

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2014** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield

The meeting commenced at 8.00 p.m.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Mr. S. Henton (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mr. M. Amor
Mr. W. Blunden
Mr. R. Pickett

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

Not present: Councillors Mr. R. Plass (Vice Chairman) and Mrs. V. Upton

394. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

394.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Plass and Upton and the reasons were accepted.

395. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA.

395.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members in respect of any items on the Agenda.

396. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

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

397. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 JULY 2014.

397.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 17 July 2014. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

398. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

398.1 There were no Chairman's announcements.

399. ACTION LIST

399.1 The Action List was **NOTED** without comment.

400. GRANTS AND DONATIONS:

400.1 Grants budget: available funds. **NOTED** that the balance in hand was £1,050 with sum of £200 deducted from the balance but which not yet paid over for the Church Bells Project, pending a decision under the next agenda item. A Member asked for the register to be presented alphabetically in future.

400.2 Grant request from the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance. The Air Ambulance provided a 24 hours a day Helicopter Emergency Medical Service. Members noted that the Air Ambulance had attended several incidents in the village in recent years. It was **AGREED** to support this request for £250.

RESOLVED: that the Council, in accordance with its powers under Section 137 the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: a grant of £250 towards the work of the Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance.

- 400.3 Grant request from Victim Support, Sussex. Victim Support worked with victims of crime in the community and witnesses in the courts. People in the Lindfield area had benefitted from their support during the previous year. It was **AGREED** to award £100.

RESOLVED: that the Council, in accordance with its powers under Section 137 the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, which, in the opinion of the Council, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: a grant of £100 towards the work of the Victim Support Sussex

- 400.4 Poppy Appeal 2014: donation for the Parish Council wreath. It was **AGREED** that a donation of £45 should be made from the Chairman's Fund.

- 400.5 To note letters of thanks received. No letters of thanks had been received.

401. ALL SAINTS CHURCH BELLS PROJECT.

- 401.1 Councillor Snowling, who was not a member of the F&GP Committee, had submitted a paper recommending an award of £1,000 to the Bells Project, as agreed at the Full Council meeting on 10 July when he had expressed disappointment with the decision made at the F&GP Committee meeting on 22 May (£200 from the grants budget with a further £300 offered by Councillor Blunden from the Chairman's Fund). At the Full Council meeting on 11 September it had been agreed on a provisional basis to authorise the virement of the money from the Denmans Lane sinking fund, subject to the decision to be made subsequently by F&GP. During discussion, two members expressed reservations, but it was pointed out that this was a one-off opportunity to support a lasting feature of the village and that this was of benefit to the village as a whole and not just the church.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** by 3 votes to 1 and 1 abstention to award a donation of £1,000 towards the bells project. It was to be made clear that this was specifically to fund the bells as distinct from the wider Aspire Project because of the significance of the sound of the bells to the wider community.

Because the grants budget was intended for smaller donations and half the financial year still remained, it was **AGREED** that the £1,000 was to come from the designated reserve: Denmans Lane Sinking Fund, which was no longer required. The £200 previously agreed at the meeting of the Committee on 22 May 2014 was to be added back into the remaining balance in the grants budget.

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, is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: a donation of £1,000 towards the All Saints Church Bells Project.

402. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS: NEW SYSTEMS TO BE PUT IN PLACE

- 402.1 The RFO had prepared a short list of new systems to be put in place which had emerged from the review of the Financial Regulations. The Committee **APPROVED** the new systems and **NOTED** the action to be taken.

403. BUDGET 2014/15

- 403.1 Finance and General Purposes Committee - to review payments made to 31.08.14. **NOTED:** that the F&GP Committee's budget progress to 31.08.14 showed that from a budget of £123,020, a total of £45,668 had been spent.

- 403.2 Analysis of Administration Budget to 31.08.14. **NOTED:** that the breakdown of the Administration Budget showed that to 31.08.14, from the budget of £108,520, £41,995 had been spent.

- 403.3 Environment and Amenities Committee budget to 31.08.14. **NOTED:** £11,564 had been spent from the total budget of £70,000.

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403.4 Planning and Traffic Committee budget to 31.08.14. **NOTED:** £18 had been spent from the total budget of £40,200. It was suggested that the Planning and Traffic Committee should be encouraged to proceed with the traffic study. Councillor Blunden would request that this be included on the Agenda for the next full meeting of the P&T Committee.

403.5 Overall Budget to 31.08.14. **NOTED:**

- From budget total of £263,220 the total spent was £57,251.
- There had been no expenditure from the reserves to date.

403.6 To consider options for use of the capital sum received for the sale of 6 Denmans Lane. The RFO had consulted Mark Mulberry of SSALC. He had confirmed that a capital receipt could be used to repay the loan, or to fund a capital project such as the public toilets but it could not be used for supporting the general fund for the day to day running of the Parish Council. He had advised that this money should be shown as an earmarked reserve and put into a separate bank account so that there could be no accidental mixing of funds. The RFO felt that it would be enough to show it as a separate amount without putting it into a new bank account. However if this money was not spent in the foreseeable future, by paying off some of the loan for the Parish Office for example, it would be advisable to look for a suitable account that would earn interest. It was **AGREED** that further information was required about the impact of paying off a portion of the loan capital before a decision could be made on what to do with the capital receipt; meanwhile it should be kept as a separate reserve.

404. BUDGET 2015/16

404.1 Timetable for setting the budget. **NOTED:** the budget and precept must be approved by Full Council before the end of January. A meeting of F&GP would be arranged for the first half of January with Full Council following within a week or two to approve the recommendations. Committees were required to prepare their budget proposals over the next two months. It was **AGREED** to swap round the November meeting of F&GP and the December meeting of E&A to enable E&A to finalise its budget for consideration by F&GP in December, leaving time for any further adjustments to be made before F&GP approves a final version for recommendation to Full Council.

404.2 F&GP budget. It was **AGREED** that a meeting of the Administration Sub Committee should be arranged to discuss the Administration budget and report back to F&GP at the next meeting. It was also **AGREED** that the Grants budget should be reviewed at the next F&GP meeting and it was **NOTED** that the 2015 election should be budgeted for.

405. PARISH OFFICE MATTERS.

405.1 Damage to the front door: update on the insurance claim. Members had been informed about the damage to the Parish Office front door by a manoeuvring lorry for which an insurance claim had been submitted to Zurich Municipal with two quotations from local firms. Following some negotiation Zurich had agreed that firm that made the lower offer could be instructed. This firm has also been asked to add a catch and handle to keep the door closed when unlocked.

405.2 Work to the roof. The quotation received for repainting the Clock Tower House had been on a cosmetic basis and did not include the top and part of the tower. It was **AGREED** that they should be asked to quote for the whole roof and tower. It was **NOTED** that the procedures for contracts under Financial Regulations did not have to be applied in the case of repairs to plant and it was therefore not necessary to obtain three quotations, particularly as this was a somewhat specialised job. It was **AGREED** to authorise the Clerk in consultation with Councillor Plass and the Chairman of Council or this Committee to place an order subject to the outcome of further discussion with the contractor.

406. PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON.

406.1 Councillor Pickett reported that he was about to re-do his sketch of the new arrangement of cubicles for submission to Goulds, as agreed by the Working Group. Councillor Blunden stated that when the new design had been drawn up by Goulds, all possible sites on the Common would be re-examined for suitability.

407. POLICY ON REPORTING OF MEETINGS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

407.1 A draft policy had been drawn up pursuant to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. This had been circulated to Councillors and a draft report further to comments received was tabled and considered. It was **NOTED** and that the policy must not undermine the rights of members of the public and that the points made were covered by the Chairman's power to take action if a meeting was disrupted. It was **AGREED** to adopt the policy as drafted and that a shorter guide should be prepared for display at meetings.

408. ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

408.1 **NOTED:**

- the Clerk was to attend the Clerks' Networking Day on 7 October (previously approved).
- The Society of Local Council Clerks annual Regional Roadshow was to take place at Felbridge on 11 February 2015 and discounts were available for early and group bookings. Councillor Blunden stated that he wished to attend.

409. LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2015.

409.1 It was **NOTED** that "Become a Councillor" packs were available from SSALC at £5.50 each plus postage. It was **AGREED** that an order should be placed for 5 packs initially. Posters could be obtained electronically for printing as required. It was also **NOTED** that representatives of SSALC were prepared to attend events to encourage people to stand for election. It was suggested that they could be approached about attending Christmas Festival Night.

410. RISK MANAGEMENT.

410.1 There was no report under this item..

411. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

411.1 No other items of business were raised.

The public part of the meeting ended at 8.45.

412. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [AND PRESS].

412.1 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 3 (d) 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.

413. STAFFING MATTERS

413.1 A staffing matter was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that this should be taken up by the Administration Sub Committee at the meeting to be arranged to discuss the budget.

The meeting concluded at 8.53 p.m.