

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 22 MAY 2014** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting commenced at 8.00 p.m.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Mr. S. Henton (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mr. M. Amor
Mr. W. Blunden
Mr. S. Henton
Mr. R. Plass (Vice Chairman)

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)
Mrs. S. Kolien (Responsible Financial Officer)

Not present: Councillors Mr. R. Pickett and Mrs. V. Upton

This being the first meeting of the Committee following the Annual Meeting of Council, the Chairman of Council opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

355. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.

355.1 The Chairman of Council called for nominations for Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2015/15. Councillor Henton was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Plass and **SECONDED** by Councillor Blunden. There being no further nominations, Councillor Stephen Henton was duly **ELECTED** as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2014/15. Councillor Henton took the Chair for the meeting.

356. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN.

356.1 The Chairman called for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Councillor Plass was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Blunden and **SECONDED** by Councillor Blunden. 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 2014/15.

357. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

357.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pickett and Upton and the reasons were accepted.

358. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

358.1 There were no declarations of interest by Members in respect of any items on the Agenda.

359. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

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

360. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 MARCH 2014

360.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 6 March 2014. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

361. APPOINTMENT OF SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

361.1 It was **AGREED** that the Sub Committees and Working Groups of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and their membership and terms of reference should be as follows:

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- Insurance and Risk Management Working Group
4 members - Councillors Allen, Amor, Henton and Plass.
Remit: to review the insurance policies of the Council in consultation with the Clerk and RFO; to make recommendations to the F&GP Committee on changes to the insurance cover arising from such reviews; to conduct a periodic review of the Council's insurance providers and submit a written comparison of proposals to F&GP with recommendations; to oversee the Council's risk management procedures to ensure that the requirements were met, reporting to F&GP and other committees as appropriate.
- Administration Sub Committee
5 members – Councillors Allen, Blunden, Henton, Plass and Upton.
Remit: to oversee all matters relating to the Parish Council's office property, employment matters and the running and maintenance of the Parish Office within the agreed Administration Budget and in consultation with the Parish Clerk, including periodic checks of the premises and working practices for compliance with Health and Safety and Risk Management requirements.
- Directory Working Group
4 members - Councillors Allen, Amor, Plass and Upton.
Remit: to give practical help to the office staff if needed when preparing the Parish Directory and Year Book for the printers and to consider significant editorial changes in consultation with the office staff. It was suggested that this Working Group should meet at least once a year.
- Grants Panel
3 members - Councillors Allen, Amor and Upton
Remit: to assess applications for grant funding and make recommendations to the F&GP Committee.
- Public Toilets Working Group
4 members - Councillors Blunden, Henton, Pickett and Plass.
Remit: to liaise with the surveyors and others in developing the project and report to the F&GP Committee.

361.2 It was also suggested and **AGREED** that each of these groups should have a lead Councillor to call meetings as required.

362. BANK MANDATE.

362.1 It was **AGREED** that the bank signatories should remain unchanged: Councillors Blunden, Henton, Plass and Upton.

363. DIRECT DEBITS AND STANDING ORDERS

363.1 **NOTED:** the only changes to the list of Direct Debits were in respect of the photocopier which had been changed and the cancellation of the broadband and line at 6 Denmans Lane.

363.1 The list of Direct Debits and Standing Orders in force for the coming year was **NOTED** and **AGREED**.

364. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

364.1 The Chairman had no announcements to make.

365. ACTION LIST.

365.1 The Action List was **NOTED**.

366. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

366.1 To note remaining available funds. **NOTED:** the available funds were comprised of the full budget figure of £1,500 plus the unspent balance of £400 from 2013/14 year which it had been agreed at the last meeting should be carried over.

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- 366.2 Grant request from St. Catherine's Hospice. St. Catherine's Hospice specialised in end of life care to patients with terminal illness, including community-based care in patients' own homes. It was **NOTED** that St. Catherine's Hospice supported people in this locality. It was **AGREED** to award a grant of £200 to St. Catherine's Hospice.

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 £200 towards the work of St Catherine's Hospice.

- 366.3 Grant request from Outset Youth Action This Charity had worked across West Sussex for over thirty years, encouraging and supporting young people aged 13 – 25 to take part in safe and secure volunteering activities. It was **AGREED** that a donation of £100 should be made.

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 Outset Youth Action.

- 366.4 Grant request 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.

- 366.5 Grant request from All Saints Church for the Queen Elizabeth II Bells Project. A letter, dated Easter 2014, had been received from Rev James Clarke of All Saints Church to explain the proposal to replace the church bells, which were in a poor state of repair, with decaying mechanisms and it was difficult for them to be rung in a full peal. The new bells would be known as "The Queen Elizabeth II Bells" to mark the fact that on 9 September 2015 HM The Queen would become the longest reigning monarch in British history. The project would cost in the region of £200,000 and the local congregation had already committed to underwrite £50,000 towards it. If the target was not met by Christmas 2014, all donations would be returned.

The letter had not specified the amount requested and Mrs. Valerie Upton, who, as a leading member of the fundraising team, had written a further letter, dated 15 May, specifying £500 as the amount being requested. It should be noted that Mrs. Upton, who was also a Member of the Parish Council, was not present at this meeting.

Councillor Allen reported that he had responded to the initial letter by proposing a recommendation from the Grants Panel to support the request with a donation of £200, advocating a balanced approach as there were other local worthy causes. He added that according to the Council's Grants Policy, the normal limit for grants was £250 and where consideration was to be given to a higher sum, a written paper was to be provided by a delegated member, setting out the case against the Policy. Councillor Allen stated that without a business case, the request for £500 should not be considered and the Committee should then either consider the Panel's recommendation for a grant of £200 or defer the matter.

Councillor Blunden stated that he was strongly in favour of supporting the project. The sound of the bells was enjoyed by many and the bells were rung to mark special dates, such as coronations, in addition to church services, so they had wider community value and were not solely for the benefit of All Saints Church and its members. This project would leave a legacy for future residents and Councillor Blunden believed that the Council should be seen to be generous. If the Committee agreed a donation of £200 as recommended by the Grants Panel, Councillor Blunden stated his intention to add £300 from his Chairman's Fund to make up the total donated by the Council to £500.

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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: to donate £200 from the Grants budget to the Church Bells Project and it was further **AGREED** to support the Chairman of Council's wish to make this up to £500 from the Chairman's Fund.

366.6 Letters of thanks received. **NOTED:** a letter of thanks had been received from 4Sight for the grant of £100 agreed at the last meeting.

367. BUDGET 2013/14.

367.1 Budget progress 2013/14. The end of year accounts for 2013/14 had been approved at the Annual Meeting of Council on 15 May.

367.2 Budget progress 2014/15. The budget progress report was not yet available.

367.3 Allocation of unspent funds and transfers to reserves. The RFO had prepared a spreadsheet, summarising the recommendations of the E&A and P&T Committees (agreed at their meetings held on 3 April and 29 April 2014 respectively) and setting out the F&GP's unspent funds from the last financial year. It was **NOTED** that increasingly large amounts were being held as designated reserves, but that if every project was completed there would be a shortfall. The paper was accepted and the recommendations for sums to be carried forward as outstanding projects or designated reserves were **AGREED**. The remainder of the unspent sums would be added to the heading General Reserve/Unallocated Funds. The outstanding projects and reserves for 2014/15 would therefore be as follows:

General Reserve	<u>£50,000.00</u>	
		£50,000.00

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Outstanding Projects	None
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Designated Reserves:

Sinking Fund – Denmans Lane - (previously agreed)	£ 4,600.00
Election	£ 3,121.00
Grants and donations (new)	£ 400.00
Repairs and remedial work Clock Tower House (new)	£12,909.00
Capital Project: Toilets on Common	£49,000.00
Public toilets on Common: Sinking fund	<u>£20,000.00</u>
	<u>£90,030.00</u>

Environment and Amenities Committee

Outstanding Projects	None
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Designated Reserves:

Street Lighting	£13,404.88
Street map of Lindfield	£ 8,816.25
Posts around MSDC open spaces (budget	£ 7,000.00
Emergency equipment	£ 486.65
Joint project with WSCC – dropped kerbs	£ 2,500.00
Joint project with MSDC – replacement of Floating islands on the Pond	£ 1,000.00
Denmans Lane toilets: maintenance sinking fund	£ 5,000.00
Repair/maintenance of community assets – sinking fund	£ 3,000.00
Maintenance of King Edward Hall clock	£ 900.00
Christmas Lights	£ 437.93
Replacement of litter bins	£ 2,916.50
Tree pollarding	<u>£ 5,000.00</u>

£50,462.21

Planning and Traffic Committee**Outstanding Projects – None****Designated Reserves:**

Professional Fees / Neighbourhood Plan	<u>£34,490.06</u>
	£34,490.06

Summary:

Outstanding Projects:	none
General Reserve	£50,000.00
Designated Reserves:	
Finance & General Purposes Committee	£90,030.00
Environment & Amenities Committee	£50,462.21
Planning & Traffic Committee	<u>£34,490.06</u>
TOTAL	<u>£224,982.27</u>

Members wished to record their thanks to the RFO.

368. REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

368.1 It had been noted at Full Council on 15 May that the Internal Auditor, Peter Frost, had carried out his second and final inspection for 2013/14 on 12 May and a copy of his report had been circulated with the agenda. Mr. Frost had highlighted two further items for consideration: that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were in the process of being reviewed and to be agreed by the Council in the near future and that Bank Reconciliations should be signed by the Councillor designated to carry out the periodic internal inspections.

369. APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2014 / 15.

369.1 **NOTED:** Peter Frost had confirmed that he was willing to continue as the Council's Internal Auditor and that his fees would be £49 per hour for the review and report. He would not charge mileage or travelling time as he lived close to the Parish Office.

RESOLVED: that Peter Frost should be appointed as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for the Financial Year 2014 / 15.

370. ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEWING STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS.

370.1 Financial Regulations. It was **AGREED** that Councillors Henton and Allen would assist the RFO and a clean draft would be prepared for the next meeting of the F&GP Committee on 17 July. It was **NOTED** that Full Council had to approve the Financial Regulations and the recommendation of the F&GP Committee would therefore be presented at the meeting of Full Council on 11 September. |

370.2 Standing Orders. It was **AGREED** that Councillors Plass and Blunden would assist the Clerk with the review of Standing Orders, working to the same timetable as the Financial Regulations.

371. ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEWING POLICIES.

371.1 It was **AGREED** that Councillor Allen would assist the Clerk in preparing draft policies for approval, including Equality, Data Protection and Press and Media.

372. PARISH OFFICE MATTERS.

372.1 Electricity meters. The new meter to complete the separation of the supply for the floor had been installed the previous week.

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372.2 Telephones and broadband. The BT line rental for the Denmans Lane office had been cancelled and a revised contract was being drawn up because the feature line with broadband (set up so that the Denmans Lane telephone which operated over the broadband, could be included on the Clock Tower House telephone network) was no longer needed. BT had offered Infinity Broadband a lower price than the current standard, along with other goodwill incentives. Confirmation from BT of this revised order was awaited. The Broadband service from TalkTalk for Denmans Lane had also been cancelled.

372.3 Disposal of computer desk and chairs. It was **AGREED** to authorise the Clerk to make arrangements to dispose of ten chairs (purchased at £44 each in 1996) and a basic computer desk remaining at Denmans Lane.

373. PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON.

373.1 The Architects had responded to the points made at the meeting of the Working Group with MSDC. It was **AGREED** that a meeting of the Working Group should be arranged to progress this matter.

374. ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

374.1 **NOTED:** the dates of forthcoming SSALC training and briefing events and that Councillor briefings were now being run on an ad-hoc, bespoke basis, to be set up by the Parish Councils with presenters provided by SSALC.

375. RISK MANAGEMENT.

375.1 **NOTED:** a meeting of the Insurance and Risk Management Working Group was to be arranged in due course to work on risk management.

376. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

376.1 No other items of business were raised.

The public part of the meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

377. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

377.1 It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED,** and **AGREED,** in accordance with the Public Bodies, Admission to Meetings Act 1960 section 1 (2) and the Parish Council's Standing Order 1 (c) that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded.

378. PROPERTY AT 6 DENMANS LANE.

378.1 Progress on the sale of the former Parish Office was **NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 8.45 p.m.