

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**DRAFT** Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** (here in F&GP) held on **THURSDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2023** at the King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 20.00 hours.

**Present:**

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

Parish Councillor: Mr. D. M. Woolley

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

\*Denotes absence.

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

**44. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**

44.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs V. Upton and their reasons were accepted.

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

45.1 There were no declarations of interest from members regarding any items on the agenda.

**46. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

46.1 There were no members of the public present.

46.2 The Chairman noted Cllr Woolley's presence and sought advice from the Clerk on whether a Councillor not being a member of the committee could participate in later discussion. The Clerk read out The Society of Local Council Clerks guidance:

"Any member not being a member of a committee may attend any meeting of the committee but their right to participate in the meeting will be equal to the public's right to do so and should be governed by Standing Orders."

The following paragraphs of the Council's Standing Orders were then reported:

3(e) Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

3(f) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(e) above shall not exceed fifteen minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

3(g) Subject to standing order 3(f) above, a member of the public may speak once only and shall not speak for more than three minutes.

25(d) The decision of the chairman of a meeting as to the application of standing orders at the meeting shall be final.

46.3 The Chairman advised the Committee that he would run the meeting according to the SLCC guidance. Cllr Woolley had been invited to comment on the report that had been shared in respect of Agenda item 15.

46.4 Cllr Woolley was asked questions by members. Members had raised concerns regarding using existing equipment and whether these could be accommodated using the proposed eCargo Trike. There was uncertainty regarding the storage of the Trike at the Village Orderly's residence, use in

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

adverse weather conditions, and use on the local highway with a busy junction in Lewes Road. Cllr Woolley had suggested that different size tricycle boxes were available to purchase to assist with the storage of equipment such as ladders and that the option to purchase ladders in different sizes could be considered. Looking forward, perhaps Lindfield Parish Council should be considering making roads safer in the village.

The above was **NOTED**.

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

47.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the F&GP Committee held on Thursday 6 July 2023. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as a true record of that meeting.

### 48. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

48.1 The Chairman made no announcements.

### 49. ACTION LIST.

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

### 50. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

50.1 i) Grants budget. It was **NOTED** that funds of £1,750 were available to spend from a budget of £2,500.

ii) To consider Grant requests. 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 requests:

#### a. Victim Support (Sussex).

Victim Support (Sussex) were a registered charity that had submitted an application for a grant of £100.00 dated 14 August 2023. Other Sussex Parish Councils had been approached to seek funding. It would cost £650 per recruit for the first year to meet the cost of recruiting and training new volunteers to support victims of crime in Sussex. In the last twelve months, 153 crimes had been reported in our postcode area.

**RESOLVED:** 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 £100 be made towards the work of Victim Support (Sussex).

#### b. 4Sight Vision Support.

4Sight Vision Support was a registered charity that had submitted an application for a grant of £440.00 dated 17 July 2023. It would cost £55 to provide support to one person for a year; the total cost to support the 27 members living in the parish of Lindfield would be £1,485.

**RESOLVED:** 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 £440 be made towards the work of 4Sight Vision Support.

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

### 51. BUDGET 2023/24: TO NOTE BUDGET PROGRESS REPORTS TO 31 JULY 2023.

51.1 Members had been presented with copies of a detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Report and Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves Report to 31 July 2023. Budget progress was **NOTED** as follows:

i) F&GP Committee: A total of £50,346 had been spent from a budget of £175,849.

ii) Overall Council Budget: A total of £55,599 had been spent from the budget of £241,324 of which £8,212 had been spent from the Environment & Amenities Committee budget of £54,975. £1,000 had been spent from the

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Allotments budget of £2,500. £(4,044) had been spent from the Planning & Traffic Committee budget of £8,000. There had been nil expenditure from Earmarked Reserves.

iii) General Reserves Expenditure: a total of £85 had been spent from General Reserves.

iv) Income: Income of £112,218 had been received in total, represented mainly by the precept payment of £108,000 and £3,232 CTH rental. Other income relating to bank and building society interest, CTH Service Charge, Licence Fee and allotment rents had also been received.

### 52. FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS TO 31 JULY 2023.

52.1 Members had been presented with account records to 31 July 2023.

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

It was **NOTED** that the total bank - cash and investment reconciliation to 31 July 2023 was £236,150.17.

ii) Payment Analysis.

It was **NOTED** that a total of £13,966.16 net of VAT had been paid from the Barclays Bank Current Account in July 2023.

### 53. BUDGET 2024/25: TO AGREE ON THE PROCEDURE FOR SETTING THE BUDGET.

53.1 The Chairman referred to a report prepared by the Clerk in conjunction with the RFO. Members had been asked to consider the budget-setting mechanism for 2024/25. Details of a timeline and process for setting the budget had been presented for consideration together with the following recommendations:

- a) To agree to the proposed timeline for 2024/25 as set out in the report and Appendix 1 headed Budget Setting Timetable, and to agree that a recommendation be made to Full Council for approval.
- b) To recommend to Full Council that the Committee Chairs, Vice Chair of F&GP, and Officers be authorised to meet, when required, to consider the latest financial figures and the impact these would have on the proposed precept calculation for 2024/25. Meetings will be held between now and January 2024.

The above was **NOTED** and the recommendations were **AGREED**.

### 54. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS: UPDATES AND TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS RELATING TO EXISTING OR PERSPECTIVE ACCOUNTS.

54.1 The Chairman had invited the RFO to report on the following:

a) Unity Trust Bank Business Instant Access Savings Account: Update.

An application form had been submitted on 14 August 2023. Unity Trust wished to draw to our attention, the limitations of applying for a stand-alone savings account. Internet access would be available only to view the balance and the only way to withdraw funds would be to use CHAPS – a chargeable service at £28 each time, per payment. Lindfield Parish Council might wish to choose a current account instead, or as well as. A copy of an email that was sent to the Clerk, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of F&GP by the RFO dated 22 August 2023 had been circulated to members. This had provided details of key features, the standard service tariff and terms and conditions for the current account. A monthly fee of £6.00 would be payable and a minimum initial deposit of £500 would be required. After further consideration, it was agreed with the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair and Vice-Chair of F&GP, to apply for the Business Current account. An application form had been submitted to Unity Trust and their further advice was awaited.

The above was **NOTED**.

It was **AGREED** to **RATIFY** the decision to apply for a Unity Trust current account in addition to the Unity Trust instant savings account as agreed with the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair and Vice-Chair of F&GP.

It was further **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Full Council to delegate authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the three Committee Chairs, to agree on the amount of funds to be transferred from the Barclays Business Premium Account and Nationwide Building Society to Unity Trust bank.

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

- b) Mandate Change Update: Barclays Bank and Nationwide Building Society.  
Confirmation had been received advising that mandate changes in respect of accounts held with Barclays Bank and Nationwide Building Society had been accepted and completed. The Vice-Chair of F&GP now had online access to Barclays Bank.

The above was **NOTED**.

- c) Nationwide Building Society Instant Access Savings Account: To Note Change of Product Name, Terms and Conditions and Interest Rate.
- i. A letter had been received advising a change of product name from Business Instant Saver Issue 5 – Monthly to Business Instant Saver Issue 9 – Monthly. New terms and conditions had been provided and the minimum balance required to receive interest had reduced from £10,000 to £5,000.
- ii. The monthly interest rate had increased with effect from 30 August 2023 from 1.45% AER/Gross p.a. (variable) to 2.20% AER/gross p.a. (variable).

The above was **NOTED**.

### 55. INTERNAL AUDITOR ARRANGEMENTS 2023/24: UPDATE AND TO CONSIDER A THREE-YEAR AGREEMENT.

55.1 The Chairman had invited the RFO to report on the following:

a) Engagement Letter.

Mulberry & Co. were pleased to accept the instruction to act as internal auditors for the Council and had written to confirm the terms of appointment. A copy of their engagement letter dated 31 August 2023 had been circulated to members for information.

b) Offer of Long-Term Three-year Agreement.

Members had received a copy email from Mulberry & Co. outlining the offer of a long-term 3-year agreement for the provision of internal audit services. The £65 hourly rate would be fixed for the three-year period of an updated engagement letter. Other benefits of being an internal audit client of Mulberry & Co. were shared in the email.

It was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that Lindfield Parish Council apply for the long-term 3-year agreement.

### 56. INTERNAL CONTROL CHECK ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2023/24.

56.1 The chairman referred to a report that the RFO had prepared. Members had been asked to consider arrangements to carry out internal control checks for the current financial year. Reference had been made to the current Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England Guide and details of past arrangements had been shared. RBS has made improvements to their software to assist with this process.

The above was **NOTED** and the following **AGREED**:

- a) To continue with existing arrangements. A member of the F&GP committee would carry out an in-person visit to the Parish Office. The following internal control checks would be undertaken for each quarter year:
- i. Detailed bank reconciliation eg checking bank statements agree with cash books.
  - ii. Examination of books and vouchers.
  - iii. Check petty cash operations.
  - iv. Carry out a general review of bookkeeping.
  - v. Ensure that payment controls are in place.
- b) Councillor Beecroft had kindly offered to take responsibility for internal control checks for 2023/24.

### 57. VAT RECLAIM: UPDATE.

57.1 It was **NOTED** that claims for VAT refund had been paid by HMRC as follows:

- a) Invoice period January to March 2023: £1,746.12 received on 18 July 2023.

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

b) Invoice period April to June 2023: £3,009.61 received on 27 July 2023.

### 58. VILLAGE ORDERLY: TO CONSIDER THE PROVISION OF A VEHICLE.

58.1 The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk, with appendices 1, 2 and 3. Members had been asked to provide a recommendation to Full Council on the provision of a vehicle for the Village Orderly role. Consideration would need to be given towards what type of vehicle would be suitable for the role, fuel type, costs and whether to lease the vehicle or purchase this outright.

Background information had been provided with a list of considerations, details of financial implications, legal implications and a recommendation. Appendix 1 was a copy email dated 4 August 2023 detailing the current position and potential options, appendix 2 shared additional information following queries that the Clerk had received in response to circulating the email referred to in appendix 1 and appendix 3 detailed an option for members to consider an electrically assisted eCargo Trike.

Members had been invited to share their thoughts and comments, which were **NOTED** as follows:

- i. Grateful thanks had been expressed for the input from members, and the Clerk in helping to prepare the report.
- ii. Gratitude had been expressed towards the member who had kindly taken time to explore the option of an eCargo Trike.
- iii. Health and safety responsibilities as an employer:
  - a. Adverse weather conditions.
  - b. Travel on busy local roads and junctions.Both must be considered when agreeing on a suitable vehicle type.
- iv. Current Village Orderly travel costs would be minimised.
- v. A lease arrangement would offer a short-term solution in addressing the immediate need to provide a vehicle for the role of the Village Orderly.
- vi. Consideration should be given towards the type of stock that needs to be transported, such as grit in the winter months, wood to assist with maintenance of assets as well as mechanical equipment.
- vii. Consideration should be given towards transporting Village Orderly equipment that is already held in stock, to minimise additional expense.
- viii. On occasions it was necessary for the Clerk to travel with and assist the Village Orderly.

After having given the matter full and careful consideration, it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Full Council to **APPROVE** the following:

- a. That a used van is required for the role of the Village Orderly.
- b. That the van be electric powered.
- c. To lease a used van on a two-year agreement, including a service contract (maximum value £7,000 for the contract length).
- d. The expenditure will be met from General Reserves.
- e. To purchase insurance for the vehicle.
- f. To delegate authority to the Clerk to sign the relevant contracts.
- g. To delegate authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, to take decisions relating to the running of the van.

### 59. PROPOSED PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON: TO CONSIDER PROPOSED FEES AND NEXT STAGES.

59.1 Members had been referred to correspondence received by the Clerk dated 30 August 2023 providing details of the updated fee proposal and information relating to Stages 3 (Discharge of Conditions), 5 (DDM/Health and Safety) and 7 (Contract Administration). Stage 2 (Building Regulations) and Stage 4 (Pre-Contract Services) remained unchanged. A rough programme had also been provided.

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The Clerk reported that an application for s106 funding had been submitted. It was anticipated that the Mid Sussex District Council Grants panel would consider the application in October 2023. It had been indicated that increased funding might be available to include the cost of architects' fees. Members had been asked for their approval to agree on the fees that had been proposed in the document.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the proposed fees be approved.

### 60. CLERK AND RFO REPORT.

#### 60.1 Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported on the following items:

- a) Clock Tower House – Emergency Lighting and Heat and Smoke Detectors.  
Replacement emergency lighting, and heat and smoke detectors had now been installed.
- b) Clock Tower House Front Door Lock.  
The front door lock had been replaced due to wear and tear and a replacement set of keys was obtained.
- c) Clock Tower House Air Conditioning Units.  
The routine regular annual air conditioning maintenance was due to be arranged.

The above was **NOTED**.

#### 60.2 RFO's Report.

The RFO reported on the following items:

- a) AGAR Year End 2022/23 Update.  
Members had been presented with a copy of the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022/23. Moore wished to draw members' attention to matters that had been reported in Section 2 of the Report.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 61. POLICY AND STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS: UPDATE.

#### 61.1 A. Draft Plan 2022-27 – Report on Progress.

The Clerk confirmed that a report was in the process of being prepared and this would be circulated to members in due course.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 62. RISK MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS.

62.1 There were no risk assessments to consider.

### 63. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING, CONFERENCE AND ASSOCIATION EVENTS, AND RECEIVE ANY ATTENDANCE REPORTS.

63.1 a) The Clerk confirmed the attendance of staff and members at the following training and conference events:

Date	Training Course	Provider	Staff Member/Cllr
24 May 2023	Emergency First Aid at Work	MSVA	Clerk
8 June 2023	Councillors: Roles, Responsibilities & Working Relationships	Mulberry & Co	Cllr A. Beecroft
14 June 2023	Policies, Powers & Duties	Mulberry & Co	Cllr T. Webster*
15 June 2023	Finance for Councillors	Mulberry & Co	Cllr A. Beecroft
29 June 2023	Introduction to Planning	Mulberry & Co	Cllr S. Nisbett
4 July 2023	Emergency First Aid at Work	MSVA	Deputy Clerk

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

25 July 2023	Face to Face – New Councillors Training Day	Mulberry & Co	Cllrs I. Burns & S. Nisbett
--------------	---	---------------	-----------------------------

\*Attended as a Lindfield Rural Parish Councillor.

b) The Clerk confirmed the attendance of members as Linfield Parish Council Representatives as follows:

Date	Organisation	Representative
18 July 2023	Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils	Cllrs L. Grace & S. Nisbett

The above was **NOTED**.

**64. 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.**

64.1 There were no matters arising.

The public part of the meeting ended at 21.00 hours.

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

65.1 It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Blunden and **SECONDED** by Cllr Grace to exclude the press and the public. It was **AGREED** to exclude the press and public.

**66. STAFFING MATTERS.**

66.1 The Clerk had confirmed that the NJC pay levels had still not been agreed to and that discussions were ongoing.

The above was **NOTED**.

**67. CLOCK TOWER HOUSE LEASE: UPDATE.**

67.1 The Clerk confirmed that Lindfield Parish Council had received approval for the solicitors to circulate the lease to our tenant.

The above was **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 21.04 hours.

### DISCLAIMER

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, statements and decisions recorded in these minutes, their status will remain that of a draft until they are confirmed as a correct record at the subsequent meeting.