

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** (here in F&GP) held on **TUESDAY 2 JULY 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.

This was the first meeting of the committee, following the annual meeting of the Council. The Chair of the Council, Cllr Blunden, opened the meeting and presided over the first item. He welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

### **166. TO ELECT THE COMMITTEE CHAIR.**

166.1 The Chairman of the Council called for nominations for the office of Chair of the F&GP Committee for the Council year 2024/25. It was **NOTED** that Cllr Beecroft had been nominated and was willing to stand.

Cllr Beecroft was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Grace and **SECONDED** by Cllr Pickett. There being no further nominations, Cllr Amy Beecroft was duly **ELECTED** as Chair of the F&GP Committee for the Council year 2024/25. Cllr Beecroft took the Chair for the meeting.

### **167. TO ELECT THE VICE COMMITTEE CHAIR.**

167.1 The Chair called for nominations for the office of Vice Chair of the F&GP Committee. It was **NOTED** that Cllr Pickett had been nominated and was willing to stand.

Cllr Pickett was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Blunden and **SECONDED** by Cllr Beecroft. There being no further nominations, Cllr Roger Pickett was duly **ELECTED** as Vice Chair of the F&GP Committee for the Council year 2024/25.

### **168. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**

168.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Upton and Webster, and their reasons were accepted.

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

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

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

170.1 There were no members of the public present.

### **171. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE F&GP COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 MAY 2024.**

171.1 The Chair called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the F&GP Committee held on Thursday 2 May 2024. These were **AGREED** and the Chair **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

### **172. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

172.1 The Chair made no announcements.

### **173. ACTION LIST.**

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

### **174. APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS.**

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

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

It was **AGREED** to appoint the existing Working Groups of the F&GP Committee, terms of reference and remit as presented. Membership would be as follows:

Insurance and Risk Management.

3 Members – Cllrs Beecroft, Grace and Pickett.

Administration and HR.

5 Members - Cllrs Beecroft, Blunden, Pickett, Upton and Webster.

Grants Panel.

3 Members - Cllrs Blunden, Grace and Upton.

Toilets on the Common.

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

Clock Tower House Lease & Enterprise Park.

4 Members – Cllrs Beecroft, Blunden, Pickett and Upton.

Policies.

5 Members – Cllrs Beecroft, Blunden, Grace, Pickett and Webster.

Plan 2023-27.

6 Members – Cllrs Beecroft, Blunden, Grace, Matthews, Pickett, and Upton, subject to Cllr Matthews confirming agreement to continue.

174.2 It was **FURTHER AGREED** that each Working Group would review the existing Terms of Reference. The Clerk will email copies of the existing details to each Working Group.

**175. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.**

175.1 Grants budget. It was **NOTED** that funds of £2,000 were available to spend from a budget of £2,500.

175.2 To Consider Grant Requests. No grant requests had been received. It was **AGREED** that an article would be included in the next newsletter when published to promote the availability of grants/donations to benefit the local community.

175.3 Letters of thanks received. It was **NOTED** that a letter of thanks had been received from the Lindfield Bonfire Society Limited.

**176. BUDGET 2024/25: TO NOTE THE LATEST BUDGET PROGRESS REPORTS.**

176.1 Members had been presented with copies of the RFO summary and detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Report and Expenditure from Earmarked Reserves Report to 30 April 2024. These had been circulated with the agenda. Reports to 31 May 2024 had subsequently been emailed to members by the RFO on 1 July 2024. Budget progress to 31 May 2024 was **NOTED** as follows:

- i) F&GP Committee: A total of £27,346 had been spent from a budget of £192,390.
- ii) Overall Council Budget: A total of £35,414 had been spent from the budget of £262,215 of which £7,520 had been spent from the Environment & Amenities (E&A) Committee budget of £64,425. £548 had been spent from the Allotments budget of £2,500. £nil had been spent from the Planning & Traffic Committee budget of £2,900. £350 had been spent from Earmarked Reserves.
- iii) General Reserves Expenditure: There had been no expenditure from General Reserves.
- iv) Income: Income of £129,878 had been received in total, represented mainly by payment one (of two) in respect of the precept £128,500 and £1,616 CTH rental. Other income relating to bank and building society interest had been received totalling £182 and allotment rental income of £1,110. Income totalling £420 remained outstanding for 2023/24.

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

### 177. FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS.

177.1 Members had been presented with account records to 30 April 2024 with the agenda. Records to 31 May 2024 had subsequently been emailed to members by the RFO on 1 July 2024.

i) Bank - Cash and Investment Reconciliation and To Note Deposits and Investments Held.

It was **NOTED** that the total bank cash and investment reconciliation to 31 May 2024 was £261,783.18.

ii) Payment Analysis.

It was **NOTED** that a total of £21,568.19 net of VAT had been paid from the Barclays Bank Current Account in May 2024.

iii) To Approve/Ratify any required Payments.

There were no payments requiring approval.

### 177.2 Year-End 2023/24.

a) A last-minute year-end adjustment had to be included representing an item of expenditure under the budget heading Toilets on the Common Construction 4285, which was an earmarked reserve. This represented a net payment of £1,460.00 that had been requested under an invoice dated 31 March 2024. This therefore impacted the Toilets of Common earmarked reserve balance that was available to be carried forward to the new financial year on 1 Apr 2024. A balance of £78,651.67 had been agreed to at the F&GP committee meeting held on 2 May 2024, which subsequently had to be reduced to £77,192.00 (rounded).

The above was **NOTED** and **AGREED**.

b) Supporting notes to the Financial Statements had inadvertently been overlooked when presenting the year-end accounts to members at the Full Council meeting held on 13 June 2024. These had been signed by the Chair of Council and the RFO at the end of the meeting and a copy was now presented to members with the agenda.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to share the information with all members of the Council.

c) Members had been presented with a draft review of surplus funds held on 1 April 2024. Taking into consideration the total bank cash and investments held, budgeted expenditure, anticipated income and funds that were required to support the general reserve, and capital, ring-fenced and agreed earmarked reserves, this had left a small surplus of £8,974.76.

The above was **NOTED**

### 178. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS: TO CONSIDER ANY CHANGES.

178.1 The Chair referred members to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to consider cancelling the arrangement for automatically transferring interest from the Nationwide Building Society savings account each month to the Barclays Bank current account. Given improved online access and the easier management of the transfer of funds between accounts held by the Council, it was felt that this arrangement was no longer necessary. This would increase the total amount of interest received from Nationwide. The Barclays Bank rates of interest were lower compared to that of the Nationwide Building Society and their administration process resulted in a delay in the recording of the transfer of interest to the following month in their statement of account, which was not ideal. Cancelling the current arrangement would provide clearer monthly bank reconciliations and this would assist with year-end accounting.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to cancel the arrangement for automatically transferring interest each month from the Nationwide Building Society account to the Barclays Bank current account. The RFO would action this.

### 179. PLAN 23-27: TO CONSIDER ANY CHANGES.

179.1 Members were presented with a summary of responses that had been received regarding allocation towards supporting the aims and objectives of the 23-27 Plan. The Chair was now seeking confirmation from members that they were happy to accept the allocations as presented.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to accept the allocation of members as presented in the summary.

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to include a report tracking the progress that was being made towards meeting the objectives as a regular item on the agenda at future F&GP committee meetings.

### **180. COMMUNICATIONS: TO CONSIDER THE CREATION OF A WORKING GROUP.**

180.1 The Chair referred members to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to consider creating a Communications Working Group tasked with reviewing both internal and external communications. Terms of Reference would need to be confirmed along with membership.

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

- A) To create a Communications Working Group tasked with reviewing both internal and external communications.
- B) The terms of reference would be to:
  - i. Conduct a review of current internal and external communications, which would involve
    - Considering how this is currently undertaken and how effective this is.
    - Identifying areas to be improved and any associated costs & required resources.
    - Presenting recommendations to F&GP & Full Council.
  - ii. On a continuous basis monitor: a) new and b) existing communications for effectiveness.
  - iii. Make recommendations as and when required on improving communications.
- C) The Working Group membership would include 5 members – Cllrs Beecroft, Grace, Nisbett, Upton and Webster.

### **181. POLICY DOCUMENTS.**

181.1 The Chair referred members to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to consider tasking the Policies Working Group to review the following policy documents, in conjunction with the office:

- a) Financial Regulations - a new version was published in April by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).
- b) Pensions Discretions Policy – a new recommended template had been provided by the Council's pension provider.

Due to the detailed nature of these documents, it would seem appropriate for the Working Group to be allowed time to scrutinise the content and to present tailored drafts to members for consideration.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to task the Policies Working Group, in conjunction with the office, to review the template documents and to consider appropriate amendments. The draft documents would be presented to members at a future F&GP committee meeting.

### **182. TOILETS ON THE COMMON: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT.**

182.1 The Chair referred members to a report that had been circulated and invited Cllr Pickett to comment. A CCTV survey on a surface water drain, which was owned and maintained by the Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC), had been undertaken. This had revealed a blockage. The Clerk was in discussion with MSDC and a response was awaited.

The above was **NOTED**.

### **183. CLERK AND RFO REPORT.**

183.1 Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported on the following items:

- a) IT: Windows 10 Update.  
Enquiries were ongoing and a report would be presented to members as soon as possible.

The above was **NOTED**.

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

### 183.2 RFO's Report.

The RFO reported on the following items:

#### a) HMRC Claim for Refund of VAT: Invoice Period January to March 2024.

A claim for a refund of VAT totalling £5,224.57 had been submitted to HMRC and the refund was received on 31 May 2024.

#### b) Transfer of Funds from Barclays Business Premium Account to Nationwide Building Society.

£30,000 had been transferred from the Barclays Business Premium account to the Nationwide Building Society savings account on 31 May 2024. This transaction was approved by Full Council at their meeting held on 16 May 2024.

#### c) AGAR 2023/24: Update.

The completed AGAR had been submitted to the external auditor on 18 June 2024.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 184. **RISK MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER ANY RISK ASSESSMENTS.**

184.1 There were no risk assessments to be considered.

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

185.1 Members had been presented with a summary of training courses that had been attended for the period 24 May 2023 to 24 June 2024. Attendance reports were shared by the following members:

Cllr Grace: Communication through Traditional and Social Media – 16 May 2024

Cllr Grace: LNRS Briefing – 11 June 2024

Cllr Grace: Eco Councillors Network Meeting – 24 June 2024

Cllr Upton: Unveiling of the Sussex Walk-in Trail Waymarker at Ansty

The Clerk had in addition applied to attend a course provided by Breakthrough Communications and Strategies Limited:

Community Engagement & AI – 13 September 2024

The above was **NOTED**.

### 186. **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.**

186.1 There were no matters arising.

The public part of the meeting ended at 20.49 hours.

### 187. **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).**

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

### 188. **STAFFING MATTERS.**

#### 188.1 i) Proposed Draft Appraisal Policy.

It was **AGREED** that the proposed draft Appraisal Policy would be submitted to the Full Council to seek approval.

#### ii) NJC Pay Claim.

The Chair referred to a report that had been presented to members, which was **NOTED**.

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The meeting concluded at 20.55 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.