

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 04 MAY 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. Pickett

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

**Absent:** Parish Councillors Mr. R. Plass and Mrs V Upton.

### **212. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**

212.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Mr. R. Plass and Mrs V. Upton and the reasons were accepted.

### **2131. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

213.1 Grants and Donations: Councillor Blunden declared a personal interest in item 7 in the Agenda given that he was a personal friend of Sheila Hobbs who was a member of the Lindfield Country Market Ltd.

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

214.1 Public Toilets on the Common. Mr N Kerslake expressed concern that a considerable amount of hard work had been carried out by members of the Council in trying to agree a suitable site for the proposed toilets on Lindfield Common. A number of different sites had been considered, and he was enquiring as to whether the Parish Council were able to provide a statement of the current position, outlining what options were available and future intentions.

### **215. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 MARCH 2017.**

215.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Thursday 2 March 2017. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

### **216. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

194.1 There were no Chairman's announcements.

### **217. ACTION LIST.**

217.1 Risk Management (Minute 21.1).  
It was **NOTED** that a meeting had taken place on 24 April 2017 by the Insurance and Risk Management Working Group.

217.2 Internal Audit (Minute 123.1).  
It was **NOTED** that a review of the internal audit and existing accounting procedures had been completed.

217.3 Public toilets on the Common (Minute 153.1).  
It was **NOTED** that a request to arrange a meeting with the Planning Officers in relation to an alternative site had been arranged.

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### 218. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

#### 218.1 To note available funds.

It was **NOTED** that £25 remained in the budget of £2,000 for the year ending 31 March 2017. An agreement had been made to make a donation of £250 to Catherine's Hospice out of the 2017/18 budget, and it was **NOTED** that a cheque for this sum had been drawn. This had resulted in £1,750 being available to spend from a total budget of £2,000.

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

##### Grant request from Lindfield Country Market Ltd.

**NOTED:** A letter of request had been received on 4 April 2017 from Lindfield Country Market Ltd seeking financial assistance. They had been experiencing a financial downturn and increased hall rental charges.

After full and careful consideration it was **AGREED** that the request did not fully meet the eligibility criteria as stated in the current Grants and Donations policy. It was **RESOLVED** that a request to award a grant to Lindfield Country Market Ltd would regretfully have to be declined.

#### 218.3 Grant request from St Peter and St James Hospice and Continuing Care Centre.

**NOTED:** A letter of request dated 7 March 2017 had been received from St Peter & St James Hospice & Continuing Care Centre who were a registered charity, seeking financial assistance towards their hospice transport service.

**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 Peter and St James Hospice and Continuing Care Centre.

#### 218.4 Letters of thanks received.

**NOTED:** that letters of thanks had been received from the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance Trust (KSSAAT) for a grant of £250, Citizens Advice Horsham for a grant of £200 and Lindfield Arts Festival for a grant of £250.

### 219. BUDGET 2016/17 (BUDGET PROGRESS REPORTS TO 31 MARCH 2017).

It was **NOTED** that budget progress reports for the end of the financial year had been previously circulated.

#### 219.1 i) Finance and General Purposes Committee – to review payments made to 31.03.17.

It was **NOTED** that £109,520 had been spent from the budget of £131,780.

#### ii) Analysis of Administration Budget to 31.03.17.

It was **NOTED** that £98,151 had been spent from the budget of £115,780.

#### iii) Overall Council Budget 2016/17: to review expenditure to 31.03.17.

It was **NOTED** that a total of £149,250 had been spent from the in-year budget of £183,580 of which:

- Environment and Amenities Committee: - £39,680 had been spent from the budget total of £51,600
- Planning and Traffic Committee: - £50 had been spent from the budget total of £200 and a further £9,633 had been spent from the designated reserves in respect of professional fees and the traffic study.
- General Reserve: - £1,835 had been spent from the General Reserve.

### 220. BUDGET 2017/18: TO NOTE ARRANGMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE UNSPENT BALANCES AND TRANSFERS TO RESERVES: AGENDA ITEM AT THE 6 JULY MEETING FOR A RECOMMENDATION TO FULLCOUNCIL.

220.1 The Chairman reminded members that each Committee would need to review their reserves and the unspent balances showing at the end of the year, in order to make recommendations about the allocation of unspent amounts. The designated and general reserves would then be revised to accommodate these recommendations as far as possible to

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correspond with actual funds available. These arrangements were **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that these would be included as an agenda item on the 6 July meeting for a recommendation to Full Council.

### 221. INTERNAL AUDIT.

#### 221.1 To receive the Internal Audit's Report of the Interim Visit on 15 March 2017 and the Clerk's response as presented to the Auditors on 26 April 2017.

The Chairman reported that the Internal Auditor had carried out an interim review on 15 March 2017.

It was **NOTED** that a report had been received from the Internal Auditor and that a number of considerations had been made which had included reference to the Councils' insurance cover. These had been considered by the Clerk whilst carrying out a review of the Council's insurance provision last month. At his final visit on 26 April, the Auditor had been presented with a written response by the Clerk in relation to each of the points raised. It had been confirmed by the Auditor that the explanations and proposed actions had all been considered to be satisfactory.

#### 221.2 To receive the Internal Auditor's Report of his Final Visit on 26 April 2017.

The Chairman reported that the Internal Auditor had carried out a final internal audit and annual review of accounts to 31 March 2017.

It was **NOTED** that a report had been received dated 26 April 2017. A restated value of £483,461 in respect of the Total Fixed Assets held for the year end 31 March 2016 was required in the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2017. A calculation error in respect of the value representing the Public Toilets in Denmans Lane had been identified by the RFO, which had resulted in an adjustment of £58K having to be made.

With regard to point 2, the Council had been reminded that there were two sets of Guidelines/Regulations that needed to be followed, being the Governance & Accountability Guide 2017 and the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. Copies of these had been circulated to all Councillors by email and it was confirmed that printed copies were in use at the Parish Office.

### 222. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT ANNUAL RETURN AND YEAR END ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31.03.17: TO BE PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL BY FULL COUNCIL AT THE MEETING TO BE HELD ON 11 MAY 2017.

#### 222.1 The Chairman reported that a draft copy of the Annual Return and Year End Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017 had been circulated. Section 2 – Accounting statements 2016/17 had been signed by the RFO and Annual internal audit report 2016/17 on page 5 signed by the Internal Auditor. The RFO had recommended using the publication period that had been suggested by the External Auditors for the exercise of public rights which was Monday, 5 June until Friday 14 July 2017.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to recommend that the draft Annual Return and Year End Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017 be presented to Full Council for approval at their annual meeting due to be held on Thursday 11 May 2017. It was **AGREED** to accept the RFO recommendation to use the publication period for the exercise of public rights Monday, 5 June until Friday 14 July 2017.

### 223. INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP.

#### 223.1 To receive the note for the record of the meeting held on 24 April 2017.

The Chairman reported that a meeting of the Insurance and Risk Management Working Group had been held on Monday 24 April 2017, and it was **NOTED** that minutes of the meeting had been circulated.

#### 223.2 To note the list of actions arising from Risk Assessments and inspections carried out in 2016/17 Risk Assessments.

The Chairman reported that a Risk Assessment Action List dated March 2017 had been circulated and that the main risks to the Parish Council had been considered under the broad headings of Health and Safety, Legal and Governance and Financial. It was **NOTED** that the Working Group had monitored the Action List and that they had carried out regular physical inspections. It had been confirmed that no risks had been identified that needed to be

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added to the insurance schedule. The action list had been updated to include names of those responsible for the action to be taken.

### 223.3 To consider the recommendations in respect of the review of the Insurance provision.

The Chairman reported that a Summary sheet headed Lindfield Parish Council Insurance Review 2017, dated 27 April 2017, had been circulated with the agenda, which had been prepared by the Clerk for consideration. It was **NOTED** that the current insurance policy was due to be renewed on 27 May 2017, which had been a three year long term agreement. The Insurance and Risk Management Working Group had met on 24 April 2017 to undertake a thorough review of insurance provision, and had considered quotations that had been received from companies referred to as A, B and C. Quotations had been requested to include cover for key person and cyber crime, in line with a suggestion that had been made by the Internal Auditor. The Working Group had recommended that the Parish Council continue with their existing insurer referred to as company A.

After discussion it was **AGREED** to accept the recommendation of the Working Group to renew cover with the existing insurance company referred to as company A for a three year long term agreement, in respect of an annual premium of £1,583.11, including insurance premium tax of £143.91. The following amendments to cover would be incorporated:

- All Risks Allotment Shed contents sum insured to be increased to £10,000 to include contents in respect of the public toilets.
- Removal of Hirer's liability.
- Legal expenses cover to remain unchanged at £250,000.
- Personal Accident cover to be provided for persons up to 90 years. Limit for under 18s in full time education would be £7,500.
- Fidelity Guarantee cover would remain at £500,000.
- With regard to cyber crime and internet banking, cover for financial loss to a third party would be provided under the policy if the Parish Council were to be found negligent. Additional cover would be provided by the bank in the event of loss, on the understanding that sensible precautions had been observed. An amendment was therefore considered to be unnecessary.
- Key person cover would not be required as the Parish Council were in a position to budget separately for this loss.

### 224. INVESTMENT OF FUNDS: REPORT BY COUNCILLOR HENTON.

#### 224.1 Investment of Parish Council Cash Deposits.

The Chairman reported that, with regard to the exercise to spread the Parish Council's cash deposit which at present was entirely with Barclays Bank between two other organisations so as to bring more of the funds under the Government's deposit protection scheme, it had been decided to deal with one new organisation at a time. Accordingly, placing a deposit with Nationwide Building Society would be dealt with first and that in order to authorise the placing of such a deposit with this Society the authorities set out in the following resolution, would need to be approved (and recommended to full Council):

- i) The Responsible Financial Officer ("RFO"), Tracy Ely and the Chairman of Financial & General Purposes Committee, Stephen Henton, be and are hereby authorised on behalf of Lindfield Parish Council ("LPC") to set up with Nationwide Building Society ("NBS") a Nationwide Business Instant Saver Account with an initial deposit of £85,000;
- ii) The main contact between LPC and NBS would be the RFO;
- iii) "Business Officials" as required by NBS to be nominated to be Councillors William Blunden and Stephen Henton;
- iv) "Authorised Signatories" to be any two of Councillors William Blunden, Valerie Upton, Ronald Plass and Stephen Henton;
- v) Any instructions to NBS regarding the Business Instant Saver Account to require the authorisation of any two Signatories named in (4) above and

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vi) Interest accrued on the deposit with NBS to be paid directly into the LPC's current account with Barclays Bank which would be named as the nominated account with NBS.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the above authorities and to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council for approval.

224.2 The Chairman reported that consideration had previously been given with regard to investing funds into the Santander Treasurers Savings Account. On close inspection of their Terms and Conditions, it was concluded that their rules governing withdrawal transactions were not compatible with that of the Parish Council financial controls.

This was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to close the line of enquiry with Santander in respect of their Treasurers Savings Account. Consideration would instead be given towards transferring funds into an additional bank current account.

224.3 Barclays Bank.

i) Following the proposed changes to Lindfield Parish Council's banking arrangements that had been referred to in the preceding minute, it was proposed to move to full online banking on a step by step basis; additionally various other changes would be needed. At present only the Clerk and the authorised signatories were recognised by Barclays to speak to the Bank on the telephone about the account. As a first step to move towards online banking it was proposed that the RFO be given authority to have "view only" online access to the two accounts with Barclays.

ii) At present only the Clerk was authorised to draw petty cash up to £250. It was proposed that the Clerk and RFO both be authorised to draw petty cash up to an amount of £250.

iii) Approval would be needed for Lindfield Parish Council to have a debit card as at present personal debit cards were used to make certain purchases which was unsatisfactory. A proper security system would need to be put in place to control its use.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the above proposals and to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council for approval.

**225. PARISH OFFICE.**

225.1 To note purchase of a replacement office chair under delegated action.

The Chairman reported that a replacement chair had been purchased at the cost of £179.18 plus VAT and this had been **NOTED**.

**226. PROPOSED PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON UPDATE.**

226.1 The Chairman reported on a written note that Councillor Plass had provided dated 3 May 2017.

It was **NOTED** that informal site meetings had taken place on Lindfield Common between Councillor Plass, the Parish Clerk, MSDC Planning Officer Joe Swift and MSDC Conservation Officer Emily Wade to determine their views and solicit support on an appropriate site for the proposed public toilets on Lindfield Common.

The site between the top Common Car Park and the Horse Trough, and the site North West and on the edge of the Bowling Green Car park had been considered in detail. Informally Joe Swift had stated he did not have a problem with either site, however the Conservation Officer would only back the Bowls car park site. It being the least intrusive to the heritage of the Common and sufficiently removed from existing habitation.

A full written report with recommendations was currently awaited.

**227. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.**

227.1 The Chairman reminded members that SSALC training events were published on their website and that bulletins were circulated by email. These were also added to the Councillors weekly lists. It was **NOTED** that there is a morning

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session for Councillor Briefing and Awareness Updates on 22 June in St Leonards on Sea and a Chairmanship Training near Hellingly on 4 July in the evening.

### **208. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

208.1 No other items of business were raised.

The meeting concluded at 8.35 p.m.