

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 02 MARCH 2017** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. S. Henton (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mr. W. Blunden
Mr. R. Plass (Vice Chairman)

In attendance: Mrs. T. Ely (RFO)
Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)

Absent: Parish Councillors Mr. R. Pickett, Mr. S. Shortland and Mrs V Upton.

190. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

190.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Mr. R. Pickett, Mr. S. Shortland and Mrs V. Upton and the reasons were accepted.

191. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

191.1 Village Day Programme. Councillors Blunden and Plass declared a personal interest in item 8 in the Agenda given that they were members of the Village Day Committee.

192. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

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

193. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2017.

193.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Thursday 12 January 2017. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

194. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

194.1 There were no Chairman's announcements.

195. ACTION LIST.

195.1 Risk Management (Minute 21.1). It was **NOTED** that a meeting was still to be arranged by the Insurance and Risk Management Working Group.

195.2 Public toilets on the Common (Minute 153.1). It was **NOTED** that a request to obtain an informal opinion from the Planning Officers in relation to an alternative site was still to be arranged. In view of the current workload of the Parish Clerk it was **PROPOSED** and **AGREED** that Councillor Plass would become project leader to progress this matter further.

196. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

196.1 Grants budget. It was **NOTED** that £875 remained in the budget of £2,000.

196.2 Councillor Allen reported on behalf of the Grants Panel as follows:

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Grant request from St Catherine's Hospice.

NOTED: St Catherine's Hospice was a registered charity that helped to provide the best possible care, advice and support for patients at the end of their life in the comfort and familiar surroundings of their own home. The specialist skills of their Community Nursing Team undertake some of the care duties at home, helping to provide short term respite from the physical and emotional demands placed upon the carer. Around 80% of patients had received assistance from this service and a grant had been sought towards the costs of caring for patients in the Lindfield area.

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 grant of £250 towards the work of the St Catherine's Hospice.

As the Hospice had already received a grant of £250 during the current financial year, it was **AGREED** to defer payment to the next financial year..

196.3 Grant request from Mid Sussex Older People's Council.

NOTED: MSOPC was a local registered charity that had been established to help older residents of Mid Sussex combat loneliness and isolation. Advice had also been provided in relation to health, heating and housing matters. Their 2017 programme had included coffee mornings and afternoon teas, provision of drop in IT support centres and an annual Christmas Party that had been booked to be held at King Edward Hall. Two volunteer drivers, who were Lindfield residents, had helped to provide transport for those with disability issues and difficulty having access to transport. A donation had been requested to help continue their work in Lindfield village.

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 grant of £150 towards the work of the Mid Sussex Older People's Council.

196.4 Grant request from Lindfield Arts Festival.

NOTED: The Lindfield Arts Festival was now a registered charity and had requested a grant to support their 2017 event which would be taking place over the weekend of the 8 and 10 September 2017. In particular a financial contribution had been requested towards the funding for a collection of workshops and exhibitions that would be held in local venues. This would provide the platform for local artists, crafts-people, musicians, writers and poets, including creative professionals to showcase their work. It was hoped that Lindfield Common would be used to facilitate a full performance stage with large screen to broadcast the BBC's Last Night of the Proms.

Councillor Allen had presented a review of the application for a grant made by the Linfield Arts Festival for 2017 dated January 2017. Following discussion it was recognised and hoped that in agreeing to award a grant, this would help contribute towards an increase in the level of public support for the event.

RESOLVED: to award a grant of £250 to the Lindfield Arts Festival 2017 under the powers granted by Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 to contribute towards expenses related to entertainment and the arts.

196.5 Grant request from Mid Sussex RED.

NOTED: Mid Sussex Remembrance, Education & Development (MED RED) had been established in September 2016 to organise military history events in the Mid Sussex community. All members were volunteers and any profits made after allowing for running costs would be donated to charity. Initial events had been held in Lindfield Primary Academy and Blackthorns Primary Academy in July 2016, and a launch event in King Edward Hall had taken place in November 2016. In 2017 it was their intention to hold a series of events and exhibitions in Lindfield, Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and East Grinstead. A grant of £250 had been requested towards the purchase of an aluminium frame 8 panel display board kit to be used at exhibitions.

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Following full and careful consideration it was **RESOLVED** that a request to award a grant of £250 to Mid Sussex RED would be declined preferring instead to offer use of the parish council's display boards. Councillor Allen would speak to Mid Sussex RED to explain the decision that had been made, upon receipt of a copy of the Parish Clerk's letter of confirmation.

196.6 Grant request from Citizens Advice Horsham.

NOTED: Citizens Advice Horsham was a registered charity operating in the name of Central and South Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau. They gave vital help and advice to members of the public for issues such as debt, relationship breakdown, homelessness, domestic violence as well as signposting for individuals with mental health issues and helping people reduce their gas and electric bill costs through their Energy Best Deal service. A donation had been requested towards the financial cost of ensuring that their services are provided free, impartial and accessible to everyone. These services included Advice Centres, telephone and email advice outreach services and services in conjunction with other organisations. The nearest Advice Outreach Centre was located in Haywards Heath.

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 grant of £200 towards the work of the Citizens Advice Horsham.

196.7 Grant request from Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance.

NOTED: The Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Trust (KSSAAT) were a registered charity providing advanced pre-hospital life-saving care to ill and injured people in the South East of England. Two helicopters with at least one doctor and one paramedic were currently in operation. Specialist clinical procedures, including advanced pain relief and general anaesthesia could be delivered to patients at the scene. A new helicopter had been taken into possession, an AW169, which would soon be in operation, offering a faster service. A grant request for £250 had been requested towards the funding of ongoing costs to provide this service in the Lindfield parish.

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 grant of £250 towards the work of the Citizens Advice Horsham.

196.8 Letters of thanks received. **NOTED:** that a letter of thanks had been received from CPRE Sussex for a donation of £100.

197. **VILLAGE DAY PROGRAMME: TO CONFIRM PARISH COUNCIL ADVERT.**

197.1 The Chairman reported on the options that were available to place an advert in the Village Day Programme for 2017. This cost would be met from the Administration budget.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to place a half page advert for a cost of £35.

198. **BUDGET 2016/17.**

198.1 The budget progress reports to 31.01.17 were **NOTED:**

- Finance and General Purposes Committee: - £94,709 had been spent from the budget of £131,780 of which £84,690 had been spent from the Administration budget of £115,780.
- Environment and Amenities Committee: - £34,585 had been spent from the budget of £51,600
- Planning and Traffic Committee: - £50 had been spent from the budget of £200 for Miscellaneous items
- Overall Council Budget 2016 / 17: - The total spent from the in-year budget total of £183,580 was £129,344.
- Reserves: - £6,397 had been spent from the £20,000 reserve for the Traffic Study and £1,653 had been spent from the General Reserve of £53,452.

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198.2 To note that the periodic check of the cash book, bank statements and petty cash etc was carried out on 20 February.

It was **NOTED** that the internal audit check had been carried out on the 20 February 2017 for the period October to December 2016. This had included checking the bank reconciliation each month, spot checks on entries that had been made in the cash book against invoices and checking the petty cash balance.

199. INVESTMENT OF FUNDS.

199.1 The Chairman reported that the RFO had prepared a report dated 27 February 2017 following receipt of Full Council approval to invest funds with the Nationwide Building Society in respect of their Business 6 Month Fixed Saver Account, and Santander in respect of their Treasurer's Savings Account. Consideration would now need to be given towards progressing to the application stage and identifying which councillors would be authorised to approve transactions on each account. A decision would also need to be made with regard to who would take responsibility for administering each of these accounts. The RFO had arranged a meeting with the Business Manager of Santander in Burgess Hill on 6 March 2017, to discuss the application process in more detail.

It was **RECOMMENDED** and **AGREED** that Councillors Blunden, Plass, Upton and Henton would be signatories in respect of the Nationwide Building Society in respect of their Business 6 Month Fixed Saver Account, and Santander in respect of their Treasurer's Savings Account. Councillor Henton would prepare a report for presentation to Full Council confirming the steps that would need to be taken in order to open these accounts, in order for an appropriately worded resolution to be passed.

200. TO NOTE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND INTERNAL CONTROLS.

200.1 It was **NOTED** that as Councillor Henton had responsibility for carrying out quarterly internal audit checks, Councillor Plass would undertake this review and submit a report to Full Council at their next meeting that was due to be held on 16 March.

201. LINDFIELD PARISH DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK 2017.

201.1 The Chairman referred to copies of a written report that had been prepared by the Clerk and which had been attached to the agenda. This related to the 2017 edition and included recommendations in respect of the 2018 edition for consideration.

It was **NOTED** that:

- Truprintmedia/Nordic Press had again provided a helpful and efficient service. The number of 2017 diaries printed had increased by 200 to 3,800 reflecting the addition of new homes in Gravelye Lane.
- Printing costs in respect of the 2017 edition for 3,600 copies were £5,145 (plus VAT). This had reflected a decrease in the number of advertisers and had resulted in a reduced number of pages being printed – 8 pages less.
- Income from advertising was at its lowest level since 2008 totalling £2,015.
- Shortfall (advertising income less printing cost) - £1,370.
- Estimated administration costs (staff hours, postage, stationery totalled £1,199.
- A loss of £3,214.
- The quotation for the 2018 edition had been received and circulated: £5,240 to print 72 pages or £5,540 to print 80 pages (plus VAT).

It was **AGREED**:

- To proceed with the Directory for 2018 with a concerted campaign involving the team of Members to increase the level of advertising. Concern had been raised with regard to the merit of producing the Directory and effectiveness of the current method of distribution. It was **RESOLVED** that the Lindfield Directory and Year Book Working Group would hold a meeting to consider a marketing strategy.
- To place the order for the 2018 edition with Truprintmedia/Nordic Press.

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- To order 3,800 copies in respect of the 2018 edition.
- The format to include the usual dark green cover with gold blocked logo and title, Lindfield signpost logo on the front cover, no ribbon and 80 pages of text and advertisements, or 72 pages if there was insufficient material.
- To authorise the Clerk/Deputy Clerk in consultation with the Editorial Group to make editorial changes and increase or decrease in the number of pages if necessary.
- The prices of advertisements to remain unchanged.
- To invite Lindfield Rural PC to make a contribution of £677.19 towards the loss that was incurred in respect of the 2017 edition.

202. PARISH OFFICE.

202.1 To authorise purchase of replacement office chair and disposal of faulty chair.

The Chairman reported that the RFO chair needed to be replaced as the pneumatic gas cylinder had failed.

It was **AGREED** to authorise the RFO to purchase a replacement chair taking into consideration HSE guidance, up to a maximum cost of £379.

203. PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE COMMUNITY PAGE.

203.1 To note the resignation of the Community Editor.

The Chairman reported that the current website had been set up in 2009. A community page had been added with a directory of businesses, a list of village organisations with contact details, articles of interest and notices of local events. Parish office staff had minimum involvement with assistance having been provided by Councillor Gomme and a volunteer Community Editor. The website was now very out of date.

It was **NOTED** that the Community Editor had resigned.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to discontinue the community page.

204. ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

204.1 It was **NOTED** that the Society of Local Council Clerks would be holding a Regional Seminar on Wednesday, 5 April 2017. A booking had been made for the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, RFO and Councillor Blunden to attend. Places were still available should other members of the council wish to attend. The agenda included sessions on social media and legal and financial matters.

204.2 The Chairman reported that SSALC had published a list of training and briefing events for the coming year and that it was normal practice to authorise bookings for staff and councillors to attend relevant events. This was **NOTED and AGREED**.

It was also **NOTED** that the RFO had attended an end of year finance and meeting procedures training event on 23 February 2017.

205. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME.

205.1 To note the requirement for scheme employers to review their discretions policy annually and notify the administrators by 28 February.

The Chairman reported that it was a requirement for scheme employers to review their discretions policy annually and to notify the administrators by 28 February. The Clerk had been advised that as the Parish Council had carried out a review in July 2016, it would not be necessary to complete a review at this time. It would however be necessary to undertake this exercise annually from 2018.

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The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to include this as a standard item on the agenda for F&GP meetings in January.

206. RISK ASSESSMENTS.

206.1 The Chairman reported that a comprehensive review of risk assessments had been carried out in relation to the current financial year as follows:

i) Financial Management, Cash Handling & Transportation, Parish Office and Display Screen Equipment.

It was **NOTED** that full reviews had been carried out in February 2017 and that the corresponding reports had been presented by the Clerk.

It was **AGREED** to accept these reports and these were signed by Councillors Henton, Plass and Blunden.

With regard to the Parish Office, it was **AGREED** that Councillors Allen and Plass would arrange to carry out an inspection of the premises.

ii) To note that employees who habitually use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal day work are entitled to ask their employers to provide a free eye test and provide spectacles if special ones are needed.

The above was **NOTED**.

207. **“OPERATION ‘LONDON BRIDGE’”: TO NOTE MSDC’S ADOPTED PROTOCOL FOR MARKING THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE OR LOCAL HOLDER OF HIGH OFFICE AND TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE PARISH COUNCIL SHOULD ADAPT THE PROTOCOL AS APPROPRIATE, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO PARTS 3 AND 4.**

207.1 The Chairman reported that MDSC had issued a protocol for marking the death of a senior national figure or local holder of high office, and that a copy of this had been attached to the agenda.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk and Councillor Blunden should adapt the protocol as appropriate with particular reference to parts 3 and 4, and present a draft to Full Council for approval.

208. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

208.1 Councillor Allen had raised concern that the Grants Panel were now one member short.

It was **AGREED** that Councillor Plass should join the Grants Panel.

The public part of the meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.

209. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [AND PRESS].

209.1 It was **RESOLVED** 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 as desirable in the public interest that the public [and press] be excluded.

210. RENEWAL OF LICENCE FEE: 21 DENMANS LANE AND TO CONSIDER THE FEE FOR 2018/2019.

210.1 The Chairman gave a brief background to this item.

210.2 Licence 2017/18. Councillor Allen declared a personal interest in this item as an acquaintance of the licensee. It was **AGREED** to renew the licence for 2017/18 and the fee agreed the previous year was **CONFIRMED**.

210.3 Licence 2018/19. It was **AGREED** that the licence fee for 2018/19 should not be increased, which was in line with the decision made by the Environment and Amenities Committee in respect of allotment tenancy fees.

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211. TO REVIEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME CONTRIBUTION BANDINGS FOR 2017/2018 (EMPLOYEES' CONTRIBUTIONS).

211.1 The Chairman reported that the contribution banding thresholds for 2017/18, as provided by the Local Government Pension Scheme Administrators, were reviewed on 1 April each year in line with Pension Increase orders. The increase applicable to the range was equal to the percentage increase to pensions due on the first Monday after 5 April each year using an increase date of 1 April 2014.

It was **NOTED** that although official notification had not been received from DCLG, table of the expected new bands for 2017/18 had been received. As all three members of staff fell comfortably within the relevant range, there would be no change to the percentage rates of their respective contributions.

211.2 It was **NOTED** that the Employers Contribution rate would remain at 21.7% for 2017/18.

The meeting concluded at 9.03 p.m.