

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** (here in F&GP) held on **THURSDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2025** at King Edward Hall, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 20.00 hours.

Present:

Committee Members:	Mr. W. Blunden	Mrs. V. Upton
	Mrs. A. Beecroft (Committee Chair)	Mr. T. Webster
	Mrs. L. Grace (Vice-Chair)	Mr. C. Wood*

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.

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

314.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Wood, and their reason was accepted.

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

315.1 The following declaration of interest was **NOTED**:

Item 7. ii. To Consider Grant Requests Received. Cllr Grace declared a personal interest in this item in view of her membership with the Lindfield History Project Group.

316. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

316.1 There were no members of the public present.

317. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE F&GP COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 JULY 2025.

317.1 The Chair called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the F&GP Committee held on Thursday 3 July 2025. These were **AGREED** and the Chair **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

318. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

318.1 The Chair made the following announcements:

a) Co-option.

Three candidates will be interviewed on 25 September 2025, when members meet at 19.10 hours prior to the commencement of the Full Council meeting that had been scheduled. The Council Chair would ask each candidate the same questions, and the candidates would be given five minutes to talk about why they wish to join the Council.

b) Community Governance Review.

At last night's Mid Sussex District Council meeting, their Scrutiny Committee had agreed to endorse the recommendation that the Haywards Heath Northeast Ward would not be transferred to Lindfield Parish Council. A further consultation on this issue was due to commence on 15 September 2025.

The above was **NOTED**.

319. ACTION LIST AND COMMITTEE WORK SCHEDULE.

319.1 The Chair referred to the Action List and updated Committee Work Schedule which had been circulated with the agenda, and this was **NOTED**.

320. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

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

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

320.2 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. Cllr Blunden reported on behalf of the Grants Panel and confirmed that consideration had been given towards the following grant requests:

i) Lindfield Bonfire Society Limited.

An application had been received dated 14 July 2025. 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 that would be taking place this year. Last year the cost to provide this service was £1,750. Funding had been sought totalling £500 had been sought.

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 2025.

ii) Lindfield History Project Group.

An application had been received dated 13 July 2025. Funding had been requested to contribute towards the cost of the preparation and running of the 'William Allen and 200 years of Lindfield School' public exhibition that was due to take place at King Edward Hall on 20 and 21 September 2025. The cost of the project would total £526.10. Funding had been sought totalling £263.00 had been sought.

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 £263 be made towards the work of Lindfield History Project Group.

iii) Citizens Advice in West Sussex.

An application had been received dated 27 July 2025 from the Citizens Advice in West Sussex, who were a registered charity. They were looking to continue their services supporting residents. Last year, nearly 39,000 local people had been supported with just under 136,000 problems. This was up from just over 24,000 local people and almost 105,000 problems from the year before. They were unique in the advice sector in being able to offer face to face meetings and in-person support. Funding had been sought totalling £300.

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 £300 be made towards the work of Citizens Advice in West Sussex.

320.3 To Note Letters of Thanks Received.

It was **NOTED** that no letters of thanks had been received.

321. BUDGET 2025/26: TO NOTE THE LATEST BUDGET PROGRESS REPORTS.

321.1 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 31 July 2025, which had been circulated with the agenda. Reports to 30 June 2025 had previously been emailed to members by the RFO on 5 August 2025.

Budget progress to 31 July 2025 was **NOTED** as follows:

i) F&GP Committee:

A total of £57,239 had been spent from the budget of £199,791.

ii) Overall Council Budget:

A total of £69,240 had been spent from the budget of £277,696 of which £9,345 had been spent from the Environment & Amenities (E&A) Committee budget of £74,505. £685 had been spent from the Allotments budget of £3,000. £nil had been spent from the Planning & Traffic Committee budget of £400. £150 had been spent to date from Earmarked Reserves as follows:

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

- Council Elections £150.00.

iii) General Reserves Expenditure:

£1,970 had been spent from general reserves up to 31 July 2025.

iv) Income:

The following total income had been received to 31 July 2025:

Precept	145,334
CTH Rental	3,232
Bank and Building Society Interest	918
License Fee	152
Allotments	<u>1,243</u>
	£150,879

322. FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS.

322.1 Members had been presented with account records to 31 July 2025, which had been circulated with the agenda. Reports to 30 June 2025 had previously been emailed to members by the RFO on 5 August 2025.

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 July 2025 was £282,773.31.

ii) Payment Analysis.

It was **NOTED** that the following payments net of VAT had been spent:

- £27.90 Barclays Bank current account.
- £17,810.88 Unity Trust Bank current account.
- £548.40 Lloyds Bank Charge Card.

iii) To Approve/Ratify any required Payments and/or Internal Transfer of Funds.

Members had been presented with a report that had been prepared by the RFO. A request had been received to transfer funds from the Barclay Bank Business Premium account to the Unity Trust Savings account to assist with day-to-day banking and payment of invoices.

It was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the RFO to arrange for the transfer of £20,000 from the Barclays Bank Business Premium account to the Unity Trust Savings account.

323. BUDGET 2026/27: RECOMMENDED TIMETABLE.

323.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk dated 4 September 2025 and circulated with the agenda. This had set out the context and guidelines for developing the budget for 2026/27. It had provided a high-level plan for the Council, based on Plan 23-27 objectives, when considering its service and financial decisions. Since preparing this report, the Government had announced that the Autumn Statement would be held on Wednesday, 26 November 2025, the outcome of which might possibly influence local and national considerations. Members had been asked to endorse the guidelines set out in the report, and to use these principles when preparing the 2026/27 budget.

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

- a. To endorse the guidelines set out within the report.
- b. To use the principles in preparing the 2026/27 budget.

324. BANK ARRANGEMENTS: TO CONFIRM THE BANK MANDATES AND TO CONSIDER PROPOSED BANKING CHANGES AND TO NOTE UPDATES.

324.1 Members had been presented with a report that had been prepared by the RFO. Appendix 1 had included copies of bank mandates for each account held. These were **NOTED** and **CONFIRMED**.

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

- 324.2 The RFO report had also included banking updates. Appendix 2 had provided details regarding the removal of Roger Pickett as an authorised signatory with Barclays Bank, confirmation that completion of a Business Savings Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) – Entity Self Certification Form had been requested by the Nationwide Building Society and confirmation that they had in addition requested assistance regarding a review of the account held.

The above was **NOTED**.

- 324.3 The RFO had reminded Members of the review of banking arrangements that had taken place in November 2024 and had provided an update on progress made. Everyday banking had now been transferred to Unity Trust Bank and arrangements were in hand to switch Barclays Bank debit card payments to the new Lloyds Bank charge card. Once completed it had been agreed that both the Barclays Bank current account and Business Premium Savings account would be closed. The Hinckley & Rugby Building Society savings account was now set up and running. The level of precept funding that was subsequently agreed to for 2025/26, had increased the amount of funds held by the Council and this had put a strain on the total amount of FSCS protection that was available. With limited availability of new savings products for parish councils, a recommendation was now being made to retain the Barclays Bank accounts with online banking. The bank mandate being reviewed to increase the number of signatories to three per transaction to improve security.

The report was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council to retain the Barclays Bank accounts. In addition, it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the Barclays Bank mandate be reviewed to increase the number of signatories to three per transaction.

- 324.4 The RFO had provided details of anticipated funds that would be held when payment (2 of 2) of the precept is received at the end of September 2025. Savings accounts held with the Nationwide Building Society and the Hinckley & Rugby Building Society were both currently holding funds totalling £85,000. A recommendation had been made to transfer a sufficient level of funds from the Unity Trust Bank Current account to the Barclays Bank Business Premium savings account to maximise the level of FSCS protection to £85,000. The balance remaining to be transferred to the Unity Trust Savings account to maximise the level of interest rate return.

The report was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the RFO, in conjunction with the Chair of Council and Committee Chair, to arrange for the transfer of funds from the Unity Trust Current account to the Barclays Bank Business Premium savings account to maximise FSCS protection, when payment (2 of 2) of the precept is received at the end of September 2025. A suitable balance of funds remaining in the Unity Trust Current account would be transferred to the Unity Trust bank savings account.

325. TOILETS ON THE COMMON PROJECT: UPDATES.

- 325.1 The Chair reported that the working group had met, and that a recommendation had been made to consider the following:

- i) What the Lindfield Parish Council wished to aim for.
- ii) To carry out a review of costs and how these were to be funded.
- iii) The need to take into consideration progress in respect of the proposed Mayoral Combined County Authority in Sussex and what if any outcomes might impact the project.
- iv) To carry out a review of expiry dates of various applications that had been submitted in support of the present project.
- v) To consider any new possible building design options.

A meeting was due to take place with Cllr Anne-Marie Cooke on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council to review progress to date, the outcome of which would help contribute towards a future recommended course of action.

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

- a) To pause progress on this project until a full review had been undertaken.
- b) That the Clerk would liaise with the architects to arrange payment of any outstanding invoices due and to provide a summary of the progress made to date.
- c) The working group would reconvene on completion of the above lines of enquiry.

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

326. PLAN 23-27: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT AND ANY MATTERS REQUIRING A DECISION.

- 326.1 The Chair invited Cllr Webster to provide an update. Full Council had been presented with, and approved, the use of a draft monitoring report to assist with delivering agreed objectives. This would detail the Council's achievements to date and aimed to focus on what else needed to be done to complete the plan by 2027. He was pleased to advise that a few items had been successfully completed, and that progress was being made on other items such as a Councillor's manual and Governance. He was keen to expedite community engagement and the Clerk confirmed that discussions were ongoing to agree a mutually convenient date on which to hold a training session. The Council wished to apply for the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) "good council" accreditation scheme and enquiries were ongoing.

The above was **NOTED**.

327. PROCUREMENT: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT.

- 327.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk dated 4 September 2025 and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to consider procurement arrangements for the following items:

a) Van.

The current hire lease agreement was due to expire mid-October. The existing electric vehicle had fulfilled the role and had proved to be an asset supporting the work of the Village Orderly. A recommendation had been made to confirm that, for operational reasons, Lindfield Parish Council continue with a lease arrangement. The Clerk was in the process of obtaining quotations, including renewal of the existing contract.

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

- i) That Lindfield Parish Council wish to continue using an electric vehicle for operational reasons.
- ii) To delegate authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair of Council and Committee Chair, authority to either renew the existing hire lease agreement or to procure a new contract. A decision would be made following a review of quotations when received. This item of expenditure would be met from the current Vehicle budget (nominal code 4385).

b) Clock Tower House Gutter.

It was disappointing to report that a short section of guttering needed repair or possibly replacement. This would cost approximately £1,300, including scaffolding.

The above was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to approve expenditure of up to £1,300 for the repair. This would be met from the current Maintenance/Improvements to CTH budget (nominal code 4393).

c) Solar Panels for Clock Tower House.

The Clerk had provided a comparison of three quotations received from different suppliers detailing system size, battery use, bird proofing, the use of individual optimisers on panels, warranties and general observations about each system including scaffolding arrangements. It was possible that the Clerk might receive additional quotations after this meeting. A recommendation had been made in favour of Option 1, the cost of which would be met from the F&GP Plan 23-27 earmarked reserve. A battery could be added at a future date, and it was considered that use of a scaffolding tower for the installation would present a more practical method of working within the busy industrial estate.

The above was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council to approve acceptance of Option 1, subject to no further quotations subsequently being received.

d) Website.

It was **NOTED** that quotations had been shared with the Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Cllr Nisbett and that discussions were ongoing in conjunction with the Clerk.

e) Photocopier.

The chair reported that a moderation of contracts had been completed and that a contract was being reviewed before being signed. Notice had been given on the existing agreement, which was due to expire in December.

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

The above was **NOTED**.

328. WORKING GROUPS: TO CONSIDER ANY UPDATES.

328.1 The Clerk confirmed that District Councils and County Councils were required to submit their final local government reorganisation plans for devolution by 26 September 2025.

The above was **NOTED**.

329. CLERK AND RFO REPORT.

329.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk dated 4 September 2025 and circulated with the agenda. Members **NOTED** updates relating to the following items:

a) Clerk.

- i) The Clock Tower House front door had been adjusted to improve the slow-close hinge.
- ii) A spare control for the air conditioning unit had been purchased.

b) RFO.

- i) A payment of £1,890.32 had been received from HMRC relating to a claim for VAT refund for the invoice period April to June 2025.
- ii) The cost of CTH window cleaning would increase from £22.00 to £24.00 per month with effect from October 2025.

330. RISK MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER ANY RISK ASSESSMENTS.

330.1 There were no risk assessments to consider.

331. TO CONFIRM ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING AND EVENTS, AND TO RECEIVE ANY ATTENDANCE REPORTS.

331.1 Members had been presented with a Summary of Training and Meeting Attendance since January 2025, which had included future training sessions that had been booked. This had included a report from Cllr Grace after having attended a Chairs Training - Leading Council and Committee Meetings with Confidence and a Councillors environmental network meeting.

The above was **NOTED**.

332. 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.

332.1 There were no matters arising.

The public part of the meeting ended at 20.32 hours.

333. 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).

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

334. STAFFING MATTERS: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT.

334.1 The RFO had been asked to withdraw from the meeting and had agreed to this request.

334.2 Members **NOTED** the update regarding employment matters.

The meeting concluded at 20.38 hours.

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

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.