



HAWKHURST PARISH COUNCIL

STRATEGY, ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Copt Hall
Monday 22nd August 2022, 7:15pm

Agenda

Join by Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84334807941?pwd=NIhGWWNYSWhxNE9BU1FUyTV6K3lIZz09>

Meeting ID: 843 3480 7941

Passcode: 736317

Committee Members:

Clr Green, Clr Faulkner, Clr Anderson, Clr Blake, Clr Eccles and Clr Veal.

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Strategy, Administration and Policy Committee to be held on the Monday 22nd August 2022 at Copt Hall to conduct the following business:

1. **ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING**
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:** *To receive notice of personal interests, whether of a prejudicial nature or otherwise, in respect of items on this agenda, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.*
4. **To approve MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING** of 27th June 2022.
5. **OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM LAST MEETING**
6. **MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

6.1 Appointment of internal auditor

Verbal report by Deputy Clerk outlining the progress in finding an internal auditor.

The Committee asked to resolve that subject to agreement between the clerk, SAP chairman and SAP vice-chairman a recommendation is put to the next Full Council to appoint an Internal auditor from the list of providers given by Kent association of Local Councils (KALC)

6.2 Parish Office update – Cllr Green on behalf of Cllr Anderson

The Council has now bought the Parish Office for £65,000. This saves the annual rent of c£6k and secures longer-term office space for the Council. We had previously occupied the building on a full repairing lease, although only limited repairs had been undertaken during the previous 15 years. A situation that could have given rise to an immediate and significant cost had we been asked to leave. Now we have acquired the building, we now have an opportunity to ensure that the building is cared for properly and invest in this community asset in a way that maximises its utility for the Parish.

But, first we need to know everything there is to know about the building's condition. To understand this the Council needs to have a detailed and full condition report from an independent and professional surveyor. Given his experience with listed buildings Cllr Anderson, was tasked by Cllrs Green and Escombe with investigating who could assist the Council.

Cllr Anderson spoke with a number of surveyors and consulted those he worked with from his time responsible for historic MOD properties in London.

Mark Michel from surveyors MMA came highly recommended and has a particular interest in listed properties. Although Cllr Anderson has not previously worked with Mr Michel, he was viewed as the best of those with whom Michael spoke.

A link to the MMA website is below.

<https://mmacharteredsurveyors.co.uk/about-us.html>

Cllr Anderson's recommendation is that we engage MMA for this initial independent and thorough examination of the building. At £150 per hour the cost is likely to be between £1,000 to £1,500 and is within the budgeted £6,000 for office repairs and maintenance.

The clearing and cleaning of the office - welcomed by the public as a sign that the office is open and welcoming, has revealed dilapidations that in the opinion of the acting clerk should be urgently investigated. The clerk having consulted with Cllr Escombe and Cllr Green asked the surveyor to attend as soon as practicable, which will be early September.

The Committee are asked to resolve to confirm the appointment of MMA for the full condition survey of The Office at the Moor at a cost of up to £1,500.

6.3 Cemetery Restoration Update

The project to restore section C identified 43 graves for which we found named kerbs. All the graves for which all four kerbs were recorded have been restored. The remaining 17 graves where only a partial set was found are in phase 3 of the restoration. It is hoped to complete this work by the Spring. Whilst the aim will be to reuse as many of the kerbs without names inscribed thereon, it is likely that new stone will need to be ordered to ensure a proper match for the remaining graves. We have already received positive feedback from the relatives of

those graves which have been restored. The spreadsheet highlights progress with graves highlighted green having been restored.

6.4 Scribe

Scribe is the system that the Council's uses for its accounts and budgeting. Councillors can have read-only access to Scribe. Given SAP's remit for financial scrutiny the Committee are invited to discuss whether it would be appropriate for members to becoming familiar with the system so they can monitor the Council budget in real time as well as at Committee.

The Committee resolves to ask the Clerk to provide log-in details for all SAP members.; and, to ask other councillors if they too would like access.

6.5 Financial authorisations

Committee members to discuss whether all councillors should be cheque signatories.

The Committee resolves that the Clerk will send SAP members not yet able to sign cheques with the appropriate authorisation forms.

Committee members to discuss the importance of there being a variety of members authorised to make on-line payments. At the moment just two members of the Council are so authorised, and the Committee are asked to identify members who would be willing to become authorised on-line signatories.

6.6 Insurance update

Verbal update from Cllr Faulkner

6.7 Victoria Hall

To consider the importance of the Victoria Hall and understanding the current lease terms and obligations.

The Committee resolves to ask Cllr Faulkner to review and report back on the current lease terms and obligations.

6.8 Website update

The web provider has been assisting with updating the website and has promptly made a large number of minor amends. The initial aim has been to simplify content, identify dead links to reset or delete, and correct wrong information. This process is iterative and continuing as the site is methodically reviewed. If members are looking at the site and spot something awry, please alert the clerk and SAP chairman. Once we have the base right, we can consider how to build on that to create content that is interesting and sustainable for us to refresh.

The Committee **are asked to resolve** to agree with the current approach and aim for a more significant refresh in the New Year.

Councillors with an interest in experience of websites are asked to consider leading the consideration of what would make our site stand out (and still be manageable).

6.9 Grants Policy

To discuss a future review of the scope and application of the Council's s.137 grants policy. The scope will examine the current use of the grants policy and also other spending that we undertake that might be considered typical/suitable s.137 spend.

6.10 Risk Register

To discuss a future review, the corporate risk register.

6.11 Openreach / fibre

To discuss the progress of the fibre roll-out across the parish and any further assistance we may be able to give or pressure that needs to be applied to ensure that the maximum number of homes benefits from modern connectivity; and, to seek a member to lead on its consideration.

6.12 Roads

To discuss KCC Highways Improvement Plan for Hawkhurst and to seek a member to lead on its consideration.

6.13 Health & Safety, maintenance and budget/funding

The Committee is asked to resolve to urge the Full Council to consider the report and agree with the conclusions in the paper sent to councillors by Cllr Green in June.

The Committee is asked to resolve that neglect and inaction is not acceptable and the proper care of public assets requires them to be safe and properly maintained. Striving for adequacy cannot take second place to other considerations, and we need to demonstrate that we can be trusted to be the guardian of public assets and facilities for which we are currently accountable.

The Committee is asked to resolve that the matters identified in the report along with other emerging health and safety matters, such as the foul water at the KGV, take priority when allocating budgeted spend and reserve monies; and that a prioritised plan is developed for restoration and renewal to be delivered as soon as is practicable and not later than Q3 2023.

6.14 Reserves & budget position - report from Deputy Clerk

7 Questions and Comments from Councillors

8 Date of next meeting 24th October.

9 Closure

Anita Maxwell, Deputy Clerk

Agenda Notes for Members:

Item 3 on the Agenda, Declaration of Interests. If a Member has a prejudicial interest, this should be declared at the start of the meeting. Personal interests may be declared at this point or alternatively can be declared at the time when the specific item is being discussed, if a Member wishes to speak on an item in which s/he has a personal interest. Members in doubt about such a declaration are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer before the date of the meeting. This may also be used by Members to advise the Council of any relevant changes that may have occurred since they first completed the register of interests.