

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER 2015**, 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. A Gomme  
Mr. R. Plass (Vice Chairman)  
Mr. S. Shortland  
Mrs. V Upton

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

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

**57. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**

57.1 All Members were present.

**58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

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

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

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

**60. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2015.**

60.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10 September 2015. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

**61. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

61.1 There were no Chairman's announcements.

**62. ACTION LIST.**

62.1 The Action List was **NOTED**.

**63. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.**

63.1 Grant Budget. It was **NOTED**: The unspent balance on the grants register currently stood at £1,300.00.

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

Grant request from Victim Support.

**NOTED:** Victim Support was a registered charity which had been established to provide a comprehensive service in the community providing personal contact with victims of crime. A greater range of support was being offered to include emotional support from their team of volunteers for serious crimes including murder, rape and death/injury from road traffic accidents, and providing an enhanced range of practical support services

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including hate crime. Volunteers were trained to take part in the Government's Restorative Justice System. People in the Sussex Community had benefitted from their support during the previous year.

**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 Victim Support.

Grant request from 4Sight.

**NOTED:** 4Sight (West Sussex Association for the Blind) was a registered charity which had been established to support severely sight impaired and partially sighted people living in West Sussex. Their services were delivered to contribute towards the England Vision Strategy and outcomes required for the Seeing It My Way vision. Advice and guidance was provided from three resource centres in the county as well as from some of the eye clinics within hospitals in West Sussex. Whilst 17 members of the Parish of Lindfield currently used these services, predictions had suggested that there would be increased demand to support people with sight loss remaining independent and living at home in this 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, was in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and would benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure: a grant of £150 towards expenditure incurred by 4Sight.

63.3 Letters of thanks received. Letters of thanks had been received from the Lindfield Arts Festival and the Mid Sussex Older People's Council for grants of £250 and £100 respectively.

### 64. BUDGET 2015/2016 (Budget Progress Reports to 31 October 2015).

64.1 It was **NOTED** that the budget progress reports to 31 October 2015 had been circulated and that the budget progress reports to 30 November 2015 had not yet been completed.

64.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee: to review payments made to 31 October 2015.

**NOTED:** That the F&GP Committee's budget progress to 31 October 2015 showed that from a budget of £128,020 a total of £75,105 had been spent and a further £3,283 from the designated reserve for repair work that had been carried out at Clock Tower House.

64.3 Analysis of Administration Budget to 31 October 2015.

**NOTED:** That analysis of the Administration budget had showed that to 31 October 2015, from the budget of £112,520 a total of £71,360 had been spent.

64.4 Overall Council Budget 2015 / 16: to review expenditure to 31 October 2015.

It was **NOTED:**

- £41,062 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 miscellaneous budget of £200 and designated reserves of £35,000.
- From the overall budget total of £203,620 the total spent had been £116,168.
- There had been no further expenditure from the reserves to date other than £3,282 that had been reported in item 64.2 of these minutes.

### 65. TO NOTE THE REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOLLOWING HIS INSPECTION ON 18 NOVEMBER 2015.

65.1 It was **NOTED** that Peter Frost had carried out an Internal Audit on 18 November 2015 and in accordance with his Internal Audit Plan, Controls and Procedures had been tested, with Fraud and Risk Issues having been reviewed. It was reported that these had been well managed, in line with the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils Practitioners' Guide and had met the needs of the Council. One comment had been made regarding Risk Assessment in which there had been a few areas where the responsibility for monitoring certain issues should be added.

**66. NALC (NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS) SECTOR LED BODY FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDIT: TO CONSIDER FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL A RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION TO BECOME AN OPTED IN AUTHORITY TO THE NALC SCHEME.**

66.1 The Chairman paraphrased the e-mail that had been received from SSALC dated 17 November 2015 and accompanying letter received from NALC. Copies of these had been circulated with the Agenda. The previous Government had abolished the audit commission and from the start of the 2017/18 financial year smaller authorities, including parish councils, were to be given the choice to procure their own external auditor. It had since been confirmed that the Government had agreed to NALC and partners being nominated to form a Sector Led Body to procure audit services on behalf of local councils to help reduce the possibility of increased workload. The opportunity to opt out of the Sector Led Body for a five year period had to be exercised by 31 January 2016 otherwise the Council would automatically be included. It had been suggested that the Lindfield Parish Council opt in.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to submit to Full Council a recommendation to approve for Lindfield Parish Council to opt in to the Sector Led Body Audit procurement for the next five years.

**67. ADMINISTRATION SUB COMMITTEE: TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2015 (PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED).**

67.1 The Chairman reported on the Minutes of the meeting that had been held on 9 November 2015 by the Administration Sub Committee. It was **NOTED** that the main item of business had been the Administration Budget for next year. Updates had also been provided regarding the Parish Office and a confidential staffing matter, which had been referred to Full Council.

**68. BUDGET 2016/2017: TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATION SUB COMMITTEE, THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE AND THE PLANNING AND TRAFFIC COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF THE BUDGET REQUIREMENTS AND TO CONSIDER THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE BUDGET.**

68.1 It was **NOTED** that the total budget and, if possible, the precept had to be considered by Thursday, 7 January 2016 in time to be finalised, and a recommendation submitted to Full Council on 14 January 2016.

68.2 Administration Budget.

The Chairman reported that the Administration Sub Committee had agreed recommendations for consideration by F&GP at a meeting held on 9 November 2015. It was **NOTED** that the main increases had related to National Insurance Contributions, pension contributions, auditors' fees and repairs and remedial work to Clock Tower House. Details had been provided on a spreadsheet. The increase had totalled £3,260.

68.3 Environment and Amenities Committee Budget.

The Chairman reported that the E&A Committee had agreed recommendations for consideration by F&GP at a meeting held on 26 November 2015. It was **NOTED** that this had been considerably less compared to last year's budget due to completion of two large projects. In addition, the Council had been building up reserves over a period of time to fund other specific projects. The Committee had also proposed to transfer the 2015/2016 unspent balances to the designated reserves next year.

It had been agreed by the E&A Committee to budget for £2,000 in respect of post and rail fencing. On further consideration however the F&GP Committee had felt it necessary to take into account the joint project with MSDC and the possibility of the Council having to contribute towards the footpath. It was **AGREED** to increase the budget to £3,000 in respect of post and rail fencing to include the footpath.

The total in year budget that had been proposed was £51,600 which included a new heading for additional pavement bollards to be erected near the Butcher's on the High Street. It was **AGREED** that the total budget would now be increased to £52,600 to reflect the above amendment.

68.4 Planning and Traffic Committee Budget.

It was **NOTED** that the P&T Committee had proposed to retain the miscellaneous budget at £200 and to carry forward any unspent balance to the reserve next year.

68.5 Finance and General Purposes Committee Budget.

It was **NOTED** that an increase in the number of Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Books for 2017 would be required to accommodate additional new homes that were being built. At present the diaries had cost £5,050 for 3,600 copies and it would have cost £5,440 to print 3,900 copies. Allowing for a 10% increase in cost to print 3,900 copies, the total overall cost would still remain within the budget of £6,000. It was **AGREED** that the budget of £6,000 would remain unchanged in respect of the Village Directory.

It was **NOTED** that no further additional changes had been proposed in respect of the F&GP budget. It was **AGREED** that the F&GP Committee would meet again in early January 2016 to consider calculations for funding the budget and to agree the precept.

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

69.1 The Chairman reported that the Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Books had been delivered to the Parish Office on 9 December 2015, and that these would be counted out ready for distribution by the delivery team the following week. It was **NOTED** that the delivery team were to be asked at the same time to deliver flyers advising that a joint public meeting had been arranged on 6 January 2016 with Lindfield Rural Parish Council regarding a development proposal for land south of Scamps Hill.

**70. VAT RETURN: TO NOTE THAT THE TWICE YEARLY RETURN HAS BEEN SUBMITTED.**

70.1 The Chairman reported and it was **NOTED** that the twice yearly VAT return had been submitted.

**71. FIXED ASSET REGISTER: TO NOTE ADVICE RECEIVED ABOUT THE LAYOUT.**

71.1 The RFO reported that following attendance at the recent Legal and Finance Day, Mark Mulberry had recommended that the Fixed Asset Register should include an additional heading to record the replacement value for each item listed. It had been confirmed that there was no legal requirement to implement this recommendation.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** not to change the current Fixed Asset Register to include an additional heading to record the replacement value for each item listed.

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

72.1 The Chairman reported that a new training programme booklet had been published by SSALC. Copies of this had been printed and circulated to all Councillors. Members were advised that the Council had a training budget and that it was the Committee's practice to give approval for Staff and Councillors to attend a relevant course. Should a member wish to attend, would they please inform the Clerk.

The above was **NOTED**.

**73. RISK MANAGEMENT (Standing Item).**

73.1 It was **NOTED** that a meeting should be arranged in the New Year by the Insurance and Risk Management Working Group to consider Risk Assessment and **AGREED** that this should take place prior to the next Audit.

**74. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

74.1 No other items of business were raised. The Chairman wished everybody a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting concluded at 8.37 p.m.