halletts at Ashford for a response – thus far nothing received. ‘Person who is dealing with this (Jason Southcott) is unavailable’. Also chased through Thorneloe’s. Therefore, the item remains at large. We are awaiting comments from Halletts on a document sent to them by us from the Solicitors acting for the Paddocks development. Agreed that future works for Halletts would be reviewed considering this level of service.
- g. WPF S106 – Cllr. J Britt will recirculate the final drafts of the documents to LPC members – the mistakes previously highlighted are still present. Also noted that entire road needs to be included in the S106. They are keen to progress so perhaps this will start to move again.
- h. Churchyard – Cllr. J Britt reported that a root from the Yew tree appears to have lifted the footpath and someone has fallen on it. Need to review as a matter of urgency.
ACTION Cllr. N Osborne and A Ratcliffe to review and report.

7. QPJ SOUVENIR BROCHURE OPTIONS

Cllr. J Britt advised on costs for a publication on the size of the Focus as follows:

- a. Gemini - For 24 pages: 100 Copies = £156, 200 copies = £223, for 28 pages: 100 copies = £166, 200 copies = £245. Need to add £210 for artwork and design (for 100) or £230 (for 200)
- b. Lotus – For 24 pages: 100 Copies = £192, 200 copies = £267, for 28 pages: 100 copies = £205, 200 copies = £288. Assuming artwork is complete and brochure ready to print.

ACTION F&GP recommends Gemini for 200 copies at £453.00. Some will be free issue and others will be sold for £2/copy.

8. TO CONSIDER A DOG WASTE BIN IN PLATTS HEATH (APPROXIMATE COST £287.07 PLUS DELIVERY)

Cllr. J Britt reported that at a recent gathering there was a request for a dog bin near the end of green lane – by the last bungalow on the right. Need to confirm who owns the land and check that they are happy to have one there. F&GP happy to site one there.

9. FOI REQUEST FOR SPEED DATA - INFORMATION AND TIMEFRAME

An FOI request for SID speed data has been received relating to the through the village locations. While LPC publishes it, the preceding period is removed. The information requested has been sent. Understood that this was to assist the requesting individual with representations for the 20mph zone. Point to note that future data needs to note the location in the name.

10. CORRESPONDENCE RECIEVED

- a. Headcorn Road layout at railway bridge – Cllr. J Britt met with KCC Highways – KCC agreed that modifications are needed. KCC will work with the contractor to undertake the works. Will be altering the lining of the junction beyond the build up approaching the village and will use hatching and other lining to emphasise the narrowness. This location would be ideal for Speedwatch – which can be reinvigorated. KCC witnessed head to head issues and drivers speeding up to beat the narrows.
- b. Cllr. N Osborne met with Marion Geary (MBC Planning) regarding trees on Groom Way and developers cutting more trees than they were allowed. The nearest house will be 2m from the boundary and the tree was overhanging by 3m. MBC stated that the note allowing them to trim the hedge was wrong as it was not the developers hedge to trim. Same is planned against some garages further into the site. MBC suggested that they will get Abbey Landscape to look at planting proposals. It appears that the hedge/trees were planted on the boundary not inboard – accepting this is LPC preference to a solution. Cllr. N Osborne to suggest to MBC that LPC would accept mature trees and hedging is replanted – trees to be minimum 5m and hedging to be minimum 2m high – at Abbey Homes expense – including replacing the trees removed erroneously. This has a big impact on the character of the development. There should be a holding response to the complaint.

11. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- a. Agreement to annual maintenance contract for skate ramp.
- b. Gemini to produce 200 copies of QPJ brochure at £453.00.

The meeting closed at 22:00