

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2021** at King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 20.00 hours.

Parish Councillors:	Mr. S. Henton (Chairman)	Mr. M. Leach
	Mr. W. Blunden	Mr. R. Pickett
	Mrs. L. Grace	Mrs. V. Upton
	Mrs. M. Hersey*	

(*) Denotes absence

In attendance:	Mr. A. Funnell (Parish Clerk)
	Mrs T. Ely (RFO)

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

283. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

283.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs. M. Hersey and their reason was accepted.

284. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA.

284.1 There were no declarations of interest from members in respect of any items on the Agenda.

285. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

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

286. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2021.

286.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday, 29 September 2021.

These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

287. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

287.1 The Chairman made no announcements.

288. ACTION LIST.

288.1 The Chairman referred to the Action List, which had been circulated with the Agenda and this was **NOTED**.

289. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

289.1 i) To Note Available Funds. It was **NOTED** that £1,500 had been spent from a budget of £2,500.

ii) To Consider Grant Requests Received. It was **NOTED** that no grant requests had been received.

iii) Letters of Thanks Received. It was **NOTED** that letters and emails of thanks had been received from Lindfield Repair Café, Victim Support, West Sussex Mediation Service and 4Sight.

290. BUDGET 2021/22.

290.1 A detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Report and Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves Report to 30 September 2021 had been circulated to members by the RFO on 11 October 2021. Budget progress was **NOTED** as follows:

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- 290.1 i) Finance and General Purposes Committee: a total of £56,430 had been spent from the budget of £163,900.
- ii) Overall Council Budget 2020/21: a total of £74,055 had been spent from the budget of £226,300 of which £11,524 had been spent from the Environment and Amenities Committee's budget of £49,400. £531 had been spent from the Allotments budget of £2,500. There had been expenditure of £125 from the Planning & Traffic Committee budget of £10,500. There had been no expenditure from Earmarked Reserves.
- iii) General Reserve Expenditure: a total of £5,445 had been spent from General Reserves. £75 in support of the Big Green Week, £3,978 to refurbish toilets on the first floor of Clock Tower House, £1,372 in relation to costs supporting COVID safe reopening of the parish office and £20 to hold a stall on Lindfield Village Day 9 September 2021.

291. FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021.

- i) **CASH AND INVESTMENT RECONCILIATION AND TO NOTE DEPOSITS AND INVESTMENT HELD.**
- ii) **PAYMENT ANALYSIS.**
- iii) **SUMMARY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.**

- 291.1 i) A copy of the total bank cash and investment reconciliation to 30 September 2021 had been circulated to members by the RFO on 11 October 2021. A balance of £299,135.89 was **NOTED**, which was represented by the following:

	£
Bank Statement Balances:	
Barclays Bank Business Current Account	15,000.00
Barclays Bank Business Premium Account	192,231.15
Nationwide Building Society	93,000.03
Petty Cash	139.29
Less unrepresented an unrepresented cheque	-1,238.40
Plus interest receipt not on bank statement	3.82
	299,135.89

- ii) It was **NOTED** that payments totalling £12,790.22 had been made from the Barclays Bank Current Account between 1 and 30 September 2021.

- iii) The summary of income and expenditure to 30 September 2021 was **NOTED** with income totalling £178,264 and expenditure totalling £74,055. The RFO had confirmed that payment 2 of the precept £86,000 had been received on 30 September 2021.

292. BUDGET 2022/2023:

- i) **TO CONSIDER COMMITTEE BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 2022/23.**
- ii) **TO RECEIVE DRAFT BUDGETS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT & AMENITIES AND PLANNING & TRAFFIC COMMITTEES.**

- 292.1 i) The Committee Chairman, Clerk and RFO had met on 18 October 2021 to consider the Finance & General Purposes committee budget for 2022/23. Members were now presented with a table comparing the current annual budget against current spend and the proposed budget for 2022/23 for consideration and comment. An overall budget of £183,833 had been proposed for 2022/23 compared to the current year's budget of £163,900.

Each budget item was carefully considered and the following **NOTED** in relation to current year budget headings. Anticipated expenditure to year end under Salary was reduced due to the current Village Orderly situation. It had been proposed that the Village Directory budget be withdrawn and replaced by a new budget heading Communications & Events (Community Engagement). The Toilets on the Common earmarked reserves of £84,170 was required to remain in place.

Additional new proposed budget headings were **NOTED** and these were **AGREED** as follows:

- a) Waste Collection £2,000 with a weekly collection.
- b) Tablets for Councillors £8,000 be deferred.

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- c) CTH Insulation £tbc – consideration to be deferred until quotations received, proposed £8,000 budget for Tablets perhaps be transferred to this budget heading.
- d) CTH Solar Panels £10,000
- e) Communiations & Events £3,000
- f) General Reserves be increased to £75,000

It was **AGREED** to propose a total budget of £183,833 for 2022/23 on behalf of the Finance & General Purposes Committee as this current time.

- 292.2 ii) It was **NOTED** that draft budgets were currently under discussion by each Committee. Consideration was being given towards rearranging the Environment & Amenities Committee meeting to assist with this process.

It was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Chairs of all three Committees, in conjunction with the Clerk and RFO, to consider and review their draft budgets when available. This would provide assistance in presenting a complete draft Council budget to members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee at their next meeting due 9 December 2021.

293. TO CONSIDER RAISING THE UNAPPROVED DEBIT CARD EXPENDITURE TRANSACTION LIMIT FROM £50 TO £100.

- 293.1 Members were asked to consider a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the Agenda. A summary of the current agreed payment and authorisation approval limits had been included for reference. Agreement had been requested to increase the current limit of expenditure by debit card, per single transaction from £50 to £100, without receiving prior approval. In approving this level of expenditure, consideration would need to be given towards the increased level of risk that this would present.

The report was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to raise the unapproved debit card expenditure limit from £50 to £100.

294. TO NOTE CLAIM FOR VAT REFUND SUBMISSION FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021.

- 294.1 Members **NOTED** that a claim for VAT refund of £2,093.34 had been submitted to HMRC for the period 1 July to 30 September 2021.

295. TO CONSIDER DRAFT INVESTMENT POLICY.

- 295.1 The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the RFO and circulated with the Agenda. Attention had been drawn to recommendations made by the Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guidance March 2021 for an investment policy to be considered, having regard when holding a bank balance in excess of £100,000. Additional guidance had been provided in Appendix A and a draft Investment Policy in Appendix B.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** that the Council should have an Investment Policy, to meet the recommendations made by the Accountability and Governance Practitioners' Guidance March 2021.

It was further **AGREED** to recommend to Full Council to adopt the draft Investment Policy as shared in Appendix B but with the following amendment:

5 Liquidity of Investments. The Finance & General Purposes Committee will determine the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed so as not to compromise liquidity.

296. TO CONFIRM COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT EXTERNAL EVENT(S).

- 296.1 Lindfield Parish Council had received an invitation to attend the launch of the Lindfield Repair Café on Saturday 6 November 2021.

It was **NOTED** that Councillors Grace and Upton would be attending.

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297. TO APPROVE PURCHASE OF NEW LAPTOP.

- 297.1 Members were asked to consider a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the Agenda. Approval to purchase a laptop to a maximum budget limit of £1,000 had been requested. Existing equipment was dated and struggled to display information needed to support physical meetings due to its basic processor, with limited entry-level. A business-class laptop would provide much improved build quality and components, with the potential of being upgraded for free to Window 11 Pro.

The recommendations were considered and **NOTED**, and the following was **AGREED**:

- 1) To purchase a business-class laptop with a maximum budget of £1,000.
- 2) To authorise use of the debit card for this purchase.
- 3) That the existing laptop has its hard drive erased and be donated to Computers for Kids or another local group or charity.

298. TO APPROVE LEGIONNAIRES TESTING EXPENDITURE.

- 298.1 Members were asked to consider a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the Agenda. Approval for the procurement of services to support a Legionnaires risk assessment had been requested. As building owners, it was the responsibility of the Council to assess the risk and to carry out a risk assessment. The effects of this disease and details of legal requirements of statutory law to comply with Legionella Control L8 Approved Codes of Practice had been summarised. Procuring the services of a professional would assist the Council in this process.

The recommendations were considered and **NOTED**, and the following was **AGREED**:

- 1) To authorise the Clerk to obtain training and ensure suitable risk management be put in place.
- 2) Initial expenditure of up to £500 for a third-party assessment and training of staff.
- 3) To undertake sampling as required, currently £60 per sample.

299. PROPOSED PUBLIC TOILETS ON LINDFIELD COMMON: TO CONSIDER ANY RELEVANT MATTERS.

- 299.1 Members had been asked to consider a report that had been prepared by the Clerk with a view to approving a quotation for statutory notice. The S38 Commons Act application for consent to build on common land was ready to be submitted, which if submitted would incur additional expenditure.

The recommendations were considered and **NOTED**, and the following was **AGREED**:

- 1) To submit the S38 Application to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 2) To authorise expenditure of £448 plus VAT to publish the statutory notice.
- 3) To authorise £100 miscellaneous expenditure to (copies of documents, postage, etc)
- 4) That the Council's solicitor would act as agent and be given authority to authorise payment of fees up to a maximum value of £2,000.
- 5) To authorise the Clerk, in conjunction with the Working Group, to answer any queries that might result from the application (either directly or through our appointed agent).

300. VISION STATEMENT: UPDATE.

- 300.1 The Clerk reported that a draft statement was in the final stages of development. Comments from the Working Group were being summarised and this would be shared to members as soon as possible.

The above was **NOTED**.

301. WELCOME BACK FUND: TO CONSIDER ANY RELEVANT MATTER RELATING TO CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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- 301.1 The Clerk reported that MSDC had been notified of the Council's interest in implementing the Village Action Plan. Progress would possibly be delayed whilst attention was initially being given by MSDC towards village events taking place.

The above was **NOTED**.

302. CLERK AND RFO REPORT.

302.1 Clerk's Report.

It was reported that the emergency push pad latch with digital lever keypad had been installed in the parish office.

The above was **NOTED**.

302.2 RFO's Report.

It was reported that an Interim Audit had been arranged to take place on Wednesday 10 November 2021.

The above was **NOTED**.

303. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING / CONFERENCE EVENTS, AND RECEIVE ANY ATTENDANCE REPORTS.

- 303.1 The Clerk confirmed attendance at the following SLCC virtual training events:

21 October 2021	Emotional Resilience	Parish Clerk
8 November 2021	Operation London Bridge	Parish Clerk
10 December 2021	Rights of Way	Parish Clerk

The above was **NOTED**.

304. RISK MANAGEMENT.

- 304.1 It was **NOTED** that after having given consideration to item 16 on the Agenda and agreement confirmed, a draft Legionnaires risk assessment would be presented to members in due course.

305. RECRUITMENT OF VILLAGE ORDERLY: TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS RELATING TO THE RECRUITMENT.

- 305.1 The Clerk advised members that advertisements had been placed in the Mid Sussex Times and online on www.smartlistpost.co.uk. An invoice for £979.20 including VAT had been received.

306. MATTERS 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.

- 306.1 The Chariman of Council had reminded officers that a copy of the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting that was held on 4 March 2021 had not been posted on the Council's website.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that action would be taken by officers to rectify the situation.

The public part of the meeting ended at 20.46 hours.

307. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [AND PRESS]: TO CONSIDER WHETHER A RESOLUTION SHOULD BE MOVED UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 3(D) AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PUBLIC BODIES ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT 1960 SECTION 1(2), TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE

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FOLLOWING PART OF THE MEETING, BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED OR FOR OTHER SPECIAL REASONS (STAFFING MATTERS).

- 307.1 It was **RESOLVED** in accordance with the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960 Section 1(2) and the Parish Council's Standing Order 3 (d) that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it was desirable in the public interest that the public [and press] be excluded.

308. STAFF MATTERS.

- 308.1 It was **NOTED** that recruitment of a Village Orderly was ongoing.
- 308.2 It was **NOTED** that strike action may be taken by colleagues at District and County level in relation to pay negotiations.

309. CLOCK TOWER HOUSE: TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE TO ESTATE MANAGEMENT COMPANY.

- 309.1 Members had been asked to consider a report that had been prepared by the Clerk.

It was **AGREED** that a letter would be written to the estate management company regarding holding a meeting of all shareholders.

The meeting concluded at 20.49 hours.