

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** (here in F&GP) held on **THURSDAY 2 MAY 2024** at King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 20.00 hours.

Present:

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

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

*Denotes absence.

The Committee Chair (herein Chair) opened the meeting, welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

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

146.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Upton and their reasons were accepted.

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

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

148. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

148.1 There were no members of the public present.

149. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE F&GP COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 MARCH 2024.

149.1 The Chair called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the F&GP Committee held on Thursday 7 March 2024. These were **AGREED** and the Chair **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

150. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

150.1 Mindful that this was the final meeting of F&GP before the Annual Meeting of the Council was due, the Chair wished to thank members for their support during the past few months.

151. ACTION LIST.

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

152. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

152.1 Grants budget. It was **NOTED** that funds of £2,500 were available to spend from a budget of £2,500.

152.2 To Consider Grant Requests.

a) Lindfield Bonfire Society Limited.

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 21 April 2024. 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.

RESOLVED: to award a grant of £500 to the Lindfield Bonfire Society Limited under the powers granted by Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 to contribute towards the cost of providing medical services related to the Bonfire Night celebration 2024.

152.3 Letters of thanks received. It was **NOTED** that a letter of thanks had been received from the MSOPC.

153. BUDGET 2023/24: TO NOTE THE LATEST BUDGET PROGRESS REPORTS.

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- 153.1 Members had been presented with copies of a detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Report and Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves Report to 31 March 2024, before year-end adjustments had been made. Budget progress was **NOTED** as follows:

i) F&GP Committee: A total of £171,698 had been spent from a budget of £175,849.

ii) Overall Council Budget: A total of £225,763 had been spent from the budget of £241,324 of which £47,756 had been spent from the Environment & Amenities (E&A) Committee budget of £54,975. An overspend of £2,787 against the Allotments budget of £2,500. £nil had been spent from the Planning & Traffic Committee budget of £8,000. £21,689 had been spent from Earmarked Reserves, of which £4,044.26 had been accrued from 2022/23.

iii) General Reserves Expenditure: a total of £3,552 had been spent from General Reserves.

iv) Income: Income of £231,081 had been received in total, represented mainly by the full precept payment of £216,000 and £9,696 CTH rental. Other income relating to bank and building society interest, CTH service charges, licence fee, allotment rents/deposits and Christmas Village Night stallholder fees of £785 had also been received.

154. FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS.

- 154.1 Members had been presented with account records to 31 March 2024, before year-end adjustments had been made.

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

It was **NOTED** that the total bank cash and investment reconciliation to 31 March 2024 was £180,495.35.

ii) Payment Analysis.

It was **NOTED** that a total of £67,096.57 net of VAT had been paid from the Barclays Bank Current Account in March 2024.

iii) To Approve/Ratify any required Payments.

Members were advised that £10,000 has been transferred from the Nationwide Building Society to the Barclays Business Premium account to assist with spending commitments before the precept payment is received at the end of April 2024. Financial Regulations 5.5 c had provided the Clerk and RFO with delegated authority to arrange the fund transfer. Cllrs Blunden, Pickett and Beecroft had confirmed their approval to make this transfer.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council to ratify the agreement to transfer £10,000 from the Nationwide Building Society to the Barclays Business Premium account.

155. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OVERALL INTERNAL AUDIT 2023/24 AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEM 2023/24: TO NOTE THE REPORTS.

- 155.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been circulated with the agenda. Annual reviews on the effectiveness of the overall internal audit 2023/24 and internal control system 2023/24 had been undertaken by Cllr Pickett and copies of his reports were presented to members. There had been no matters of concern raised. The Chair thanked Cllr Pickett for his time and assistance in this regard.

The above was **NOTED**.

156. BUDGET 2024/25: A) EARMARKED RESERVES AND B) CHANGES TO REGULAR PAYMENTS: TO CONSIDER REPORTS.

- 156.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been circulated with the agenda.

A) Earmarked Reserves.

Since setting the budget for 2024/25 unexpected additional expenditures had been incurred concerning the F&GP Toilets on Common earmarked reserve (EMR). Matters had progressed more speedily than had originally been anticipated. This had resulted in the balance of funds being available at year-end March 2024 reducing to £78,651.67.

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The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council to amend the balance of funds available at 1 April 2024 concerning the EMR 320, 4285 F&GP Toilets on Common to £78,651.67.

B) Changes to Regular Payments.

A letter had been received from Monitor Cleaning Services Limited advising that the charge for cleaning the Denmans Lane Public Toilets would rise from £4,832.70 per annum to £5,195.15 per annum with effect from 1 April 2024.

The above was **NOTED**.

157. TOILETS ON THE COMMON: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT.

157.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to consider a potential land transfer. The proposed toilets on Lindfield Common are situated on land owned and managed by the Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC). It had been proposed by MSDC that the land, rather than being leased, would be transferred to Lindfield Parish Council. The exact boundaries of the proposed transfer would need to be established. Ownership of the land would ensure that the Council could manage this directly and this would potentially reduce the level of administration relating to lease matters. The Council would have the legal responsibility of being the land owner as opposed to being a lessee. This could potentially include liabilities such as the installation and maintenance of footpaths around the building.

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

- A) That Lindfield Parish Council would be open to taking over ownership of the land, subject to further clarifications regarding the size of the parcel of land, and
- B) To delegate authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Toilets on the Common Working Group, to oversee and agree to any potential land transfer.

158. BARCLAYS BANK: PROPOSED ADDITION FOR VIEW-ONLY ONLINE ACCESS – TO CONSIDER REPORT.

158.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been circulated with the agenda. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) was currently the only staff member with online access to Barclays Bank. To assist with monitoring cash flow, including the recording of payments received, it had been proposed that authorisation be extended for the Clerk to have view-only online access to accounts held with Barclays Bank. The Council was vulnerable when the RFO was not present in the office and when taking holiday leave. The existing level of security would be maintained.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council to amend the Barclays Bank mandate to allow the Clerk view-only online access to the accounts held.

159. CLERK AND RFO REPORT.

159.1 Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported on the following items:

- a) Clock Tower House Building: Accident.
A vehicle owned by the local charity shop had accidentally rolled into the corner of the building. Nobody had been injured. An insurance claim had been raised and it had been confirmed that no structural damage had resulted. One or two wall bricks needed to be replaced, the doorstep repaired and some internal decoration was necessary. Repair work will commence on 13 May 2024.
- b) Parish Office: Electrical check
The electrical check for the office was now required, this may include replacing the circuit boards. Quotations for the work were being obtained. The Clerk would be approaching Committee Chairs to seek payment approval.
- c) IT: Windows 10 Update.
The Clerk was mindful that Windows 10 would only be supported by Microsoft until October 2025. It would therefore be prudent to consider upgrading IT software from Windows 10 to Windows 11.

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Windows 11 would provide essential bug fixes and improved security updates. New productivity features would be included along with improved functionality. The Clerk was currently exploring options and early indication had suggested this might incur a cost something in the region of £1,000. A report would be presented to members following the completion of his enquiries.

The above was **NOTED**.

159.2 RFO's Report.

The RFO reported on the following items:

a) Launch of Mulberry Local Authority Services.

A new service had been launched with effect from 1 April 2024 dedicated solely to support local councils. The existing team of Mark Mulberry, Anna Beams and Andy Beams remained at the forefront of Mulberry Local Authority Services, who would be supported by industry specialist consultants providing audit and training services.

b) NALC Joint Panel of Accountability and Governance (JPAG) 2024 edition of the Practitioner's Guide.

NALC has published their 2024 edition. This would apply to Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) regarding financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2024. The main changes to the guide from last year were:

- i. Strong encouragement for Parish and Town Councils to use gov.uk domains for websites and emails. Lindfield Parish Council were already meeting this requirement.
- ii. A recommendation for Parish and Town Councils to publish their full internal audit report on their website alongside their AGAR.

c) MSDC Non-Domestic Rates Bill 2024/25: Ground Floor Clock Tower House & Denmans Lane Public Toilets.

Written confirmation of a £nil liability Non-Domestic Rates Bill for 2024/25 had been received from the MSDC regarding the ground floor of Clock Tower House (Parish Office) and the Denmans Lane Public Toilets.

The above was **NOTED**.

160. **RISK MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER ANY RISK ASSESSMENTS.**

160.1 The Chair referred to the Office/DSE Risk Assessment that had been presented to members. A review was now due and members's thoughts and comments had been invited. A query was raised regarding Electrical Safety by Cllr Webster

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to accept the Office/DSE Risk Assessment as presented. Cllr Webster's comments would be considered when the Risk Assessment was next due to be reviewed.

161. **TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING, CONFERENCE AND ASSOCIATION EVENTS, AND RECEIVE ANY ATTENDANCE REPORTS.**

161.1 Members had been presented with a summary of training courses that had been attended from 24 May 2023. This also included an attendance report submitted by Cllr Grace.

The above was **NOTED**.

162. **MATTERS ARISE AFTER THE PREPARATION OF THIS AGENDA, WHICH THE CHAIR AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT. SUCH MATTERS WILL BE FOR NOTING OR DEFERRAL TO A FUTURE MEETING ONLY.**

1629.1 There were no matters arising.

The public part of the meeting ended at 20.41 hours.

163. **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**

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

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

164. TO CONSIDER QUOTES FOR CHANGING PLACES CUBICLE EQUIPMENT.

164.1 The Chair referred to a confidential report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Updated quotations were still awaited and this item would be deferred to a future meeting.

The above was **NOTED**.

165. CLOCK TOWER LEASE: UPDATE.

165.1 Arrangements were in hand for the signed lease to be submitted to the tenant.

The above was **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 20.42 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.