

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 6 MARCH 2014** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield

The meeting began at 8.00 p.m.

**Present:**

Parish Councillors: Mr. S. Henton (Chairman)  
Mr. M. Allen  
Mr. W. Blunden  
Mr. R. Pickett  
Mr. R. Plass  
Mrs. V. Upton

**Not present:** Mr. M. Amor

**In attendance:** Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)  
Mrs. S. Kolien (Responsible Financial Officer (RFO))

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

**332. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**

332.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Amor and the reasons were accepted.

**333. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

333.1 There were no declarations from Members in respect of any items on the agenda.

**334. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

334.1 There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

**335. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2014.**

335.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9 January 2014. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

**336. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

336.1 The Chairman had no announcements to make.

**337. ACTION LIST.**

337.1 It was **NOTED** that certain policies should be in place and that drafts based on models where available would be prepared for the next meeting.

**338. GRANTS AND DONATIONS:**

338.1 Grants and donations budget - available funds. It was **NOTED** that there was a balance of £500 in the grants and donations budget and that this was the last meeting of the financial year.

338.2 Grant request from 4Sight. 4Sight (West Sussex Association for the Blind) was a fully registered medical and social welfare charity supporting blind and partially sighted people in West Sussex. It was **NOTED** that the work of this

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charity was of benefit to a number of residents of Lindfield Parish. It was **AGREED** to award a grant of £100 to 4Sight.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council, in accordance with its powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, which, in the opinion of the Council, was in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and would benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: a grant of £100 towards the work of 4Sight.

338.3 It was further **RESOLVED** that the balance of £400 should be carried forward to the 2014/15 Financial Year.

### 339. BUDGET 2013/14.

339.1 The February reports were not yet available. Members **NOTED** the reports to 31 January 2014.

339.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee - to review payments made to 31.01.14. **NOTED:** that the Finance and General Purposes Committee's budget progress to 31.01.14 showed that from a budget of £119,675, £103,688 had been spent plus a further £5,632 under the Capital Project headings for work at the Clock Tower House and public toilets on the Common for which the budget total was £38,000.

339.3 Analysis of Administration Budget to 31.01.14. **NOTED:** that the breakdown of the Administration Budget showed that to 31.01.14, from the budget of £104,675, £93,170 had been spent.

339.4 Overall Council Budget 2013-14: to review expenditure to 31.01.14. **NOTED:**

#### Environment and Amenities Committee

- £25,712 had been spent from the in-year budget of £64,150,
- £2,650 from the £6,316 set aside for outstanding projects and
- £2,031 from designated reserves of £25,048.

#### Planning and Traffic Committee

- £14,095 had been spent from the budget of £20,200

#### Overall Council budget

- £149,127 had been spent from the total budget of £242,025 and a further total of £4,681 from Outstanding Projects and Reserves for which the total stood at £166,689.

### 340. PARISH OFFICE MATTERS.

340.1 6 Denmans Lane. The former Parish Office had been emptied and decorated. Councillor Plass and the Clerk had an appointment with the letting agent the following afternoon to discuss the details for letting.

340.2 Utility bills. It was **AGREED** to defer consideration of a matter regarding utility bills to the confidential session.

340.3 Clock Tower House - electric meter. The alterations to the meter had not been straightforward, but an appointment had been made for 24 March to downgrade the existing meter (including off peak facilities for the storage radiators) so that the tenants could then make arrangements for a separate meter and account.

340.4 Clock Tower House - storage. The archive was now housed at the Clock Tower House and new shelving had been purchased, costing £324 plus VAT. The Committee **AGREED** to ratify this expenditure retrospectively. Arrangements had been made to either repair or replace the loft ladder and when that had been done the work to the clock would be carried out.

### 341. PROPOSED PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ON THE COMMON.

341.1 Members of the Working Group had met with representatives from MSDC: Pru Moore (Cabinet Member for Leisure and Sustainability), David Harper (Business Unit Leader, Waste and Outdoor Services) and Chris Coppens

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(Property Lawyer, Legal Services ) on 4 February to discuss any issues before going out to consultation. Some suggestions had been made which were being taken up with Goulds. The notes of the meeting would be circulated with the Full Council agenda in draft pending confirmation from MSDC. It was **NOTED** that two letters of objection to the proposal had been received from residents of Backwoods Lane.

### 342. **INSURANCE: TO CONSIDER THE RENEWAL OF THE POLICY.**

342.1 The Account Manager at Zurich, Jonathan Meiseles had met with the Clerk on 19 February to go over the details of the policy which was coming to the end of the current long term agreement. Further to that meeting, Mr. Meiseles had sent the revised schedule and a letter detailing some proposed changes for the Council to consider. It was **NOTED** that:

- The schedule and the premiums had been quoted on the basis of the existing arrangements, with index linked uplifts where applicable. Additional premiums would apply for any additional options the Committee agreed to include.
- The horsegyn and the allotment sheds and contents had been moved to the all risks category because this was cheaper but made no difference to the cover provided.
- Public Liability cover had been raised from £10,000,000 to £15,000,000 with no increase in the premium.

The Committee considered each of the proposed changes in the letter and **AGREED** as follows:

6 Denmans Lane. Addition of subsidence cover at an additional cost of £3.94 p.a.

6 Denmans Lane. Loss of rent cover for 24 months at an additional cost of £26.50 p.a. if the property was to be rented out and that this should be highlighted as part of the rental agreement.

Clock Tower House. Increase additional expenses cover under the Business Interruption heading to 24 months at an additional premium of £17.26 p.a.

Libel and Slander. Increase the cover from £100,000 to £500,000 at an additional premium of £26.50.

Personal Accident. Move the employees Personal Accident Cover to a salary based benefit of Capital Benefit 5 x salary and Weekly Benefit of 50% of salary. The additional premium would be £9.55 p .a.

Legal Expenses. It was **AGREED** not to reduce the contracts disputes cover which would have the effect of limiting the cover to contracts up to £5,000. The saving that would have been made would have been £153.33.

It was **AGREED** to renew the policy on the basis of a 3 year Long Term Agreement.

### 343. **REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR.**

343.1 The Internal Auditor had made reference to two items for further consideration:

Financial Regulations and Standing Orders – should be reviewed annually and updated where appropriate. It was **NOTED** that NALC were understood to be issuing an up to date version of the Model Financial Regulations in the near future and it was **AGREED** that the review of Financial Regulations should be undertaken when the revised Model had been received.

Risk Assessment. The Risk Assessment documentation was considered to be comprehensive but the risks needed to be scored as Low Medium or High Risk on a number of the forms.

### 344. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S INTERNAL AUDIT AND INTERNAL CONTROL PROCEDURES.**

344.1 It was **NOTED** that Full Council had to make a statement in the Annual Return that a review had taken place and that according to the guidance this should be done ahead of that meeting. This year the Annual Return was to be on the agenda for the Annual Meeting on 15 May in order to meet the External Auditors' deadline. The review

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would therefore be carried out and a written report would be presented to Full Council on 13 March for consideration and approval.

### 345. VAT MATTERS.

345.1 Having given due consideration to the report from the RFO and external advice received, it was **AGREED** that to pursue registration for VAT was not necessary at this time.

### 346. AMENDMENT TO PARISH COUNCIL INVOICES.

346.1 The RFO had reported that a number of requests were being received to pay invoices by electronic transfer. It was therefore **AGREED** that the Council's bank details be included on all invoices raised in order to facilitate this method of payment.

### 347. LINDFIELD PARISH DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK.

347.1 It was **NOTED** that Lindfield Rural Parish Council had agreed to pay for an additional 500 copies of the Directory for delivery to all their residents at a cost of £625. LRPC had also discussed having a couple of pages inserted into the Directories for Scaynes Hill containing information about organisations and activities in that village, and seeking advertising from Scaynes Hill businesses. It was **NOTED** that additional pages could only be inserted in multiples of eight which would increase the cost further. To include Scaynes Hill information within the existing pages would entail considerable work on the layout and may also necessitate extra pages.

It was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that a review should be carried out to ascertain whether there was a practical way to accommodate Scaynes Hill material. Members voted 2: 4 against a review, preferring to keep the Directory as a Lindfield publication.

### 348. ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

348.1 **NOTED** and **CONFIRMED**:

- Councillors Gomme and Plass and the Deputy Clerk to attend a Neighbourhood Plan Workshop at MSDC on 11 March, (free of charge).
- The RFO to attend the SALC Legal and Finance Day on 8 July - £87.50 plus VAT.
- The Clerk to attend the Sussex Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks AGM on 14 March (no charge).

It had previously been agreed to authorise attendance at SALC training days and Members were reminded to check the SALC website and advise the Clerk if they wished to attend any briefings etc.

### 349. RISK MANAGEMENT.

349.1 There were no updates to report.

### 350. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

350.1 Filming and recording of meetings. It was **NOTED** that recent amendments to the Local Accountability and Audit Bill would mean that the Standing Order prohibiting filming or recording of meetings without prior consent of the Council would no longer apply and Councils would have to consider how to manage the process. Details were expected to be contained in regulations to follow and a policy would be drawn up as appropriate.

### 351. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS.

351.1 It was **PROPOSED**, **SECONDED**, and **AGREED**, in accordance with the Public Bodies, Admission to Meetings Act 1960 section 1 (2) and the Parish Council's Standing Order 1 (c) that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded.

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### 352. LICENCE FEE 21 DENMANS LANE.

352.1 Licence 2014 / 15 It was **AGREED** to renew the licence for 2014 / 15 and the fee was **CONFIRMED**.

352.2 Licence 2015 /16. It was **AGREED** that the licence fee for 2015/16 should be increased in line with the percentage increase in allotment rents.

### 353. LGPS CONTRIBUTION BANDINGS FOR 2014/15

353.1 The contribution banding thresholds for 2014/15, as provided by the Scheme Administrators, were reviewed by matching pensionable pay to the appropriate band in the contributions table. Members **NOTED** that there was no resultant change to the contribution rate applicable to Lindfield Parish Council staff member who was in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

### 354. PARISH OFFICE (DEFERRED FROM OPEN SESSION).

354.1 A matter relating to utility bills was discussed and it was **AGREED** that a letter drafted by the RFO should be sent.

The meeting concluded at 8.50 p.m.