

Southwater Parish Council



DRAFT Finance and General Purposes Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 20th June, 2018, 7.30pm
Beeson House
Lintot Square
Southwater

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,
Southwater,
West Sussex
RH13 9LA



Clerk: **Mrs.C.M.Tobin**
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MINUTES

The Minutes of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE meeting held on Wednesday 20th June, 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

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

County Councillor: Not present

District Councillors: Not present

Press: Not present

Members of the Public: 3

FG26/06/18 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 Chairman indicated that a statement was to be read by a local resident.

This resident stated that she also represented a local Zumba coach who by hard work and enthusiasm set up a Zumba class which is one of the community groups which has been ousted from Easteds – that is the Barn of course.

At a meeting held with Councillor Watkins, we were told that the Barn would continue to be available for general community use, even when a long term single user lessee had been installed.

Will the Parish Council please confirm this commitment will be adhered to?

Now that a new lessee of the Barn is in the offing and – according to the News Release (an I quote) “the Parish Council remain committed to working with all community groups to ensure that where possible, the community of Southwater has facilities to meet the growing demand.”

Has the new lessee been made aware of the commitment given by Cllr Watkins and has the new lessee agreed to comply with this?

How is the Parish Council going to implement this commitment and on what terms? For example, as the rumoured new lessee is a Day Nursery, will there be restrictions as to times/days when the Barn will be available for general community use? How will hire costs be calculated and will there be clauses in the lease to ensure that a fair price is charged when compared with other similar local venues. Might there also be other restrictions such as the use of exercise equipment for example.

These are important matters for local people hoping to continue use of the Barn in future.

The Chairman of the meeting responded that the instructions provided to the Clerk did not provide for any third party use, with Zumba and other activities outside of the D1 use contained in the original land covenant; this being something that the Council cannot now breach. Discussions are to commence shortly but these remain confidential under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act. The Clerk had investigated the claim with Cllr Watkins and believes that what is being purported is inaccurate. The councillor concerned is fully aware that as an individual councillor he has no power to make such commitments; this being a Council or committee decision.

Cllr Watkins in response stated that he had at the meeting held in the village hall indicated that he had stated that every effort would be made to accommodate groups until a tenant was in place. Other members present at that meeting also confirmed that this to be the case. Cllr Watkins then stated that he was concerned in that the letter stated that she was speaking on behalf of Jenny Coote (Zumba) when he had just received an email from Jenny offering her thanks to the Chairman for honouring his promise to try and accommodate her group at the leisure centre; this had now been achieved.

Another resident stated that following the decision in relation to the Barn whether the information which should have been provided to councillors could be made available. The Councillor also thanked Cllr Barbara Varley

for objecting to the decision taken by the Council. Then following up on a Freedom of Information request in relation to the Leisure Centre asks when the Leisure Centre Management Committee was to resume its meetings. Also he was informed at the F&GP meeting that there had been adequate staffing to run all the classes and keep the centre open when in fact many of these had been contractors.

The Clerk responded that this committee no longer was in existence, however a working party had been operating since the demise of this committee this working party reporting back to the Finance & General Purposes and Full Council as required. There was no intention of reconvening this at this time.

With regard to comments and the letter the information provided to the public at the time was correct; the letter was issued purely as an advisory note to all clients advising them of the difficulties being faced in terms of staffing and tutors. Since that time the Manager had resumed and other staff have been taken on board. A couple of tutors had since terminated their arrangements with the Leisure Centre hence the recent advertisement for tutors.

The gentleman asked whether the Clerk was going to respond to other questions raised at the meeting; the Clerk stated that had she been aware of the full content of the question/statement she would have given a response but in light of the fact that she did not then suggested that the member of the public write to her raising the individual additional questions not previously provided.

FG27/06/18 APOLOGIES

There were apologies noted and agreed from Cllr McGill Cllr Vickers will arrive late due to duties on behalf of the District Council.

Councillors NOTED and APPROVED the absence.

FG28/06/18 DECLARATIONS OF ABSENCE

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.

There were no declarations of interest received.

FG29/06/18 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 23rd May, 2018 be accepted as a true and correct record of the meetings.

FG30/06/18 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that there were some concerns regarding incidents of vandalism both at Easteds Barn, Notice Board etc. These are considered serious and have all been reported directly to Sussex Police.

The Chairman reported that yet again the Woodland Walk provided through Tesco funding and supported widely in the community has been badly vandalised with one spy hole completely broken through; this must have taken considerable force.

FG31/06/18 CORRESPONDENCE

Easteds Allotment Association

A letter of thanks has been received in relation to the Council's grant to this village organisation. The grant being for a mower shed.

Operation Watershed

The Clerk indicated that there were further monies available under the 2018 Operation Watershed Active Communities Fund. This fund would assist a parish with:-

- Tackle a recognised surface or ground water flood risk,
- Provide new infrastructure installations or building
- Make material change improvements to existing infrastructure
- Increase the drainage capacity of existing infrastructure.

Southwater Parish Council was one of the first Council's to be offered Watershed funding previously with many of the projects completed although monies retained by the Parish had been returned to the County Council at the end of the project rather than the Council use these to benefit the Church Lane area.

If members wished to consider this further would they like to put this on an agenda; the Clerk would suggest that the Planning Committee discuss this.

It was AGREED that this matter be considered further at the next Planning Committee meeting in July.

Mr.Dye arrived at 7.45 pm.

Horsham District Council

The District Council have written to the Parish Council to enquire whether the Council would like to hold a register of condolence in the event of the death of HM the Queen or another senior royal. Horsham will open books at Parkside and the Museum.

A short discussion took place in relation to this matter with members stating that as a large parish they felt that it was appropriate for the Council to site a Condolence Book in Beeson House.

RESOLVED by all present that the Council would site a Book of Condolence in the event of HM The Queen or another senior royal pass away.

Complaints and Freedom of Information Requests

The Clerk reported that one complaint and a further Freedom of Information request had been received from residents.

The Clerk was asked to try and quantify the costs to the Parished area in relation to these requests which were still ongoing.

RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should try and quantify the costs of the various Freedom of Information Requests and Complaints received in terms of the public purse.

FG32/06/18 ACCOUNTS

Bank Reconciliation

The Clerk reported that the purpose of the report is to approve the Bank Reconciliation as at 30th April 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 2 this being 30th April 2018.

Recommendation

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

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

Debtors & Creditors

The purpose of this report is to approve the Debtors and Creditors as at 13th June 2018 as a true reflection of the current position of the Council. This document has been circulated to all members. The Clerk stated that the Accounts Supervisor had already written to a number of these clients, with one final letter being sent in the next week; thereafter these would outstanding debts will be taken to the County Court.

The Clerk stated that in the main these related to bookings at Easteds Barn.

Recommendation

The Committee are recommended to approve the Debtors and Creditors list dated 13th June 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 13th June 2018 were APPROVED by all present.

Insurance

The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider increasing its Fidelity Guarantee cover based on the Internal Auditors recommendation at year end.

Recommendation

The recommendation is to increase the Council's Fidelity Guarantee cover by £66.78 the pro rata premium being £23.56.

All present APPROVED the increase to the Council's Fidelity Guarantee cover by £66.78 the pro rata premium being £23.56.

FG33/06/18 PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

To approve the payments schedule to 20th June 2018 in the sum of £5,580.94 with other payments of £54,139.76 having been approved since the last meeting. A copy of this document was provided to all members.

Recommendation

The recommendation is for the Committee to approve the Payment Schedule in the sum of £5,580.94 with other payments of £54,139.76 having been approved since the last meeting.

The Committee APPROVED the payment schedule in the sum of £5,580.95 and other payments of £54,139.76 made since the last meeting.

FG34/06/18 COMMUNITY GRANT

The Clerk declared an interest in this item as she sponsored a child's education through this Charity.

The Chairman indicated that the Committee was to consider a grant application of the loan of tables and chairs to a local charity Pageant.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to approve the loan of tables and chairs to the local Charity, Pageant.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Charity should be given a loan of tables and chairs by way of a grant.

FG35/06/18 COUNCIL POLICIES & AGREEMENTS

The Clerk advised Members that a number of councillors had provided comment on the proposed policies, without going into each one she would like to assume that notwithstanding any fundamental change to a policy that these could be made and then represented to either the committee or Full Council in July.

Volunteering Policy

The Committee is to consider and approve this draft Volunteering Policy.

Recommendation

RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should make any necessary changes and represent in July.

Complaints Policy

The Committee is to consider the draft Complaints Policy.

Recommendation

RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should make any necessary changes and represent in July.

Social Media, Internet, Email and Telephone Policy

The Committee is to consider the draft Social Media, Internet, Email and Telephone Policy.

Recommendation

Council Purchasing Terms & Conditions

The Committee is to discuss and note the Council's Purchasing Terms & Conditions.

Recommendation

RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should make any necessary changes and represent in July.

Specification of Requirements (Tenders)

The Committee is to discuss and note the Council's Specification of Requirements (Tenders).

Recommendation

RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should make any necessary changes and represent in July.

Declaration of Information to be supplied by Tenderer's

The Committee is to discuss and note the Council's Declaration of Information to be supplied by Tenderer's.

Recommendation

It was RESOLVED by all that the Clerk should make any necessary changes and implement as soon as possible.

Undertaking by Tenderers

The Committee is to discuss and note the Council's Undertaking by Tenderer's.

Recommendation

It was RESOLVED by all that the Clerk should make any necessary changes and implement as soon as possible.

Instructions & Information on the Council's Tendering Procedure

The Committee is to discuss and note the Council's Tendering Procedure.

Recommendation

It was RESOLVED by all that the Clerk should make any necessary changes and implement as soon as possible.

FG36/06/18 ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

The Committee is to consider whether it wishes to register Southwater Country Park as an Asset of Community Value. Members discussed this at length and having done so concluded that the Clerk should submit as soon as possible the necessary documentation.

Recommendation

RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should submit on behalf of the Parish Council an Application to register Southwater Country Park as an asset of community value to protect this for the future of Southwater and its inhabitants.

FG37/06/18 SOUTHWATER CHRISTMAS EVENT

Christmas Lights

The Committee is to discuss the tender process for the Christmas Lights, Christmas Tree etc.

Recommendation

It was APPROVED by all present that delegated authority be provided to the Clerk, Operations Manager, Chairman and Vice Chairman of Committee to progress the contract following receipt of the necessary tenders being received.

Annual Community Event

The Chairman referred to the Clerk's report in relation to the Annual Community event, in that this be scaled down for a variety of reasons not least being the workload of the Council and lack of staff to ensure the safety of all who would attend such an event.

Cllr Timson stated that she was personally disappointed as she had small children who loved the event as did many of her friendship group, but having discussed the Clerk's concerns fully understood her position on this matter. Nevertheless, she felt that the Council should not scale back and hoped that there were community volunteers who would come and assist to ensure that the event was not scaled back. It was evident that the Parish Council with staffing levels now so low could not take on the major burden of work for the event any longer.

Cllr Whitear also expressed concern as this was a highly valued event, but again he too understood the Clerk's concerns but felt that it should proceed but only should significant volunteers come forward. Members felt that the comments by a few residents earlier in the year had made an impact on those who worked tirelessly to put on the event for the benefit of the children and families of Southwater; it was extremely easy to hide behind social media like Facebook rather than get involved and help their own communities. Members offering their assistance on a Working Party were Cllr Timson, Watkins, Scoon. The Clerk gave an overview of what she felt both she and the team could provide with other partners including perhaps the Churches organising the carols service.

Discussions then surround whether or not this should be outsourced to an outside organisation/company; the Clerk pointed to the financial aspect of the event and the costs involved.

Members felt that the Council should advertise for volunteers to assist with the event. Various issues were then addressed including income from the event which the Clerk explained was from sponsorship or stalls and therefore was not guaranteed; any group would need to take this on board as well as other factors including legal agreements and insurance. The event whether organised by a group/outside company or otherwise would always

have a lead organiser who would be responsible overall for the safety of individual and the Lintot Square infrastructure.

Overall members felt that the opinion of the local retailers and residents were paramount, but this would require staffing by volunteers.

Recommendation

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should advertise on Social Media for volunteers to assist with the Christmas event. Furthermore a working party be put together to organise the event, offers received from Cllrs, Timson, Scoon and Watkins.

FG38/06/18 COUNCILLOR VACANCY

The Chairman stated that the purpose of this verbal report is to notify members and public alike of the vacancies which currently exist for parish councillors; the Council now have two and candidates will be considered at the Full Council meeting in July 2018.

The Chairman Cllr Neale, stated that all applicants should contact the Clerk to make the necessary appointment to meet with her and receive the necessary application form required by Council to ensure that where possible candidates have the necessary skills required by the Council.

The Clerk stated that she had seen one candidate, with another's application form being awaited along with interview. Another candidate declined to continue with their application due to the amount of time involved in being a councillor estimated to be between eight and ten hours per week.

Cllr Flores-Moore expressed her concern that out of a population of c.11,000 people only one candidate had expressed an interest, she noted that one other had not come forward at the point of the meeting. Cllr Scoon said that generally in the sector there was apathy in communities coming forward to serve. Cllr Watkins hoped that this will be resolved by the following May when there were local council elections including that for the parish council; it would be interesting to see how many people actually stood who were not at that time existing councillors.

Recommendation

Those present ACKNOWLEDGED the present situation in relation to the two vacancies for Parish Councillors and that the Clerk would bring forward any applications at the Full Council meeting in July 2018.

FG39/06/18 OPERATIONAL MATTERS

This report will cover all operational aspects of the Council's estates and assets. The Clerk went through each aspect of the report highlighting those areas which were outside of her authority; these were all formally agreed as

per the report for the meeting including, repairs to the main footbridge from Lintot Square and the Leisure Centre, intruder alarm at the Leisure Centre, memorial benches and seating areas and works to the war memorial etc.

Recommendation

It was RESOLVED that the expenditure contained in the Operational Report for the meeting of the 20th June be APPROVED as outlined, other items should be delegated to the Clerk.

Skatepark

This report informs Council that works have been authorised to repair further vandalism under Health & Safety, but seeks authority for the closure of the park pending further damage occurring. A new concrete skate park being delivered under the Berkeley's Section 106 agreement along with a Multi-Use Games Area.

The Clerk reiterated both her and the Operations Managers concerns about the high risk of leaving or not attending to any possible vandalism and it was imperative that should the Council wish to retain this then a decision be made in terms of where the costs are to be taken in terms of the Council's budget as there was currently no expenditure figure. The overall financial aspect of the Skate Park was discussed when members were reminded that whilst the Council had written off last year a figure circa £14k re this facility within the figure had been receipts for insurance claims and Section 106 contributions.

Cllr Watkins stated that young adults were coming to the skate park from as far away as Cornwall, Devon and Kent. Cllr Flores-Moore said that it can be right that local residents council tax were paying for repairs for a facility used by a number of people from outside the community; it was acknowledged that there was little that could be done about this position.

Cllr Watkins stated that the contractor had suggested asking the users group for donations to keep the facility open, Cllr Moore thought this a good idea. Cllr Scoon said, that as a parent of children involved in the original design, he felt that the skate park had possibly now come to the end of its life and perhaps now was the time following another incident to close this and ensure that the Council comply with health and safety concerns. Cllr Flores-Moore stated that she was aware of accidents occurring at the skatepark; the Clerk stated that there were no recorded accidents with the exception of one a number of years previously.

Cllr Timson stated that perhaps a solution was to allow the Clerk to repair another incident up to a figure of say £500, but anything over this amount she should have the authority to remove the facility. This could be advertised on Facebook both on the Parish Council page and the Skatepark Page. The Clerk could also let young people know through the schools once an article is put together.

Cllr Watkins suggested that prior to closure that the Clerk speak to the Youth Worker for Southwater and organise a skatejam; the last being extremely successful.

Recommendation

The Committee are recommended to approve retrospectively the works required to the Southwater Skate Park and provide further instruction to officers in relation to future costs not budgeted for within the 2018/19 budget but which could have major Health & Safety risks to users. Last year expenditure totalled £850 with £1,000 received in relation to an insurance claim, this year's expenditure to date being £650 with insurance recovery of £550, nett difference -£100; this being the insurance excess.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should:-

- **Discuss with the Southwater Youth Worker a Skate jam which should be held prior to any closure subject to any damage.**
- **Investigate the possibility of a donations page for repairs to the skate park.**
- **Investigate the Section 106 payments for the erection of the original structure.**
- **Put on Facebook information relating to action which would be taken in the event of further damage and what the Council was prepared to spend and that in the event of this amount being exceeded the Clerk, Operations Manager and the Chairman of Council make the relevant decision based on Health & Safety conditions and the Risk Assessment at that time.**

Tree Policy

The Committee to discuss and approve a Tree Management Policy have been provided with copies of alternative policies for consideration.

The Clerk's view was that whilst the policy provided by the consultant engaged by the Council was very good and information some aspects could incur unforeseen costs for the Parish Council. Councillors may prefer to consider an amalgamation of this with other models provided.

Recommendation

RESOLVED by all that the Clerk and Operations Manager should amalgamate the various suggested policies into one document for further discussion in July 18.

Tree Survey

The Committee is informed that the Clerk's office is issuing that week tenders in relation to Tree Works required following the completion of the Tree Survey by Quaife Woodland. This is a comprehensive tree survey. The Clerk report that two trees had been felled these having been close to

other works being carried out and the cost of doing this work at this time was considerably cheaper than the contractor having to return.

The Clerk stated that Council should not that only one tree has been identified as requiring immediate attention within six months.

Recommendation

It was APPROVED by all present that the Clerk and Operations Manager should amalgamate various policies into one for consideration by the Council.

FG40/06/18 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Members to discuss the possibility of a possible grant application from Horsham District Council's funding of small businesses in terms of promoting the local economy through tourism.

The Clerk reported that HDC had secured £72k of funding to support small businesses in Horsham District. The Clerk advised Members of a scheme which could be taken forward in relation to signage by the railway bridge directing visitors and tourists to Lintot Square.

The Chairman advised the Clerk that a further grant may be available in the near future from the District Council in terms of charging stations for local communities and asked that the Clerk investigate this also.

Recommendation

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should look to applying for a grant, with Councillors assisting her in this process if required due to the volume of work currently being experienced.

It was AGREED that the Clerk would investigate the new Government Grant being provided to District Council's in order to encourage green energy points for hybrid/electric vehicles.

Members are to discuss the Council's overall approach to communication with the view to incorporating other methods of communication within the policy currently being drafted by the Clerk.

Referring to the proposal by Cllr Scoon, whilst much of this can be provided in future within newsletter, the Chairman's report would be a brief review of the activities of the Council during the previous financial year. The Clerk suggested that this document be built into the document when reviewed again by the Clerk, with the hope that this can be brought forward in July 18.

Recommendation

It was AGREED that the Clerk should incorporate elements of the report produced by Cllr Scoon into the Parish Council's Public Consultation Policy.

FG41/06/18 FREEDOM OF THE PARISH AWARD

To receive recommendations in relation to future recipients of the award of The Freedom of the Parish.

Recommendation

Cllr Watkins indicated that he would like to propose Cllr Claire Vickers be nominated in relation to the Freedom of the Parish Award. Cllr Vickers was the only remaining member from inception of the Council, and whilst an elected political District Councillor, when acting as a Parish Councillor she acted as did others on the Council in the best interest of the community assisting the community in many ways. The Chairman stated that this would allow her to join others who had been celebrated for their long service eg., Cllr. Barbara Varley and Laurie Apted.

Recommendation

It was APPROVED by all present that the Clerk should arrange another Freedom of the Parish ceremony, at which the honour of the Freedom of the Parish should be awarded to Cllr Claire Vickers for her long service as a parish councillor for Southwater and her work for the community. The Clerk will make the necessary arrangements to advise Cllr Vickers of this honour and a date for the presentation.

FG42/06/18 EMERGENCY PLAN

To receive the draft Emergency Plan for the Parish of Southwater and amend or comment upon the document.

Cllr Whitear stated that he presented the Plan to the Committee for consideration and discussed this with the Clerk. He would like to thank his fellow colleagues on the working party for their assistance in putting this together. The Clerk stated that apart from a few minor alterations she had no material comments to make.

Recommendation

It was AGREED by all present that the Parish Emergency Plan be APPROVED and ADOPTED following the minor alterations to be made.

FG43/06/18 PERSONNEL & PENSIONS*

Local Government

The Clerk also advised Members that the Council will also have to re-register before October 18 with the Pensions Regulator.

The County Council also require the Council to authorise a Data Sharing Agreement regarding Compliance with Data Protection Law.

Recommendation

The Committee noted the requirement to re-register with the Pension Regulator the Council's Pension Scheme with West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Clerk should produce the document for signature by herself on behalf of the Council in terms of the requirement of the County Council.

Ill Health Insurance Cover

This report concerns the existing Ill Health Retirement Insurance cover in place and to consider whether the Council will wish to renew or otherwise.

Recommendation

It was RECOMMENDED that this be delegated to the Chairman of Council and the Clerk and subject to their findings this cover may be terminated without further recourse, if not it would be renewed.

****At this point in the meeting the Chairman proposed the suspension of Standing Orders due to the confidential nature of the business under discussion this relating to staff matters.**

“Confidential Minute”

FG44/06/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, 18th July 2018

The meeting finished at 9.45pm.