

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 29 OCTOBER 2009, IN KILBIRNIE, WINCHMORE HILL

Present	Cllrs M.J.Raszpla (Chairman) D.J. Baker M.J.Bayley M.A.Morley Mrs M. Seymour Clerk M.S.Green
Apologies	None
Appointment of Chairman	Cllr Raszpla was unanimously returned as Chairman
1. Check of Accounts	The Chairman confirmed that he had carried out all the necessary checks and that the account was in good order.
2. Summary of Accounts as at 30 Sep 09	The attached Summary was reviewed and agreed with small changes. There was further discussion on the following items: <i>Interest from capital a/cs</i> - We will be spending most of our capital on a new parish office and so will need to put money aside to re-build our capital. It is therefore recommended that from now on interest from capital a/cs is reinvested as part of the capital. <i>Current balance</i> - There is likely to be a cushion of about £10,000 in the current a/c.
3. Expenditure & Income table	The attached Table was reviewed and agreed.
4. W/Hill easement	The extended date of 15 Oct 09 for exchange of contracts was not met by the purchaser, but completion is expected on 30 Oct 09. There will then be some £49,000 in the account. A high interest earning account is needed with the interest to be transferred to the current account towards maintenance of the new play area and other similar running costs. Capital can only be used for purchase of land.
5. Parish Office	Four tenders have been received with a wide range of quotes and we await advice from our architect.
6. W/Hill Play Area	Local differences as to the size and position of the play area were reported and most have been resolved by the latest layout. Mr Derek Smith has suggested moving the site to the centre of the common where the bonfire used to be. This idea was considered, but it is recommended that the proposed location with the reduced extent and number of items provide the best solution to a facility that is needed by the community as a whole. The Clerk is to reply to Mr Smith's correspondence. It was noted that planning permission is not needed provided there is to be no equipment more than 4 metres in height. Playdale's revised quote and the revised total budget of £23,419 were reviewed. This assumes a Parish Council contribution of £5,419. Three quotes for groundworks were considered and it is recommended that we accept one by D.W.Clayfield for £4,365 since he can start by mid-November which will allow the new grass surface to bed down before the play equipment is installed. The Veolia grant of £10,000 has been re-confirmed, and the finance agreement requires a site start before 30.01.10. It is also recommended that we place the order with Playdale now to avoid any increases in prices. This will require a 50% deposit of some £8,250 for which we can use funds from the Residents Association (£2,000), Securon (£5,000), and Bucks

	Community Foundation (£1,000).
7. Burial Grants	<i>Recommended: Penn Church, £1,000 plus £300 for repair of the churchyard wall; Penn St Church, £400; W/Hill Methodist, £300</i>
8. Requests for donations	<i>Recommended: Penn St Cricket Club Juniors, £350; Age Concern Bucks, £50.</i>
9. Knotty Green Play Area	The last inspection by Wicksteed in September identified two major problems: <i>Leisure Logs</i> - extensive rot in the two vertical logs of the Triple Pull Up bars and unstable horse's head and body. There are also splits in many of the large timbers of the double swing and log scramble. A site meeting was arranged with Leisure Logs who agreed all the items were still within warranty. However their response requires us to pay £597 labour costs. A reply to be sent saying this is not acceptable. <i>Playdale</i> - Surface shrinkage of all the wet pour surfaces has created gaps along the edges and at joints. Wicksteed's cost estimate is for materials £1,840 and labour £1,075, i.e. nearly £3,000. The 5-year warranty expired in August 08. A site visit with Playdale has been requested.
10. Friends of Knotty Green	We are expecting a cheque of perhaps £3,000, from the account of the Friends who are now winding up.
11. Grass-cutting Contract	The 3-year fixed price contract with CTR Maintenance has been working extremely well and there is no hesitation in <i>recommending its continuation for third year.</i> We have added 5 cuts for the W/Hill Football Club pitch
12. Annual tree inspection	Ridgeway Woodlands have now carried out the annual inspection of all our trees and their quote for £200 for small tasks was accepted. In <i>Pistles Pond</i> , a quote for £480 for work on coppicing goat willow in the corner of the pond, reducing the canopy of two hornbeams and re-pollarding an ash near the pond is accepted. Mr John Pearce of Pistles Pond Cottage has requested the pollarding, or preferably the removal of a tall ash at the side of the entrance track which he says is damaging the foundation of his shed. The Committee <i>recommends</i> that the tree should not be removed since it is perfectly healthy, but if Mr Pearce wishes to pay the £420 cost of re-pollarding and the cost of an application for Conservation Area consent then he can do so. <i>Trees on Front Common at Elm Road</i> - Some concern was expressed over the amount of leaf fall. It was agreed to arrange a site meeting with Ridgeway Woodlands to consider thinning some of the trees.
13. Woodbridge Alley	A building firm working at Strings opposite used the alley, initially without permission, to park two skips, a digger, a toilet and various pieces of equipment. After discussion with the Clerk, the builder, who was the father of the owner of the firm, agreed to pay £50 per week for the assumed 10 week period of use and restore the alley to its previous condition. His son denies receiving a letter setting out the terms and offers £25 per week for 6 weeks. The Clerk was asked to persuade him to meet his obligations in a more acceptable manner.
14. Clerk's salary & allowances	It was noted that the reduction to a 1% inflationary increase in NALC's salary scales had reduced the total cost of salary and office costs to £25,981. This is now £3,744 less than the estimate in Jan 09.

15. Annual Audit	Mazars have now confirmed the account has been cleared, with no comments other than the omission of the name of the council at the top of one page. Notices reporting conclusion of the audit together with copies of Sections 1 – 3 will be displayed on five notice boards around the parish.
16. Review Financial Regulations	Table 3.2 requires amendment both to take account of the grass-cutting contract and to define procedures for authorisation of sums between 10% and 30% of precept. The Clerk will check NALC's model draft Financial Regulations for guidance and make a recommendation to the next Council meeting.
17. Risk Assessment policy	The policy largely focuses on the Clerk's office arrangements and so will have to be radically revised when the new office is built. The questions of whether an alarm should be built-in to the wiring and whether windows should be barred need to be decided. A sturdy door and locks have already been specified. A fire-proof safe or filing cabinets will be needed. (Bowyer's have a 2-drawer cabinet safe at c.£600).
18. Web site review	Brian Lock has circulated a review and should be asked to take us through it at the November Council meeting.
19. Co-option of a Councillor	Cllr Smiley has given notice of his intention to resign at the end of the November Council meeting. A resolution will be needed acknowledging the resignation and requiring a notice to be put up in the ward advertising the vacancy. This allows 14 working days for 10 electors to claim an election. If no claim is made then co-option can be made at the January Council meeting. It is good practice to post a notice throughout the parish announcing the intention to co-opt a new member and asking for anyone interested to contact the Clerk.
20. Binding Council Minutes	It was noted that two volumes worth of Council minutes need to be bound.