

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 11 JANUARY 2018** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 20.00 hours.

Present:

Parish Councillors: Mr. S. Henton (Chairman)
Mr. M. Allen
Mr. W. Blunden
Mr. R. Plass (Vice Chairman)
Mrs. S. Richmond
Mrs. V. Upton

Also present: 1 member of the public (who left after item 305.)

Not present: Mr. M. Damsell
Mr. R. Pickett

In attendance: Mr A. Funnell (Clerk)
Mrs T. Ely (Responsible Financial Office)

The Chairman opened the meeting, welcomed those present, and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

287. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

287.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Damsell & Pickett and the reasons were accepted.

288. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

288.1 There were no declarations of interest from Members in respect of any items on the Agenda.

289. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

289.1 A member of the public had made reference to his letter dated 27 December 2017 and commented on the Council's level of expenditure in previous years.

These comments were **NOTED**.

290. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2017.

290.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 2 November 2017. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

291. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

291.1 The Chairman advised that **Agenda item 9 Budget 2018/2019** would not be considered at the meeting. Apologies for this omission were made. The Chairman of the Council had been unable to consider the budget proposals due to unforeseen circumstances. It was **AGREED** that an additional meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would be held on Thursday 18 January 2018 and that the Full Council meeting would be postponed to Thursday 25 January 2018.

292. ACTION LIST.

292.1 The Action List was **NOTED**.

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293. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

293.1 Grants budget: available funds. It was **NOTED** that there was a balance of £850 in the grants and donations budget.

293.2 Councillor Allen reported on behalf of the Grants Panel as follows:

Grant request from Open Spaces Society and Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sussex Branch

NOTED: Letters of requests had been received in November 2017. Neither of these requests had related to a specific local cause, and as such were considered to be of a general fund raising nature. With this in mind it was proposed that grants should not be offered.

It was **AGREED** that a donation would not be offered to both the Open Spaces Society and Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sussex Branch. A letter explaining this decision would be sent to each organisation.

293.3 Letters of thanks received. It was **NOTED** that a letter of thanks had been received from the West Sussex Mediation Services.

294. BUDGET PROGRESS 2017/18.

294.1 The budget progress reports in respect of payments made to 30 November 2017 had been previously circulated and **NOTED** as follows:

Finance and General Purposes Committee: a total of £83,411.22 had been spent from the budget of £139,130.

Analysis of Administration Budget: a total of £77,779.29 had been spent from the budget of £123,130.

Overall Council Budget 2017/18: a total of £106,668.81 had been spent from the budget of £197,080, of which £20,985.71 had been spent from the Environment and Amenities Committee's budget of £47,750. A total of £2271.88 had been spent from the Planning and Traffic Committee's budget of £10,200.

Reserves: £960.30 had been spent from the Designated Total Reserves of £176,267.64.

295. TO NOTE THAT THE VAT REFUND HAD BEEN RECEIVED.

295.1 It was **NOTED** that a VAT refund of £3392.43 had been received on 7 December 2017.

296. INVESTMENT OF FUNDS: REPORT FROM COUNCILLOR HENTON.

296.1 The Chairman advised that the RFO's main concern had been the preparation of the 2018/19 budget and therefore no significant progress had been made with regard to investing funds with an additional body.

It was **NOTED** that a second option was under consideration and that this would be completed after the 2018/2018 budget had been concluded.

297. TO REVIEW PROPOSED SICKNESS AND ABSENCE POLICY.

297.1 The Chairman reported that a draft Sickness and Absence Policy had been circulated. After consideration it was **AGREED** to accept the proposed Policy with the following additions:

Section 4.2 The annual leave period runs from 1st April to 31st March the following year. A maximum of **7 day's** annual leave may be carried over from one year's entitlement to the next.

Section 5.2 The length of paid compassionate leave granted is at the discretion of the Clerk, but is limited to a maximum of **3 days**. Where a situation requires an extended period of leave beyond 3 days, other options should be discussed including use of TOIL, annual leave and/or a period of unpaid leave.

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It was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council adoption of the proposed Sickness and Absence Policy with the additions that had been agreed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

298. CLOCK TOWER HOUSE: PROPERTY REPORT.

298.1 The Clerk had reported that the following matters had been completed:

- Annual PAT testing of the electrical equipment had been undertaken December 2017.
- Annual service in respect of Fire Safety Equipment had been undertaken in December 2017.
- Office Key Safe had been installed by the Clerk.
- A fireproof cabinet had been purchased and fitted.
- In line with the Council's Document Retention Policy, a number of items had been sorted into sacks for secure shredding.

The above was **NOTED**.

298.2 The Clerk had reported that water had leaked from underneath the floor tiles in the toilet and that the stopcock had jammed. The condition of the room was considered to be of poor condition and the Clerk had suggested that the room was in need of refurbishment. With this in mind approval had been sought to obtain quotations to refurbish the office toilet and kitchen.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that quotations would be obtained by the Clerk to refurbish the toilet and kitchen area.

299. PARISH OFFICE.

299.1 The Clerk had reported on the following items:

Plastic Stacking Storage Crates: The Clerk advised that office storage was in need of being tidied up and advantage would be gained if plastic stacking storage crates were to be obtained. The cost would not exceed £100.

It was **AGREED** to authorise the Parish Clerk to purchase plastic stacking storage crates at a cost not exceeding £100.

Office Cleaning Update: The Clerk had previously circulated a summary of quotations that had been obtained with a view to appointing a contract cleaner to provide a once a week clean, expressed as Options 1,2 and 3.

It was **AGREED** to accept Option 2 in respect of a cost of £151.66 per month.

Purchase of Additional Components for the Office PC Security Software: The Clerk reported that current security software was in need of increased protection and in return for a cost of £5 per licence this would provide the following additional protection:

- Secure connections to open and public networks
- Passwords
- SecureLine VPN
- Browser Cleanup
- Webcam Shield

It was **AGREED** to authorise the Clerk to purchase additional components for the Office PC Security Software.

300. DATA PROTECTION: UPDATE FROM THE CLERK.

300.1 The Clerk had reported that a meeting had taken place between Councillor Richmond and the Clerk on 5 January 2018 to consider the impact that would result on the Parish Office in order to meet requirements of the forthcoming Data Protection legislation.

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Advice had been sought from SSALC and NALC and it had been confirmed that the Parish Council would need to appoint a Data Protection Officer. Due to conflict of interest it would not be possible for this role to be performed by the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, RFO or a Councillor. Consideration would need to be given towards the following:

- Data Protection training
- Councillors having .gov.uk email addresses
- Additional software such as Microsoft Sharepoint
- Privacy notices
- Information Security Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- General Data Protection Regulation access to information statement
- Third Parties who handle data for the Parish Council

The above was **NOTED**. Councillor Richmond had thanked the Parish Clerk for all the work that had been undertaken so far.

301. PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE: TO CONSIDER UPDATING OR REPLACING.

301.1 The Clerk had reported that significant delays were being experienced uploading and editing information on the website. This was due to the fact that the website was considerably old and possibly in need of either being updated or replaced. Implementation of Data Protection legislation would also have an impact. The possibility of providing improved easy access to the site for members of the public was discussed by members along with the suggestion that a summary of responsibilities be included to explain the relationship between Mid Sussex District Council, West Sussex County Council, Town Councils and Parish Offices.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that Councillors Blunden, Plass and Richmond would provide assistance to the Parish Clerk to progress this matter forward.

302. PROPOSED PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON: TO NOTE ANY UPDATE.

302.1 Councillor Plass had reported that a meeting of the Working Group had been arranged to take place on 12 January 2018 with a view to progressing matters further in respect of the proposed Toilets on the Common project. Work in progress had been delayed due to health reasons.

303. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

303.1 The Clerk reported that staff had attended the following training events:

- The Clerk had attended Clerks Development training events on 7 and 23 November 2017
- The Deputy Clerk had attended a Planning Application training course held by Mid Sussex District Council on 10 November 2017

The above was **NOTED**.

303.2 The Clerk reported that the following training events were due to be attended:

- The Deputy Clerk would attend a Data Protection course provided by SSALC on 30 January 2018
- The RFO and Clerk would attend the regional SLCC Technical Seminar to be held on 21 March 2018

A copy of the SSALC training programme for 2018 had been circulated with the Agenda. The Clerk reported that consideration was being given towards staff attending additional training events and had extended an invitation for Councillors to attend any of the events if required.

The above was **NOTED**.

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304. RISK MANAGEMENT.

304.1 The Chairman reported that Risk Assessments in respect of the following items would need to be undertaken:

- Cash Handling & Transportation
- Display Screen Equipment / Workstations
- Parish Office
- Financial Management

The Clerk had also reminded members that the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit for March 2017-2018 was due to be completed.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the Deputy Parish Clerk would contact members to request assistance when conducting the Risk Assessment reviews.

305. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

305.1 No other items of business were raised.

The public part of the meeting ended 20.46 hours.

306. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [AND PRESS].

306.1 It was **RESOLVED**, in accordance with Standing Order no. 3(d) and the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960 section 1(2), to exclude the public and press from the following part of the meeting, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons (staffing matters).

307. TO CONSIDER A MATTER RELATING TO THE CLOCK TOWER HOUSE TENANCY.

307.1 It was **NOTED** that discussions were continuing.

The meeting concluded at 20.59 hours.