



SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

Beeson House, 26 Lintot Square, Fairbank Road, Southwater,
West Sussex RH13 9LA

Telephone number: 01403 733202

Email: Enquiry@Southwater-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.southwater-pc.gov.uk

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 16 June 2021 at 7:30pm at the Parish Council Chambers, Beeson House, 26 Lintot Square, Fairbank Road, Southwater, West Sussex, RH13 9LA.

Present:

Councillors Present: M Neale (Chairman), D Moore (Vice Chairman), G Watkins, I Slowly, G Scoon, P Flores Moore

Members of the Public: 1 person in Chamber and meeting accessible by live YouTube Stream.

Executive Officer: Justin Tyler

	Actions
<p>1. Public Question Time – 15 minutes in total.</p> <p>None requested to speak.</p>	
<p>2. Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies received from Councillors C Vickers, G Cole, and S Lewis.</p>	
<p>3. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The Chairman explained the difference between Personal and Pecuniary Interests and reminded Committee members to declare an interest where required.</p> <p>Councillor Watkins declared an interest as a Trustee to the Southwater Ghyll CIO and advised he could remain in the room but not vote on a business transacted relating to it. The Chairman (Councillor Neale) also declared an interest as a Trustee of Southwater Ghyll CIO.</p>	
<p>4. Chairman's Report</p> <p>The Chairman updated the Committee that there was a job opportunity available within the Council of Assistant Officer and that the advert could be found via the Council's website and it had been advertised with other platforms.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Wardens' vehicle lease was due to expire, and it would be renewed to a hybrid vehicle which would result in a small net reduction to monthly outgoings.</p> <p>External Auditor Report had now been received for 2019-20 (Year ended 31st March 2020) which raised no issues. The External Auditor Report was late due to delays caused by COVID-19 and due to various questions raised by residents to the auditor. The additional work and investigation by the External Auditor resulted in</p>	

additional costs of £400. Councillor Flores-Moore thanked the RFO and Accounts Administrator for the work required to satisfy the queries and complete the audit.

He updated the Committee on a Freedom of Information request relating to Easteds Barn where the Council withheld the information which resulted in a complaint to the ICO. The ICO had now published their Decision Notice (Case Reference Number: IC-42482-S5P0) which upheld the Council withholding the requested information under provisions in the FOIA and it was noted the Council should have referred the complainant to the commissioner in accordance with Section 50 of FOIA. Councillor Watkins requested the Decision Notice and name of complainant be published; the Executive Officer advised the Decision Notice was publicly available, but he would seek further guidance from the ICO. Further discussion took place regarding the workload created from FOI requests and that responses be made available on the website. The Executive Officer confirmed the Council had not historically kept a time log, but he was now keeping a staff time log from 2021. Councillor Scoon queried whether it could also include Councillor time and the EO confirmed he could add it when applicable. The EO confirmed he would forward the Decision Notice to all Councillors.

EO JT

5. Correspondence

None.

6. Minutes –

- i) To note approval of the minutes of the F&GP Committee meeting held on 28th April 2021 (approved at AMPC 19th May 2021).

Noted.

EO JT

- ii) Matters arising from previous F&GP Committee meeting of 28th April 2021.

Noted.

EO JT

7. Accounts

The Chairman advised that a Budget Review was originally scheduled for this meeting but advised that it would be deferred to the next F&GP Committee meeting when more monthly accounts data was available.

- (i) Debtors and Creditors – To note the Debtors/Creditors list as at the date of the meeting.

The Chairman updated the committee that any outstanding debtors had been chased for payment.

Councillor Watkins proposed approval of the debtors/creditors, seconded by Councillor Flores-Moore and **AGREED** by all.

- (ii) Balance Sheet/Earmarked Reserves – To approve

The Chairman advised that the Detailed Balance Sheet report originally circulated to the Councillors did not have the same creation time as the Detailed Income and Expenditure hence the Councillors were sent an updated copy prior to the meeting with a minor difference to the total figure.

Councillor Scoon raised concerns over the income and expenditure and requested to discuss contractual elements. Councillor Watkins requested the Chairman consider deferring Items 7. ii), iii), iv) and Item 8 to the end of the meeting for confidential session.

Items 7. ii), iii), iv) and Item 8 were moved to the end of the meeting after Item 16.

7. Accounts (Item 7. ii), iii), iv) and Item 8 were considered after Item 16 of meeting at 8:50pm)

The Meeting entered Confidential Session due to the contractual nature of discussion at 8:50pm

ii) Balance Sheet / Earmarked Reserves – To approve

Discussion took place regarding contractual elements of payments. [Extraordinary Full Council Meeting of 7th July 2021 settled the queries raised]

Councillor Watkins gave his apologies and left the meeting at 9:15pm.

The Meeting resumed from Confidential Session and Live Stream Commenced 9:30pm.

Councillor Flores Moore proposed acceptance of the updated later version of the Detailed Balance Sheet/Earmarked Reserves circulated, seconded by Councillor Moore, and **AGREED** by all.

(iii) Detailed Income and Expenditure – To approve

Councillor Flores Moore proposed acceptance of the updated Detailed Balance Sheet/Earmarked Reserves, seconded by Councillor Moore, and **AGREED** by all.

(iv) Bank Reconciliation – To approve the Bank Reconciliation of 31st May 2021.

Councillor Scoon confirmed he had validated the bank statements and bank reconciliation and proposed acceptance of the Bank Reconciliation of 31st May 2021. Seconded by Councillor Flores Moore and **AGREED** by all.

8. Payments Schedule

To approve the payment schedule of Wednesday 16th June 2021.

- (i) £214,409.90 for approval

Councillor Moore proposed accepting the payment schedule of Wednesday 16th June 2021 totalling £214,409.90. Seconded by Councillor Flores Moore and **AGREED** by all.

9. Bank Accounts – To receive update.

The Chairman provided an update on the bank accounts held by the Council which included Co-Op and Virgin Money and their respective interest rates (Co-Op 0.09% and 0.03%. Virgin Money 0.1%). He informed a new account application was underway with NatWest. The Committee would further consider how to allocate the cash held by the Council and to which accounts. The EO clarified that the Council should allocate funds to each respective bank account based on highest interest rates available. The Vice Chairman and EO confirmed that the Council did not benefit from the FSCS on its bank accounts. The EO updated the Committee that Lloyds and Handelsbanken were both approached but were unfortunately not opening accounts for Councils currently.

10. Operational Report

Circulated to Committee Members and noted.

The EO confirmed that Section 106 monies totalling £234,274.14 had now been received:

- Skateboard/BMX Park commuted sum £117,137.07.

- MUGA commuted sum £117,137.07.

The funds relate specifically to the future maintenance of the MUGA and BMX park at Church Lane/Downs Link adjacent to Laurie Apted Building. The balances had been Earmarked in the reserves accordingly.

Councillor Watkins noted that the electronic display screen for Beeson House would be installed over the next week.

Councillor Flores Moore queried whether the cuttings left on the Red Route would be cleared and if it related to the tree works required by the tree survey. The EO confirmed that the grounds maintenance company carrying out the works on the red route was different to the company who had completed the tree works required by the tree survey.

Councillor Watkins noted that Horsham Museum were holding numerous Southwater historic artifacts and memorabilia relating to a piper forge and there would be a meeting scheduled the following Monday to discuss storage arrangements as HDC were looking to dispose of them. Councillor Watkins believed a storeroom of HDC property could become available to SPC in Lintot Square and clarified there may not be a net increase of insurance costs as grants were available.

11. Business Plan 2021-2025 [Draft] – To discuss and consider the first draft of Southwater Parish Council Business Plan 2021-2025.

Councillor Watkins said he regarded this Business Plan as a contract between the Council and the residents and believed a Working Party should be formed which assessed the contents, carry out stress tests to the objectives and liaise with the community for feedback. The Southwater Infrastructure Delivery Plan would assist in providing project information from the results of the extensive public consultation and its outcome which could be incorporated into the Business Plan. The Executive Officer also recommended that the Council seek resident feedback once the Council had an agreed draft of the Business Plan.

Councillor Watkins proposed forming a working party to work on the next draft of the Business Plan to bring back to Council. Seconded by Councillor Scoon and **AGREED** by all. Working party to consist of Executive Officer (Justin Tyler) and Councillors Scoon, Watkins, Moore, Flores Moore, and Cole. Councillor Watkins confirmed he would like to hold a public meeting to encourage public involvement, when possible, to do so.

EO JT

12. Park Benches

The Executive Officer and Chairman updated the Committee that correspondence had been received from residents and on the SPC Facebook Forum requesting additional park benches. There were some benches that may also need replacing and Councillor Watkins confirmed that any memorial plaques needed protecting.

Councillors Moore and Slowly to liaise with the EO to consider locations, provision, and replacement/maintenance of benches.

EO JT /
DM / IS

13. HR Services and Employment Law Provision – To discuss and consider extension of contract with current provider or commencement with another provider.

4 quotes from 4 different companies had been circulated offering HR Services and Employment Law with some providing a more one-to-one service, some able to also provide a health and safety consultancy provision and one company able to provide Legal Protection Insurance. Councillor Watkins requested this item be deferred to the HR Committee for consideration and the recommendations from the HR Committee brought back to full council.

HR
Com

14. Phonelines, Communications and Broadband Services at Beeson House – To discuss and consider.

<p>Multiple quotes had been sought, those received distributed to the Committee for review. Discussion took place regarding current provider BT, the modernisation of the phone systems, how majority of staff were using their personal phones' contracted minutes when working from home, effectiveness of the current broadband and phone lines, and how VoIP would provide greater flexibility, working from home provision, emergency calls and improve communications. Councillor Moore proposed acceptance of the Octotech phonenumber, broadband and VoIP service provision which included an upfront cost of £650.00 and fixed annual costs of £1422.00 based on current user provision and set rates for outbound calls of 1p/min UK Landlines and 7.5p/min for UK Mobiles. Seconded by Councillor Watkins and AGREED by all.</p>	EO JT
<p>15. Berkeley – Phase 5 Broadacres (Open Space, LAP, LEAP) - To receive update, discuss and consider.</p> <p>Berkeley had asked the Council if it would still assume operation (and thus the accompanying Section 106 commuted sums) of the open spaces, LEAP/LAP play areas relating to Phase 4 & 5 of Broadacres (Berkeley Homes) as previously agreed in 2015. The Committee discussed whether the Council should accept the transfer of future LEAP, LAP, and Open Spaces relating to Phase 5 or let the Berkeley management company retain. The Council currently operated and had taken transfer of the LEAP/NEAP play area by Downslink (by Eames View) which formed part of the development. Councillor Scoon raised concerns over the Council taking on more responsibility and the future costs of managing and maintaining play areas and similar assets. Councillor Watkins clarified any assets would see respective Section 106 transferred to the Council for future maintenance costs. Councillor Flores-Moore and Councillor Moore discussed how it was the responsibility of the Parish Council to help facilitate and make provision of recreational facilities like play areas. Councillor Watkins reminded Councillors that SPC had requested more play areas form part of any future housing development by Berkeley in 2014. Councillor Scoon proposed the recommendation to Full Council to revoke the Council decision to take on the operation of the play areas, open spaces relating to Phase 4 & 5. Councillor Watkins amended Councillor Scoon's proposal not to revoke this decision: Substantive motion seconded by Councillor Flores Moore, voted on and AGREED with 4 in favour and 1 against.</p>	EO JT
<p>16. Southwater Ghyll CIO – to receive any updates/reports from Southwater Ghyll CIO with respect to The Laurie Apted Building or The Ghyll (Formerly known as Southwater Leisure Centre).</p> <p>The Chairman (also Trustee/Chairman of Southwater Ghyll CIO) updated the Committee on the various anti-social behaviour and vandalism that was occurring at both The Ghyll and Laurie Apted Building including a destroyed shed, fencing and damaged guttering. Councillor Moore requested a written report and accounts for the next F&GP or when they were available. The Chairman advised the accounts were being finalised to be submitted to the Charity Commission and once available would be sent to the Council with a written report.</p>	MN
<p>17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 18 August 2021</p> <p>This meeting was live streamed and ended at 9:37pm</p>	