

# EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Mr D Hughes  
 Chief Executive  
 Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council  
 Gibson Building  
 Gibson Drive  
 Kings Hill  
 WEST MALLING  
 Kent  
 ME19 4LZ

<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	
PASS TO <i>CO</i>	FOR INFO FOR ACTION
17 DEC 2008	
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ACKNOWLEDGED	YES/NO

11 December 2008

Dear David

## 2009/10 SPECIAL WORKS APPLICATION IN RESPECT OF OLDER CHILDRENS PLAY EQUIPMENT IN EAST PECKHAM

Thank you for your letter of 27 November in which you outlined the financial difficulties, which are affecting the Borough Council.

You stated that whilst the Borough Council will honour the commitment to increase revenue support to Parish Councils by 0.5% for 2009/10 it could not afford to continue to make Special Works Project grants except in some very special circumstances. I would be grateful if the application in respect of older children's play equipment could be assessed under these very special circumstances.

To provide some background, the older children's play equipment project is part of an ongoing goal to improve the children's play areas at East Peckham Playing Fields. We are hoping to provide some new equipment and some seating which will benefit the children and their parents in the 8 – 14 age group. A recent project to provide facilities for the younger children of the village was successfully completed but it did highlight the lack of facilities for the older children. The importance of a safe and challenging environment in which to play is essential for the development of healthy children and this is what we wish to achieve. Funding will help us to provide three new items of junior play equipment. The need for such equipment was also highlighted in a receive review of leisure services by the Borough Council which found that East Peckham had serious deficiencies in this area. The need for the play equipment has also been identified in surveys of parents and in the course of completing the East Peckham Parish Plan.

In providing the equipment we will be providing the older children of East Peckham with facilities, which they currently do not have. The addition of older children's play equipment will mean that East Peckham will then providing all the children of East Peckham between the ages of 0 – 14 years with modern, safe challenging play equipment which is suitable for the different stages of their development. We will

also be enabling families to play together in a safe enclosed environment without having to travel to other areas in the borough to access similar facilities elsewhere.

Owing to the lack of equipment, the present play area is underused. The installation of much-needed new and challenging equipment will I am sure see a dramatic increase in the use of the play area and the playing fields. Having recently overseen the installation of the new toddlers play park there is sufficient knowledge and experience to ensure that the project will be well managed and will deliver value for money. In addition a routine maintenance plan will be put in place and the equipment will be inspected annually either by ROSPA or an equivalent organisation. The equipment will be used seven days a week 52 weeks of the year. The play area is a completely open facility for the whole of the community and will be covered by CCTV.

I have no doubt that there is a well proven need for older children's play equipment and the installation of such equipment will be very well received by the residents of East Peckham.

Regarding funding, we have received a quotation for the sum of £17,975 of which we were seeking a Special; Works Grant of up to £7,500, £2,925 would be contributed by the East Peckham Playing Fields Company whilst the remainder would be met by Parish and other funds/grants

It is estimated that at 31 March 2009 the Parish Councils reserves will be approximately £53,703. However in line with the recommendation of District Audit the Parish Councils is expected to hold in reserve between 75% - 100% of its precept level. The Parish Councils precept for 2008/09 was £68,194 in view of the economic climate it is likely that the Parish Councils will follow the Borough Councils lead and not increase the precept for 2009/10 by any more than 5%, i.e. £71,604. It is likely that the Parish Council will include some provision within our 2009/10 budget towards this project.

I recognise the difficulties in the current financial climate and if the Borough Council is unable to fund £7,500 towards the project in 2009/10 I would be happy to work with you over a period of say 2 to 3 years so that the equipment can be installed piecemeal one item at a time.

Please do contact me should you have any queries regarding this submission, I hope you will be able to look favourably upon the application and find that very special circumstances do exist for this project and that you will be able to offer the Parish Council some financial assistance towards its successful completion.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Karen Bell  
Clerk of the Council

# TROTTISCLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL



Tel. 01732 824194

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## CLERK

Mrs Frances Merryfield Day  
The Willow House  
Church Lane  
Trottscliffe  
Kent ME19 5EB

9<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Mr David Hughes  
Chief Executive  
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council  
Gibson Building, Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill, West Malling  
Kent ME19 4LZ

<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	
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11 DEC 2008	
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ACKNOWLEDGED	YES/NO

Dear Mr Hughes

Thank you for your letter of 27<sup>th</sup> November regarding the present financial situation and special works grants. This was discussed at the meeting of Trottscliffe Parish Council last week and, whilst the situation was fully appreciated, concern was expressed over the safety of the multi-play area in the recreation ground.

The Parish Council intended to improve certain facilities but the multi-play area is in urgent need of a "wet pour" surface to meet health and safety regulations. If this work is not carried out shortly it will be necessary to close this area down.

The Parish Council has sourced a small grant for one of the improvements but the cost of the new surface around the multi-play area is £12,463.36 plus VAT. The Parish Council feels it is able to put £6,000.00 towards this from the reserves because it is high priority and, therefore, asks if consideration may be given to the balance being provided by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

The precept will be increased by 12.5% next year and it is anticipated that the reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 will be £11,500.00.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

*Frances Day*  
Parish Clerk

# WEST MALLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk to the Parish Council: Carole D'Silva

02 December 2008

Mr David Hughes  
Chief Executive  
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council  
Gibson Building  
Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent ME19 4LZ

Dear Mr Hughes

## SPECIAL WORKS GRANTS 2009/10

Thank you for your letter of 27 November 2008.

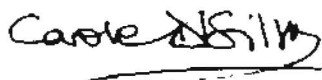
My members are of course well aware of the financial pressures on the Borough Council resulting from the global financial crisis.

This Parish Council has applied for a Special Works Grant for 2009/10 in order to replace the cable runway play equipment at the Norman Road Playing Field. This was intended to form Phase 3 of a programme of upgrading. The existing cable runway has had to be removed on safety grounds, on the advice of our professional consultant. This was a very popular piece of equipment, especially with older children for whom there is little other equipment to attract them; we have made parents aware that we would be applying for the Special Works Grant, which in less straitened times we would have taken for granted.

We anticipate submitting a Precept request showing a 4% increase over last years'.

We hope that you may be able to see your way to approving a Special Works Grant to us for 2009/10 but will of course understand perfectly should this not be possible.

Yours sincerely



Carole D'Silva  
Clerk to West Malling Parish Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE	
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05 DEC 2008	
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ACKNOWLEDGED	YES/NO



Dear David

**Re: St James Centre Capital Grant Funding**

I am in receipt of a letter from Francis Gahan and, on behalf of the St James Centre Trust. I would like to invite the Borough to revisit their decision to not provide funding for the St James Centre as I believe a very special case can be made for this grant to be approved.

As you are aware, East Malling is the most deprived ward in the borough and the area in which the proposed St James Centre will be situated will serve the most deprived communities within that ward. The development of the St James Centre has arisen out of a unique opportunity in the area as the primary school is being moved to a new building leaving the old school building available for other uses from mid 2009. It is proposed that the old school will accommodate the East Malling Children's Centre, part will be retained for educational use and The St James Centre will occupy the remaining part providing much needed facilities for all of the local community. Proposals for all three uses are inter-linked; it would not really be feasible to operate the Children's Centre of educational uses in a building, where due to lack of funding, the larger part of it has to be closed up and mothballed to await a time when essential improvement works can be funded.

The lack of suitable community facilities is something the local community raised through consultation work carried out on behalf of the East Malling Partnership. Since commencing work on the proposed centre a few years ago, we have received many requests for meeting, office and other space from a wide variety of voluntary, community and statutory partners, so much so, we will may be unable to accommodate all of them. This demonstrates the high level of local demand for space to offer services to the local community.

Earlier delays to the construction of the new school has meant that plans for the community centre have also had to be deferred. As a result, the East Malling Partnership has been more limited in the kind of projects and programmes they would like to offer locally due to restricted community space. However, with the new school now well under construction and with a confirmed completion date of mid 2009, the coming financial year (for which the grant has been applied) presents the local community of East Malling with a not-to-be missed opportunity to secure the opening of the community centre. The Trust believes that the Centre, when developed, would act as a focal point for the wider regeneration of the neighbourhood and a beacon for change in a very needy area.

If Tonbridge and Malling is able to release the £25K grant for this project, this would unlock a contribution of £50K from the County Council and £10K from the Parish Council, which, along with existing Trust funds, would enable the

£150K project to proceed. There is a very real risk that without a contribution from the Borough Council, the project may not go ahead, leading to potential risks in the management of the building and I believe, a significant missed opportunity to assist the most deprived community in the borough.

I would be happy to discuss plans for the proposed centre in more detail.

Yours sincerely

Angela Borsos