

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** (here in F&GP) held on **THURSDAY 6 JULY 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)

*Denotes absence.

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

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

24.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs L. Grace, Mrs V. Upton and Mr T. Webster and their reasons were accepted.

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

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

26. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

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

27. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE F&GP COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 MAY 2023.

27.1 The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the F&GP Committee held on Tuesday 30 May 2023. These were **AGREED** and the Chairman **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

28. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

28.1 The Chairman made no announcements.

29. ACTION LIST.

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

30. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

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

It was **NOTED** that the available funds had included a grant award to Fairer World Lindfield (FWL) for £250. This had previously been approved subject to Council receiving a copy of an accepted quotation and confirmation that there would be members who could maintain the website and meet maintenance/hosting charges. Minute reference 429.1.

ii) To consider Grant requests. Councillor Blunden reported on behalf of the Grants Panel and advised that no grant requests had been received.

iii) Letters of thanks received. It was **NOTED** that a letter of thanks had been received from the Lindfield Bonfire Society Limited and Lindfield Cricket Club.

31. BUDGET 2023/24: TO NOTE BUDGET PROGRESS REPORTS TO 30 JUNE 2023.

31.1 It was **NOTED** that budget progress reports to 30 June 2023 were not available.

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Members had been presented with copies of a detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Report and Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves Report to 30 April 2023. Budget progress was **NOTED** as follows:

i)F&GP Committee: A total of £14,194 had been spent from a budget of £175,849.

ii)Overall Council Budget: A total of £9,905 had been spent from the budget of £241,324 of which £(396) had been spent from the Environment & Amenities Committee budget of £54,975. £151 had been spent from the 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: There had been nil expenditure from General Reserves.

iv)Income: Income of £109,351 had been received in total, represented mainly by the precept payment of £108,000 and £808 CTH rental. Other income relating to bank and building society interest and allotment rents had also been received.

32. **FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS TO 30 JUNE 2023.**

32.1 It was **NOTED** that account records to 30 June 2023 were not available.

Members had been presented with account records to 30 April 2023.

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

It was **NOTED** that the total bank - cash and investment reconciliation to 30 April 2023 was £276,172.84.

ii)Payment Analysis.

It was **NOTED** that a total of £31,243.30 net of VAT had been paid from the Barclays Bank Current Account in April 2023.

33. **UNSPENT BALANCES FROM BUDGET 2022/23: TO NOTE THE UNSPENT BALANCE FIGURE.**

33.1 The Chairman reported that surplus funds of £4,272.53 were available at year-end 31 March 2023. Members had been reminded that the current year's budget had been agreed with a £10,000 deficit to help minimise the cost to the taxpayer.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the surplus funds of £4,272.53 would be held in general reserves.

34. **REVIEW BANK ARRANGEMENTS: TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER ADDITIONAL SAVINGS PRODUCT.**

34.1 The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the RFO. This had been presented to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of F&GP for consideration as agreed. New research had been undertaken and a summary of products currently available had been provided. Unity Trust Bank was now offering a stand-alone savings product with an interest rate of 2.6% gross pa. Members thanked the RFO and acknowledged the need to minimise the risk of funds held.

A recommendation had been made by the Chairman and Vice Chairman that members of the F&GP Committee agree to recommend to Full Council that Lindfield Parish Council apply for the Unity Trust Instant Access Business Savings Account.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED to RECOMMEND** to Full Council that Lindfield Parish Council apply for the Unity Trust Instant Access Business Savings Account reflecting bank mandate signatory arrangements with the Nationwide Building Society. It was **FURTHER AGREED** that, if necessary, a current account would be applied for with Unity Trust to support the savings account.

35. **PROPOSED PUBLIC TOILETS ON THE COMMON: UPDATE.**

35.1 The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk. Discussions had taken place with Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) to explore the possibility of funding using S106 monies. WSALC had also been contacted to explore the possibility of securing a loan from the Public Works Loan Board to bridge any shortfall between funds held by Lindfield Parish Council and potential S106 Monies. MSDC had suggested that BIFFA funding might be available up to a maximum of £200,000, but further research found this option to be unsuitable.

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The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that an application be submitted to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) for grant funding. An application to the PWLB would be considered subject to the amount of funding received from MSDC.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to delegate authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Toilets on Common working group, to manage and complete the application.

36. **CLOCK TOWER HOUSE: AUTHORISATION FOR EXPENDITURE ON EMERGENCY LIGHTING AND SMOKE DETECTORS.**

36.1 The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk. Some of the current emergency lighting, and heat and smoke detectors in the parish office were nearing the end of their service life. A summary detailing the equipment that needed replacing had been provided.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to purchase replacement emergency lighting, and heat and smoke detectors up to a maximum spend of £1,000.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to delegate authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Committee Chair and Vice Chair, to obtain and accept a quotation.

37. **CLERK AND RFO REPORT.**

37.1 Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported on the following items:

a) Clock Tower House Flood Lights.

These had now been repaired by Lindfield Enterprise Park Limited Management Company.

b) Parish Office Kitchen Flood.

The Clerk had painted the skirting board and no further problems had arisen.

c) RBS Software.

Enquiries were ongoing with RBS in regard to their software with a view to providing a Cloud based package. The advantage would be gained in being able to access their services remotely. Under the existing contract access to the software was restricted and linked to the RFO computer.

The above was **NOTED**.

d) Renewal of IT Maintenance Services Contract.

The Clerk had requested approval to improve email security. A quotation for £432.00 net of VAT had been received to introduce Email Filtering Services for all mailboxes. The regular annual IT Maintenance and Service contract was due to be renewed and could be upgraded to include this additional service.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to add the cost of Email Filtering Services £432.00 net of VAT to the 2023 IT Maintenance Services contract with effect from renewal.

37.2 RFO's Report.

The RFO reported on the following items:

a) AGAR Year End 2022/23 Update.

This had been submitted to the external auditor on 29 June 2023.

b) Arrangements for Internal Control Checks 2023/24.

Members were reminded of the Council's obligations and the requirement to follow the Governance & Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England Practitioners' Guide. Internal control checks were previously carried out by the F&GP Chair. Consideration needed to be given towards arrangements for 2023/24. The RBS account software had been improved to assist with this process when checking statements against bank reconciliations and cash book entries. A report was currently being drafted by the RFO to present to members at a future F&GP committee meeting.

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- c) VAT Reclaim Invoice period January to March 2023: Update.
Payment from HMRC remained outstanding and would be chased.

The above was **NOTED**.

**38. POLICY AND STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS: A. DRAFT PLAN 2022-27 – REPORT ON PROGRESS
B.COMMUNICATIONS POLICY - TO UNDERTAKE INITIAL RESEARCH BY CONDUCTING INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY.**

38.1 A. Draft Plan 2022-27 – Report on Progress.

The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk. Feedback had been received from members of the public and this had been collated and shared with members of the working group. All new members had been met individually by the Clerk to view the Plan 2022-27. Members of the F&GP Committee had been asked for their comments on the draft Plan 2022-27.

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

- a) That public feedback had been shared with the working group.
- b) That all new members had been shown the Plan 2022-27.
- c) That all members had been asked for their comments on the current draft.

38.2 B. Communications Policy - To Undertake Initial Research by Conducting Internal Communications Survey.

The Chairman referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk. Council members had expressed support for adopting a new Communications Policy. It had been proposed that Lindfield Parish Council undertakes an internal communications survey to help inform the proposed Policy. Members were invited to share their initial comments or to raise any queries. It had been suggested that a digital format might be helpful.

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

- a) That the Clerk be instructed to create a survey on internal communication.
- b) That the survey be circulated to all members to complete.
- c) That the results of the survey be collated into a report.

39. RISK MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS.

- 39.1 The Chairman referred to a copy of the current risk assessment for the Clock Tower House Office/DSE that had been presented to members. This was now due to be reviewed and approved. Having given the matter careful consideration, members were of the opinion that no changes were necessary.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to approve the Clock Tower House Office/DSE as presented.

40. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND CONFERENCE EVENTS.

- 40.1 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 Beecroft
14 June 2023	Policies, Powers & Duties	Mulberry & Co	Cllr Webster*
15 June 2023	Finance for Councillors	Mulberry & Co	Cllr Beecroft
29 June 2023	Introduction to Planning	Mulberry & Co	Cllr Nisbett
4 July 2023	Emergency First Aid at Work	MSVA	Deputy Clerk
25 July 2023	Face to Face – New Councillors Training Day	Mulberry & Co	Cllrs Burns & Nisbett

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*Attended as a Lindfield Rural Parish Councillor.

The above was **NOTED**.

41. 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.

41.1 There were no matters arising.

The public part of the meeting ended at 20.24 hours.

42. 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).

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

43. CLOCK TOWER HOUSE LEASE.

43.1 The Clerk had provided members with a report regarding the renewal of the lease. Approval had been requested in relation to the draft agreement and members had been asked to confirm that the Clock Tower House Lease and Lindfield Enterprise Park working group be given authority to continue negotiations and authority to sign the agreement.

The above was **NOTED** and It was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council.

The meeting concluded at 20.26 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.