

LINDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE 5TH MARCH 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** (here in F&GP) held on **THURSDAY 8 JANUARY 2026** at the Parish Council Office, Lindfield.

The meeting began at 19.45 hours.

Present:

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

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

* Denotes absence.

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed those present. Due to emergency gas works at the King Edward Hall, the meeting had taken place at Lindfield Parish Council office.

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

358.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Grace, and her reason was accepted.

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

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

Item 16. Community Events, 3. Lindfield Village Day. Cllr Blunden declared a personal interest in this item in view of his membership with the King Edward Hall management committee and Lindfield Village Day committee.

360. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

360.1 There were no members of the public present.

361. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE F&GP COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2025.

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

362. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

362.1 The Chair made no announcements.

363. WORK SCHEDULE AND ACTION LIST.

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

364. GRANTS AND DONATIONS.

364.1 Grants budget. It was **NOTED** that funds of £497.00 were available to spend from a budget of £2,500.

364.2 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 request:

i) Lindfield Bowling Club.

An application had been received dated 9 November 2025 requesting funding towards the cost of alterations to the inside of their clubhouse. This would increase the main area, making it more accessible/disabled

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friendly, and included kitchen alterations and installation of essential disabled toilets. The total cost of their project was £13,000 and a grant had been sought totalling £500. The working group were mindful that the Lindfield Bowling Club operated on a membership only basis and that the clubhouse facilities were not accessible to the wider community.

The above was **NOTED**, and after having given the matter full and careful consideration it was **AGREED** that with regret the application did not meet the criteria of the Council's Grants Policy.

ii) St Peter & St James Hospice.

An application dated 4 December 2025 had been received from St Peter & St James Hospice requesting funding towards providing expert care to adults facing life-limiting illnesses in our community. The total cost of their project was £6.9 million and a grant for £500 had been requested. The working group had recommended that a grant of £500 be awarded.

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 St James & St Peters Hospice.

Members **NOTED** that in approving this grant award, this would exceed the agreed total budget expenditure limit of £2,500 for the current financial year. It was **AGREED** that the overspent balance of £3.00 would be met from general reserves.

364.3 To Note Letters of Thanks Received.

It was **NOTED** that a letter of thanks had been received from 4Sight Vision Support.

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

365.1 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 October 2025, which had been circulated with the agenda.

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

i) F&GP Committee:

A total of £105,645 had been spent from the budget of £199,791.

ii) Overall Council Budget:

A total of £132,039 had been spent from the budget of £277,696 of which £23,156 had been spent from the Environment & Amenities (E&A) Committee budget of £74,505. £1,073 had been spent from the Allotments budget of £3,000. £nil had been spent from the Planning & Traffic Committee budget of £400. £950 had been spent to date from Earmarked Reserves as follows:

- Wilderness Field S106 Maintenance £800
- Council Elections £150

iii) General Reserves Expenditure:

£2,165 had been spent from general reserves up to 31 October 2025.

iv) Income:

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

Precept	290,668
Bank and Building Society Interest	1,606
Grants & Donations	357
CTH Rental	5,656
CTH Service Charge	344

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License Fee	152
Christmas Festival Night	830
Allotments	<u>1,260</u>
	£300,873

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

366.1 Members had been presented with account records to 31 October 2025, which had been circulated with the agenda.

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

It was **NOTED** that the cashbook total bank cash and investment reconciliation to 31 October 2025 was £369,635.10.

ii) Payment Analysis.

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

- £167,579.48 Unity Trust Bank current account.
- £129.15 Lloyds Bank Charge Card.
- £34.31 Barclays Bank current account.

Payment analysis in respect of the Unity Trust Bank current account for September 2025 had in addition been circulated: £28,419.40.

iii) To Approve/Ratify any required Payments (If required).

There were no payments to approve or ratify.

iv) Internal Transfer of Funds: Barclays Bank to Unity Trust Bank Plc.

The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to consider a request for the RFO to transfer £55,000 from the Barclays Bank Premium account to the Unity Trust Bank current and savings accounts to assist with everyday banking needs and to maximise interest rate returns.

The above was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to delegate authority to the RFO in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council to transfer £55,000 split between the Unity Trust Bank current & savings accounts.

367. **BUDGET 2026/27: TO CONSIDER THE FINAL BUDGET PROPOSAL.**

367.1 Members had been presented with a report that had been prepared by the Clerk dated 8 January 2026. Since the last Committee meeting Full Council had scrutinised the proposed draft budget at their meeting held on 13 November 2025. New suggestions had since been considered and proposed, which had included an amendment to two items on the E&A committee budget relating to the proposed public toilets on the common. Expenditure from earmarked reserves had been reviewed and it had been proposed that the Council had a general reserve level of 38.5% of its anticipated budget. The Council's tax base figures for 2026/27 had now been confirmed.

Estimated funds in hand on 1 April 2026 had been reviewed taking into consideration allotment tenancy deposits held. Members had been asked to consider the Full Council report, including attached proposed draft budgets per Appendices A, B and C, and earmarked reserves per Appendix D.

Full and careful consideration had been given towards the updated and proposed Committee budgets, including a request to top-up existing reserves and to include a new reserve Village Clock. A total general reserve of £117,556.54 would be required. A total anticipated budget expenditure of £285,802.81 had been proposed, which was represented by the following:

	£
F&GP Committee	221,402.81
E&A Committee	64,000.00
PT&T Committee	<u>400.00</u>
	285,802.81

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A total budget requirement of £322,000 would be required, which was represented by the following:

Expenditure:	£	£
Budget expenditure E&A Committee	221,402.81	
Budget Expenditure F&GP Committee	64,000.00	
Budget Expenditure PTT&T Committee	400.00	
New Earmarked Reserve	1,000.00	
Top-Up to Existing Earmarked Reserves	31,000.00	
Additional General Reserve funding	4,197.19	322,000.00
Less Income:		
Anticipated income 2026/27	17,000.00	<u>-17,000.00</u>
Giving rise to a shortfall to be supported by a precept of		305,000.00

The updated overall draft budget requirement for 2026/27 of £322,000 was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council for approval at their meeting due 22 January 2026.

- 367.2 It had been further been **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council at their meeting due 22 January 2026 that a precept request of £305,000 be made to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) for the financial year 2026/27.

It had also been **AGREED** that an article explaining the precept request would be published, prior to MSDC confirming Council Tax Bills for 2026/27 to residents.

368. BANK ARRANGEMENTS: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT AND MATTERS REQUIRING A DECISION.

- 368.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to note the latest updates regarding authorised signatories and banking arrangements:

- Written confirmation had been received from Barclays Bank that Cllr Lowman had been added to the Bank Mandate as an authorised signatory.
- Notification had been received from Barclays Bank Plc that the Council Business Current account would be changed to a Barclays Business account with effect from 13 February 2026. A monthly fee of £8.50 would be charged. This would be an automatic change.
- The Nationwide Building Society had updated their records following receipt of the AEOI Entity Self Certification Form that was submitted on 18 December 2025.
- The Unity Trust Bank would be increasing the monthly account fee from £6.00 to £7.00 per month and increasing charges for cash and cheque deposits in addition to other services with effect from 1 February 2026.

The report was **NOTED**.

- 368.2 Members had been asked to ratify the setup of new direct debit mandates and a standing order in the name of the following suppliers:

- Aim Copier Supplies Limited.
- PEAC (UK) Limited.
- Bryan Cleaning Services.

The above was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to ratify the setup of the new direct debit mandates and standing order as outlined in the report.

369. TOILETS ON THE COMMON PROJECT: TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS (IF REQUIRED).

- 369.1 The Chair had invited Cllr Webster to provide an update with reference to his report, which had been circulated with the agenda. Progress was ongoing to try to seek a reduction in costs and members were reminded that some permissions had expired. The specification would be reviewed and Gigloo Limited would be approached to see if they were able to offer assistance.

The above was **NOTED**.

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370. PLAN 23-27: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT AND ANY MATTERES REQUIRING A DECISION.

370.1 The Chair referred to the Plan 23-27 Monitoring report that had been circulated with the agenda and had made the following comments and recommendations regarding Health and Wellbeing:

Promote awareness of Campaigns linked to Health and Wellbeing.

It was felt that more thought was required and that consideration should be given towards a link being put on the Council's new website when this was up and running.

Investigate opportunities to support Youth and Elderly Services in the Village.

The RAG status should be changed from red to yellow in the knowledge that the Council had supported the Mid Sussex Older People's Council.

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

370.2 Health & Wellbeing.

Cllr Lowman had suggested that mental wellbeing should be considered as a new initiative in the future.

The above was **NOTED**.

371. CLERK AND RFO REPORT.

371.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk dated 8 January 2026 and circulated with the agenda. Members **NOTED** updates relating to the following items:

a) Clerk.

- i) The new office photocopier had been received and the old device returned.
- ii) An order had been placed for the new website.
- iii) The solar panels had been installed on 11 November 2025.

In addition to the report, the Clerk advised on the following:

- iv) The hot water tap in the parish office was currently running brown water. Enquiries were ongoing to identify the cause.
- v) The bracket on the outside wall of the office, which supported the air conditioning unit was rusting, and consideration would need to be given towards its replacement.
- vi) The six-monthly maintenance of the office intruder alarm was due to be carried out shortly.

b) RFO.

- i) Lloyds Bank Charge Card statements were now being raised on day 26 of each month and the Council monthly credit limit and individual cardholder limit had now been increased to £6,000.00.
- ii) Gratitude had been expressed to the Chair for attending the Internal Interim audit meeting that was held on Wednesday 19 November 2025 with Mulberry Local Authority Services Limited.
- iii) Members had been advised that the FSCS level of protection has been increased to £120,000 with effect from 1 December 2025.
- iv) Cllr Grace had agreed to carry out the annual review of the effectiveness of internal control and overall internal audit for 2025/26.
- v) A summary of thresholds and current savings account interest rates had been provided.

372. INTERIM AUDIT 2025/26: TO RECEIVE THE REPORT.

372.1. Members were advised that the interim audit had been carried out on 19 November 2025 and a copy of the report had been circulated with the agenda. There were no matters arising, but in the knowledge that new guidance would impact this year's AGAR it was recommended that members be reminded of the following:

- a) Members who were in arrears with council tax payments would not be entitled to cast a vote when the Council agrees future budgets.
- b) The Council would fail its audit if members were found to be using their personal email addresses.
- c) The Acceptance of Office forms would need to be updated reflecting agreement from members to receive agendas by email. This update would be considered as an item of the agenda at a future Full Council meeting.

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The Clerk informed members that arrangements were in hand to provide GDPR training at the end of the next Full Council meeting that was due to be held on 22 January 2026.

Members had expressed thanks to the Clerk and RFO for their work in support of the Council receiving a positive audit report.

The above was **NOTED**.

373. COMMUNITY EVENTS: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT.

373.1 Cllr Blunden, having declared an interest in the item relating to Lindfield Village Day, did not participate in the discussion.

373.2 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to consider providing funding for two community events:

a) Lindfield Village Day.

Lindfield Parish Council would be attending Lindfield Village Day on 30 May 2026 and had been approached to fund £300 sponsorship towards the medical cover for the event.

The above was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to fund £300 sponsorship towards the medical cover for Lindfield Village Day. This item of expenditure would be met from the F&GP Community Engagement budget in the new financial year.

b) Lindfield Archive event.

The Council's volunteer archivists were planning to hold an event on Saturday, 3 October 2026 at the King Edward Hall, and the F&GP committee had been asked to consider funding the cost of the room hire.

The above was **NOTED**, and it was **AGREED** to meet the cost of room hire for the Lindfield Archive Event. This item of expenditure would be met from the F&GP Community Engagement budget in the new financial year.

374. COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT.

374.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to note the latest working group report, which had provided updates on the following:

- a) Christmas festival night – preparation for the Council's stall and 20 mph campaign.
- b) Council's new website.
- c) Introduction of a new community awards scheme.
- d) Refurbishment and use of the newly acquired red BT telephone kiosk in Lindfield High Street.
- e) Development of a strategy document.
- f) Residents annual meeting – advertising arrangements and to confirm content.

The report was **NOTED**.

375. ASSET MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER THE REPORT.

375.1 The Chair referred to a report that had been prepared by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Members had been asked to note updates relating to the new ownership of the red telephone kiosk, which is located next to the Bent Arms in Lindfield High Street. This was acquired in November 2025.

Enquiries were being made relating to electrical connection, maintenance and repair work, and use of the asset. A report would be presented to members for consideration following completion of these enquiries.

The report was **NOTED**.

376. RISK MANAGEMENT: TO CONSIDER ANY RISK ASSESSMENTS.

376.1 There were no risk assessments to consider.

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

377.1 Members had been presented with a Summary of Training and Meeting Attendance 2026, which had included future training sessions that had been booked.

The RFO had reported that Mulberry Local Authority Services Limited had offered to provide online or in-person training to assist members with the annual review of the effectiveness of internal control and overall internal audit for the current financial year. Whilst appreciated, on further consideration it was felt that this was not appropriate at the current time.

The above was **NOTED**.

378. 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.

378.1 The following items were reported:

- a) The Clerk advised members that The Lindfield Society had invited a representative of Lindfield Parish Council to attend their forthcoming meetings.
- b) Cllr Blunden was sad to report that a former Vice Chair of the Council, Cllr Snowling was in poor health. Members conveyed their best wishes.

The above was **NOTED**.

The meeting concluded at 20.41 hours.

Date of next meeting 5 March 2026.

Approved.....Chair

Date

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.