

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2013** 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. R. Pickett
Mr. R. Plass (Vice Chairman)

In attendance: Mrs. C. Irwin

Not present: Mrs. V. Upton

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

281. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

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

282. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

282.1 There were no such declarations.

283. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

283.1 There were no members of the public present.

284. MINUTES AND CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JULY 2013.

284.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 July 2013. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes and Confidential Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

285. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

285.1 The Chairman had no announcements to make.

286. ACTION LIST.

286.1 The Action List was **NOTED**.

FC Minutes 264.1 and 265.1 – Policies. It was suggested that the Equality Policy should be added to this list.

287. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

287.1 Grants and donations budget – available funds. It was **NOTED** that there was a balance £1,100 in the grants and donations budget, including the £500 it had been agreed to vire from the General reserve.

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287.2 Grant application received from Victim Support. Councillor Allen, on behalf of the Grants Panel, 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 Victim Support.

288. BUDGET 2013/14.

288.1 Finance and General Purposes Committee - payments made to 31.08.13 . **NOTED:** that the F&GP Committee's budget progress to 31.08.13 showed that from a budget of £119,675, a total of £50,639 had been spent

288.2 Analysis of Administration Budget to 31.08.13. **NOTED:** that the breakdown of the Administration Budget showed that to 31.08.13, from the budget total of £104,675, the sum of £46,759 had been spent.

288.3 Overall Council Budget to 31.08.13. **NOTED:**

- Environment and Amenities £10,644 had been spent from the budget of £64,150
£2,650 from the outstanding project sum of £2,500 for bus stop poles (which was £150 overspent
£369 from the designated reserve for litter bins
- Planning and Traffic Committee £624 had been spent from the total budget of £20,200. It was noted that the RFO would shortly be making a payment to Lindfield Rural Parish Council for the agreed proportion of the expenses to date on the Neighbourhood Plan
- Council's in-year budget £65,145 had been spent from a total of £242,025 and a further from
- Outstanding projects and reserves £3,019 had been spent from the total of £166,689.

289. BUDGET 2014/15.

289.1 The timetable prepared by the RFO was **NOTED:**

3 October 2013	Environment and Amenities Committee to discuss its budget requirements for 2014 – 2015
15 October 2013	Planning and Traffic Committee to discuss and agree its budget requirements for 2014 – 2015
28 November 2013	Finance and General Purposes Committee to discuss and finalise its budget requirements for 2014 – 2015 and review the requirements of the Environment and Amenities Committee and the Planning and Traffic Committee
5 December 2013	Environment and Amenities Committee to finalise its budget requirements for 2014 – 2015 – if not already finalised
9 January 2014	Finance and General Purposes Committee to consider Draft Budget for 2014 – 2015 and agree final budget figures.
16 January 2014	Full Council to agree Budget and Precept requirement for 2014 – 2015

290. LINDFIELD PARISH DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK.

290.1 Unpaid invoice – 2013 edition. It was **NOTED** that there was an outstanding payment for an advertisement in the 2013 edition, despite reminders having been sent. Councillor Allen offered to make one further attempt to obtain payment. It was **AGREED** that, if Councillor Allen was unsuccessful, this relatively small sum would be written off as a bad debt and the advertiser would not be invited to take an advertisement in future editions.

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290.2 Progress report on 2014 edition. The Clerk reported that the proof had been received as a PDF and would be checked and returned to the printer within the next week. Income from advertising stood at £4,055 which was £225 less than the previous year and there would be a shortfall of £895 against the printing cost of £4,950

291. PARISH OFFICE MATTERS.

291.1 Electricity supply at the Clock Tower House. Councillor Plass explained that there was one electricity meter for the whole building which had originally been in single occupancy. Subsequent shared occupiers had calculated their proportion of the charges, which was not a satisfactory arrangement. The installation of storage heaters in the ground floor had complicated matters to the disadvantage of the tenants as the shared meter would be on a higher tariff, but they would not benefit from the lower night tariff. The tenant had welcomed the suggestion of separating the supplies with each party having their own meters. Councillor Plass had obtained a quotation from a reputable company as the job would be somewhat complex. There were two options, the more costly of which included individual trips on all the circuits, which would be more flexible if faults occurred.

AGREED:

- To accept the quotation received and place the order to separate the electricity supply
- To proceed with Option 2 - £2,247.00 plus VAT
- To bear the cost of the work as landlords.

291.2 Clock. A clock repairer had restarted the clock in the tower but had advised that the hands needed realignment as they were close together, with the risk of them catching against each other in a strong wind, causing it to trip. He had also recommended installing a resetting mechanism so that it would automatically reset after a power outage which currently had to be done manually in the tower. External access to the clock using a scaffold tower or similar would be an additional cost. It was **AGREED** to arrange for the work, including the addition of a resetting mechanism, to be done on the clock as quoted £1,095 plus VAT.

291.3 Loft ladder. The clock repairer had pointed out that the loft ladder was not in a safe condition. Councillor Blunden confirmed that this needed to be replaced rather than repaired and recommended the most substantial ladder possible. It was **AGREED** to arrange for the loft ladder to be replaced before access to the tower was needed again.

291.4 Refrigerator. It was **AGREED** to authorise the Clerk to purchase a small refrigerator for the Parish Office.

292. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ON THE COMMON.

292.1 It was **NOTED** that Full Council had agreed on a design but that the surveyors should be asked to redraw the plan so that the long side faced the Common. It had also been agreed that the number of hand basins should be reduced to two and baby change units added to gents and ladies. The surveyors were to be asked for budget costings for the selected design and to carry out a survey of the site. When this had been done, the Council would be considering the process for consultation with the public. It was suggested that the consultation might run alongside the consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan in November, but it was pointed out that it would not be desirable to distract attention from the Neighbourhood Plan.

293. TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

293.1 The following events were **NOTED**.

- Attendance by the Clerk, the RFO and Councillor Upton at a half day LCAS seminar on insurance and risk management on 2 October (one free place and two places at £30 each). **CONFIRMED**
- Attendance at the AirS / SALC AGM and conference on 7 November – Councillor Blunden
- SALC Clerks' Networking Day on 8 November - Deputy Clerk (£50) **CONFIRMED**.
- SALC Councillors' Update and Briefing and Chairmanship – 23 November at the Chichester Park Hotel (£87.50). It was **AGREED** to authorise booking for any Councillors wishing to attend.

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294. AUDIT: EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT.

- 294.1 The Annual Return, signed by the External Auditor (Littlejohn) had been received that morning. No comments had been made. Members expressed appreciation to the RFO.

295. RISK MANAGEMENT.

- 295.1 A number of measures needed in order to comply with the Fire Risk Assessment were now in place. Councillor Plass and the Clerk would be checking for any outstanding matters prior to Phoenix returning to conduct a review.

296. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

- 296.1 No other items of business were raised.

297. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

- 297.1 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.

298. STAFFING MATTERS.

The Clerk temporarily withdrew from the meeting during this item (8.30 p.m.) and was asked to return during the second part of the discussion at Minute 298.2 (8.35 p.m.).

- 298.1 Office Staff appraisals. It was **NOTED** that the Office Staff appraisals had been carried out, according to the guidance issued jointly by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

- 298.2 Office Staff pay. According to the Council's usual practice, it had been agreed at the Annual Meeting of Council on 9 May 2013 that the necessary arrangements for the review of pay and conditions of service for existing staff be delegated to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Members discussed this item with reference to the Employment Briefing issued by NALC on 22 July 2013, which had been attached the Agenda and a confidential report from the Clerk, which had been tabled.

Having considered the recommendations in the NALC Employment Briefing: Local Government Pay 2013/14 and the report from the Clerk, decisions were made regarding Office Staff pay.

299. PREMISES AT 6 DENMANS LANE

- 299.1 Pending clarification of a certain matters, a paper with recommendations was to be presented to Full Council on 14 November.

The meeting concluded at 8.50 p .m.