

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 20 MAY 2010** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

Present: Mr. M. Allen
Mr. W. Blunden
Rev. M. Davies (Vice Chairman)
Mr. A. Gomme
Mrs. M. Nicolle
Mrs. V. Upton
Mr. S. Willcox

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin

The Chairman of Council, Mr. W. Blunden, opened the meeting at 8.00 p.m.

375. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

375.1 This being the first meeting of the Committee for the new Council year, Councillor Blunden, as Chairman of Council, called for nominations for the office of Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2010/11. Councillor Stephen Henton was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**. Councillor Henton was not present, but he had confirmed that he was willing to serve as Chairman. There being no further nominations, Councillor Stephen Henton was duly **ELECTED** as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2010/11.

376. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

376.1 The Chairman of Council called for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2010/11. Councillor Davies was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and, there being no further nominations, Councillor Michael Davies was duly **ELECTED** as Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2010/11. In the absence of Councillor Henton, Councillor Davies took the Chair for this meeting.

377. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

377.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Henton and the reasons were accepted.

378. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

378.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members in respect of any item on the Agenda.

379. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

379.1 No members of the public were present.

380. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 MARCH 2010

380.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 March 2010. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

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381. TO CONFIRM MEMBERSHIP OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS:

381.1 It was **AGREED** that the following Sub Committees of the Finance and General Purposes Committee should continue and that their membership should be:

- **Insurance and Risk Management Sub Committee**
Councillors Allen, Gomme, Davies, Henton and Willcox
- **Administration Sub Committee**
Councillors Blunden, Davies, Nicolle and Willcox. It was **AGREED** to add Councillor Henton to the Administration Sub Committee, subject to his confirmation.
- **Directory Working Group**
Councillors Allen, Davies, Gomme, Willcox and Upton
- **Liaison Group with Lindfield Rural Parish Council**
Councillors Blunden, Nicolle and Willcox

382. TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO AMEND THE BANK MANDATE

382.1 As the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee should be a cheque signatory, it was **AGREED** that the bank mandate should be amended to include Councillor Henton. As Councillor Davies had expressed the intention of standing down from the Council at the 2011 election, he suggested that his name should be removed from the bank mandate rather than that of Councillor Willcox, if the bank was not prepared to have an additional signatory for one year.

383. ACTION LIST / PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

383.1 Back up (Minute ref 259). The Clerk confirmed that an external hard drive had been installed for the purposes of taking back ups and that this was then kept in a secure off-site location.

383.2 A number of other items were to be discussed later on the Agenda.

384. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

384.1 The Chairman had no announcements to make.

385. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

385.1 To note list of grants made in 2009 / 10. **NOTED:** £1,200 in grants had been paid in 2009/10 to six organisations according to the criteria in the Parish Council's Grants and Donations Policy, leaving a remainder of £300 from the budget of £1,500 for that year.

385.2 To consider request for a grant received from Sussex Crimestoppers. Sussex Crimestoppers was a regional branch of an independent national charity helping to find criminals and stop crime. Its call handling centre, manned by volunteers, was set up to receive calls about crime anonymously and pass the information to the police. Councillors Allen and Gomme reported that there had not been any lull in crime as evidenced by the FarmWatch reports and they recommended a grant of £100. This was **AGREED**.

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 Sussex Crime Stoppers.

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- 385.3 To consider request for a grant received from Just Different (“learning about disability and difference”). This organisation provided free, innovative and educational workshops to local children, delivered by disabled young adults, which changed social attitudes towards disability and difference. Councillors Allen and Gomme reported that they had been unable to identify a particularly local context. **RESOLVED:** that this grant request should not be supported.
- 385.4 To consider request for a grant received from Starlight Children’s Foundation. Starlight Children’s Foundation’s purpose was to grant the wishes of seriously ill children. Councillors Allen and Gomme reported that the Foundation’s work was very worthy, but they had been unable to identify whether it was active locally. **RESOLVED:** that this grant request should not be supported.
- 385.5 To consider request for a grant received from the Open Spaces Society. Although it was acknowledged that the Parish Council contributed to the Open Spaces Society by way of an annual membership subscription, it was **AGREED** to make a donation in recognition of the valuable work the Society had done in getting public footpaths reopened. **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 £50 towards the work of the Open Spaces Society.
- 385.6 Procedure. Councillor Allen agreed to examine grant applications on receipt and advise the Clerk if further information was needed to enable the panel to make an informed recommendation to the Committee.
- 385.7 To note thank you letters received. Members **NOTED** letters received from 4Sight and Streetmate thanking the Parish Council for recent donations.

386. TO CONSIDER SUPPORTING THE LINDFIELD BONFIRE SOCIETY BY PLACING AN ADVERTISEMENT IN THE 2010 EVENT PROGRAMME

- 386.1 It was **AGREED** to continue to support the Lindfield Bonfire Society by placing a quarter page advertisement in the 2010 event programme. Councillor Blunden advised that the Bonfire Society was understood to be about to apply to the Parish Council for a grant.

387. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE BUDGET

- 387.1 To review payments made in 2009 / 10. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) was in the process of completing the year end accounts and had not yet circulated April 2010 figures. From Budget Progress and Receipts and Payments summary that to 31 March 2010, it was **NOTED** that:
- The balance in hand was just over £107,000.
 - The overall total spent in 2009 /10 was £144,578.85
 - From the F&GP Committee’s budget of £99,900.00 a total of £80,631.21 was spent.
- 387.2 Analysis of Administration Budget 2009 / 10. Members **NOTED** and **APPROVED** the RFO’s report on the Administration Budget Analysis:

“From a budget of £77,650 a total of £63,879.44 was spent. The main reasons for the shortfall in spending of £13,770.56 are as follows:

Salaries and NIC paid by LPC

It was previously agreed that an allowance should be made in these budget headings to go towards any additional salary payments that may have to be made in the event of a member of staff having to take long term leave and

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additional temporary staff having to be employed. The shortfalls in these budget headings were £5,575.79 and £3,654.65 respectively. In future years any such contingency will be drawn from the General Reserve.

Pension

There was a brief period when the Council only had one employee in the pension fund, which contributed to the shortfall in spending of £1,616.16. Additionally, there was no increase to the contribution percentage, which meant that the amount required was over assessed.

Business rate

Allowance had been made for business rates to be paid on additional premises at Denmans Court, but this project did not proceed, which accounts for the shortfall in spending of £1,001.92.

Sinking Fund – Denmans Lane

At the time that the budget was prepared it was noted that redecoration, internally and externally, of the Parish Office still needed to be undertaken and that some further work may have to be undertaken following the results of a survey on the building. These matters are still outstanding, which accounts for the shortfall in spending of £1,814.00. There was also the possibility of work having to be undertaken on any new premises.

Web Site maintenance

In reality, only £17.39 was spent on web site maintenance, due to a change to Vision ICT Ltd. The payment of £285.50 made to them in February 2010 actually related to the period 14.04.10. to 13.04.11. and will be shown as a prepayment in the year end accounts.

Miscellaneous

This was overspent by £649.28 largely due to £593.67 having to be expended on advertising for a new Deputy Clerk.

Members agreed that the budgeting had been effective.

388. TO RECEIVE REPORT ON PROGRESS OF YEAR END ACCOUNTS 2009 / 10

388.1 **NOTED** that the RFO was in the process of completing the year end accounts. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of F&GP will have an opportunity to go through them before they are presented for approval by Full Council on 24 June together with the Annual Return.

389. TO NOTE LIST OF DIRECT DEBITS AND STANDING ORDERS

389.1 The list of Direct Debits / Standing orders was **NOTED**. Councillors Davies and Henton would be looking at these payments in due course when conducting their internal control inspection.

390. TO CONSIDER APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2010 / 11 ACCOUNTING PERIOD.

390.1 The quotation and audit plan from Gwen and Tony Pritchitt was not expected until after their last visit of the cycle when the accounts were finalised. However Members gave some consideration to whether or not the Parish Council should be looking for a change of Internal Auditor, which was considered to be good practice periodically. It was recognised that Mr. and Mrs. Pritchitt were very efficient and thorough and gave good value for money. It was **AGREED** that the Parish Council should continue to use Mr. and Mrs. Pritchitt for the next financial year but to begin a review process early for 2011 /12 by obtaining quotations from other practitioners having made enquiries with other Clerks as to who their internal auditors were and what the satisfaction rate was.

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391. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

391.1 **AGREED:**

- Local Council Advisory Service Seminar – 14 July in Southwater. One free place and a discounted rate for additional guests - £30 each plus VAT. – Clerk and Councillor Henton, if available.
- SALC weekend – Power of Wellbeing session 11 September - Bramber £11.75 including VAT – Councillors Nicolle, Willcox and Allen
- SALC Legal and Finance Day (Smallfield) – 11 Oct – Clerk - £80 plus VAT.
- SALC Clerks Networking Day – October 20 – (Battle) £45 plus VAT - one or both Clerks.

392. INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE

392.1 To receive Minutes of meeting held on 18 May 2010. Councillor Gomme reported that the Sub Committee had discussed Risk Management, reviewed the Insurance policy and looked at the draft Emergency Plan.

392.2 Risk Management. Assessment sheets for various activities and functions were being looked at by the committees. A report would be going to the next Council meeting.

392.3 Insurance provision. The Zurich policy was shortly due for renewal and three quotations had been received from providers specialising in Local Council Insurance Policies – Zurich (£1693.94), Aon (Allianz policy) (£1600.05) and Came and Co (Aviva policy) (£1540.98 for one year or £1474.96 for a three year agreement. In considering these products, Members had looked particularly at the categories which covered officers and volunteers. On the basis of price and the information from the three schedules that were available at the meeting, the Sub Committee had been in favour of the Aviva Policy from Came and Co and had recorded the recommendation to change to the Aviva Policy provided that no further information received following the meeting indicated otherwise.

However the full policies from Aon and Came and Co had been received, on request, after that meeting. It was noted that these were very detailed and contained a lot of exclusion clauses. Of particular concern was that Personal Injury cover on these two policies had a lower age limit (15 and 16) below which this cover was not provided, whereas the Zurich policy did insure persons under 18 years of age although there was an upper limit of £7,500 on the amount payable for bodily injury for under 18s.

As there were now some doubts that the alternative policies would provide the same level of cover as the existing Zurich policy, it was **AGREED** to stay with Zurich. Members agreed that this had been a worthwhile exercise and wished to record thanks to the Clerk for her input.

It was **AGREED** that the next review of the Council's Insurer should take place in 4 years time (2014)

392.4 Emergency Plan. Councillor Allen reported that the Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common Emergency Plan had been used as a template and adapted for Lindfield. It had now reached the stage when it should go out to all Councillors for any further amendment and for them to confirm the roles to which they had been allocated. **AGREED** to circulate the draft Emergency Plan to all Councillors and that it should come before the Full Council for adoption on 24 June.

393. TO REVIEW RISK MANAGEMENT FOR F&GP FUNCTIONS.

393.1 At the last meeting several sheets for various F&GP functions had been handed out for members to go through and suggest any amendments, additions or changes to the scores or review timings. It was **NOTED** that any suggested amendments should be sent to the Clerk as soon as possible so that the system could be updated accordingly. Members agreed to record thanks to Councillors Allen and Willcox for their work on the Plan.

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394. TO CONSIDER QUOTATIONS RECEIVED FOR REPLACEMENT OF PARISH OFFICE PHOTOCOPIER

394.1 The rental agreement for the existing Canon photocopier was due for renewal in August and as the Clerk had been approached by two other companies, XSS Solutions and Image Runner, she had obtained quotations from them. The current Canon machine had been satisfactory, but when it replaced the previous model, there had been some problems with communication with Canon and the old copier was taken away for some weeks after the new one had been installed. This time, Canon had not replied to the invitation to quote. It was noted that the photocopier was now wireless linked to the computers for printing purposes which was more economical than using the laser printer. This had been set up relatively recently and the increased usage had not yet been measured. The following prices per quarter were based on usage over the last year according to the meter readings on the invoices:

Image Runner - £320.15 for 3 year lease

£250.15 for 5 year lease

XSS - £295.00

The machines from both Image Runner and XSS would also be networked to the computers. The copier promoted by Image Runner had the added benefit of a remote facility which would report faults, order cartridges and send meter readings automatically without need for user input. Otherwise the machines appeared to offer similar facilities. Image Runner was a local company based in Haywards Heath.

The Clerk's recommendation was the 5 year contract from Image Runner as being the lowest priced option. However, Members considered that as technology advanced rapidly, the machine could become outdated in that time and it was **AGREED** to take out the 3 year contract with Image Runner at £320.15 per quarter.

395. LINDFIELD PARISH DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK

395.1 To note responses received to letter in Lindfield Life from the Secretary of the Communications Forum. Following discussion at the meeting of the Communications Forum on 2 March 2010, the Forum Secretary had published a letter in Lindfield Life inviting the opinion of residents on this publication. **NOTED** that 5 written or emailed responses had been received, all in support of the Directory in its accustomed format. Similar comments had also been made by the few residents who had attended Parish Meeting, at which the Directory had been an agenda item. A report was tabled summarising the comments received.

The Chairman, who was also Secretary of the Communications Forum, stated that he felt that the responses had missed the point. The Communications Forum had for some time been mindful of the cost to the Parish Council in terms of staff time spent in getting the Directory ready for the printers and other associated administrative tasks. There was no disputing the popularity of the Directory, but the Forum was asking whether there were other alternatives which might be achieved at lesser cost. The late delivery of the 2010 edition had led members of the Forum to raise this again at the 2 March meeting and a lively discussion had followed.

The idea of separating the diary from the directory pages and publishing them separately was not supported as other directories were in circulation and to have all the information in one pocket sized publication was understood to be what most people wanted.

It was suggested that the Chairman of Council should speak at the next meeting of the Communications Forum to explain the Council's position regarding the Directory.

395.2 To consider quotations received from printing houses and alternative proposals from GC Publishing and to make a decision about the placing of the contract (Section 137 expenditure).

The F&GP Committee had agreed in January that the 2011 Directory should go ahead in the same format, but that quotations should be obtained from several other printers. A spread sheet had been tabled setting out the quotations received and these were considered by Members. It was noted that some printers required copy to be

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submitted electronically which was not a viable option as the copy was sent in by advertisers in different formats and the Parish Council did not have the resources to design an advert from handwritten copy.

Following the delayed delivery of the 2010 edition, GC Publishing had confirmed that they would be prepared to print the 2011 edition in the same format, with 200 extra copies, for the same price as the previous year (£5,400). They had also offered to put the Lindfield events on the relevant diary pages instead of in a list

Only one of the other companies that had quoted competed in price with GC Publishing but there were additional charges for blocks and the quotation was "ex works," so the Parish Council would have to arrange delivery incurring additional costs.

The Managing Directory of GC Publishing had paid a visit to the Parish Office to suggest other options:

- an alternative style with a clear plastic cover so that the card inner cover could be used to display photographs of local scenes, for example. This version would be "perfect bound" which would lie flat when closed. Members **AGREED** that they preferred the traditional green cover.
- GC Publishing had offered to take over the advertising and on that basis they would supply the Directories free of charge. They would stand any loss and the Parish Council would receive a revenue share of income above the cost of printing.

These two suggestions were not supported, particularly as the Committee had previously agreed to keep the Directory in the same format for the next edition,

Having considered the quotations and the alternative proposals from G C Publishing it was **AGREED** to stay with GC Publishing and to keep the traditional format with the exception of having the events printed on the diary pages instead of in a list.

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: printing by GC Publishing Ltd. of the Lindfield Parish Directory and Year Book 2011 for the sum of £5,400.00.

396. TO CONFIRM MINOR AMENDMENT TO STAFF CONTRACTS – DATE OF PAYMENT OF SALARIES, ACCORDING TO WSCC PROCEDURE.

396.1 The salaries were now being administered by WSCC and the pay date was 24th of the month direct into Employees' bank accounts whereas previously they had been paid on 20th by cheque. This was a minor change to the terms of the contracts and it was **AGREED** that a letter should be written to each member of staff to this effect, the letter to be attached to the contract.

397. ANY ISSUES RELATING TO PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION.

397.1 There was nothing further to report on this item.

398. 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.

398.1 No items of other business were raised.

As there were no members of the public present to ask questions or make comments, the meeting concluded at 9.10 p.m.