

## LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** (here in F&GP) held on **THURSDAY 29 MAY 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	Mr. C. Wood

**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 Webster, opened the meeting and presided over the first item. He welcomed those present and announced the emergency procedure for the King Edward Hall.

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

268.1 The Chairman of the Council called for nominations for the office of Chair of the F&GP Committee for the Council year 2025/26. 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 Upton. There being no further nominations, Cllr Amy Beecroft was duly **ELECTED** as Chair of the F&GP Committee for the Council year 2025/26. Cllr Beecroft took the Chair for the meeting.

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

269.1 The Chair called for nominations for the office of Vice Chair of the F&GP Committee. It was **NOTED** that Cllr Grace had been nominated and was willing to stand. Cllr Grace was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Webster and **SECONDED** by Cllr Upton. There being no further nominations, Cllr Linda Grace was duly **ELECTED** as Vice Chair of the F&GP Committee for the Council year 2025/26.

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

270.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Blunden and their reason was accepted.

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

271.1 The following declaration of interest was **NOTED**: Item 10. ii. To Consider Grant Requests Received. Councillor Beecroft declared a personal interest in this item in view of her position as Trustee membership with the Friends of Lindfield Playgrounds.

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

272.1 There were no members of the public present.

### **273. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE F&GP COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2025.**

273.1 The Chair called for approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the F&GP Committee held on Thursday 6 March 2025. These were **AGREED** and the Chair **SIGNED** the Minutes as being a true record of that meeting.

### **274. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

274.1 Following Cllr Pickett's resignation as a Councillor, the Chair wished to convey her gratitude for his kind and helpful guidance that he has provided during her time as a member on the Committee and Full Council. His support and enthusiasm in the past years has been very much appreciated.

### **275. ACTION LIST AND COMMITTEE WORK SCHEDULE.**

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

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- 275.2 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. A draft committee work schedule had been proposed for the current financial year. This would serve as a reminder to members of contracts when due to be renewed or reviewed, to confirm any outstanding items requiring action and to outline the timeline agreed to in which to consider the Budget for 2026. This would be updated as and when necessary.

The above was **NOTED**.

### 276. APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUPS.

- 276.1 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. 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 Webster.
Administration and HR (5 Members):	Cllrs Beecroft, Blunden, Upton, Webster and Wood.
Grants Panel (3 Members):	Cllrs Blunden, Grace and Upton.
Toilets on the Common (4 Members):	Cllrs Beecroft, Blunden, Upton and Webster.
CTH Lease & Enterprise Park (3 Members):	Cllrs Blunden, Upton and Webster.
Policies (3 Members):	Cllrs Blunden, Grace and Webster.
Plan 2023-27 (4 Members):	Cllrs Beecroft, Blunden, Grace, Upton & Webster.

### 277. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

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

- 277.2 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. Councillor Grace reported on behalf of the Grants Panel and confirmed that consideration had been given towards the following grant request:

- a. Friends of Lindfield Playgrounds. Friends of Lindfield Playgrounds was a registered charity who had submitted an application for a grant of £500.00 dated 14 March 2025. They were looking to fund start-up costs, including roller banners for events, initial insurance and some promotional items to assist with further fundraising and awareness raising. Funding would contribute towards their ability to take part in Lindfield Village Day, the Village Roadshow and the LPA Spring Fair and similar future events.
- b. **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 £500 be made towards the work of Friends of Lindfield Playgrounds.

- 277.3 To Note Letters of Thanks Received.  
It was **NOTED** that no letters of thanks had been received.

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

- 278.1 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 2025. These had been circulated with the agenda. Budget progress reports for February 2025 and March 2025 (prior to year-end adjustments having been made) had been previously circulated to members by the RFO by email. Budget progress was **NOTED** as follows:

- i) F&GP Committee:  
A total of £14,198 had been spent from a budget of £199,791.
- ii) Overall Council Budget:

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A total of £17,476 had been spent from the budget of £277,696 of which £2,891 had been spent from the Environment & Amenities (E&A) Committee budget of £74,505. £387 had been spent from the Allotments budget of £3,000. £nil had been spent from the Planning & Traffic Committee budget of £400. £nil had been spent to date from Earmarked Reserves.

iii) General Reserves Expenditure:

£nil had been spent from General Reserves up to 30 April 2025.

iv) Income:

The following total income had been received to 30 April 2025:

Precept	145,334
CTH Rental	808
Bank and Building Society Interest	122
Allotments	(46) Year-end adjustment
	<u>£146,218</u>

- 278.2 It was **NOTED** that Budget progress reports for February 2025 and March 2025 (prior to year-end adjustments having been made) had been previously circulated by the RFO to all Council members by email. Reports for February were emailed on 17 March 2025 and for March on 15 April 2025.

**279. FINANCIAL MONITORING: TO NOTE THE ACCOUNT RECORDS.**

- 279.1 Members had been presented with account records to 30 April 2025 with the agenda.

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 30 April 2025 was £330,159.56.

ii) Payment Analysis.

It was **NOTED** that a total of £15,295.26 net of VAT had been spent from the Barclays Bank current account in April 2025. This had included a transfer of funds £15,000 to Unity Trust bank. £28,193.75 net of VAT had been spent from the Unity Trust Bank current account in April 2025.

iii) To Approve/Ratify any required Payments.

There were no payments requiring approval.

- 279.2 It was **NOTED** that account records for February 2025 and March 2025 (prior to year-end adjustments having been made) had been previously circulated by the RFO to all Council members by email. Reports for February were emailed on 17 March 2025 and for March on 15 April 2025.

**280. BANKING ARRANGEMENTS: LATEST UPDATE AND PROPOSED ADDITIONAL DIRECT DEBIT, AND CHANGES TO BANK MANDATE.**

- 280.1 Members had been presented with a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda.

It was **NOTED** that the Clerk had now received the new Charge Card from Unity Trust bank. Arrangements were in hand to transfer regular Barclays Bank debit card payments to this new account.

- 280.2 The Chair advised members that Kipper Creative Limited had provided the opportunity for Lindfield Parish Council to set up a Direct Debit Mandate. Full Council had approved to proceed with this arrangement.

The above was **NOTED**.

- 280.3 It was **NOTED** that Councillor Pickett had resigned and that he was an authorised signatory for accounts held with Unity Trust Bank, Barclays Bank plc and the Nationwide Building Society.

It was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the RFO, in conjunction with authorised signatories, to make arrangements to remove Councillor Pickett from the bank mandates as soon as possible.

**281. COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER REPORT.**

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281.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk dated 23 May 2025 and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to consider the next stage of the Council's communications review, which included the following:

a) Corporate Membership of Rotary Cuckfield, Lindfield & Haywards Heath.

An invitation had been received by email dated 25 March 2025 for Lindfield Parish Council to join the Rotary Club as a Corporate Member. Membership would provide scope to work more closely within the community and assist with wider networking opportunities. The Rotary Club's emphasis is on fellowship, service in the local community, supporting local charities and causes, and networking with local businesses and organisations for the benefit of community members. A single membership subscription, currently £100 per year, would provide access to up to four Council members. Cllrs Beecroft and Webster had expressed keen support in favour of this invitation.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that Lindfield Parish Council would apply for membership. This item if expenditure would be met from the F&GP Annual Memberships/Subscriptions budget.

b) Breakthrough Communications.

After having confirmed agreement to sign up for the Breakthrough Communications Hive Platform, a revised offer had been received at a substantially increased cost. The following revised offer had been made, which included an in-person training event on 26 June 2025. This would help to support a communications strategy for the Council:

- Council Hive Premium (with unlimited professional communications, community engagement and information compliance advice), discounted from £1997 by £177 (the AI in-person ticket).
- Two training events delivered free, with a £300+vat supplement per event for in person.
- Free additional training event, delivered in person at no extra cost.

This offer was on condition that Lindfield Parish Office was able to process and pay the invoice this month. Members were mindful that an alternative date would need to be agreed to hold the in-person event, given that Full Council were already committed to meet on 26 June 2025.

The above was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to accept the revised offer as presented but with an alternative date being agreed to for the in-person event. This item of expenditure would be met from a combination of the Training budget and general reserve.

c) Primary Tool of Internal Communication.

The Communications working group had met on 1 April 2025. A proposal had been made by a member of the Council that attended the meeting relating to the use of Microsoft Teams (or similar Platforms) as an alternative option to using email. Members were mindful of the varying degrees of IT knowledge amongst all Council members and the need for a consistent approach. Limited staff resources would influence the Council's ability to manage Microsoft Teams, and the Council was obliged to follow legal requirements and regulations.

After having given the matter full and careful consideration, it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council the use of email as the Lindfield Parish Council's primary tool of internal communications.

It was **FURTHER AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that any alternative trials are to be agreed upon by the relevant committee (s) and that these must include a clearly defined scope, including safeguards. The launching and management of any agreed trials will be undertaken by Council Officers.

## 282. TOILETS ON THE COMMON: TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS.

282.1 The Chair referred members to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to agree to undertake a review of the current status of the project. With regret, two of the required applications were shortly due to expire and there were a few issues that remained unresolved.

It was **AGREED** that the working group would meet to assess the current project status and consider what challenges would need to be resolved to enable the project to continue.

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

283.1 It was **NOTED** that the report had been deferred.

### **284. GOVERNANCE: TO NOTE REPORTS OF THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENES OF THE OVERALL INTERNAL AUDIT AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEM.**

284.1 Members had been presented with copies of the following reports:

- a) Internal control check of accounts for the invoice period October to December 2024, which had been carried out by the Chair on 4 March 2025. There were no matters arising.
- b) Internal control check of accounts for the invoice period January to March 2025, which had been carried out by the Chair on 22 May 2025. There were no matters arising.
- c) Annual review of the Effectiveness of the Overall Internal Audit 2024-25, which had been prepared by Councillor Pickett and signed on 25 March 2025.
- d) Annual review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Control Systems 2024-25, which had been prepared by Councillor Pickett and signed on 25 March 2025.

The above reports and their comments were **NOTED**.

### **285. PROCUREMENT TO CONSIDER THE REPORT ON IT SERVICES, WEBSITE AND SOLAR PANELS.**

285.1 The Chair referred members to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members were reminded that the Council, in support of Plan 2023-27 objectives, had been looking to install solar panels on Clock Tower House and to update its website. In addition, a review of the annual IT Support and Security contract for 2025/26 was due.

#### a) Solar Panels.

It was **NOTED** that the Council had received confirmation from Lindfield Enterprise Park Ltd that they had no objection towards the installation of solar panels on Clock Tower House (subject to terms and conditions). Advice would be sought from Mid Sussex District Council regarding any possible planning requirements and quotations would then be obtained for consideration by the Committee and Full Council.

#### b) Review of IT Support and Security Contract 2025/26.

It was **NOTED** that the existing supplier had significantly increased their proposed charge for 2025/26 and as such the Council would be seeking quotations from other suppliers. The proposed contract would not exceed £4,999.99 net of VAT.

It was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the Committee Chair & Vice Chair, to review and accept a quotation for the Council's IT Support and Security contract for 2025/26. This item of expenditure would be met from the IT budget heading.

#### c) Update of Website.

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Nisbett, as part of his role with the Communications and Community Engagement working group (CCEWG), had helped to prepare a specification for an updated website. It was now being proposed that the Council seek formal quotations from suppliers. The updated website would provide improved functionality and editing. The proposed contract would not exceed £4,999.99 net of VAT.

It was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Clerk, in conjunction with the CCEWG, to review and accept a quotation for an updated website. In addition, it was **AGREED** to authorise the Clerk and CCEWG to oversee the development of the updated website. This item of expenditure would be met from the Plan 23-27 F&GP earmarked reserve.

### **286. WORKING GROUPS: TO CONSIDER ANY UPDATES.**

286.1 There were no updates other than matters reported under minute references 281.1 c) and 295.1 c) above.

### **287. CLERK AND RFO REPORT.**

#### 287.1 Clerk's Report.

The Clerk reported on the following item:

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a) Clock Tower House

The swift nesting box had been installed on the outside of the Clock Tower House.

The above was **NOTED**.

287.2 RFO's Report.

The RFO reported on the following item:

a) Internal Control Check of Accounts.

The Chair had carried out internal control checks of accounts on 4 March 2025 for the invoice period September to December 2024 and on 22 May 2025 for the invoice period January to March 2025, with no matters arising. The RFO had thanked the Chair for her assistance.

b) Closedown of Accounts for 2024/2025.

The closedown of accounts had been successfully completed in conjunction with RBS on 29 April 2025 and a year-end internal audit of accounts was due to take place on 4 June 2025.

c) AGAR 2024/25 – Update.

Financial information to complete section 2 of the AGAR was now available and work was currently in progress towards providing an explanation of variances over 15%. Additional information had been requested to be received by the external auditor given that Lindfield Parish Council had exceeded the £200,000 threshold for receipts and expenditure.

d) Transfer of Funds following Receipt of Precept.

Following receipt of the precept of £145,334 on 30 April 2025, a transfer of funds to maximise FSCS protection of total funds held had been approved in conjunction with the three Committee Chairs and Vice Chair of F&GP. £84,000 had been transferred from Unity Trust Bank current account to the Hinckley & Rugby Building Society and £39,200 to the Unity Trust Bank savings account.

The above was **NOTED**.

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

288.1 There were no risk assessments to consider.

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

289.1 Members had been presented with a Summary of Training and Meeting Attendance since January 2025.

The above was **NOTED**.

**290. 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.**

290.1 There were no matters arising.

The public part of the meeting ended at 21.04 hours.

**291. 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).**

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

**292. STAFFING MATTERS: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT.**

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

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292.2 Members noted the report and **AGREED** that a report be submitted to Full Council (24 July 2025).

The meeting concluded at 21.10 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.