

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2022** at King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 20.00 hours.

<b>Parish Councillors:</b>	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, welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

### **403. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**

403.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. M. Hersey and Mr. M. Leach and their reasons were accepted.

### **404. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA.**

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

### **405. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

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

### **406. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2022.**

406.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Thursday 1 September 2022. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

### **407. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

407.1 The Chairman made no announcements.

### **408. ACTION LIST.**

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

### **409. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.**

409.1 i) To Note Available Funds.  
It was **NOTED** that £1,200 had been spent from a budget of £2,500.

ii) To Consider Grant Requests Received.

Members had been presented with a summary of Grants and Donations applied for, and awarded for the current financial year, with details of the purpose for which funding had been requested. Councillor Blunden reported on behalf of the Grants Panel and confirmed that consideration had been given towards the following grant request:

a. Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex.

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Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex were a registered charity who had submitted an application for a grant of £300.00 dated 31 October 2022. Other organisations had been approached to seek funding. Awarding this grant would help to continue providing and delivering pre-hospital care 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. They were called out to over 3,000 incidents in the South East last year. The total cost of this project was £15.2M per year.

**RESOLVED:** that in accordance with the recommendation of the Grants Panel and the Council's powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the following expenditure should be incurred 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 £300 be made towards the work of Air Ambulance Charity Kent Surrey Sussex.

### iii) To Note Letters of Thanks Received.

Letters of thanks had been received from:

- i) 4Sight Vision Support
- ii) Mid Sussex Older People's Council
- iii) Victim Support

## 410. BUDGET 2022/23: TO NOTE BUDGET PROGRESS REPORTS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022.

410.1 A detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Report and Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves Report to 30 September 2022 had been circulated by the RFO prior to the meeting. A summary had been circulated with the Agenda. Budget progress was **NOTED** as follows:

i) Finance and General Purposes Committee. a total of £65,130 had been spent from the budget of £164,633. Income of £194,195 had been received, which had included payment of the precept £94,500 (Payment 2 of 2).

ii) Overall Council Budget. a total of £93,514 had been spent from the budget of £228,033 of which £23,697 had been spent from the Environment and Amenities Committee's budget of £55,900. £2,125 had been spent from the Allotments budget of £1,855 and income of £891 received. There had been £1,312 spent from the Planning & Traffic Committee budget of £5,000. £2,400.00 had been spent from Earmarked Reserves.

Income of £99,603 had been received in total.

iii) General Reserve Expenditure. a total of £1,520 had been spent from General Reserves.

## 411. FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022.

411.1 i) Cash and Investment Reconciliation and To Note Deposits and Investment Held.

It was **NOTED** that the total bank cash and investment reconciliation to 30 September 2022 was £293,084.45.

ii) Payment Analysis.

It was **NOTED** that a total of £12,649 net of VAT had been paid from the Barclays Bank Current Account in September 2022.

## 412. FINANCIAL SERVICES COMPENSATION SCHEME (FSCS): UPDATE.

412.1 The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the RFO and Clerk. Members had been asked to consider research that had been carried out relating to the possibility of opening an additional financial product. This would maximise the protection offered by the FSCS. Members had previously expressed interest in opening an additional account with minimum risk. On 31 October 2022 total funds of £266,664 had been held of which £96,664 was unprotected. A summary of potential products had been provided with a recommendation to consider a product from either NatWest Bank Plc or the Cambridge Building Society.

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After having given full consideration, the following was **AGREED**:

i) To set up an additional product in which to hold funds to increase the level of FSCS protection.

ii) To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that a Business Current Account with NatWest Bank Plc be opened with an initial deposit of £85,000. The existing Barclays Bank authorised signatories to be included.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 413. VAT RECLAIM: TO NOTE VAT RECLAIM PAYMENT AND SUBMISSION.

413.1 i) It was **NOTED** that a claim for VAT refund totalling £3,191.02 had been paid by HMRC on 20 October 2022.

ii) It was **NOTED** that a claim for VAT refund totalling £3,161.96 for the invoice period July to September 2022 had been submitted to HMRC on 1 November 2022.

### 414. BUDGET 2023/24.

414.1 Members had been presented with a report that had been prepared by the Clerk. They had been asked to consider draft proposals for the Finance & General Purposes committee budget and to receive proposed draft budgets on behalf of the Environment & Amenities and Planning & Traffic committees.

414.2 The Committee Chairman, Clerk and RFO had met on 13 October 2022 to consider the Finance & General Purposes committee budget for 2023/24. Members were now presented with a table comparing the current annual budget and the proposed budget for 2023/24 for consideration and comment. An overall budget of £178,099 had been proposed for 2023/24 compared to the current year's budget of £164,633.

Each budget item was carefully considered, and the following **NOTED** in relation to current year budget headings. Negotiations were ongoing in relation to Salary increases commencing April 2022, it was possible that a 5% increase might be agreed, if so, this would in addition impact on Tax & NI and Pension contributions resulting in overspent budgets in 2023/24.

A new earmarked reserve heading Elections 2023 £5,400 had been proposed for 2023/24. The Toilets on the Common earmarked reserves of £84,170 was required to remain in place. The General Reserve £60,000 would be maintained.

When setting the precept, members were mindful that allowance would need to be taken into consideration of current economic conditions. There was the prospect of the UK heading towards a long recession, rising food and energy prices and an increasing inflation rate. A discussion took place regarding the possibility of reviewing Members Allowances £4,000.

It was **AGREED** to propose a total budget of £178,099 for 2023/24 on behalf of the Finance & General Purposes Committee as this current time.

414.3 It was **NOTED** that the Environment & Amenities committee had met on 6 October 2022, followed by a meeting of the Chairman and Clerk on 10 October 2022 to consider their draft proposed budget. An overall budget of £61,900 had been proposed for 2023/24 compared to the current year's budget of £55,900. The Allotments budget £2,500 would be maintained, the earmarked reserve Wilderness Field s106 Maintenance budget would reduce from £21,107.58 to £18,695.58 and a new earmarked reserve heading Projects £5,000 had been proposed.

It was **AGREED** to authorise the Chairman and Clerk to meet further to consider the Environment & Amenities committee proposed budget.

414.4 It was **NOTED** that the Planning & Traffic committee were anticipating on submitting a budget request, including earmarked reserves, of up to £12,500. This compared against a current total year's budget of £20,000.

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- 414.5 It was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Clerk and RFO, in conjunction with the Chairs of all three Committees, to consider and review their draft budgets when available. This would assist in presenting a complete draft Council budget to members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee at their next meeting due 8 December 2022.

### **415. AGAR 2021/22: TO NOTE EXTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT.**

- 415.1 Members had been presented with a copy of the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22.

It was **NOTED** that the inspection period for the exercise of electors' rights was set for 29 working days, which was less than the mandatory 30 working days. No further matters were raised and Moore certified completion of their review of Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR 2021/22.

### **416. ARRANGEMENTS FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND INTERNAL CONTROLS 2022/23.**

- 416.1 Members were reminded by the Chairman of their responsibility to carry out an annual review of the effectiveness of internal audit and internal controls for 2022/23.

It was **AGREED** that Councillor Mr. R. Pickett would conduct the review.

### **417. PROPOSED PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON: UPDATE AND TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS.**

- 417.1 The Clerk had reported that revised plans had been received from the architect, which had allowed for two unisex cubicles with baby changing facilities in addition to a smaller unisex area and a large changing places cubicle. An updated bills cost had been requested and the Council was in a position to submit a revised planning application.

The above was **NOTED**.

### **418. CLERK AND RFO REPORTS.**

- 418.1 Clerk's Report.

The Clerk advised as follows:

- a. The parish office alarm system had recently suffered a power failure, which was successfully restored without any problems arising.
- b. Rialtas Business Solutions Limited had been bought out by Harris Computing, a global vertical market software provider.

- 418.2 RFO's Report.

The RFO advised as follows:

- a. AGAR 2021/22 Year End Adjustments. The Internal Auditor had confirmed agreement to the existing arrangements when deciding the level of materiality in respect of regular annual bills. It was confirmed that there is no need to apportion these.
- b. An interim audit review was due to take place on 16 November 2022.
- c. The existing internal auditor had announced his intention to retire following completion of the year end annual audit for 2022/23. Enquiries were commencing to find a suitable replacement.

The above was **NOTED**.

### **419. POLICY & STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS: UPDATE ON THE PLAN 2022/27 PUBLICATION.**

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419.1 The Clerk reported that the following:

- The Plan had received Full Council approval at their meeting held on 13 October 2022.
- An article would be published in the next edition of Lindfield Life, which would invite members of the public to submit comments via Survey Monkey.
- It had been proposed to hold a drop-in event next year.

The above was **NOTED**.

### **420. RISK MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER ANY RISK ASSESSMENTS.**

420.1 There were no risk assessments to consider.

### **421. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING/CONFERENCE EVENTS AND RECEIVE ANY ATTENDANCE REPORTS.**

421.1 The Clerk advised the following attendance:

- a. The Clerk had hoped to attend an in-person networking event offered by SLCC on 2 December 2022.
- b. There were no attendance reports.

### **422. 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.**

422.1 There were no matters arising.

The meeting concluded at 20.51 hours.