

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 23 MAY 2013** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

Present:

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

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin (Clerk)

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

235. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

235.1 The Chairman of Council called for nominations for Chairman of the Committee. Councillor Henton was **NOMINATED** by Councillor Plass and seconded by Councillor Pickett. There being no further nominations, Councillor Stephen Henton was duly **ELECTED** as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council year 2013/14.

Councillor Henton took the Chair for the meeting.

236. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

236.1 Councillor Plass was **NOMINATED** by Councillor Blunden as Vice Chairman of the F&GP Committee, and seconded by Councillor Henton. 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 2013/14.

237. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

237.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Upton and the reasons accepted.

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

238.1 There were no such declarations.

239. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

240. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 MARCH 2013.

240.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 7 March 2013. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

241. TO APPOINT SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE AND TO AGREE THEIR MEMBERSHIP.

241.1 It was **NOTED** that the Insurance and Risk Management Sub Committee had agreed at the last meeting to recommend for this group to be re-formed as a Working Group. As such it would not have delegated powers, unlike a sub-committee, but its function would be to carry out the detailed work on insurance and risk management, present reports and make recommendations to F&GP. The draft revised terms of reference were tabled. The

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recommendation to re-form this sub-committee as the Insurance and Risk Management Working Group was **AGREED** and the revised terms of reference were approved.

The Administration Sub Committee and Office Accommodation Working Group were discussed and it was **AGREED** that there was no longer a need for the Working Group as its objective to search for new premises had been achieved. It was **AGREED** that the Administration Sub Committee should continue under that name but that the remit in the Terms of Reference should be amended to include “ to oversee all matters relating to the Parish Council’s office property.

241.2 It was therefore **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:

- 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
5 members - Councillors Amor, Blunden, Henton, Pickett and Plass.
Remit: to liaise with the surveyors and others in developing the project and report to the F&GP Committee.

242. BANK MANDATE: TO CONFIRM SIGNATORIES.

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

243. LIST OF DIRECT DEBITS AND STANDING ORDERS

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

244. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

244.1 There were no announcements.

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245. ACTION LIST.

- 245.1 Backlog (Minute ref 130). It was reported that good progress is being made on sorting out the old paperwork although there was still a great deal to do.
- 245.2 Budget (Minute ref 29.4). It was **AGREED** to delete the action to look into the question of allocating budgets across time periods (with consideration of cost/benefit) as current Members of the Committee were satisfied with the present arrangements.
- 245.3 Clock Tower House - tenant's obligations for insurance. The terms of the lease in this regard were **NOTED**.
- 245.4 Section 106 funding for the public conveniences on the Common - MSDC had circulated a list of Section 106 projects which included the public conveniences on the Common, with a request for any further information to be added. The Clerk had filled in the estimates for the project and returned the list. The requisite application forms would be submitted at the appropriate time.

246. GRANTS AND DONATIONS:

246.1 Grants budget: available funds. **NOTED**:

- the unspent balance as at 31.03.13 was £50
- the F&GP Committee had agreed to carry three applications over for payment in the 2013/14 financial year, totalling £550.
- The F&GP Committee had agreed to vire £500 from the General Reserve to increase the 2013/14 budget to £2000.
- The opening balance for the 2013/14 FY was £1,450.

A question was put as to whether the Committee should make provision for applications anticipated later in the year. It was confirmed that applications were considered on their merits on a first-come/first-served basis as future applications could not be predicted with any certainty.

- 246.2 Grant application received from the 1st Lindfield Scout Group. Councillors Allen and Amor reported that the 1st Lindfield Scouts had requested £250 towards the cost of a fire protection system following the completion of the refurbishment of the scout hut in Eastern Road. Although this was for a capital item, it was nevertheless **AGREED** to support the application as the fire protection system was considered to be essential and because this was a local organisation with charity status that had raised considerable funding for the refurbishment of the hut.

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 £250, towards the fire protection system for the scout hut, as requested by the 1st Lindfield Scouts.

- 246.3 Grant application received 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.

- 246.4 Letters of thanks received. **NOTED**: letter of thanks had been received from the Haywards Heath Foodbank, St Catherine's Hospice and 4Sight.

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247. BUDGET 2012/13.

- 247.1 Finance and General Purposes Committee - to review payments made to 31.03.13. **NOTED** that the F&GP Committee's budget progress to 31 March 2013 showed that from a budget of £93,925, £86,937 had been spent.
- 247.2 Analysis of Administration Budget to 31.03.13. **NOTED** that the breakdown of the Administration budget showed that to 31 March 2013, from a budget of £78,925, a total of £77,017 had been spent
- 247.3 Overall Council Budget 2012 – 13: to review expenditure to 31.03.13. **NOTED:** that £44,238 had been spent from the E&A Committee's budget of £66,050 and £1,590 from the P&T Committee's budget of £10,200. From the overall budget of £170,175, the total amount spent at the end of the financial year was £132,766.
- 247.4 Outstanding Projects and Reserves 2013 – 13: to review expenditure to 31.03.13. **NOTED:** that from the total of £112,553 under Outstanding Projects and Reserves, which included the General Reserve and sinking Funds, a total of £24,211 had been spent.

248. BUDGET 2013/14

- 248.1 The April breakdowns were not yet available.

249. INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT.

- 249.1 Members had received a copy of Mr. Frost's report in which he had raised five points (in italics) which required noting:
1. Insurance – Buildings. *Whether cover for Denmans Lane is sufficient to meet reinstatement costs.*
NOTED that the buildings cover had been increased on the basis of index linking but if the Council was to retain ownership this should be reviewed.
 2. Asset Register. *Comprehensive although some Values need to be updated. Recent changes in guidelines state that details should include:*
 - a) *Original acquisition costs or if not known, use 2011 Notional Values.*
 - b) *Location of assets*
 - c) *No allowances for depreciation*
 - d) *Date of acquisition if known*

Figures under a) not to be changed subsequently. Adjustments to be made for disposals and new purchases. Ongoing insurance cover might also be included as well as location of Deeds.
NOTED: the RFO had noted the comments and would be working on updating the register when she had completed the annual accounts.
 3. Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. *Scheduled to be updated.*
NOTED: it had been agreed at the Annual Council meeting that F&GP should review these when the new model Standing Orders and advice about cheque signatories had been published.
 4. Risk Assessment *Under completion. Suggested that names of people who would be responsible for specific checking duties / monitoring roles were included.*
 5. Accounting System. *This is by way of Receipts and Payments, subsequently converted to Income and Expenditure for the Annual Return. This involves allowances for Debtor and Creditors and can be time consuming. Consideration being given to changing the Accounting Regime to Receipts and Payments. Note that the Income and Expenditure figures as at 31/03/13 would need to be rewritten as Receipts and Payments on the 31/03/13 return.*
NOTED: the RFO had been converting the figures to Receipts and Payments for the Annual Return soon to be submitted to the External Auditor.

250. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S INTERNAL AUDIT AND INTERNAL CONTROL PROCEDURES.

- 250.1 The report had been tabled, having been previously circulated by email. It was **NOTED** that the annual review had been carried out and it was **AGREED** to recommend the report to Full Council on 20 June for approval.

251. YEAR END ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR ENDING 31.03.13.

251.1 Draft copies had been circulated of the receipts and payments breakdown with accompanying notes, the schedule of debtors and creditors and the first two sections of the Annual Return, along with a covering memo from the RFO. These were drafts and the RFO had asked for Members' comments prior to submitting the final papers to Full Council for approval on 20 June. Members made no comments and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** the 2012/13 Accounts, as drafted, to Full Council for approval.

252. INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT SUB COMMITTEE.

252.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2013. The Minutes of the meeting of the Insurance and Risk Management Sub Committee held on 3 May 2013 were received. The main item of business had been to review the insurance policy prior to the renewal date. The Sub Committee had recommended a number of changes, particularly in respect of the new Parish Office.

252.2 Insurance policy renewal documents: to confirm the schedule of cover for 2013/14. The Clerk had discussed the changes proposed by the Insurance and Risk Management Sub Committee with the Account Manager at Zurich Municipal and an amended schedule had since been received. A table listing the amounts of cover for all the risks the Council would be insured for had been circulated with the Agenda together with a covering note explaining the changes made. The amendments had resulted in an increase to the annual premium of £244.72, mainly due to the added cover for Clock Tower House. It was **AGREED** to approve the changes and to confirm the schedule.

252.3 It was **NOTED** that the three year contract with Zurich was due to end in May 2014 and the Committee would be considering a review of the Council's insurance provider.

253. PARISH OFFICE.

253.1 Tenant's lease. A meeting with the Tenant had not been possible due to circumstances beyond the Council's control. It was therefore **AGREED** that a letter should be written to the tenant to make arrangements for discussing the terms of the lease, setting out any matters that the Council wished to address.

253.2 Office photocopier. The three year leasing contract for the Parish Office photocopier was coming to an end. Four quotations had been received and a spreadsheet, setting out the proposals was tabled. The suppliers were referred to by the letters A to D. Members considered these quotations on the basis of price, functionality, service and on-going support. It was **NOTED** that the financing of photocopier rental in each case was arranged through a leasing company and a separate agreement would have to be signed with the finance company. Subject to the terms and conditions of the agreement being acceptable and a demonstration of the equipment if possible, it was **AGREED** to accept quotation D as being the lowest price and because the on-going support, included in the price of the contract, would appear to be good. It was also **AGREED** to take up the option of a three year contract rather than five.

254. PROPOSED PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ON THE COMMON.

254.1 Goulds had completed their sketch proposals, but had expressed the wish to present them in person rather than send them in the post. It was **AGREED** to arrange for the Working Group to meet Goulds to receive the plans and then invite them to the meeting of Full Council on 20 June. This would enable members of the Working Group to seek clarification on any queries before the Council received the plans formally and in public.

255. LINDFIELD PARISH DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK.

255.1 PP Co-operative would no longer be printing diaries and the Clerk had approached a total of eight printers for quotations. David Tingley had confirmed that he did not wish to bid for this work. Three quotations had been received so far which all appeared to be feasible in terms of producing a similar product to the usual directory.

It was **AGREED** to authorise the Clerk, in consultation with the Directory Working Group to make a decision on receipt of further quotations.

It was **NOTED** that one of the quotations received was less than G C Publishing had charged for the 2012 edition. It was therefore **AGREED** that the advertising rates should remain unchanged.

256. TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

256.1 Attendance by Councillors Blunden and Gomme at the SALC Chairmen's Networking Day on 12 June (£50 plus VAT per delegate) and the MSDC / Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils Conference on 28 June was **CONFIRMED**.

257. RISK MANAGEMENT.

257.1 It was **NOTED** that risks that came under the Finance and General Purposes Committee, needed to be updated, particularly in view of the new premises and Members would be asked to assist the Clerk with this.

258. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

258.1 WSCC had outsourced the administration of their membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme to Capita. To enable Capita to administer the Pension scheme appropriately on behalf of the different employers making up the West Sussex scheme, the Parish Council had been asked to consider its position on the discretions available to the Council as an employer and publish a policy on certain of these. Such an audit had never been done before, but was necessary because of the new arrangements with Capita.

A table of discretions had been circulated with the Clerk's comments and recommendations added. It was considered that it would not be possible to go through this list in detail at this meeting and it was therefore **AGREED** that this should be deferred and that Councillors Henton and Blunden should study the table and present a clear written proposal to the next Full Council for approval.

259. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

259.1 No other items of business were raised.

The confidential part of the meeting started at 9.00 p.m.

260. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (AND PRESS)

260.1 Although there were no members of the public present, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted 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.

261. MATTERS RELATING TO PROPERTY AT 6 DENMANS LANE.

261.1 Matters relating to the former Parish Office at 6 Denmans Lane were discussed and it was **AGREED** that legal advice should be sought and that the property should be valued for both sale and rent, to inform future discussions.

The meeting concluded at 9.15 p.m.