

**The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 7.30 pm.**

**Chairman: Mr P. Buckley**

**Councillors: Mr L. Apted Mr G. Cole  
Mr.K.Diamond Mr.M.Neale  
Mr G. Watkins**

**County: Apologies provided by Cllr B. Watson OBE**

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

**Clerk: Mrs.C.Tobin**

**Press: Not present**

**Public: Not present**

**FG60/07/14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and then highlighted the housekeeping rules and also the fact that mobile phones should be switched off during the meeting.

The Clerk was asked to ensure that the footpath from Hangman's Hill roundabout leading to the A24 was cut back. The Clerk stated that this had been reported at the School's fete the previous weekend and added to the Parish Council's teams list.

Mr.Cole stated that he was interested in an article from the Chief Constable of Sussex in relation to policing of the area, especially as Southwater's neighbourhood policing had taken a further 10% downturn on that previous provided. It was a fact that the PCSO spent less and less time in the area; this reflected on the increase in statistics. The Clerk informed the Member that she would be reporting on letters sent to the Chief Inspector and Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner later in the meeting.

Mr.Apted asked whether any action was being taken in relation to the reports previously provided in relation to the A-Boards outside of the Cock Inn, with yet another board having appeared. The Clerk stated that as previously instructed this had been reported to the District Council's Planning Enforcement Department.

**FG61/07/14**

**APOLOGIES**

There were apologies received and noted from Mrs.Alway, Mrs.Flores-Moore, Mr.Francies, Mr.Nagy, Mrs.Vickers and Mrs.Williamson.

**Members noted the absences provided.**

**FG62/07/14**

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

The Clerk informed Members that her role was to provide impartial information and advice in relation to such matters, but that it was for the Member concerned to decide whether or not to declare an interest and what the nature of that may be. The Clerk referred Members at this point to the Nolan principles setting out standards of behaviour required by Members of a Council.

Members are advised to consider the agenda for the meeting and determine in advance if they may have a personal, prejudicial or Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any agenda item. If a Member decided they do have a declarable interest, they are reminded that the interest must be declared at the commencement of the consideration of the agenda item; or when the interest becomes apparent to them. Details of the interest will be minuted.

Where you have a Prejudicial Interest (which is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) Members are reminded that they must now withdraw from the meeting chamber after making representations or asking questions.

If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Members are reminded that they must take no part in the discussion of the item at all; or participate in any voting; and must withdraw from the meeting chamber; unless they have received a dispensation.

At this point in the meeting the Clerk reminded Members that as Councillors they could not be involved in any lobbying group otherwise they would have declare this fact in their Registers.

**Members NOTED the Clerks comments and advice.**

**At this point in the meeting Mr.Buckley, Chairman of the Meeting declared an interest in Item 8 as he was a Trustee for Southwater Responders.**

The Chairman indicated that the Clerk having attended a Legal & Finance Day reports, that there had been a legal ruling in relation to the Freedom of Information. This related to emails used by Councillors in the course of their council work. In the past only emails relating to the parish council emails were subject to Freedom of Information, however following the recent ruling the Clerk believes that this would now relate to personal emails used for council work or discussion and those between councillors in relation to council matters.

Mr.Diamond asked whether this was based on legal advice. The Clerk stated that the information had been supplied by Mr.Ian Davison of Hedleys Solicitors, who was also an advisor to the Surrey & Sussex Association of Local Councils. Mr.Diamond being keen to learn more felt that a training session on this or brief note would be in order. The Clerk stated that she would contact Mr.Davison and ask for further information.

Mr.Watkins asked that the Clerk also enquire as to whether this was infringe a Member's Human Rights Article 1, although he understood that the information provided by the Clerk to be correct.

The Clerk reiterated the importance following this ruling that Member's of the Council use only one email for their Council work, rather than combine their personal and council emails. This ruling also related to member to member correspondence which dealt with any matter relating to Council business.

The Chairman stated that sooner the Intranet system was in operation the better. The Clerk stated that this was one of priority within her office, with the relevant member of staff having been employed on end of year accounts and other priorities. A general discussion took place and the Clerk was asked to consider employing one a one off basis another to ensure that the system become operational. This matter to be further discussion under Personnel related matters.

The Clerk further advised that following on from the various items of legislation recently passed by Government a revision of various Council policies will now be undertaken and present at future meetings of the Council.

**Councillors NOTED the Clerk's information and advice.**

The Clerk also advised Members that the new Quality Council Scheme was being rolled out; Southwater having previously been awarded such status on two occasions. However, the Clerk was concerned that the current levels of attendance by Members may exclude Council from achieve a third award. In the past this was one of the criteria assessed. The Clerk would be reviewing the new scheme and providing advice to Council.

**FG64/07/14                    CORRESPONDENCE**

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

**Members NOTED the correspondence received.**

Opportunities for Talented Young People

The Civil Service fast track apprenticeship scheme is open further information is available at Your Space on the County Council's website. [www.yourspacewestsussex.co.uk](http://www.yourspacewestsussex.co.uk)

**Members NOTED this information.**

**FG65/07/14                    MINUTES**

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2014 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.**

**FG66/07/14                    ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 including Income and Expenditure and Bank Balances.

**8.24 pm Mr.Cole left the meeting, returning at 8.25 pm.**

Damage to Gym Equipment

The Clerk confirmed that the full amount was paid to the Council in relation to the damage to the gym equipment.

The Chairman of the Meeting felt that the client should be barred for life from the leisure centre and use of the gym facility; the behaviour not being in line with standards expected. The Clerk stated that whilst the client had paid in full, he still stated that the machine screen had previously had a crack. It was agreed that before further action be considered that the Clerk check the membership rules. If there was not a clause within the agreement then the Clerk was to ensure that such matters were noted.

**The Clerk to check the rules of the Membership Agreement for customers of Southwater Leisure Centre, ensuring that an appropriate clause in relation to damage and abuse to Council equipment and/or staff be included if this was not already so.**

**Councillors NOTED the Clerks comments in relation to the payment of the cost of repair of the equipment.**

New Financial Regulations

The Clerk confirmed that both she and the Chairman would be looking at the new Draft Financial Regulations which would in turn affect the Council's Standing Orders which will also be reviewed. It is hoped that these documents will be provided for discussion in September 2014.

**Councillors NOTED the Chairman's comments.**

Governance & Accountability in Local Councils in England & Wales

The Clerk confirmed that she had forwarded to members a copy of the guide. This guide gives a full explanation of the responsibility of the Council in relation to the safeguarding and administration of public money and processes to be adopted.

**Councillors NOTED the Clerk's information and advice.**

Christmas Event

The Clerk would like to have authority to spend monies in relation to a special guest star for the Southwater Christmas Event being on held on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November. It may be possible for a fee of £500 to acquire the services of an individual who is a professional musician with a large following. This being based on the fact that sponsorship will be obtained as in 2013.

It is hoped to hold a meeting with the organising party in the near future.

Mr.Diamond questioned the expense, the Chairman stated that Council had authorised this previously with sponsorship having more than covered last year's costs for entertainment.

**It was APPROVED by all present that the Clerk should engage the services of a professional musician for the Southwater Christmas event being held on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2014.**

Coole & Haddock (Beeson House) – Urgent Payment

The Clerk confirmed that she wished authorisation for a sum of £4,893 this being fees in relation to stamp duty land tax in relation to Beeson House. This money will then be paid on our behalf by solicitors. This relates to the long term lease of 125 years and rentals to be achieved.

**It was APPROVED by all present that the amount of £4,893.00 payable to Coole & Haddock be sanctioned by the Committee in relation to land fees in relation to Beeson House. This amount to be shown as a payment on the July Full Council schedule.**

Insurance Levels in relation to major infrastructure items

Following a review of insurance levels and discussions with the Council's insurers, it has come to light that major infrastructure items such as bridges, concrete manholes and flooding infrastructure on Council land are not presently insured. The Clerk has asked the contractor involved in Operation Watershed to provide a fixed figure for the replacement of the various items of infrastructure in order that they may be added should the Council require to the Council's asset register and insurance policy.

A short discussion took place on the type and location of infrastructure concerned.

**Members NOTED and APPROVED of the Clerk's intended actions in relation to this matter to ensure that any financial risk to the Council be limited.**

Letter from local Dance School – Leisure Centre

The Clerk confirmed that having responded to the initial correspondence from one of the Council's clients, both she and the Chairman had received further email correspondence to which a response will be provided. Part of this email correspondence was an issue around protocols for public participation and suspension of Standing Orders at the Council meeting and in relation to whether the clients School would be subject to VAT. The HM Revenue advice was sent but again disputed by the client, who is also questioning the need behind the MUGA project.

**Councillors NOTED the Clerks comments and that she would be responding on behalf of the Council in due course.**

**FG67/07/14**

**COMMUNITY GRANT**

**At this point in the meeting the Chairman, Mr.Buckley declared an interest in this matter the grant being for Southwater Responders of which he was a trustee as previously declared. Mr.Buckley at this point left the chamber for the entire discussions and did not take part in any vote.**

The Vice Chairman, Mr.Geoff Cole then took the Chair for this matter. The Clerk stated that a grant request for £500 had been received in order to provide further equipment training of volunteers in order that the Group could continue to save lives locally. The group is fully constituted.

Mr.Diamond asked what equipment, Mr.Cole reading from the application stated that he was not aware from the description what the actual functions of some of the equipment were.

**At this point in the meeting Mr.Diamond declared a prejudicial interest in the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and take no further part in**

**the discussion on this matter. At this point the committee were inquorate and unable to decide upon the application.**

A general discussion was held and the Clerk was asked to provide further information for debate at Full Council. The Clerk to ensure that this item was put on the Full Council agenda.

**The Committee INSTRUCTED the Clerk to ensure that this matter was put on the Full Council agenda for July 2014, the Committee being inquorate. The Clerk to have obtained further information on the equipment and its intended use in the saving of lives.**

**Mr.Buckley, Chairman of the Meeting then returned to Chair the meeting, thanking Mr.Cole for having done so.**

**FG68/07/14****ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

The Clerk presented a payment schedule to 9th July, 2014 for approval.

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedule dated 9th July, 2014 in the sum of £70,441.79 and also the amount of £4,893 in relation to a payment to Coole & Haddock in relation to land tax on Beeson House.**

**FG69/07/14****AUGUST RECESS DELEGATED POWERS OF EXPENDITURE**

The Clerk indicated that she would require delegated powers of expenditure in relation to the August recess. The Council were undertaking various projects from Operation Watershed to the refurbishment of Beeson House and this would require payment or authorisation of project work. The Clerk would therefore like delegated powers of authority given to the Chairman of Council, Vice Chairman of Council, Chairman of Finance & General Purposes committee and Vice Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee and also Chairman and Vice Chairman of Planning. This would ensure that the Clerk had two members with authority along with herself the Responsible Financial Officer.

**Members present APPROVED the Scheme for Delegation for July/August 2014.**

**FG70/07/14****BUTTERFLY PROJECT**

The Clerk confirmed that a meeting with the three Southwater Schools had taken place and agreement reached on the theme for this years competition to enhance the old railway bridge; the theme being 'Bees'.

It was also thought preferable during discussions with the Council and the heads that larger designs be considered and therefore costs are in relation to A2 sizing with no little A4. The cost to provide 14 A2 and 14 A3bees and associated works would come to a total of £2,152 excluding VAT. The

Council currently held the sum of £4,106.83. The Council could reduce the number of bees thereby ensuring that the project could go forward for a couple of more years.

A general discussion then took place in relation to the quantity, with it being agreed that the A2 sized bees should be reduced to 7 x A2 and 14 x A3. This would ensure that there would be sufficient funds left in the ring-fenced account for one more year of the project with the Schools. It was imperative to get the bee designs to the Schools in time for the end of term.

Once the children had completed their drawings, there would be a judging competition as in previous years, the panel made up of school, community, church and parish council representatives.

**The Clerk was AUTHORISED to place the relevant order as discussed with the Committee with BEL Signs the preferred supplied.**

**FG71/07/14****MEETINGS DATES**

The Clerk informed Members that the dates and times had been issued and will be displayed on the Council's website.

**Councillors NOTED this.**

**FG72/07/14****POLICE MATTERS**

The Clerk confirmed that as instructed by Council she had written to the Sussex Crime Commissioner and local Chief Inspector of Sussex Police. Trevor Leggo of Sussex Association of Local Councils had also taken this up at a meeting with the Assistant Chief Constable for Sussex. The Clerk has been advised that Sussex Police will be requesting a meeting with the Clerk and Chairman of Council.

The Clerk presented to the Committee figures relating to the month of June 14 as supplied by PCSO Cecil.

Mr.Diamond, stated that as it had been the Council who had instructed the Clerk, it was the Council to whom the Chief Inspector and Crime Commissioner should respond. The Council's previous debate and instructions was based on the lack of confidence and satisfaction with the proposed policing strategy for Southwater. Sussex Police should therefore respond providing the data requested by the Council.

Members felt that this was not a matter for the Clerk acting under her own delegated powers but the Council and as such whilst at times it may be appropriate for the authorities to meet with the Chairman and Clerk on this occasion the instruction had been that of the Full Council. Members felt that the Council had always communicated well with Sussex Police, having thought that there was a real partnership, however were concerned about the

latest developments and how this would affect the community of Southwater.

**The Clerk was instructed to write to Sussex Police asking that the Chief Inspector or Inspector for Horsham attend the next appropriate Full Council Meeting in order to address the concerns of the Parish Council in relation to the current policing strategy.**

**FG73/07/14**

**LEISURE CENTRE**

Shower Refurbishment

Members were advised that there was currently potential development gain apportioned in the sum of £30,410.96. This figure could be set against the feasibility study provided by MSA dependent on which scheme the Council may wish to consider.

Mr.Cole stated that Option 1 was to his mind the better option providing a much improve facility for the Leisure Centre and its customers. A general discussion then took place as to how the Council could find the shortfall in funding. The suggestion being that the Clerk evaluate possible grant funding from both the County and District Councils over and above the Section 106 development gain.

Mr.Watkins said that in his mind the schemes proposed by MSA were excellent and well presented, and if at all possible should be progressed within the financial year if opportunities existed. Mr.Watkins further proposed a letter of thanks for the excellent report prepared by Philip Starling of MSA.

**The Clerk was INSTRUCTED to evaluate possible grant funding opportunities in order to report and DELIVER the proposed scheme. Once monies were identified the Clerk to REPORT to Full Council for further discussion or alternatively bring forward for the next years budget Year 2015/16.**

Drainage Works to Leisure Centre Land

During discussions about drainage and ensuring that the land was in order for the MUGA project, various issues were highlighted in relation to the land drainage on site and blockages identified by the Leisure Centre Manager.

Upon investigation advice was received from the Council's consultant being used for Operation Watershed, and urgent action required in relation to a manhole identified. There are also identified blockages this cost amounting to £1258 excluding VAT. During this visit other issues were identified to the foul and water drainage systems on site the cost of remedying these will be £2,500 excluding VAT.

Mr.Watkins suggest that in relation to the sum of £2,500 that the Clerk contact Southern Water to identify whether any of the sewage issues were

related to their system and if so then pursue repairs with them. If this were not the case then the Clerk was directed to ensure that the works were undertaken prior to the commencement of the MUGA project.

**It was APPROVED that the works relating to surface water and potential flooding at the Leisure Centre be undertaken in the sum of £1,258+VAT.**

**With regard to the works in relation to sewage and other works the Clerk to contact Southern Water in relation to a site visit to ensure that these works are addressed should they relate to their network. If not the Clerk to ensure that the works be undertaken.**

**FG74/07/14**

**BEESON HOUSE\*\***

Air Conditioning

The Clerk informed Member's that landlord's permission is being sought in relation to the provision of air conditioning to the office and chamber. The Clerk has also enquired as to whether building control or planning permission is required.

**Members NOTED the progress in relation to this project.**

Electronic Notice Board

Horsham District Council have confirmed that they are willing to replace the previous sign and pay for installation costs and would place the order. The Clerk has questioned whether they required planning permission for this replacement and awaits a response from the relevant department.

A brief explanation as to what had happened to the original notice board took place, with Members delighted that the District Council were to both replace and pay for the installation of the new electronic display board.

**Members NOTED the information provided by the Clerk.**

**FG75/07/14**

**COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND\*\***

Easteds Barn

The Clerk confirmed that under delegated authority the following orders had been placed, window blinds, flooring and replacement triple glazed windows these amount to a total of £2,976. Additional costs for a noise limiter and a new alarm and fire system were being sourced and will be dealt with under delegated authority. The Clerk intended to consult with the relevant member in relation to the actual proposals for such systems, although she believed from previous discussions the member will not be privy to the costs merely comment on systems. The Committee felt that this was a good approach in relation to the fire systems.

Meanwhile, fire risk assessment and information on fire precautions had been completed and in place. Maintenance and supply of the existing extinguishers including signage had also been authorised.

In addition the telephone connection to the building had been made more secure pending the provision of new systems for fire and security this to be connected to Redcare when approved. The Clerk intends to seek advice from within the Council in relation to the actual provision although the prices will not be shared.

**Councillors NOTED and APPROVED all actions taken to date under delegated powers by both the Clerk and Mr.Cole. The Clerk to discuss with Dr.Cash the proposed fire systems submitted by contractors.**

Skatepark

The Clerk confirmed that an on site meeting had taken place and the relevant orders submitted. The Clerk's office would be submitted a request to the District Council for the release of developer funding.

The Clerk was questioned as to who would be responsible for security of the site during works. The Clerk stated that this had been included in the overall order, with the proposed contractor responsible, although confirmed that as Landowner there would be a degree of liability on the Council.

The Contractor had also agreed to each section of the works being inspected by both Mr.Cole and Mr.Watkins as representatives of the Council along with the Clerk.

**The Clerk's office to submit a request for the release of monies in respect of development gain for the skate park repairs.**

Open Space Areas

The Clerk confirmed that she had received two requests for additional provision on the parish council owned land, one relating to the provision of goal posts in Larkspur Way and the other relating to the repositioning of the existing basketball nets, a holding response had been sent to the later.

The Clerk indicated that with regard to the Larkspur Way request, she would advise the Committee that this is a balancing pond and as such did not feel that this area would be suitable. A similar goal post had been removed from Nyes Lane due this also being a balancing pond, with the equipment difficult to maintain. Residents would also have to be canvassed as to whether they were in agreement; in the past when asked about a potential basket ball hoop residents were reluctant, although many may have moved since that time.

Members asked the Clerk to consult with local residents in Larkspur Way in relation to the proposal to erect football posts on the balancing pond area asking whether the residents would meet the cost of provision.

With regard to the basket ball area relocation, it was agreed at the meeting that both Mr.Cole and the Clerk would investigate possible relocation sites preferably within the Leisure Centre grounds. The Clerk stated that consultation on other sites if no suitable site found at the Leisure Centre would have to be undertaken.

**It was APPROVED that the Clerk should write to local residents of Larkspur Way in relation to a proposal to site football posts on the balancing pond and if the residents did wish this, then would they be prepared to pay towards the provision.**

**Mr.Cole and the Clerk to evaluate possible sites for the relocation of the small knock around basket ball area preferably within the Leisure Centre grounds.**

Church Lane Play Area

The Clerk informed the Committee that the gate and fence at the entrance of the play area had been damaged over the previous weekend; this was reported to the local police. It was thought that this damage was caused by a vehicle reversing into the gate section. The Clerk had obtained two quotations in relation to the repair of the gate and fence, the lowest price being from Horsham Fencing in the sum of £200+VAT.

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should place the order for the replacement post and reinstatement of the gate with Horsham Fencing in the sum of £200.00. The Clerk would be submitting an insurance claim in this respect.**

**At this point in the meeting the Chairman excluded the press and public from the meeting in view of the confidential information to be discussed.**

**FG76/07/14**

**PERSONNEL & PENSIONS\*\***

Staff Grievance

The Clerk reported that a grievance raised by a member of staff had been resolved. The Clerk would like to thank Cllr Diamond for his assistance in investigating the matter.

**Members NOTED the Clerk's comments in that the grievance had been resolved.**

Intranet

Following on from a previous conversation, members felt that it was important in light of recent Freedom of Information requests, that the intranet system be progress speedily. In light of the current workload within the office the Clerk to employ if necessary another person to ensure that the system is populated and up and running for use and access by Members of Council.

**The Clerk authorised to progress the Intranet System and if the need arise employ another person on a short term contract to populate and progress.**

**Standing orders were reinstated.**

**FG77/07/14**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting would be Wednesday **10th September 2014.**

**The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.**