

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** (here in F&GP) held on **TUESDAY 30 MAY 2023** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 20.00 hours.

### Present:

Parish Councillors:      Mr. W. Blunden (Chairman of Council)      Mr. R. Pickett  
                                 Mrs. A. Beecroft                                      Mrs. V. Upton  
                                 Mrs. L. Grace    Mr. T. Webster

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

This being the first meeting of the Committee following the Annual Meeting of Council, the Chairman of Council, Cllr Blunden, opened the meeting and presided for the first item.

### 1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE F&GP COMMITTEE.

1.1 The Chairman of Council called for nominations for the office of Chairman of the F&GP Committee for the Council year 2023/24. Cllr Pickett was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Upton and **SECONDED** by Cllr Beecroft. There being no further nominations, Cllr Roger Pickett was duly **ELECTED** as Chairman of the F&GP Committee for the Council year 2023/24. Cllr Pickett took the Chair for the meeting.

### 2. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE F&GP COMMITTEE.

2.1 The Chairman called for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman of the F&GP Committee. Cllr Beecroft was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Upton and **SECONDED** by Cllr Blunden. There being no further nominations, Cllr Amy Beecroft was duly **ELECTED** as Vice Chairman of the F&GP Committee for the Council year 2023/24.

### 3. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

3.1 All members were present.

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

4.1 There were no declarations of interest from members in respect of any items on the agenda.

### 5. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

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

### 6. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE F&GP COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 MARCH 2023.

6.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the F&GP Committee held on Thursday, 2 March 2023. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

### 7. GROUPS: TO APPOINT SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS, REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE AND TO AGREE THEIR MEMBERSHIP.

7.1 The Chairman referred members to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. This had provided a summary of previous year's Sub Committees and Working Groups together with their terms of reference and remit.

It was **AGREED** to appoint the existing Sub Committees and Working Groups of the F&GP Committee and Terms of Reference as presented. Membership would be as follows:

#### Administration Sub Committee.

4 members - Cllrs Beecroft, Blunden, Pickett and Upton.

#### Insurance and Risk Management Working Group.

3 members – Cllrs Grace, Beecroft and Pickett should be appointed members of the Working Group.

#### Grants Panel.

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3 members - Cllrs Blunden, Grace and Upton.

### Public Toilets Working Group.

5 members – Cllrs Blunden, Beecroft, Pickett, Upton and Webster.

### Clock Tower House Lease & Enterprise Park.

5 members – Clerk, Deputy Parish Clerk and Cllrs Pickett and Upton. The Chairman of the Environment & Amenities Committee would also be included when elected at their meeting due to be held on Thursday 8 June 2023.

### Policies.

4 members – Cllrs Blunden, Grace, Pickett and Webster.

### Plan 2022-27.

6 members – Cllrs, Blunden, Grace, Matthews, Pickett, and Upton. The Chairman of the Environment & Amenities Committee would also be included when elected at their meeting due to be held on Thursday 8 June 2023.

## 8. TO CONFIRM BANK ARRANGEMENTS.

- 8.1 The Clerk referred members to a report that had been circulated with the agenda. This had provided a summary of existing bank mandate arrangements with Barclays Bank and Nationwide Building Society and had included approved spending limits in respect of use of the Lindfield Parish Council Debit Card by the Clerk.

It had been suggested that existing bank mandate arrangements continue, with Cllr Beecroft replacing the outgoing F&GP Committee Chairman, Cllr Henton. The Council would benefit from Cllr Beecroft's accounting background. The above was **NOTED**.

It was **AGREED** that the existing bank mandate arrangements continue, with Cllr Beecroft replacing the outgoing Finance & General Purposes Committee Chairman, Cllr Henton. The RFO would contact Barclays Bank and the Nationwide Building Society. Full Council would be asked to ratify these changes.

- 8.2 Members were reminded that Full Council had recently approved the setting up of a new current account with NatWest Bank with a view to increasing protection of funds held under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. The application process had been deferred pending the outcome of the recent Council Elections. Members had expressed interest in reviewing the decision made towards setting up a new bank account compared to that of a simple instant access savings account being offered by a building society. Details of potential providers had been presented to members at the Committee meeting held 3 November 2022

It was **AGREED** that the RFO would prepare a report comparing the benefits of the NatWest current account to that of any available instant access savings account products being offered on the market. This would be presented, if possible, to the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman prior to the to date on which the Finance & General Purposes Committee were next due to meet.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to delegate authority for the Clerk in conjunction with the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman to continue setting up the NatWest current account if considered to be the most appropriate product after having considered the RFO report.

## 9. TO CONFIRM VOTING ARRANGEMENTS ON OUTSIDE BODIES.

- 9.1 The Chairman informed members that the Council is on occasions asked to vote on items at meetings of MSALC and SALC. Full Council had agreed that Cllrs Grace and Nisbett would attend these meetings. Members had been asked to confirm their agreement to Cllrs Grace and Nisbett being authorised to vote on behalf of the Council.

This was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that Cllrs Grace and Nisbett would be authorised to vote on behalf of the Council at meetings of MSALC and SALC.

- 9.2 On occasions the MSALC and/or SALC meeting was intended for the Council Chairman and Vice Chairman. Members had been asked to confirm their agreement that the Council Chairman and Vice Chairman be authorised to vote on behalf of the Council.

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This was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the Council Chairman and Vice Chairman be authorised to vote on behalf of the Council.

### 10. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

10.1 The Chairman thanked existing members for their continued support, and experience that this would bring to the Committee. Grateful thanks were expressed to Cllr Henton, the outgoing Chairman for his past commitment and support. New members were warmly welcomed, and he looked forward to working alongside them.

### 11. ACTION LIST.

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

### 12. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

12.1 i) Grants budget. It was **NOTED** that a budget of £2,500 was available to spend. It was further **NOTED** that the grant of £408 awarded to Lindfield Cricket Club would be met from the 2022/23 Grants budget.

ii) To consider Grant requests.

a. Lindfield Bonfire Society Ltd.

Cllr Blunden reported on behalf of the F&GP Committee and referred members to a letter of request that had been received from the Lindfield Bonfire Society Limited dated 10 May 2023. They were a limited company for insurance purposes but ran as a non-profit making organisation with all members being volunteers, seeking a grant towards the cost of providing medical services in support of the annual Lindfield Village Bonfire Night celebration. The aim was for the event to remain free for the public, and to support local children's charities by street collection on the night.

**RESOLVED:** to award a grant of £500 to the Lindfield Bonfire Society Ltd under the powers granted by Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 to contribute towards expenses related to Bonfire Night celebration.

iii) Letters of thanks received. No letters of thanks had been received.

### 13. BUDGET 2023/24: TO NOTE BUDGET PROGRESS REPORTS TO 30 APRIL 2023.

13.1 It was **NOTED** that budget progress reports to 30 April 2023 were not available. The RFO had been concentrating on preparing and collating information that was required to assist with the RBS year-end closedown of accounts to 31 March 2023, and in advance of the year-end Internal Audit review that was shortly due to be carried out.

Members had been presented with copies of a detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Report and Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves Report to 31 March 2023, prior to year-end adjustments having been made. Budget progress was **NOTED** as follows:

i) F&GP Committee: A total of £140,413 had been spent from a budget of £164,633.

ii) Overall Council Budget: A total of £200,694 had been spent from the budget of £228,033 of which £46,495 had been spent from the Environment & Amenities Committee budget of £55,900. £2,839 had been spent for the Allotments budget of £2,500 and income of 880 received. There had been spent £9,427 from the Planning & Traffic Committee budget of £5,000. A total of £10,514.97 had been spent from Earmarked Reserves.

iii) General Reserves Expenditure: A total of £1,520 spent from General Reserves.

iv) Income: Income of £200,873 had been received in total, represented mainly by the full precept payment of £189,000 and £9,696 CTH rental. Other income relating to bank and building society interest, CTH Service Charge, Licence Fee, Allotment rents and Christmas Festival Night had also been received.

### 14. FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS TO 30 APRIL 2023.

14.1 It was **NOTED** that account records to 30 April 2023 were not available.

Members had been presented with account records to 31 March 2023 prior to year-end adjustments having been made.

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### i)Bank - Cash and Investment Reconciliation (Deposits and Investment Held).

It was **NOTED** that the total bank - cash and investment reconciliation to 31 March 2023 prior to year-end adjustments was £197,177.30.

### ii)Payment Analysis.

It was **NOTED** that a total of £13,574.06 net of VAT had been paid from the Barclays Bank Current Account in March 2023.

## 15. **VAT RECLAIM: UPDATE.**

15.1 It was **NOTED** that a claim for VAT refund totalling £1,746.12 had been submitted by the RFO on 23 May 2023 for the invoice period January to March 2023.

## 16. **PROPOSED PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON: UPDATE.**

16.1 The Chairman reported that the planning application, which had been amended to include a Changing Places cubicle, had been approved by MSDC on 30 March 2023. The architects had been requested to provide an updated schedule of projected building costs.

The above was **NOTED**.

## 17. **CLERK AND RFO REPORT.**

### 17.1 Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported on the following items:

#### a) Budget 2023/24.

A couple of minor typing errors had been spotted in relation to budget heading expenditure limits that had been agreed to under the Finance & General Purposes Administration Budget for 2023/24. These had been taken in account when setting up the annual budget for 2023/24 on the RBS software. The total Administration budget spend of £158,799 had remained unchanged.

#### b) BT Communications Plc.

A new contract had been agreed with BT in January 2023. Invoicing was in the process of being updated.

#### c) Purchase of New Gazebo.

The Clerk was pleased to report that he had taken delivery of the new gazebo, which would be used to assist with the Lindfield Parish Council stall on Lindfield Village Day, Saturday 3 June 2023.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 17.2 RFO's Report.

The RFO reported on the following items:

#### i)Internal Control Check Year End March 2023.

The outgoing Chairman of the F&GP Committee, Cllr Henton, had completed the Internal Control check to year end March 2023, with no matters arising.

#### ii)MSDC Small Business Rate Relief Review Update.

MSDC had formally confirmed that Lindfield Parish Council would receive the Small Business Rate Relief for 2023/24 following completion of their review of accounts.

#### iii)AGAR Year End 2022/23 Update.

Rialtas Business Solutions Limited (RBS) had completed the year end closedown of accounts for 2022/23 on behalf of Lindfield Parish Council on Tuesday 16 May 2023.

An appointment had been made with the Internal Auditor, Mr Peter Frost of PJ Consultants, on Wednesday 31 May 2023 to carry out the year end internal audit.

#### iv)Monthly Financial Reporting 2023/24.

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Members were advised that monthly financial reporting for the new financial year would commence as soon as possible. Attention had been drawn towards preparing and collating information required to assist with the RBS year-end closedown of accounts and in advance of the of the year-end Internal Audit review that would shortly be carried out.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 18. **POLICY AND STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS: TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS.**

- 18.1 The Chairman reminded members that the Council had in place a Plan 2022-27, setting out Lindfield Parish Council aims and objectives to the period up to when the next Council Elections were due to take place ending May 2027. The Clerk had provided an update on progress to date and confirmed that the Plan would be on display for members of the public to view on Lindfield Village Day. Any feedback received would be included in a report to Full Council at a future meeting. New members of the Council would be asked for their comments that would also be included in the report.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 19. **RISK MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS.**

- 19.1 There were no items to consider.

### 20. **TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.**

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

Date	Training Course	Provider	Staff Member/Cllr
24-May-23	Emergency First Aid at Work	SVA	Clerk
8-Jun-23	Cllrs: Roles, Responsibilities & Working Relationships	Mulberry & Co	Cllr Beecroft
15-Jun-23	Finance for Cllrs	Mulberry & Co	Cllr Beecroft
29-Jun-23	Introduction to Planning	Mulberry & Co	Cllr Nisbett
25-Jul-23	Face to Face – New Cllrs Training Day	Mulberry & Co	Cllrs Burns & Nisbett

Cllr Grace reported that she had attended a WSCC Carbon Literacy Training course free of charge. The course was designed to increase awareness of the issues and challenges and the action needed, to address climate change and reduce carbon emissions. Details would be circulated to members.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 21. **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.**

- 21.1 There were no matters arising.

The public part of the meeting ended at 20.41 hours.

### 22. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [AND PRESS].**

- 22.1 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.

### 23. **CLOCK TOWER HOUSE LEASE.**

- 23.1 The Clerk had provided members with a background and updates on the lease negotiations. It was **NOTED** that professional advice had been sought and that discussions were ongoing.

The meeting concluded at 20.46 hours.