

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on **THURSDAY 07 MARCH 2019** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 20.00 hours.

### **Present:**

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

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

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Plass Vice Chairman, presided as the Chair of the meeting and opened the meeting, welcomed those present, and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

### **458. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**

458.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mr. S Henton (Chairman) and Mrs. V. Upton and their reasons were accepted.

### **459. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

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

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

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

### **461. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2019.**

461.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Thursday 10 January 2019. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

### **462. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

462.1 The Chairman made no announcements.

### **463. ACTION LIST.**

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

### **464. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.**

464.1 i) Grants budget. It was **NOTED** that £250 remained in the budget of £2,350.

ii) To consider Grant requests.

Councillor Allen reported on behalf of the Grants Panel and consideration had been given towards the following grant requests:

a. St Catherine's Hospice.

St Catherine's Hospice was a registered charity and their community nurses provided care and support to patients living at home. This had included management of symptoms, and the provision of advice on pain relief, medication

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as well as advice on aid mobility and daily living. Residents of Lindfield and their families would benefit from the support provided by their community nurses and a grant of £250 had been requested towards this cost. Member's attention had been drawn to the fact that a grant of £250 had already been paid in the current financial 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 £250 be made towards the work of St Catherine's Hospice.

It was further **AGREED** that the payment would be deferred until the beginning of the next financial year.

b. Citizens Advice.

Citizens Advice in West Sussex (North, South, East) were a registered charity and had requested a donation of £250 towards the cost of improving I.T. equipment. This would benefit local residents in providing faster access to support and information.

**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 £250 be made towards the work of Citizens Advice.

iii) Letters of thanks received. It was **NOTED** that no letters of thanks had been received.

### 465. BUDGET 2018/19.

465.1 The budget progress reports to 31 January 2019 were **NOTED:**

i) Finance and General Purposes Committee: a total of £124,255.37 had been spent from the budget of £159,230.

ii) Analysis of Administration Budget: a total of £112,952.42 had been spent from the budget of £142,780.

iii) Overall Council Budget 2018/19: a total of £157,291.70 had been spent from the budget of £216,330 of which £27,132.45 had been spent from the Environment and Amenities Committee's budget of £46,600. A total of £5,903.88 had been spent from the Planning & Traffic Committee's budget of £10,500. A total of £24,506.40 had been spent from the total General Reserve and Designated Reserves of £216,571.42.

iv) General Reserve Expenditure: a total of £9,612.76 had been spent from the General Reserve. The RFO had presented a summary detailing items of expenditure to 31 January 2019 and members had been invited to approve this.

The summary detailing items of expenditure to 31 January 2019 from General Reserve was **NOTED** and all items of expenditure **APPROVED**.

v) To note the Internal Control for the period October to December 2018 was carried out on 31 January 2019. It was **NOTED** that the Internal Control for the period October to December 2018 had been carried out on 31 January 2019 by the Chairwoman of the Finance Committee.

### 466. DEBIT CARD: TO PREAUTHORISE EXPENDITURE RELATING TO THE VILLAGE ORDERLY AND OFFICE STATIONERY.

466. The Chairman advised that the Clerk had requested authorisation to meet the cost of the following items of expenditure using the Parish Council debit card:

a) The Village Orderly.

Purchase of consumable items in support of regular duties undertaken by the Village Orderly for the remainder of the current financial year and 2019/20. This would include items such as sacks for rubbish.

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It was **AGREED** to provide authorisation to the Clerk to meet the cost of purchasing consumable items in support of regular duties undertaken by the Village Orderly for the remainder of the current financial year and 2019/20 using the Parish Council debit card.

b) Stationery.

Purchase of office stationery for the remainder of the current financial year and 2019/20. A budget of £500 had been agreed for 2019/20.

It was **AGREED** to provide authorisation to the Clerk to meet the cost of purchasing office stationery for the remainder of the current financial year and 2019/20 using the Parish Council debit card.

### 467. **BARCLAYS BANK UPDATE.**

467.1 The RFO confirmed that following Full Council approval to proceed with online banking, an application was in the process of being submitted to Barclays Bank to include the RFO as an authorised signatory. This was in support of the RFO acting as Service Administrator. Members were now being asked to agree which authorised signatories should be responsible for logging on to Barclays Bank with a view to authorising the payment and how this process should be recorded.

It was **AGREED** that either the Chairman, Committee Chairman or Committee Vice Chairman would be responsible for logging on to Barclays Bank with a view to authorising the online payment. It was further **AGREED** that a list of invoices together with their completed 'Authorised Online Payment form' would be prepared on a weekly basis and emailed to the authorised signatory for payment.

### 468. **VAT RECLAIM: UPDATE ON RECLAIM SUBMITTED 13 DECEMBER 13 DECEMBER 2018 FOR £7,421.02 FOR THE PERIOD 24 MARCH 2018 to 30 SEPTEMBER 2018.**

468.1 It was **NOTED** that a VAT reclaim payment had been received on 15 February 2019 for £7,421.02 for the period 24 March 2018 to 30 September 2018.

### 469. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEM: UPDATE.**

469.1 The Chairman confirmed that an annual review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit and Internal Control System had been undertaken by Councillor Plass on 4 March 2019. Copies of the reports had been circulated with the Agenda and members had been asked to note their findings. It had been concluded that all processes currently in place for both the Internal Audit and Internal Control System were satisfactory and effective for a Council of this size. Some risk assessments could however be undertaken in a more timely fashion.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 470. **OFFICE EQUIPMENT.**

470.1 The Chairman reported on the following:

A) Printer: To Consider Arrangements for Replacement.

The existing Toshiba equipment provided by Direct Tec had been in use for six years. This was currently supplied under a three year lease agreement with BNP Paribas, which was due to expire in September 2019. Members were advised that printing requirements of the office had remained stable and that it was anticipated there would be no significant change in the volume of printing. Concern had been raised regarding changes that had taken place to office IT equipment and software, and it was envisaged that a new device would better integrate with these platforms. The Clerk was therefore seeking authorisation to explore alternative contracts with a view to replacing and updating the printer. Consideration would possibly need to be given towards the size of the new printer in view of restricted access to the office via the internal corridor. The Clerk had recommended that consideration be given towards either:

a) Setting up a working group to produce and circulate a tender, or

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- b) Delegating authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman and Committee Chairman, to produce and circulate a tender for consideration.

It was **AGREED** to consider arrangements for replacement of the printer as a separate item on the Agenda at a future meeting.

### B) Phone System.

The existing phone system had been installed some time ago and by the start of 2020 traditional ISDN phoneline systems would no longer be offered by BT wholesale. Existing systems would be phased out by 2025 and ISDN would be replaced by VOIP systems. Initial research had indicated that it would be possible to replace the existing phone system without incurring additional cost and the Clerk had asked members whether they would agree in principle to further enquiries being made.

It was **AGREED** to consider the option of replacing the existing phone system upon receipt of a report from the Clerk outlining the advantages, disadvantages and costs involved. Full Council would then be in a position to consider the matter.

### 471. **VILLAGE DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK: TO NOTE THE RESULTS OF PUBLIC FEEDBACK AND REPORT OF MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP.**

- 471.1 The Chairman referred to a report that had been circulated with the Agenda, in which the results of public feedback had been collated and summarised.

Residents had been invited to provide feedback in response to a survey that had taken place between December 2018 and 4 January 2019. Questions had been asked relating to how the Directory was used and for what purpose, how the information might be accessed should a Directory not be available as well as preference towards the size of the Directory. A total of 370 responses had been received. See Appendix 1. for summary of the public survey feedback.

The results of the public feedback were **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the results could be formerly published.

- 471.2 The Chairman referred to a report that had been circulated with the Agenda, in which the findings of a meeting of the Working Group held 1 February 2019 had been summarised. Consideration had been given towards the following aspects of producing the Village Directory and Yearbook and the possibility of there being scope to make improvements in relation to reducing current level of expenditure and workload involved:

1. Design – replacement of the plastic cover and whether to split the current format into two separate elements ie Diary and Directory.
2. Office time spent and the merit of possibly outsourcing some elements of production.
3. Costs – production, advertising and sponsorship.
4. Delivery – the number of volunteers that were able to deliver the Directory had been reducing.
5. Public relations – concern had been raised regarding the negative impact on residents if the Village Directory and Yearbook were to be withdrawn.

The findings of the Working Group were summarised thus:

- Councillor Plass had agreed to progress this matter further.
- Consideration would be given towards replacing the plastic cover.
- Alternative suppliers (including outsourcing) would be explored.
- The Working Group would aim to meet in six weeks time to receive an update.
- Members were mindful that any agreed changes would require time to implement.

The report and findings of the Working Group were **NOTED**.

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### 472. PROPOSED PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON: UPDATE.

- 472.1 Councillor Plass reported that MSDC had received a number of objections to the planning application which had given rise to additional reports having to be requested. West Sussex County Council Highways had confirmed that they had no concerns. A response from Mid Sussex Anti-Social Behaviour was still awaited. A final decision from MSDC had been anticipated following their meeting due 14 March 2019 however this had now been postponed, possibly to be held on 28 March 2019.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 473. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME.

- 473.1 a) To Confirm the Review of the Discretions Policy.

The Chairman reported that the Clerk in conjunction with the Committee Chairman had carried out a review of the Discretions Policy, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda. The only amendment necessary had related to details in respect of the scheme administrator which had changed on 1 March 2019.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to confirm the review of the Discretions Policy. It was further **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Clerk to make any changes necessary to the contract in respect of the scheme administrator.

- 473.2 b) To Consider the Proposed Internal Dispute Resolution Policy.

The Chairman referred to a copy of the proposed Internal Dispute Resolution Policy that had been circulated with the Agenda, and had asked members to consider recommendations that had been made by the Clerk. Members were reminded of their legal obligations to have this Policy in place.

It was **AGREED** to accept the recommendations made by the Clerk and to recommend to Full Council that the proposed Internal Dispute Resolution Policy be adopted.

### 474. CLERK'S REPORT.

- 474.1 The Clerk reported on the following items:

Parish Office Front Door.

The door latch had now been adjusted.

Fire Alarm Service.

A six monthly fire alarm service had been carried out 7 February 2019.

### 475. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

- 475.1 The Clerk confirmed attendance of staff at the following training and conference events:

- Clerk: Elections and Co-option Briefing 24 January 2019 which had been organised by SSALC.
- Clerk and RFO: Year End Finance training 28 February 2019 which had been organised by SSALC.
- The Clerk and Deputy Clerk would be attending the Clerks Networking Day on 4 April 2019.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 476. MATTERS ARISING AFTER THE PREPARATION OF THIS AGENDA, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT. SUCH MATTERS WILL BE FOR NOTONG OR DEFERRAL TO A FUTURE MEETING ONLY.

- 476.1 There were no matters arising.

The public part of the meeting ended at 20.33 hours.

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### 477. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [AND PRESS].

477.1 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 as desirable in the public interest that the public [and press] be excluded.

### 478. TO CONSIDER COMMERCIAL ADVICE RECEIVED IN RELATION TO THE VILLAGE DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK.

478.1 Following receipt of a recommendation that had been made by the Working Group, after having given the matter full and careful consideration members were unable to reach a decision.

It was **AGREED** to refer the matter to Full Council in order to reach a decision. It was further **AGREED** to provide Full Council with cost comparisons to assist in making a decision.

### 479. CLOCK TOWER HOUSE LEASE.

479.1 It was **NOTED** that discussions were still ongoing.

### 480. OFFICE STAFF: TO REVIEW STAFF SALARY SCALES FOR 2019/20 AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME CONTRIBUTION BANDINGS FOR 2019/20.

480.1 The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the Agenda, and advised as follows:

#### a) Staff Salaries Scales for 2019/20.

The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services had agreed new pay salary scales for 2019/20 and these were to be implemented from 1 April 2019. Due to the introduction of the national living wage, the NJC agreement had included introduction of a new pay spine. It had been proposed that the recommended percentage increases be considered.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to recommended to Full Council that the percentage increases as proposed by the NJC be approved.

#### b) Local Government Pension Scheme Contribution Bandings for 2019/20.

The Contribution Banding rates for the Local Government Pension Scheme had not yet been published.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the Chairman and Committee Chairman would give further consideration to this matter as soon as confirmation of the Contribution Banding rates for the Local Government Pension Scheme had been received.

The meeting concluded at 21.02 hours.

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### APPENDIX 1.

#### Item 471.1 VILLAGE DIRECTORY AND YEAR BOOK.

##### Summary of Public Survey Feedback received for Village Directory and Year Book

1	<b>How do you use the Village Directory and Yearbook?</b>	Total	%
	As a directory	74	20.00%
	As a diary	45	12.16%
	As a directory and diary	168	45.40%
	I do not use it	83	22.43%

2	<b>When I receive the Village Directory and Yearbook:</b>	Total	%
	I put it in my bag/pocket	123	33.24%
	I store it for reference	136	36.75%
	I donate it to charity	14	3.78%
	I dispose of it	37	10.00%
	Other (please specify)	60	16.21%

3	<b>How often do you use the Village Directory and Yearbook?</b>	Total	%
	On a weekly basis	173	48.05%
	Once a month	41	11.38%
	A few times a year	72	20.00%
	Never	74	20.55%

4	<b>If you did not use the Village Directory and Yearbook where would you obtain information on local groups, churches, sports clubs, businesses etc?</b>	Total	%
	Internet (including social media)	156	30.52%
	Telephone directory	18	3.52%
	Word of mouth	81	15.85%
	Parish Council office	26	5.08%
	Lindfield Life magazine	204	39.92%
	Other (please specify)	26	5.08%

5	<b>What size would you like the Village Directory and Yearbook to be?</b>	Total	%
	Current size	280	85.10%
	A6 (postcard size)	13	3.95%
	A5	10	3.30%
	A4	4	1.21%
	Similar size to Lindfield Life magazine	22	6.80%