

Southwater Parish Council



Finance and General Purposes Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 18th July, 2018, 7.30pm
Beeson House
Lintot Square
Southwater
Horsham

Committee Members

Cllr Michael Neale (Chairman)
Cllr Geoff Cole (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Ross Dye
Cllr Pauline Flores-Moore
Cllr Grant McGill
Cllr Derek Moore
Cllr Geoff Scoon
Cllr Hayley Timson
Cllr Claire Vickers
Cllr Graham Watkins
Cllr Neil Whitear



SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

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



Clerk: **Mrs.C.M.Tobin**
Cert.Ed.L.Pol.FILCM.,

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MINUTES

The Minutes of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE meeting held on Wednesday 18th July, 2018 in the Council Chamber, Beeson House, Southwater, West Sussex, RH13 9LA commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Chairman: Cllr M Neale

Cllr G Cole	Cllr R.Dye
Cllr P.Flores-Moore	Cllr D Moore
Cllr G Scoon	Cllr H Timson
Cllr G Watkins	Cllr N Whitear
Cllr C.Vickers	

Clerk to the Meeting: Mrs.C.M.Tobin

County Councillor: Not present

District Councillors: Not present

Press: Not present

Members of the Public: 9

FG45/07/18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman asked those present to turn mobile phones to silent for the duration of the meeting, unless the phone call was deemed urgent in which case phone calls could be received with permission from the Chairman. If a member of the public wished to tape the meeting could they please indicate. In the event of a fire alarm sounding, everyone would be directed to evacuate the building via the exits indicated.

The Clerk referred residents to Standing Orders – Order of Questions No. 1 which clearly states that no person may submit more than two questions of two minutes overall. A supplementary question is only allowed if a person has asked one question and wishes to ask another question without prior notice however in this instance speakers have given prior notice.

Speakers must now decide which two questions from their list they wish to ask. The Council reserves the right to respond if necessary in writing to such questions.

The Clerk asked the speaker to advise the Committee as to which two questions he wished to raise, the speaker indicated that he would like to ask questions on Easteds Barn.

The resident introduced himself to the Committee.

Thank you Mr Chairman for allowing me to address the committee

It is noted from tonight's agenda that you wish to extend the public's use of the barn until October 2018.

Question 1

Firstly, is this the beginning or the end of October? What actions are you taking to positively market the Barn in order that members of the public are aware of its availability? Thirdly we note from your published accounts that a payment was made to @Home on 19th March of £1,500 labelled as a letting fee for the barn. Would you care to explain this?

Question 2

Finally, from your budgeting documents you expected to realise £28,000 of profit in the current financial year from a private sole lease. Can you please explain the expected consequences of this clear budget shortfall and what you intend to do to recover the lost income?

Thank You

The Chairman of the meeting stated in response to both questions that the Council will continue to advertise the Barn until the end of October 2018 with a D1 use only.

With regard to the letting fee, this payment related to the marketing of Easteds Barn on the open market by this company; another company had also been approached and this was the best value in terms of cost and provided business to a local company.

In terms of the budgeted income, this will be incorporated in the general balances and if necessary deducted from the general fund.

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for the opportunity to address the Committee.

The Chairman then invited the second speaker to address the Committee. The Clerk again asked which questions the speaker would like to take forward. The speaker stated that if this was the way the Council wanted to take the matter, he would reword his third question as a statement.

The second speaker indicated his name and that he was a resident of Southwater and proceeded to thank the Committee for the opportunity of speaking.

My questions relate item 14 on the Agenda – Easteds Barn

Whilst it says on the Agenda that members of the public and press will be excluded for this item my understanding is that this is not the case and that this will only relate to very specific matters which are deemed confidential and that the most of the discussion will be held in public session. I sincerely hope this is the case and that we, the community, will be provided with a full update on the current position. As everyone will know, Easteds Barn is now registered with Horsham District Council, as an Asset of Community Value, and in view of this the community really must be kept informed of what is going on.

Questions

1. Can the Chairman confirm that the Parish Council has complied with Para 14.3 of its Standing Orders in respect of its decision to go ahead with leasing out Easteds Barn, on a long term basis. This requires a Report to be provided to Council before any asset is sold or leased. This needs to provide details of the valuation and surveyed condition, together with a proper business case, including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate.
2. In an email dated 25th May, in response to a Freedom of Information request, the Clerk said that she was currently preparing the report. Was this considered when the Council made its decision on 30th May to enter into discussions about leasing out Easteds Barn with a third party and if so, can this report be made available to the community?

Statement

The Council having selected a third party with whom to enter into negotiations regarding taking on the lease of Easteds Barn, should the Council not now share the identity of the third party with the community?

The Chairman in respect of the first part of the question indicated that where possible matters relating to the Barn will be held in open session.

However, where there were contractual or legal matters to be discussed this will be in closed session with any decision or otherwise being minuted in the public session. It has always been the Council's intention to keep the public informed of matters as and when it is prudent and which are not subject to confidentiality rules and regulations.

The Chairman confirmed that a report had been prepared for Councillors consideration, there has never been any intention for the Council to sell any of its assets and this includes Easteds Barn. Proper valuations had been received from two differing Valuation experts. Other matters remain

confidential including the report prepared by the Clerk until legal agreements are finalised.

The Council will not release the third party's information without the permission of the third party; if the third party chooses to do so that is their prerogative.

The Chairman welcomed a third speaker asking that she address the Committee, the Council having received a request to ask a question.

The resident ask what could the Parish Council do to get the speed limit on the Worthing Road reduced from 40mph to 30mph at the north end of the village (from the roundabout to the Hen and Chicken Pub) as the volume of traffic has increased significantly and the vehicles continuously far exceed the 40mph speed limit making it increasingly dangerous for all the residence.

The Chairman responded that the Parish Council had submitted on two occasions a request supported by a local petition, a request to the County Council to consider a 30mph speed restriction on the Worthing Road from Hangman's Hill to the south of the village. The Parish Council believes that this was taken off the list of 2006 due to financial restrictions by WSCC. The Parish Council have asked the local County Councillor to look at this again with officers especially if the proposal to remove pinch-points moves forward.

The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council had previously resolved to support a 30 mph limit in the Worthing Road this resolution stood therefore unchanged. She had communicated this to the County Councillor.

Cllr Vickers said that she had a huge sympathy with the residents over this matter, and she had taken up the matter also with the County Councillor, asking that the County Council carry out a safety audit of the Worthing Road.

Cllr Whitear thanked the resident for attending the Committee the question coming forward from their meeting the previous Saturday at the Parish Councillor's surgery.

FG46/07/18 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received.

Councillors NOTED and APPROVED the absence.

FG47/07/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman referred Members of Council to information issued in relation to the Member's Code of Conduct and Standing Orders and asked whether any Member had anything of note to declare at this point in the meeting.

The Clerk stated that there were no declarations of interest received.

FG48/07/18 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Whitear, seconded by Cllr Timson and RESOLVED by all present having been proposed by Cllr Watkins and seconded by Cllr Neale, that the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 20th June, 2018 be accepted as a true and correct record of the meetings.

FG49/07/18 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised members that any old email addresses will be switched off as of the end of the week as previously advised by the Parish Office. These emails will allow direct access by the public to Councillors, Cllr Moore has offered to assist any councillor who may be experiencing technical issues in setting this up.

Cllr Vickers stated that she had a problem in accessing a different email on her iPad which was supplied by Horsham District Council. The Clerk stated that there may be difficulties which had been previously discussed and she would discuss the appropriate action with the District Council's Monitoring Officer to see if the issues could be resolved.

Clerk to speak to the District Council's monitoring officer to ensure that Cllr Vickers could use the parish council's email and therefore received directly her emails.

FG50/07/18 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

FG51/07/18 ACCOUNTS

Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk reported that the purpose of the report is to approve the Bank Reconciliation as at 30th June, 2018 as a true reflection of the current financial position of the Council. Members have been furnished with a copy of this document.

The Clerk provided members with an updated Income & Expenditure figure for the end of Month 3 this being 30th June 2018.

Councillor Cole asked whether the documentation could be put in the same order within the member's information packs. The Clerk stated that she thought that this would be possible.

Recommendation

The Committee are recommended to approve the Bank Reconciliation as at 30th June 2018.

The Bank Reconciliation to 30th June 2018 was APPROVED by all present.

Debtors & Creditors

The purpose of this report is to approve the Debtors and Creditors as at July 2018 as a true reflection of the current position of the Council. This document has been circulated to all members.

The Clerk indicated that one of the 60+ day debtors had been written to and if payment not received within 7 days, then Court action to recover the debt and reasonable administration costs would be taken.

Cllr Flores-Moore stated that she was concerned that the balances had been outstanding for 60+ days this was not acceptable. The Clerk stated that the three additional clients were in discussions with the accounts team.

Recommendation

The Committee are recommended to approve the Debtors and Creditors list dated July 2018.

Members NOTED the debtors outstanding and asked the Clerk to ensure that prompt payment be given and if necessary pursue through the courts if necessary, those debts over 60 days outstanding.

The Debtor and Creditors Lists dated July 2018 were APPROVED by all present.

FG52/07/18 PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

To approve the payments schedule to 11th July 2018 in the sum of £22,222.60 with other payments of £60,941.30 having been approved since the last meeting. A copy of this document was provided to all members.

Cllr Flores-Moore questioned the sum in terms of the petty cash held at the Leisure Centre. The Clerk explained that with the Manager not available she had had to withdraw cash to ensure that catering supplies could be purchased, the petty cash levels would ultimately reduce dramatically at the Leisure Centre.

Recommendation

The recommendation is for the Committee to approve the Payment Schedule in the sum of £22,222.60 with other payments of £60,941.30 having been approved since the last meeting.

The Committee APPROVED the payment schedule in the sum of £22,222.60 and other payments of £60,941.30 made since the last meeting.

FG53/07/18 COUNCIL POLICIES & AGREEMENTS

The Clerk indicated that Members should discuss and approve the following policies:-

Health & Safety Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Complaints Reporting Policy, Fire Policy Statement, Health & Safety Statement (Employees), Vexatious Complaints Policy, Member's Correspondence Policy 2018

The Chairman suggested that a working party be initiated during the August recess to evaluate the remaining policies drafted.

Cllr Neale said that he had provided the Clerk with his comments and suggested that Councillors may wish to send their comments etc., to the Clerk so that she can go through these and produce finalised documents. In relation to the no smoking policy he would personally like to include e-cigarettes in the policy, and asked whether members would have any material objections to this.

Cllr Flores-Moore said, it was just as important if people were smoking outside the council's buildings with smoke going in through windows; however, the overall consensus was that this may be difficult to enforce. One thought was that perhaps when the Community Wardens were in situ this is the type of thing they could assist with. Cllr Cole referred to the amount of people congregating outside of the two local pubs.

Cllrs Watkins stated that he had difficulty with the Confidentiality and Vexatious Policy in terms of the way which the version was being recorded etc. He would personally like to see policies that clearly show the alterations and whilst most councillors were aware of the slight changes; some would not be. Discussion also took place in that the policy should be equally for councillors and staff. Cllr Dye stated that presumably these policies were based on that provided by the various associations with which the council were involved or via the District or County Councils. The Clerk stated that many of these were based on other council's policies, national and local association guidance e.g., Standing and Financial Order. The vexatious policy was currently in use by a large town council.

Cllr Neale suggested that members provide the Clerk with a list of amendments to be considered by a future working party which would enable

a thorough review to take place. Members felt in light of the number of policies to be discussed this was the correct approach.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to approve the Draft Policies presented.

It was APPROVED by all present that the draft policies be considered by a new working party consisting of Cllrs Neale, Moore, Whitear and Watkins. This Committee will review all future policies and make recommendations to Council on these.

It was further APPROVED that in the interim should members wish to comment then they should submit comments in writing to the Clerk in relation to the draft policies.

It was APPROVED by all that the Clerk should insert within the No Smoking Policy an exclusion within Council Building's of e-cigarettes.

FG54/07/18 OPERATIONAL MATTERS

This report will cover all operational aspects of the Leisure Centre. Cllr Flores-Moore said that in relation to staff training she would like to suggest that the Clerk investigate e-learning. The Clerk stated that she would investigate this further.

Recommendation

The Committee NOTED and APPROVED the Clerk's report. The Clerk would investigate the advantages of e-learning programmes in relation to all future staff training where applicable.

FG55/07/18 TREE TENDERS

This report relates to the tender for works related to Council owned land. Three tenders were received by the deadline, these being from Absolute Arboricultural, Thompson Estates Management and Trees Understood. The Clerk indicated that tender documents were opened in the presence of Cllr Cole, Vice Chairman of the Committee.

When asked who the contractor was currently the Clerk advised that this was Thompson Estates Management who were currently dealing with a variety of both tree and landscaping works authorised by Council. This company were currently the preferred supplier. A short discussion took place on the spreadsheet and the meaning of this as prepared by the Clerk.

Recommendation

It was RESOLVED that this matter be RECOMMENDED for approve to Full Council the contract be awarded to Thompson Estates

Management in the sum of £5,495 plus VAT this being the lowest quotation received.

FG56/07/18 FIRE TENDERS

This report relates to the tender for works relating to fire provision within Council owned buildings. Six tender documents were issued including to the company who currently hold the contract but only two companies responded, only one in relation to the Leisure Centre. Again these tenders were opened in the presence of Cllr Cole.

A short discussion took place as to why the existing contractor Interserve had not responded; the Clerk did not know the reasoning but all companies were advised of the date when tenders should be returned.

Recommendation

It was RESOLVED by those present that this matter be RECOMMENDED for APPROVE to Full Council. The contract being in relation to fire provision and maintenance be awarded to Fire Risk UK, this being a local company.

FG57/07/18 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS TENDER

The Clerk apologised to the Committee that there had been an error in deadline dates in terms of this tender; this being the 15th August 2018. It is imperative that delegated decision be provided in order to ensure that the Christmas Light contract be in place.

Recommendation

It was APPROVED by all present that the Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee be delegated this decision upon receipt of the tenders received and that the outcome be reported in September 2018.

FG58/07/18 EASTEDS BARN**

The Chairman reported that due to legal discussions and other permissions to be sought in relation to the potential lease of this building, the Council would now be able to continue its use of the building until the end of October 2018. The Council under the original covenant can only use this building for D1 use.

It was suggested in order to ensure that there were no further delays that delegated authority be given to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council and the Clerk.

****At this point in the meeting the Chairman proposed the suspension of Standing Orders in order to discuss matters of a contractual and confidential nature.**

At this point the public left the chamber.

Recommendation

It was APPROVED by all present that the Clerk should continue to advertise for D1 use, the end date being the end of October 2018. It was further APPROVED that all matters relating to the hire or letting of Easteds Barn should be delegated to the Chairman, Vice Chairman of Council and the Clerk without further recourse to either the Committee or Council.

“Confidential Minute”

Recommendation

It was APPROVED AND NOTED by all present that the Clerk should proceed as per the report produced and discuss Head of Terms with Solicitors.

FG59/07/18 PERSONNEL & PENSIONS*

“Confidential Minute”

FG60/07/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, 19th September 2018

The meeting finished at 9.35 pm.

Signed.....

Chairman – Finance & General Purposes Committee

Dated.....