

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 17 MAY 2012** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

Present: Mr. S. Henton (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mr. M. Amor
Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman)
Mr. R. Plass
Mrs. V. Upton

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin

Absent: Councillors Mr. A Gomme and Mr. R. Pickett

The Chairman of Council opened the meeting at 8.00 p.m.

114. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

114.1 The Chairman of Council called for nominations. Councillor Henton was **NOMINATED** by Councillor Plass and, there being no further nominations, Councillor Stephen Henton was duly **ELECTED** as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2012/13.

Councillor Henton took the Chair for the meeting.

115. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

115.1 Councillor Plass was **NOMINATED** by Councillor Henton and, there being no further nominations, Councillor Ron Plass was duly **ELECTED** as Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2012/13 .

116. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

116.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gomme and Pickett and the reasons were accepted.

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

117.1 There were no such delarations.

118. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

118.1 No members of the public were present at the meeting.

119. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 MARCH 2012.

119.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 15 March 2012. These were **AGREED** and the Minutes and Confidential Minutes were **SIGNED** by the Chairman as being a true record of that meeting.

120. TO APPOINT SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS AND TO AGREE THEIR MEMBERSHIP:

120.1 It was **AGREED** that the following Sub Committees and Working Groups of the Finance and General Purposes Committee should continue and that their membership should be as follows:

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- **Insurance and Risk Management Sub Committee (5 members)**. Remit: to review the insurance policies of the Council, to agree minor amendments to the policy incurring an increase in premiums of no more than £100, and to oversee the Council's risk management procedures and to ensure that the requirements were met.

Councillors Allen, Amor, Gomme, Henton and Plass

- **Administration Sub Committee (5 members)**. Remit: to oversee employment matters and the running of the Parish Office within the agreed Administration Budget and in consultation with the Parish Clerk, including periodic checks of the premises for compliance with Health and Safety and Risk Management requirements.

Councillors Blunden, Gomme, Henton, Plass and Upton

- **Directory Working Group (5 members)**. Remit: to give practical help to the office staff if needed when preparing the Parish Directory and Year Book for the printers.

Councillors Allen, Amor, Gomme, Plass and Upton.

- **Public Toilets Working Group**: It was **AGREED** to increase the membership of this group from 3 to 5 members:

Councillors Amor, Blunden, Henton, Pickett and Plass

- **Office Accommodation Working Group**: It was **AGREED** to increase the membership of this group from 4 to 5 members:

Councillors Allen, Amor, Blunden, Gomme and Henton.

- **Grants Panel**: It was **AGREED** to increase the membership of this group from 2 to 3 members:

Councillors Allen, Amor and Gomme.

121. **BANK MANDATE: TO AGREE RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL REGARDING AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES.**

- 121.1 It was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the signatories authorised on the Bank Mandate should be Councillors Blunden, Upton, Henton and Plass, plus the Clerk for purposes of drawing petty cash and issuing instructions to the Bank only.

122. **TO NOTE LIST OF DIRECT DEBITS AND STANDING ORDERS .**

- 122.1 The list of Direct Debits and Standing Orders in force for the coming year was **NOTED** and **AGREED**. The Clerk confirmed in response to a question from a Member, that when the work had been completed to upgrade the street lights, a better price for energy would be negotiated with EDF.

123. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

- 123.1 The Chairman had no announcements to make.

124. **ACTION LIST.**

- 124.1 In response to a question from a Member, the Clerk confirmed that the reference in Minute 66.1 to consulting the Local Access Group was to in relation to DDA compliance. This had been recommended by MSDC and would be done at the appropriate time.

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124.2 The Action List was **NOTED** without further comment.

125. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

125.1 Grant application from the West Sussex Mediation Service. This was a registered charity specialising in conflict resolution amongst neighbours and family members in dispute and the service was free to the end user. They were active in the Mid Sussex area, including Lindfield. Councillor Allen reported that the Parish Council had supported WSMS in previous years and recommended a grant of £100.

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 £100 towards the work of the West Sussex Mediation Service.

125.2 Request from Police Community Support Officer for funding for Night Vision Binoculars. Councillor Allen reported that whilst he did not have an issue with the nature of this request, he nevertheless recommended that the decision be deferred pending confirmation that the Parish Council could lawfully give a grant to a body that was also funded by taxation.

It was noted that Ardingly Parish Council had agreed to buy one of the two pairs of binoculars requested. It was **AGREED** to defer a decision on this request pending confirmation that a grant to another precepting authority was lawful. Subject to this being lawful, a recommendation would be made to Full Council for approval at the next meeting, that the Parish Council should agree to buy one unit at £179 or a proportion thereof, depending on the decisions made by other neighbouring Councils to which the request was also sent.

125.3 Open Spaces Society, A request had been received from the Open Spaces Society which was not on the agenda and would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

125.4 To note letters of thanks received. **NOTED** that letters of thanks had been received from the Haywards Heath Food Bank and 4Sight for the donations of £500 and £100 respectively agreed at the last meeting.

126. BUDGET 2011/12

126.1 The financial reports to 31 March 2012 had been received and noted at the Annual Council meeting on 10 May.

126.2 Finance and General Purposes Committee - to review payments made to 31.03.12. **NOTED** that the F&GP Committee's budget progress to 31 March 2012 showed that from a budget of £92,000.00, £87,759.89 had been spent.

126.3 Analysis of Administration Budget to 31.03.12. **NOTED** that the breakdown of the Administration budget showed that to 31 March 2012, from a budget of £77,200.00, a total of £76,359.90 had been spent.

126.4 Overall Council Budget 2011 – 12: to review expenditure to 31.03.12. **NOTED** that £42,710.44 had been spent from the E&A Committee's budget of £73,100.00. From the overall budget of £225,500.00, the total amount spent at the end of the financial year was £130,470.33.

126.5 Environment and Amenities Committee budget: to confirm the recommendation of the E&A Committee on the reallocation of outstanding funds and transfers to reserves. The Environment and Amenities Committee at the meeting held on 12 April 2012, had reviewed the unspent funds and reserves as at 31 March 2012 and had made recommendations for approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The RFO had circulated a short summary.

As at 31 March 2012 the Council had a total balance of £179,857.06 in the bank and £131.72 in petty cash – a total of £179,988.78. The E&A Committee had requested that three Outstanding Projects be carried forward, totalling

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£7,072.52: Street Map of Lindfield, Christmas Lights and HM the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. Additionally, the Committee had requested that an additional £7,000 be added to the Designated Reserve in respect of upgrading street lights and the replacement of litter bins. This was **AGREED**.

NOTED: that as at 1 April 2012 the breakdown of outstanding projects and reserves was as follows:

	£
Outstanding Projects	7,072.52
General Reserve	50,000.00
Designated Reserves	<u>112,553.68</u>
Total:	169,626.20
Unallocated funds	10,230.86
Petty Cash in hand	<u>131.72</u>
Total	<u>£179,988.78</u> =====

127. BUDGET 2012 / 13

127.1 The reports were not yet available and it was **AGREED** to defer this item to the July meeting of the Committee.

128. EXTERNAL AUDIT.

128.1 **NOTED:** The notice of audit for the year ended 31 March 2012 had been received from Mazars, the External Auditors. The timetable was as follows:

The Annual Return to be approved by 30 June

The Annual Return to be sent to Mazars by 4 July

The appointed date set for the exercise of electors' rights was 24 July (ie the right to question the auditor or make an objection to the accounts, after the inspection period).

When the Accounts had been completed by the RFO they would be inspected by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the F&GP Committee before circulating to all Members of the Council prior to the next Full Council. The Annual Return must be approved at the meeting of Full Council on 21 June in order to meet the deadline.

129. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND INTERNAL CONTROL PROCEDURES.

129.1 The Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit and Internal Control Procedures had been carried out and a copy of the report had been circulated. No issues of concern had been identified. It was therefore **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Governance Statement in the Annual Return "that we maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness" should be affirmed.

130. INSURANCE POLICY – RENEWAL.

130.1 The short report from the Clerk was **NOTED**. **AGREED** as recommended, to inform Zurich Municipal of an amendment to Part A – Material Damage, in respect of the sum insured and the contents category [from (b) to (d)] for item 1 on the schedule.

131. PROJECT: PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON.

131.1 **NOTED:** that further to Minute 106.1 of the meeting of the Committee held on 15.03.12, an agent had been approached by means of a letter requesting a meeting to discuss assistance with the applications and an indication of the cost. A reply was awaited. Councillor Allen requested a copy of this letter.

132. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

132.1 Several training days, conferences and seminars were scheduled for the coming months. **AGREED** to authorise attendance by Councillors and staff at appropriate events, which included:

- NALC Conference 24 May (£97.50) – Councillor Blunden.
- SALC:
 - Planning Session and Interactive Housing Workshops – 14 June and 19 June
 - Legal and Finance Day – 11 September
 - New Clerks’ Briefing – 22 September or 17 November
 - Councillors’ Briefing – 22 September
 - Clerks’ Networking Day – 9 November
 - Councillors’ Briefing – 17 November
 - Chairmanship – 17 November
- Local Council Advisory Service Seminar – 4 July at Crowborough (one free place with further places available at £30).

133. RISK MANAGEMENT.

133.1 **AGREED:** Councillors’ responsibilities for Risk assessments to be as follows:

- Parish Office: Cllrs. Gomme, Henton and Plass
- Governance: Cllrs. Amor, Blunden and Henton
- Employees: Cllrs. Blunden, Henton and Upton
- Other: Cllrs. Allen and Gomme

134. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, ARISING AFTER THE PREPARATION OF THIS AGENDA, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT. SUCH MATTERS WILL BE FOR NOTING OR DEFERRAL TO A FUTURE MEETING ONLY.

134.1 No other items of business were raised.

135. FURTHER PERIOD FOR QUESTIONS / COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

135.1 No members of the public were present at the meeting.

The Confidential part of the meeting began at 8.35 p.m.

136. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [AND PRESS]

136.1 There were no members of the public or press present at the meeting. It was **AGREED** that the following item, which related to Staffing should be treated as confidential – exempt business.

137. STAFFING MATTERS.

137.1 Deputy Parish Clerk. Issues relating to the resignation of the Deputy Parish Clerk and recruitment of his replacement were discussed. Arrangements, including the placement and details of an advertisement were **AGREED**.

The meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.