

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 11th May 2016 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 7.30 pm.

Chairman: Mr P. Buckley

**Councillors: Mr L. Apted Mr G. Cole
Mr B. Greening Mr M. Neale
Ms R. O'Toole-Quinn Mr G. Watkins
Mr N. Whitear**

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: Two

FG15/05/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting, then highlighted the housekeeping rules and indicated that should anyone wish to film/record the proceedings could they make themselves known.

Mr Greening sent his best wishes to Mrs Vickers, as he had not been aware of her recent accident before now.

Mr Greening reported that the "Southwater" sign adjacent to Roberts Close was green and rusty and asked if this could be cleaned.

Mr Greening reported that that the temporary lights at the pinch point were too close to it, and traffic coming the other way has difficulty getting through.

Mr Whitear reported that there is an old pallet, with an advertising board on the Hangman's Hill roundabout. The Acting Clerk said that she had already noted this and has asked for it to be removed.

Mr Whitear agreed with Mr Greening in that the temporary lights at the Cedar Drive junction were causing chaos. Ms O'Toole-Quinn agreed, and asked that the timings be checked. The Acting Clerk will ascertain if it is possible to put sensors onto temporary lights.

Mr Neale reported that the public footpath between Roberts Close and Southwater St is very muddy and slippery.

Mr Watkins asked if the Acting Clerk had ascertained why speed camera signage had been erected in Cripplegate Lane. She replied that Sussex Safer Roads Partnership knew nothing about a camera in this location, so she has asked for it to be removed.

Mr Greening reported that there was a tree down on the public footpath between Chesworth Farm and Kerves Lane.

It was noted that the Heras fencing at the Berkeleys development had been knocked down again; this has since been replaced.

Mr Condé, a member of the public, said that he had reported a one way sign that had been knocked down in Station Rd two years ago, and it was still down.

He had reported someone living inside the structure of the Skate Park, and no action has been taken, even though this has been going on for three weeks.

The Clerk, Mrs Tobin, had told him when he was an employee of the Council, that he was the eyes and ears of the community, but his reports are now ignored

He reported the litter bin in the Leisure Centre overflow car park being lassoed by a car and dragged out of the ground two years ago, and it has not been replaced. This means that litter is being thrown in the stream.

With regard to the temporary lights, Mr Condé, said that it was possible to install sensors, which can be pre-programmed for peak times.

Mr Buckley said that the Acting Clerk did meet regularly with Berkeleys and that she would take this up with them.

The Acting Clerk will report all the above issues to the relevant authorities.

Mr Neale asked if the repairs to the Skate Park had been completed; the Acting Clerk confirmed that they had, but a panel to the rear had since been removed, and would be replaced by the Council's own maintenance team.

FG16/05/16 APOLOGIES

There were apologies from Mrs Flores-Moore and Mrs Vickers.

Members noted these apologies.

FG17/05/16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Acting Clerk referred Members of Council to information issued in relation to the Member's Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. This information contained a flow chart previously issued which should assist Members in reaching their decision; this not being overly complicated.

There were no declarations of interest at this point.

The Chairman reported that the Clerk was still on sick leave with no date agreed for her return to work.

FG19/05/16 CORRESPONDENCE

The Acting Clerk referred members to general correspondence received and asked whether Members wished to comment on any particular item.

Horsham District Official Map and Guide

The Acting Clerk advised that this publication has recently been reprinted, including an advert for the Leisure Centre on the Southwater map page.

Members NOTED the correspondence received.

West Sussex Waste Recycling Site Consultation

The public consultation period is open from 16th May until 12th June 2016 and comments/feedback are being sought by online submissions.

This year WSCC continues to be faced with significant reductions in funding from central government forcing Council to find ways to save money & reduce costs. Therefore, it has been decided to review at the Budget for Household Waste Recycling this year with the aim of saving £2m. The review showed whilst the current provision is run well and highly regarded by residents there are savings that could be made.

Suggestions being made are as follows:

- a) Reduce the daily opening hours at sites to 8.30-4.30pm all year round
- b) Reduce the number of days that some sites are open. 7 days down to 5 days to include weekends. Suggested closure days for Hop Oast are Thursdays & Fridays.
- c) Introduce charging for non-household waste disposal (soil, hardcore, DIY, plasterboard) - £4.00 per 80litre bag, Car & Van tyres £4.00 each & no longer accept LGV, Tractor, Mobile Plant or any Commercial vehicle tyres.
- d) Cease the mobile Recycling provision for rural communities (none within Southwater Parish)
- e) Restrict the access of trailers to those sites with "Large Vehicle Bays". Cars with trailers currently accepted at all sites, proposals to restrict to larger sites only i.e. Burgess Hill, Crawley, East Grinstead, Chichester & Worthing.

Fly tipping is not expected to increase as evidenced by other County Councils who have made similar changes.

Implementation date expected to be 1st October 2016.

Any income received through the sale of recyclable materials works to offset the cost of the service.

The Acting Clerk asked members what response, if any, they wished her to make on their behalf.

Mr Whitear said that there should be a couple of late night opening evenings in the summer.

It was not clear if waste generated from household DIY projects would be subject to charge, as this would not be supported.

The proposals are, that Hop Oast be closed on Thursdays and Fridays, and this would not be supported. If it is to close on two days, then Wednesdays and Thursdays would be preferable, not Fridays.

Despite the reassurances to the contrary, councillors were concerned that fly-tipping would increase as a consequence, and as there are costs associated with clearance, queried whether restricting the hours of Hop Oast would be cost-effective.

The Acting Clerk will forward these comments on in response to the consultation.

At this point, the Chairman proposed the suspension of Standing Orders to allow members of the public to speak. This was seconded by Mr Apted and agreed by all.

A member of the public asked if the siting of the fun fair was to be discussed. The Acting Clerk said that she had a report under “Council Premises and Land” on the matter.

The Chairman asked her to bring that report forward, so she advised that Southwater Sports Club had agreed for the fun fair to be sited on their land in Church Lane in July, and were liaising directly with Mr Shayler on the matter.

The Acting Clerk has responded to all emails received from residents on the matter, and has sent letters round to households adjacent to the Leisure Centre; the same properties to which the letter notifying residents that the fair was to take place, advising them of the revised location of the fair.

Both members of the public left the meeting.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

FG20/05/16 MINUTES

Finance & General Purposes Committee, 6th April 2016

Mr Greening said that reference had been made in the Minutes that Mr Whitear had suggested that the Acting Clerk approach local Cadets to assist at the Christmas Festival; In fact he had made this suggestion, not Mr Whitear.

Ms O’Toole-Quinn said that she had given her apologies for the meeting, but these had not

been recorded. The Acting Clerk said that she thought that these had been given after the 2pm deadline, but she would check.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th April 2016 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting, including the Confidential Minute, after the amendment that Mr Greening had suggested using the Cadets at the Christmas Festival.

Leisure Centre Management Committee, 6th April 2016

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th April 2016 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

FG21/05/16 ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS

Members queried three payments with the Acting Clerk, then NOTED and APPROVED the information provided in that this was a true and correct position of the Council's financial affairs as at 11th May 2016

Quotation for Replacement Mirror at the Gym

The Acting Clerk referred members to the Leisure Centre Manager's report relating to a replacement mirror, which had been broken when a dumb bell dropped onto the matting by a customer bounced back up and broke the glass.

The quotes are for £636.88 from Shaws Glass and £550.00 from Aspect Safety Mirrors both excluding VAT but including installation.

It was suggested that signage should be erected as to the proper use of the weights, and that whilst it was accepted that it was not unusual to drop weight bars from a height during sessions, the Leisure Centre Manager should speak to the customer in question to ensure that this did not happen again.

The Acting Clerk was asked to ascertain if the proposed kick boards would be behind the mirrors or whether shorter mirrors would be possible. However, the purchase was authorised at being the maximum cost.

It was RESOLVED that the mirrors would be ordered from Aspect Safety Mirrors at a cost of £550.00 + VAT.

Re-seeding of Football Pitch

The Acting Clerk referred members to the Leisure Centre Manager's report relating to the re-seeding of the pitch, when despite the Manager's best efforts; only one quote was received, at a cost of £1803.00 excluding VAT.

It was RESOLVED that the quote for £1803.00 + VAT from Active Grounds Maintenance would be accepted.

Works to the area surrounding the MUGA

The Acting Clerk referred members to the Leisure Centre Manager's report relating to

works around the MUGA. Again only one quote was received, at a cost of £617.00 excluding VAT.

It was RESOLVED that the quote for £617.00 + VAT from Active Grounds Maintenance would be accepted; this work to be coded to the MUGA.

Cleaning of Bus Shelters

It has been noted that the four Perspex bus shelters are in need of cleaning. This has been assessed by the Council maintenance team, and agreed that they are not able to carry out the work. Therefore, three quotes have been sought to clean the four shelters inside and out and the costs are £65, £68 and £723, all ex VAT. The higher amount is due the fact that the contractor will use a pressure wash; the other two will use water fed poles similar to cleaning windows. Chemicals will be applied in all cases to inhibit algae growth, this being human and pet safe.

It was RESOLVED that the order would be placed with Pyzer for £65 + VAT.

Purchase of new Litter Bins

The litter bins at the Skate Park and in the Leisure Centre overflow car park have both recently been damaged. Replacement parts are not available, so quotes have been sought for full replacement. Both bins have a current capacity of around 95 litres; however, it may be felt that a larger bin should be provided at the Skate Park, i.e. one with 224 litre capacity. All are of metal construction, with the exception of the Sherwood which is a wood effect polymer.

The prices are as follows:

Model	Capacity	Price
Sherwood	95	£278.94
Metal Guppy bin	95	£296.56
Standard Ranger	120	£507.00
Stanford	95	£949.75
Middlesbrough	224	£407.00
Dual Ranger	214	£676.00

All prices are ex VAT and include fixings and carriage, but not installation.

It was RESOLVED that one Sherwood @ £278.94 +VAT would be purchased for the overflow car park, and one Middlesbrough @ £407.00 +VAT would be purchased for the Skate Park

Replacement of Planting around Bowls Container

The planting around the container was vandalised some months ago and was not replaced. However, recently planning permission was granted to extend the siting of the container, and it was pointed out at the time, that the planting was a condition of this permission. The Leisure Centre Manager has therefore sought quotes for 17 replacement conifers, these being, £326.83, £321.13 and £424.83 all excluding VAT but including delivery. Leisure Centre staff will plant the conifers once received.

Mr Watkins asked if there were any free trees still available from the Woodland Trust.

It was RESOLVED that should there be no free trees available, the order for 17 replacement conifers would be placed with Best4Hedging at £321.13 + VAT

Replacement of Metal Chicane at Leisure Centre

A wooden chicane was erected on the path from the overflow car park to the Leisure Centre to encourage cyclists to dismount. The path does not allow cycling but this is generally ignored. The original wooden structure rotted, needing replacement; the replacement was vandalised within days of it being erected, and has been removed. It was thought that a metal structure would be more suitable, and quotes have been sought.

These are for £390 (for scaffolding poles bolted together) for £420 (custom made) for £650 and £1165 (£1365 if galvanised), all prices ex VAT.

It was RESOLVED to defer the matter to the October budget meeting due to doubts about the efficacy of the chicane in deterring cyclists from cycling along the path.

Reduced Rate use of Lardner Hall

The Acting Clerk referred members to the Leisure Centre Manager's report. She would like authority to charge Southwater Art Group the café rate whilst using the Lardner Hall, in order to accommodate the dementia group, a difference of £9.54 inclusive of VAT per hour.

It was RESOLVED that the Art Group can be moved to the Lardner at the Café rate in order to accommodate the Dementia group booking; however, it should be made clear to the Art Group that they would need to go back to the Café, should the Dementia booking cancel.

Report on ongoing discussions with WISH Project

The Acting Clerk explained that this item was on the agenda as she wished to seek guidance from the Committee as to how they wished her to proceed.

WISH is the Work Information Support Hub, and currently operates in Billingshurst Library and is a drop in session for those seeking work. Computers are provided, and assistance is given in writing CVs, mentoring and with general job searching.

WISH is looking to extend into Southwater, and approached the Clerk at the end of last year, with a view to running five week courses. This was discussed at the November Finance & General Purposes Meeting, as this was stated as being one of the Visions of the Council for the future. It was resolved that the Clerk should proceed with discussions, subject to securing the funding for the project to go ahead. Should funding not be secured, the matter would be referred back to this Committee.

The Acting Clerk has been progressing the matter in the absence of the Clerk. WISH is asking for a room to be made available Monday mornings for three hours, for 48 weeks of the year. Wifi access is required. However, no funding has been secured, so in effect, the hall hire would be provided free of charge, with WISH providing the human resources.

The only rooms available on Mondays would be the Chamber and the Youth Club. As to provide free hall hire would equate to a grant, the cost implications are £1607 for the Chamber at Community Rate, and £1378 for the Youth Club, both ex VAT.

The Acting Clerk advised that she would not recommend use of the Chamber, as this would prohibit bookings, but that perhaps the Youth Club area could be considered. Another option would be to offer the vacant upstairs office at the Leisure Centre, although this is not accessible, due to the stairs. This room is not currently hired out, so there would be no cost implications.

Another option would be the use of the Community Room, although this does not have WiFi so the installation of this would have a cost implication.

WISH is already advertising that there are plans to open in Southwater, for example in the Spring edition of Horsham District News.

The Acting Clerk asked the Council to consider installing WiFi in the Community room regardless of the outcome of these discussions, as she thought this would be beneficial for the long term booking of the room, at little cost.

It was generally felt that to book a room free of charge for 3 hours for 48 weeks of the year was too great a financial commitment. However the Council was keen to try to assist in the project, but thought to advertise the facility in Southwater prior to it being agreed was somewhat disingenuous.

It was RESOLVED that WISH would be offered the Community Room free of charge for 3 hours one day a month for a period of six months. WISH would then be invited to a Council meeting to report on the success of the project, at which time the arrangement would be reviewed. The Acting Clerk is to progress the installation of WiFi in the Community Room as a matter of urgency.

Payment of Beeson House rents by Direct Debit

The District Council has written to ask that Beeson House rents are paid by direct debit in future. There is a provision that rents not paid within 28 days, are subject to interest and the Council will be charging this in future on all of its let properties.

The District Council has previously asked for a change in the terms of the lease, as the current terms allow for the Parish Council to collect rents on the four original offices, keep 10% as a management fee, and then pay the remaining 90% to the District Council. The District Council wanted to collect the rents itself, and then pay the Parish Council its 10% fee.

The District Council wanted the Parish Council to share the legal costs of the change in the lease, but the Acting Clerk has refused to agree to this during negotiations, on the grounds that it is the District Council who is requesting the changes, so the District Council should bear the costs.

It was noted that whilst the rent payment for this quarter was late, it being on the payment schedule for this meeting, it was also noted that the District Council appeared on the debtors list, as it owed the Parish Council money.

The Acting Clerk was instructed to ensure that late payment charges were not incurred in future, and the invitation to pay via direct debit was refused.

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council would not pay the Beeson House rents by Direct Debit in future.

Date for Budget Meeting in October

The Acting Clerk said that the Committee needed to consider setting a date for the Budget meeting, which usually takes place in October. The Planning Committee is on Thursday, 6th October, with the Finance & General Purposes Committee on Wednesday, 12th October

It was RESOLVED that the Budget Meeting would take place on Thursday 20th October 2016, with all Councillors welcome to attend.

Staff Time for Southwater Youth Project

The Acting Clerk attended a Management Board meeting on behalf of the Council, along with Mrs Flores-Moore, who is the Council's representative. It appears that the Youth Project needs assistance in finding and applying for grant funding.

The Acting Clerk said that she would approach this Committee, as she has a member of staff who is very successful in grant applications, with the view that should this staff member have spare capacity, then she could assist the Youth Project.

Given the ongoing absence of the Clerk through ill health, it was RESOLVED that that the parish office had no spare capacity to assist the Youth Project at the current time.

Freedom of Information Request

The Acting Clerk reported that she had dealt with a Freedom of Information request which was asking for reasons behind Parish Council precept increases for specified years dating back to 2002, and other financial information. Most of the requested data was supplied, but 2002 and 2008 Minutes could not be found, and the resident was advised accordingly.

Members noted this information

Staff Christmas Holidays

The Acting Clerk said that she wished to clarify with the Committee, its views in relation to keeping the Parish Office open over Christmas.

Within the contracts of Parish Office staff is a clause that they have to allow up to four days of their annual entitlement to be used at Christmas. Having an extended holiday at Christmas is popular, as it allows for staff leave to be used at a time when things are very quiet.

However, the Clerk has indicated in previous years that the Council wants the Office to be open between Christmas and New Year, which is why the Acting Clerk is seeking clarification. Should this be the case, then it may be that a consultation exercise would need to be undertaken due to the change in contracts.

It was RESOLVED that the Parish Office would not be open between Christmas and New Year, and that parish office staff would take three days holiday, which would be 28th, 29th and 30th December. The office will be closed at 12 noon on Friday 23rd Dec, with those staff who work over this time, working lieu time to compensate.

Beeson House Birthday Celebrations

The Acting Clerk advised that the Parish Council moved into Beeson House on 30th June 2006, so this year is its 10th Birthday. It is intended that a display be put in the foyer with information etc., and perhaps some balloons etc.

Lintot Square was completed in December 2006.

Members noted this information.

The Acting Clerk hopes that councillors have noted the varying interactive displays in the foyer, with the current one being for the protection of hedgehogs. These are generating a large amount of interest amongst residents, especially children.

FG22/05/16 END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS

Mr Buckley reported that he had supervised closing the 2015/2016 financial year on the accounts system and that there is not very much good news this year but thought that members were all expecting this to be the case.

The accounts need to be approved at the next full council meeting which will be the AGM on 25th May, but Mr Buckley thought that members should have the detail of the results before that.

The total loss incurred by the Parish Council this year is £89,017.

As it was never going to be good news Mr Buckley said that he has made it worse by providing for the Air Conditioning for the office, window for the community room and the recording system.

This totals £25,673.

A loss of rental income and hall hires has been suffered; much of this as a result of delays by Horsham District Council.

The figures can be broken down as follows:

Loss of rental income from Montessori	£11,397
Loss of rental income from Beeson House	£26,381
Reduced Hall Hires for Beeson House	£4,322
Reduced Hall Hires for Easteds Barn	£8,394
Total	£50494

Therefore, £76,167 can be explained out of the loss of £89,017 and these are non-recurring

costs or the loss of income has been rectified or is about to be rectified.

The balance of the loss is a number of small variations.

At the January Full Council meeting, it was agreed that the grass-cutting costs be taken from the Public Open Space ring-fenced account, that this account be reduced for £150,000 with the remainder vired into General Reserves, and that the sum of £46,143.57 be vired from General Reserves into Easteds Barn ring-fenced account. This has been actioned.

Monies were transferred out of savings account as follows:

Date	Amount	From	Balance
17 th Dec 2015	£30000	Co-Op 14 Day	£370.36
24 th Feb 2016	£35000	Nat West Deposit	£270.03
30 th March 2016	£30000	Virgin Deposit	
18 th April 2016	£20000	Virgin Deposit	£230,066.64

There is still £30000 invested in Lloyds on a fixed term deposit maturing in January 2017

It was RESOLVED to close the Nat West account, and to transfer the remaining sum of £270.03 back into general reserves. Nat West no longer has a branch in Lintot Square, so it was considered that there is little point keeping the account open.

It was further RESOLVED that £30000 (Thirty thousand pounds) would be transferred into the Co-Op 14 day Account, and that £50000 (Fifty thousand pounds) would be transferred into the Virgin Deposit Account, thus repaying sums taken out.

The Internal Audit is to take place on 17th May. The Annual Return will be considered at the AGM on 25th May, which will allow for its submission to the External Auditors Littlejohns by 13th June 2016.

FG23/05/16 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Acting Clerk presented a payment schedules to 11th May for approval in the sum of £71,761.55, this including April salaries, and payments made on 25th April.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedules dated 11th May 2016 be APPROVED in the sum of £71,761.55.

FG24/05/16 COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Acting Clerk asked Councillors to consider the following grant application, the paperwork for which having been previously circulated:

Southwater Art Club - £300.00

The Art Club were requesting a grant to make up a shortfall in funds for the provision of professional demonstrators, equipment for marketing support, and extra marketing to

promote annual exhibition.

After discussion, it was RESOLVED that a grant of £150 would be awarded to Southwater Art Club

FG25/05/16 TWINNING PROJECT

Following an approach from Cuincy in Northern France to consider twinning, the Acting Clerk was asked to progress the matter at the March meeting.

She referred members to her report.

It was generally felt that it would not be beneficial to the Council to progress the project, due to the commitment of staffing resources. No Councillor expressed an interest in spending time to the project.

Mr Greening was in favour of progressing.

It was RESOLVED by majority vote, not to progress the matter. The Acting Clerk will write to the Mayor of Cuincy accordingly.

FG26/05/16 POLICE MATTERS

The Acting Clerk reported that the latest figures available from Sussex Police website was in February 2016, when 33 crimes were reported in Southwater, these being:

Anti Social behaviour	15
Burglary	3
Violence & Sexual Offences	5
Theft	1
Drugs	3
Criminal Damage	4
Vehicle crime	1
Public Order Offence	1

FG27/05/16 COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND**

Siting of a Fun Fair on Leisure Centre Land

The Acting Clerk reported that Southwater Sports Club had agreed for the fun fair to be sited on their land in Church Lane in July, and were liaising directly with Mr Shayler on the matter.

The Acting Clerk has responded to all emails received from residents on the matter, and has sent letters round to households adjacent to the Leisure Centre; the same properties to which the letter notifying residents that the fair was to take place, advising them of the revised location of the fair.

Church Lane Premises

Paperwork for the new lease is being drawn up.

Beeson House offices

A prospective tenant has been found for one of the upstairs offices in Beeson House, and paperwork for the new lease is being drawn up.

Beeson House General

The Acting Clerk reported that she still is in dispute with Geoff Hawkins, Horsham District Estate Manager about various issues pertaining to Beeson House, these being payment for the treatment of the outside render, mis-allocation of parking spaces, and legal documentation for the renting of Youth Club office space and licence to install air-conditioning not being supplied.

Given the earlier report by the Chairman stating that some of the Council's losses were due to delays by the District Council, the Acting Clerk was asked to make an appointment with Mr Crowley, Chief Executive of Horsham District Council, as the District Council could be considered to be in breach of the Head Lease of Beeson House. Attendees to be Mr Buckley, Mr Watkins and the Acting Clerk.

FG28/05/16 PERSONNEL, PENSIONS & TRAINING**

Mr Buckley announced that due to the nature of the matter to be discussed, the public and press would be excluded for the next item. There were no members of the public present

The next item is minuted under CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

FG29/05/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting will be Wednesday 16th June 2016, this being the week after the Planning Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.