

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2015**, at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 8.05 p.m.

**Present:**

Parish Councillors: Mr. S. Henton (Chairman)  
Mr. M. Allen  
Mr. A Gomme  
Mr. S. Shortland  
Mrs. V Upton

**In attendance:** Mrs C. Irwin (Clerk)  
Mrs. T. Ely (Responsible Financial Officer)

**Not present:** Councillors Mr. W. Blunden and Mr. R. Plass (Vice Chairman).

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

**39. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**

39.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Blunden and Plass and the reasons were accepted.

**40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

40.1 Councillor Upton declared a personal interest in item 7. (ii) as she was the Parish Council's representative on the Mid Sussex Older People's Council.

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

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

**42. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 JULY 2015.**

42.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9 July 2015. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

**43. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

43.1 There were no Chairman's announcements.

**44. ACTION LIST.**

44.1 The Chairman enquired about the progress in respect of work being carried out to fit the replacement loft ladder in Clock Tower House. The Clerk confirmed that work had now been completed. It was **AGREED** that this item can now be regarded as having been completed and therefore be removed as an outstanding item on the Action List.

44.2 The Clerk had reported on the outstanding matter concerning clearing of old files in the Parish Office. Much progress had been made in sorting out these old papers and the Clerk felt that since this was an ongoing matter which received attention when time permitted it could be removed from the Action List. This was **AGREED** on the understanding that a report would be submitted if further storage requirements gave rise to problems.

**45. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.**

45.1 Grant Budget. It was **NOTED:** The unspent balance on the grants register currently stood at £1,400.00.

45.2 Councillors Gomme and Allen reported on behalf of the Grants Panel as follows:

Grant request from Mid Sussex Older People's Council. Councillor Upton declared a personal interest in this item as stated at Minute 40.1 and did not take part in the discussion or vote.

Councillor Gomme invited Councillor Upton to provide a verbal summary outlining the benefits of the Mid Sussex Older People's Council to the community. After giving this brief summary, Councillor Upton left the room for the remainder of this item.

**NOTED:** Mid Sussex Older People's Council was a registered charity which had been established to provide information and support to the older people by way of meetings, workshops and social events held in villages throughout the area. They were holding an annual Christmas Event/Party at King Edward Hall in Lindfield on 5 December 2015 and had requested a grant towards their expenditure.

**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 expenditure incurred by the Mid Sussex Older People's Council.

Councillor Upton rejoined the meeting.

45.3 Letters of thanks received. Letters of thanks had been received from St Peter and St James Hospice and the West Sussex Mediation Service for grants of £250 and £100 respectively.

**46. BUDGET 2015/2016 (Budget Progress Reports to 31 July 2015).**

46.1 It was **NOTED** that the August 2015 budget reports should be completed in time for presentation to the Full Council meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015. The budget progress reports to 31 July 2015 had been circulated.

46.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee - to review payments made to 31.07.15.

**NOTED:** That the F&GP Committee's budget progress to 31.07.15 showed that from a budget of £128,020 a total of £37,517 had been spent.

46.3 Analysis of Administration Budget to 31.07.15.

**NOTED:** That analysis of the Administration budget showed that to 31.07.15, from the budget of £112,520 a total of £34,392 had been spent.

46.4 Overall Council Budget 2015 / 16: to review expenditure to 31.07.15.

It was **NOTED:**

- £37,761 had been spent from the total Environment and Amenities Committee budget of £75,400.
- Nothing had been spent from the total Planning and Traffic Committee budget of £200.
- From the overall budget total of £203,620 the total spent was £75,278.
- There had been no expenditure from the reserves to date.

46.5 Receipt of refund for £1,332.00 from UK Power Networks

It was **NOTED** that the Parish Council's street lighting contractor had negotiated a refund of £1,332.00 following completion of work relating to the replacement of concrete columns.

**47. BUDGET 2016/2017: TO AGREE TIMETABLE.**

- 47.1 Timetable for setting the budget. It was **NOTED**: the budget must be approved by Full Council in time for the precept to be submitted to the MSDC before the end of January. Meeting dates for next year had not yet been arranged although the F&GP would meet early in the New Year and a Council meeting a week or two after that. In the meantime, F&GP were due to meet on 10 December which would allow time for E&A to consider their budget on 1 October and 26 November. P&T were due to meet on 24 November by which time it was hoped that an estimate for the cost of the traffic study would be available. A meeting of the Administration Sub Committee was to be arranged to consider this budget.

It was **AGREED** that a meeting of the Administration Sub Committee would be arranged at the beginning of November at which point in time the six month budget progress reports would have been prepared.

**48. LINDFIELD PARISH DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK 2016 EDITION.**

- 48.1 Verbal report on Progress to date. The Chairman reported that work had been in progress although the level of advertising had decreased with only £3,205 having been received so far. If the shortfall could not be made up then the total number of pages may have to be reduced.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the decision to reduce the number of pages to be printed be delegated to the office staff in consultation with the Directory Working Group.

**49. TO CONSIDER DRAFT PROCEDURE FOR DOCUMENT RECEIPT, CIRCULATION, RESPONSE, HANDLING AND FILING FURTHER TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR.**

- 49.1 The Chairman reported that the draft had been circulated with the Agenda for consideration.

It was **AGREED** to approve the draft procedure and to submit it to Full Council with a recommendation for approval.

**50. PROPOSED PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ON THE COMMON.**

- 50.1 Report of meeting with MSDC representatives held on 15 July 2015. The Chairman reported that a verbal report had been given at the last Council meeting and that draft notes had been circulated subject to receiving confirmation by those people who had attended the meeting.

- 50.2 The Chairman reported that an email had since been received from Steven King, Planning Applications Team Leader at MSDC, who had offered some initial pre application advice regarding location of the building. This had been requested by David Harper on behalf of the Parish Council and details of the email had been circulated with the Agenda for consideration.

The above was **NOTED** and, as two members of the Working Group were not present, it was **AGREED** to seek approval from Full Council to proceed with a Public Consultation in order to obtain views on the proposed site location and design of the building. The Public Consultation should take place in King Edward Hall in Lindfield village.

**51. PARISH OFFICE UPDATE.**

- 51.1 To consider a Report from the Clerk regarding the Cost of Repairs to the Clock located at Clock Tower House. Full details of the revised estimate had been circulated in a report issued by the Clerk, with a recommendation for consideration.

The Chairman reported that an estimated cost had been received from Mr John Carpenter dated 25 July 2013 to have the clock mechanism removed, fully overhauled, re-installed and set up. A cost of £550.00 had been quoted. In addition it had been estimated that it would cost £545.00 to supply and fit the resetting mechanism. This work had been dependant on the loft ladder being replaced and which had now recently been completed.

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The Chairman reported that the Clerk had received upon request a revised estimate dated 9 September 2015 from Mr John Carpenter. It had been estimated that it would now cost £625.00 to remove the clock mechanism from the tower to the workshop, to strip and carry out a full overhaul, and to then re-install and set up the clock. An additional estimated cost of £650.00 would be required to supply and fit the resynchroniser. A total estimated cost of £1,275.00 had been quoted, excluding the cost of scaffolding.

(i) *External access required to carry out repairs to the Clock.*

Consideration had been given towards Mr Carpenter's preference to erect scaffolding. It was **NOTED** that an alternative possible option might have been to consider using the Parish Council's street lighting contractors' cherry picker if available.

It was **AGREED**: Mr Carpenter should make his own arrangements to erect scaffolding. This would avoid potential timing delays with equipment being supplied and used by other sources. Greater safety would be provided in view of the large volume of lorry traffic present at Lindfield Enterprise Park.

(ii) *Financial Regulations influencing the cost to carry out repairs to the Clock.*

It was **NOTED**: for contracts over £100 and below £3,000 three or more quotations should normally be obtained. However, the Financial Regulation 11.1 (iii) states that this regulation need not be applied if the contract relates to work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant. It was **AGREED** that it would not be practical to obtain three quotations given the specialist nature of the work and that the Council should make an exception to the general rule regarding obtaining three quotations.

It was **AGREED** to accept the recommendation made by the Clerk to instruct Mr Carpenter to proceed with the work according to his estimate dated 9 September 2015 and that he should be asked to make his own arrangements to erect scaffolding.

### 51.2 Business Rates.

The Chairman reported that Goodman Nash had negotiated a total refund of £2,377.38 for the period 15 August 2014 to 1 April 2016. This had resulted following the sale of the Denmans Lane office and subsequently having qualified for the smaller business rate relief.

It was **NOTED** that the small business rate relief had reduced liability in the current year from £3,984 to £1,527. As soon as the refund has been paid by BACS, Goodman Nash will raise an invoice in respect of their fee represented by 35% of the total refund.

## 52. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

52.1 The Committee had previously approved attendance at SSALC training events at a previous meeting. The Chairman reported that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council would be attending the SSALC Chairs' Networking Day on 30 September 2015. The RFO would be attending the Legal and Finance Day on Tuesday, 20 October 2015.

. The following events were also **NOTED**:

- The next Clerks' Networking Day will take place on 3 November 2015 at Ticehurst.
- SSALC would be holding a planning event on 8 October 2015 at Lodge Hill, Pulborough, 6.00pm to 9.00pm, costing £25.00 plus VAT. Places were limited to two per Council.
- Two additional SSALC events on HR and Chairmanship Training were available to attend on 13 October at Lodge Hill, Pulborough and 18 November 2015 in Reigate. The costing would be £75.00 plus VAT for the whole day or £50.00 plus VAT for just the Chairmanship session in the afternoon.

## 53. RISK MANAGEMENT (Standing Item).

53.1 It was **NOTED**: Nothing to report.

**54. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

54.1 No other items of business were raised.

The public part of the meeting ended at 8.44 p.m.

**55. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS.**

55.1 The following item concerned staffing matters and it was therefore **AGREED** in accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Order 1 (c) that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was desirable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded.

**56. STAFFING MATTERS**

56.1 The RFO was asked to leave the room for this item. A procedural staffing matter was discussed.

The meeting concluded at 8.49 p.m.