

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 10th April 2013 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 8.00 pm.

Chairman: Mr P. Buckley

**Councillors: Mr L. Apted Mr A. Bull
Dr A Cash Mrs P. Flores-Moore
Mr R. Jackman Mrs C. Vickers**

County: Apologies provided by Cllr B. Watson OBE

District: Apologies provided by Cllrs I. Howard, Dr J. Chidlow

Clerk: Mrs J Nagy

Press: Not present

Public: Not present

Police: Apologies received.

FG01/04/13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and then highlighted the housekeeping rules and also the fact that mobile phones should be switched off during the meeting, members of the public not being permitted to tape or film meetings of the Council.

Mr Jackman said that he was disappointed about the number of Highways issues that had been reported, but were still awaiting attention.

Dr Cash said that many actions promised had not happened, nor been followed up.

The Deputy Clerk asked Mr Jackman to provide her with a list of these reports, which she would then chase and report back.

Mrs Flores-Moore asked about the latest situation with relation to the provision of a pavement at Blakes Farm Rd. Many people walked along this road, and it was dangerous due to the amount of lorries accessing Oakhurst Business Park.

The Deputy Clerk said that the provision of this footpath had been discussed as part of the Martindale development, but instead improvements were to be made to an existing footpath leading to Worthing Rd.

Mr Jackman said that the County Council needed to become more involved in the s106 process. Dr Cash agreed.

Mrs Flores-Moore said that the Council should write to the District Council to express its lack of confidence in the s106 system, and that the Parish Council should be involved at the start of the process.

The Deputy Clerk said that this was not from lack of trying on behalf of the parish office.

Mr Jackman suggested that monies from the Rascals Close and Pond Farm House developments could be put towards the Blakes Farm Rd path. The Deputy Clerk said that the Rascals Close agreement had been finalised, but she would try to put forward the suggestion for the Pond Farm House application.

Dr Cash reported that at the Finance & General Purpose Meeting on 10th November 2012, it was agreed to spend £7,500 from the Village Sign monies on a project to improve the bridge. As nothing had happened, he would like this money to be spent on a sign advertising Lintot Square facilities to be erected by the bridge.

The Deputy Clerk said this money was earmarked for the Butterfly Project, whereby local children designed butterflies to be made out of metal to be put on the bridge.

Dr Cash said that the project had stalled, therefore he repeated his request that the money to be spent on the sign suggested by Geoff Hawkins, Horsham District Council Estate Manager. He asked for the matter to be put on the May Finance meeting agenda.

The Deputy Clerk said that the project had not stalled but was on going with local schools. She was not aware of any signage being requested by Mr Hawkins.

Mrs Flores-Moore said that the Downslink is well known outside of the area, and she did not think that more signage was needed. She was in favour of the Butterfly Project continuing.

The Deputy Clerk said that under the six month rule, the question of the money being re-assigned could not be discussed again until June, as the May meeting is on 8th May.

Dr Cash asked for this matter to be put on the June Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting agenda, with a view to the money being spent on the District Council sign.

Mr Bull said that he had concerns about the soil movements taking place as part of the Golf Park works. Large piles of soil have been dumped in the vicinity of Kings Lane, and this should be reported to the Environment Agency.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk report this to the Environment Agency.

FG02/04/13

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr A. Prosser-Snelling

Members noted the apologies.

FG03/04/13

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations at this point in the meeting.

FG04/04/13

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman indicated that there still remained a vacancy on the Parish Council for a Councillor, although two persons have now registered their interest.

FG05/04/13

CORRESPONDENCE

The Deputy Clerk referred members to general correspondence received and asked whether Members wished to comment on any particular item. The Councillors present had no matter they wished to raise.

Christ's Hospital Development Meeting

Dr Cash reported that he had attended this meeting on behalf of the Parish Council earlier that evening.

The Deputy Clerk said that he must have attended on behalf of Southwater Action Team, as invitations had only been given to Mr Bull as Chairman of the Council, and Mr Apter as Chairman of the Planning Committee. Both had been unable to attend, having to attend the Leisure Centre Sub-Committee which commenced at 7pm, Dr Cash also being a member of that Sub-Committee.

Dr Cash said that he had asked for an invitation from Christ's Hospital School and had been given one, although his name badge for the event did say Southwater Action Team on it.

Horsham Business Directory

The latest Business Directory has been received, which includes a CD-ROM which allows businesses to subscribe to access marketing data and tools.

Community Organisers

At the last meeting, it was agreed that the Chairman of the Council and the Clerk would meet with a Director of Locality to discuss concerns previously expressed.

This meeting has now taken place, and Mr Bull reported that it went well, although is still not clear what was to be the end result of the Organiser project.

At the Full Council meeting, the Deputy Clerk was instructed to write to the Southwater Community Organisers asking that they transfer to the meeting room at Southwater Leisure Centre from 1st May, instead of using the Parish Office. This she has done.

The agreement with the Organisers was that the Parish Council would supply free meeting space for a period of one year, with a review after six months. It is this six month review that has prompted the change in venue.

Mrs Fisher, the Organisers' Line Manager has verbally expressed her dissatisfaction with the Council's decision, but has made no official response.

In the meantime, the Organisers have been using the Parish Office as usual, and have been made welcome.

Mrs Flores-Moore left the meeting, as a result of an emergency call from Southwater Community Responders.

New Homes Bonus

The Deputy Clerk has circulated a copy of a letter received by Pulborough Parish Council in response to a query made to the District Council relating to the New Homes Bonus.

Tom Crowley, Chief Executive, replied that the District Council has agreed to transfer sums received from the New Homes Bonus to reserves. The sum due for 2013/2014 is £1.66 million. It has not been agreed how any sums in excess of £1.66 million will be spent.

Mrs Vickers said that the District Council is considering housing figures for the District as a whole, and District Councillors have been visiting possible strategic sites over the past week.

She reported that the housing figures would be agreed for consultation in the very near future.

Mr Jackman asked if this would be before 30th April, after which Berkeley Strategic would take the current application off hold. Mrs Vickers said that it would not be before then.

Mrs Vickers said that the District Council would like Parish Councils to come up with positive suggestions where they believe housing could go in their areas.

Mr Bull said that Southwater was waiting for the District Council to come up

with figures. Mr Buckley agreed, saying that if the Parish Council consulted on a suggested figure or site now, the response would just be “no”.

Mrs Vickers said that the District Council is still short of its Five Year Housing Supply by 2400 homes, and this needed to be addressed.

She said that Tom Crowley, Chief Executive, would shortly be writing to each parish on the housing issue.

FG06/04/13

MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2013 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting. The Deputy Clerk reminded Councillors that Mrs Fisher of Southwater Community Organisers had requested an amendment be made to these Minutes, but that these had been approved at Full Council without correction.

FG07/04/13

ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Deputy Clerk said that full financial situation reports were not available for tonight’s meeting, as the 2012/2013 Financial Year had not been finalised on the computer system, for reasons for which she would explain. However, a payment schedule has been produced.

She asked if Councillors had any queries on the payments included therein.

Dr Cash queried a payment to Ingersoll Rand, and the Deputy Clerk informed him that this was for the repair of the sliding doors.

Annual Audit

The new auditors Littlejohn have written to advise the timetable for this year’s audit, which is very tight.

The public viewing period for the Annual Return will be 10th May to 7th June. However, as the Return will not be formally approved by Full Council until 28th May, it will only be in draft form for some of the viewing period.

All paperwork must be submitted to the Auditors by 10th June 2013.

Scuba Booking System

The SCUBA booking system went live on Tuesday, 2nd April, but experienced some technical difficulties and issues which resulted in it being shut down on Thursday.

With the Clerk being off sick, only one staff member fully trained in SCUBA was able to be at the Leisure Centre to assist with the start up. As this person was a parish office administrator, this meant that she was unable to carry out her accounts role, which in turn has led to a delay in the close of year

process.

It is hoped to start SCUBA up again next week, when the Parish Office is back to full staffing strength with the return to work of the Clerk.

Tree News

The Deputy Clerk reported that the Tree News magazine subscription was up for renewal, with an option to re-subscribe for £10, £15 or £20.

It was RESOLVED that the Tree News subscription would not be renewed.

Portable Appliance Testing

The Deputy Clerk said that she was currently seeking quotes for PAT, which was due in May 2013. It was previously agreed that the Council would carry out this testing every three years, for all premises.

In 2010, the total cost of all buildings was £385. However, there is an option to send a staff member on a course to carry out PAT, then purchase the equipment to do so on an on going basis. It does not have to be carried out by a qualified electrician.

The cost of a two day course is about £235 and the cost of the testing equipment ranges from £350 to £1500. All prices are inclusive of VAT.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council would continue to outsource its Portable Appliance Testing.

FG08/04/13

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Deputy Clerk presented a payment schedule to 10th April 2013 in the sum of £25192.11

It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedule dated 10th April 2013 be approved in the sum of £25192.11

FG09/04/13

COMMUNITY GRANT

Victim Support

The Deputy Clerk indicated that she had circulated the papers in relation to this request to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.

Victim Support are seeking £250 to assist them with the recruitment, training and supervision of volunteers to provide continued services to victims of crime etc., within Southwater.

This grant application was deferred from the last meeting, as the organisation had already received a grant in the 2012/2013 financial year.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council would award a grant of £250 to Victim Support.

Replacement Fingerposts

Dr Cash asked the Parish Council if it had the power to install or replace traffic signs. The Deputy Clerk said that it did have the power to install signage on its own land.

Dr Cash asked the Deputy Clerk to organise the replacement of some finger posts in the parish. The Deputy Clerk reminded Councillors that it had agreed not to part fund replacement of such signs, but to pass responsibility of this to Southwater Action Team, who were better placed to source grant funding. She had passed on all the information to SWAT some months ago. However, she was aware that the County Council fund set up to assist in the replacement of finger posts was now exhausted.

Dr Cash queried why the Parish Council had not agreed to part fund replacement signage, and the Deputy Clerk said that she believed that it was due to financial reasons. The traditional white signs with raised black lettering were very expensive, being several hundred pounds each.

Dr Cash said that SWAT did not have any grant funding, so the Parish Council should replace the signs.

The Deputy Clerk said that the County Council have a duty to replace fingerposts, but the replacements would be the basic model, made of metal.

Dr Cash asked the Deputy Clerk to organise basic replacement signs at the junction of Two Mile Ash at the Donkey Bridge, and at the junction of Two Mile Ash and Christ's Hospital.

Mrs Vickers said that she thought that basic signage would look very ugly in this rural area.

FG10/04/13

COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND

Southwater Leisure Centre

Mrs Flores-Moore, Chairman of the Leisure Centre Management Sub-Committee, was still absent from the meeting.

The Deputy Clerk said that there was a recommendation to be brought forward from the meeting earlier that evening, relating to the refurbishment of the football pitches at the Centre

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Leisure Centre Management Sub-Committee of giving the order for refurbishment of the pitch to Active Grounds Maintenance at a cost of £1630.00 + VAT should be approved by all present, this being the cheapest quote.

Mrs Flores-Moore returned to the meeting.

FG11/04/13 HEALTH & SAFETY

Southwater Leisure Centre

The Deputy Clerk reported that an insurance claim has been made against the Leisure Centre for an injury which allegedly occurred during a gym induction session.

The Deputy Clerk has collated all the relevant documentation, and has passed this to Zurich, the Council’s insurers for them to defend the claim.

FG12/04/13 EMERGENCY SERVICES - POLICE, FIRE AND AMBULANCE

Police Report

PCSO Cecil has reported that the reported crime figures to date are as follows:

	2013	2012
January	17	14
February	8	10
March	15	18
Total	40	42

The latest figures were noted.

FG13/04/13 LIBRARY PROJECT**

The District Council has replied to the Clerk’s queries in relation to the reallocation of space within Beeson House, so that matters can be progressed to the next stage.

Members noted the progress in relation to this project.

FG14/04/13 YOUTH PROJECT**

The Deputy Clerk said that there was nothing to report.

Dr Cash asked if all the financial issues previously discussed had been resolved, and the Deputy Clerk replied that they had.

FG15/04/13 PERSONNEL & TRAINING**

New Gym Instructors

The Deputy Clerk reported that two new Gym Instructors have been appointed to replace staff who had left, these being Tom Utting and Tim Kidd.

The Deputy Clerk was asked why these two new employees did not have name badges. She replied that it was usual for staff to complete their three month probationary period before purchasing name badges.

The Deputy Clerk was asked to provide temporary name badges to these new staff members.

Dr Cash asked why staff pictures were no longer put up behind the front desk at the Leisure Centre. The Deputy Clerk said that this was removed after the refurbishment of the reception area, and there were no plans to reinstate it.

The Clerk

The Deputy Clerk reported that the Clerk, returned to work from sick leave today.

The Committee welcomed the Clerk back to work, after her absence due to ill health.

Office Administrator

The Deputy Clerk and the Administrator, interviewed for the position of part time office administrator for 20 hours per week. Two candidates were selected for a final interview with the Clerk, who will make the appointment.

FG16/04/13

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes Meeting will be **Wednesday, 8th May 2013**

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.