

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** (here in F&GP) held on **THURSDAY 4 JANUARY 2024** at King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 20.01 hours.

### **Present:**

Committee Members:     Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman of Council)     Mr. R. Pickett  
                                     Mrs. A. Beecroft     Mrs. V. Upton  
                                     Mrs. L. Grace     Mr. T. Webster\*

**In attendance:**             Mr A. Funnell (Parish Clerk)  
                                     Mrs T. Ely (RFO)

\*Denotes absence.

The Chairman opened the meeting, welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

### **109. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**

109.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Webster and their reasons were accepted.

### **110. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA.**

110.1 There were no declarations of interest from members in respect of any items on the agenda.

### **111. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

111.1 There were no members of the public present.

### **112. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE F&GP COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2023.**

112.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the F&GP Committee held on Thursday 7 December 2023.

It was **AGREED** to amend the wording in the second paragraph of the introduction from 'they wished to resign as Chairman' to 'he wished to resign as Chairman'.

The amended Minutes were **AGREED**, and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as a true record of the meeting that was held on 7 December 2023.

### **113. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

113.1 The Chairman made no announcements.

### **114. ACTION LIST.**

114.1 The Chairman referred to the Action List which had been circulated with the agenda and this was **NOTED**.

### **115. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.**

115.1 Grants budget. It was **NOTED** that funds of £610.00 were available to spend from a budget of £2,500.

115.2 Grant requests. Cllr Blunden reported on behalf of the Grants Panel and advised that no grant requests had been received.

115.3 Letters of thanks received. No letters of thanks had been received.

### **116. BUDGET 2023/24: TO NOTE BUDGET PROGRESS REPORTS TO 31 OCTOBER 2023.**

116.1 Members had been presented with copies of the RFO summary, a detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Report and Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves Report to 31 October 2023.

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It was **NOTED** that the budget progress reports to 31 October 2023 had been verbally shared by the RFO at the F&GP Committee meeting held on 7 December 2023 and that details had been recorded in the minutes of that meeting. No further reporting was considered necessary.

### 117. FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS TO 31 OCTOBER 2023.

117.1 Members had been presented with account records to 31 October 2023.

It was **NOTED** that the account records to 31 October 2023 had been verbally shared by the RFO at the F&GP Committee meeting held on 7 December 2023 and that details had been recorded in the minutes of that meeting. No further reporting was considered necessary.

### 118. PAYMENT APPROVALS: TO APPROVE/RATIFY DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS.

118.1 It was **NOTED** that, due to a technical problem with Barclays Bank, it had not been possible for members to access the online service to authorise payment of invoices. Given the payment terms, it had been necessary to make arrangements for the following invoices to be paid by debit card. Written approval had been obtained from Cllrs Upton, Pickett, Blunden, and Beecroft.

1. Mid-Sussex District Council £6,276.09
2. GTA Civils & Transport Ltd £588.00

Members had been asked to retrospectively approve these payments. This was **AGREED**.

### 119. BUDGET 2024/25: TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS RELATING TO THE 2024/25 BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUEST.

119.1 It was **NOTED** that no further amendments had been made to the proposed draft committee budgets, earmarked reserves, and the general reserve, which had been considered at the F&GP Committee meeting of 7 December 2023. The recommendation from that meeting had remained unchanged proposing a total budget of £441,580.58, which was represented by the following:

	£
Budget	262,215.00
Earmarked Reserves	109,365.58
General Reserve	70,000.00

It had been further **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council at their meeting due 18 January 2024 that a precept request of £257,000 be made to MSDC for the financial year 2024/25. In addition, it had been **AGREED** that an article explaining the precept request would be published before MSDC confirming Council Tax Bills for 2024/25 to residents.

119.2 Members had been asked if they were happy to continue with the recommendations that had been made at the F&GP committee meeting held on 7 December 2023 regarding the proposed 2024/25 budget and this was **AGREED**.

### 120. COMMUNICATIONS: TO AUTHORISE EXPENDITURE FOR AN EMAIL NEWSLETTER PLATFORM.

120.1 The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. It had been proposed that the Council subscribe to an email newsletter platform. This would help to increase Council communications, providing members of the public with the opportunity to access the following information:

- Event notification.
- Press releases.
- Service notifications.
- Newsletters.

It had been proposed that the cost be met from the F&GP budget heading 4292 Community Engagement. Initial research had indicated that an annual charge of between £125 and £191 would be required. The cost would be collected either by direct debit or the Council debit card, depending on which platform was procured.

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The above was **NOTED** and the following **AGREED**:

- a) To subscribe to an email newsletter platform.
- b) That the expenditure be met from the F&GP budget heading 4292 Community Engagement.
- c) That the Clerk be authorised to arrange payment either by direct debit or via the Council debit card.

### 121. TOILETS ON THE COMMON: TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS.

121.1 Cllr Pickett reported that arrangements were in hand to arrange for a ground survey to be carried out.

121.2 The Clerk reported that MSDC would be instructed concerning Building control approval.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 122. CLERK AND RFO REPORT.

122.1 Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported on the following item:

- a) Clock Tower House – Storage Heater.  
A fault had been identified on the electricity circuit board and repaired. No further problems have since been reported.
- b) Clock Tower House – Router.  
JNR Computer Services, who provided the Council with technology support, replaced the Router on 4 January 2024. The phone system would now revert to mobile data services.

The above was **NOTED**.

122.2 RFO's Report.

The RFO reported on the following items:

- a) Rialtas Business Solutions(RBS): Year-End Closedown Scheme Options: Update.  
The RFO, in conjunction with the Committee Chair, had considered the year-end closedown options and contracts that were being offered by RBS to assist with finalising accounts to 31 March 2024.

The Three-Year Gold Scheme provided the most favourable option in return for a discounted cost of £825 (net of VAT). It was possible to replace the existing Loyalty Member Scheme without incurring a penalty. An application form had been submitted by email on 12 December 2023 to meet the deadline.

The above was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to ratify the decision to apply to RBS in respect of the Three-Year Gold Scheme year-end closedown contract commencing 1 April 2024.

### 123. RISK MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER ANY RISK ASSESSMENTS.

123.1 Members had been asked to review draft risk assessments in respect of the following:

- a) Financial Risk Assessment.  
Amendments had been included following suggestions that had been made at the F&GP Committee meeting held on 7 December 2023. An updated risk assessment has been presented to members with amendments highlighted in red.

The above was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to adopt the draft financial risk assessment.

- b) Vehicle Risk Assessment.  
A new risk assessment had been drafted reflecting the lease of the van to support the Village Orderly role. Members were satisfied that all risks had been included and as such this had provided a comprehensive assessment.

The above was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to adopt the draft vehicle risk assessment.

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**124. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING, CONFERENCE AND ASSOCIATION EVENTS, AND RECEIVE ANY ATTENDANCE REPORTS.**

124.1 It was **NOTED** that members would be attending the following training sessions and community events:

Cllr. V. Upton Community Groups Forum in partnership with MSVA 18 January 2024

Cllr. A. Beecroft Mulberry & Co, Chairs Training 7 February 2024

Cllr. L. Grace SAFE by CST Safe Society Seminar February 2024

**125. MATTERS ARISE AFTER THE PREPARATION OF THIS AGENDA, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT. SUCH MATTERS WILL BE FOR NOTING OR DEFERRAL TO A FUTURE MEETING ONLY.**

125.1 The Clerk of a Surrey-based parish council, who lived in Lindfield village, had approached Lindfield Parish Council to seek assistance with storage. This facility was currently not available to them.

The meeting concluded at 20.26 hours.

### DISCLAIMER

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, statements and decisions recorded in these minutes, their status will remain that of a draft until they are confirmed as a correct record at the subsequent meeting.