

rates were tracked, whether loans were made, what risks were faced if one bank failed, length of term that CCLA invested, restrictions for clients protection. Some members were familiar with other organisations that invested with CCLA and Mr. Davies confirmed that the CCLA would never invest more than 10% in one place and never more than 30% in one country's banks. All deposits were made with banks that had London offices if they wanted sterling deposits and long term investments were not made. CCLA aimed to be complementary to other investments that Councils made. The Vice Chairman asked the Responsible Finance Officer if she had any questions. She had an initial concern about the practice of the RFO being the sole authority for withdrawals but this had been appeased as any transfer could only go to the designated parish council bank account, as verified by my councillors. Any decision to open an account and the level of investment would be made by full council and triple authority to open an account and deposit funds. Mr. Davies was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting. Following discussion and careful consideration, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Hayes, **SECONDED** by Cllr Mrs. Haywood, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the recommendation of opening an account be placed on the next council agenda. **IT WAS FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Council reaffirm the decision to open an investment account with the Co-operative Bank, which had been previously agreed but not completed. The RFO was asked to recommend amounts to council for investment.

ACTION

Council
27/3

RFO
20/3

Admin
Asst.
10/1

6. Planning Applications.

The Planning Applications received since the last meeting were considered and the following recommendations made to the Borough Council:-

Application No	Applicant	Location	Type
Recommendation to the Borough Council			
2013/223	Mr John Freeman	178 Wyckham Road	Minor Full Appl
Could be approved subject to any neighbours comments.			
2013/285	Mr Steven Newsome	5 Wasperton Close	Minor Full Appl
Could be approved subject to any neighbours comments.			
2013/297	Ms Irene Leacy	329A Chester Road	Change of Use
Should be approved.			
2013/305	Mr Sean O'Neill	1 Ringmere Avenue	Minor Full Appl
Could be approved subject to any neighbours comments.			

The Clerk reminded members of a possible enforcement matter relating to last year's Borough Council refusal of a hot food takeaway and members were asked to remain vigilant to any changes at the known location.

7. Road Safety – Old Croft Lane and Village Green.

The request of Solihull MBC for photographs of parking problems was noted and members approved the draft letter tabled by the Clerk to consult all local residents and businesses about parking problems and obstructions. **IT WAS AGREED** this should be sent as soon as possible and the Clerk thanked Cllr Mrs. Wilkins for offering to deliver these by hand. When replies were received the Council would be able to share information with the Borough Council and ask for a site meeting.

BW
asap

Clerk
30/4

8. Working Parties and Steering Group.

Cllr Whelan reported that the Parish Plan Steering Group would be meeting at the beginning of April to discuss the final section on local government. He hoped that a draft report would be given to full council on 27th April and presented to parishioners at the Annual Parish Meeting on Tuesday 7th May. He hoped it could be printed in June/July.

Council
27/4
APM
7/5

9. Residents' Concerns.

Members noted details of recent concerns raised by residents and the complaint about the deterioration in the Windsor Room which had been scheduled for refurbishing. **IT WAS AGREED** that this should be placed on the full council agenda.

10. Training.

Members noted the report from Cllr Whelan who had attended the WALC Annual Briefing Day on 2nd March, with the theme of "Localism One Year On". The first presentation covered progress on community rights with examples of progress made with GP Commissioning, Free Schools, Big Society Capital and the Social Action Fund, Neighbourhood Planning. Examples were given of Town and Parish Councils taking part in community asset transfer and bidding to run local public services which are at the heart of the Big Society ethos. For Parish Councils a consultation had recently concluded that cheques should no longer require two signatures. It went on to suggest that where a parish or town council did not exist, then Neighbourhood Councils should be set up. Other issues concerning thresholds for governance review, timescales for decision making and rights of appeal were also covered in this consultation. The second speaker was Ron Ball, the new Warwickshire Police Crime Commissioner who spoke about the background to his appointment and progress to date. He emphasized that he has an excellent working relationship with the Chief Constable and further that he had appointed an excellent deputy. He opposed any further reductions in force numbers, intended to recruit up to 250 Special Constables, he also opposed the plan to reduce the starting salary of Constables to £19,000. He wished to invest in community crime prevention and would be recruiting local people in 17 locations to work closely with the police in a reporting and liaising role. Whilst keen to see the close association with West Mercia Force continue, he ruled out a potential merger of the forces. After lunch, Cllr Whelan attended a talk on Community Right to Bid presented by Richard Bridge from Community Matters. This talk interested several members of the audience from small parishes who were actively seeking to purchase local assets. One was trying to buy a village car park whilst another was seeking to purchase land for a cemetery. Richard explained the process of securing Community Assets and detailed the grants available and the criteria for qualification. In conclusion the day was well run by WALC and, in his opinion, the facilities were superior to the normal venue previously used. Papers accompanying the day were available from the Clerk.

The Clerk reported on the most valuable SLCC Practitioners Conference in Derby that she had attended on 1st/2nd March. She had attended numerous sessions and obtained valuable training notes on how to write a press release; working hours survey; using geography mapping to underpin the work of P&TC; what is risk from an insurance perspective; new Standards regime, VAT and non-business/business activities, devolution and transfer of assets (referred to as 'jewels'), confidential minutes, redefinition of Nolan principles. It had given her an excellent opportunity to learn/hear new ideas and take part in workshops. One area she would like to explore in more details was VAT and she hoped to ask if any other clerks would be interested in attending a one day course in the Midlands if this could be arranged. A venue like Stoke on Trent was being considered, possibly in September. The conference had ended with an inspirational talk by Bob Champion, former jockey, who spoke about his career and the research centre established at the Royal Marsden Hospital after his fight with cancer 30 years ago. This Centre was making great progress and currently researching links with positive effects of some foods in fighting or preventing cancer.

11. Clerk's Report.

Members noted the Clerk's Report which contained estimated costs to complete the

Business Annexe and comply with building regulations. Following discussion by members, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that progress should be made to conclude this project and to refurbish the Windsor Room, with both items being put to full council at the next meeting. The letter requesting office accommodation was read to members and the Clerk undertook to seek more information from the applicant. An invitation had arrived on 12th March from Solihull MBC about their new Community Infrastructure Levy consultation, commencing with the publication of a Draft Charging Schedule. The consultation ran from 15th March until 26th April and would be an agenda item at full council on 27th March. Unfortunately this was too late to formally appoint Parish Council representatives to attend an evening briefing session taking place on Monday, 25th March from 7 – 9 pm, which Cllr Hayes indicated he may be able to attend. An announcement had been made confirming the Section 137 expenditure limit would be increased from the current rate of £6.80 per parishioner, to £6.98 for 2013-14. This was in line with the increase of 2.6% in the Retail Prices Index from September 2011 to 2012. The meeting to discuss the requirements for defibrillators in the community would provisionally be held on Friday, 5th April at 10 am for those councillors who were able to attend. The public notices regarding precept changes this year had been printed and distributed to councillors to hand on to any parishioners who made enquiries. Alterations had been sanctioned by the Clerk to the Webmaster to instigate a cookie policy for the parish council's website. Unity Bank had responded to concerns about authorisation security and increased the options previously available. Once councillors had gained in confidence then the full council should review the access previously agreed. New government legislation changing cheque signatories that was expected 18 months ago was apparently now delayed at the Treasury. The investigator had confirmed he was available to answer questions from members on Wednesday, 20th March.

ACTION

Council
27/3

Clerk
Asap

MH
15/3

12. Financial Training – payment authorization and access.

The Clerk asked members who were authorised signatories if they had difficulties accessing and only one member did not. The Clerk would ask for four councillors to have their access re-set and hoped that the pilot testing since last summer could soon be completed. The Clerk had obtained an article on sample audit procedures which she would retain for possible future information.

Clerk
asap