

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 6th January 2016 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 Mrs P. Flores-Moore
Mr A. Green Mr B. Greening
Mr M. Neale Mr S. Tresadern
Mrs C. Vickers 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:

FG166/01/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Mr Neale reported that the chevron signage at Hop Oast roundabout is need of repair.

He also reported that the Worthing Rd has flooded again near the junction with New Rd, although it is still passable.

The Deputy Clerk said that the flood in Cripplegate Lane was cleared this morning by Council staff, but the Operation Watershed project to improve this area was to be commenced imminently.

Mrs Flores-Moore said that she was on her way to a First Responder call, and she could not get through Cripplegate Lane, thus delaying her by six minutes, which was crucial when trying to get to a patient. She has also noted that the bus stop at the junction of The Fieldings was flooded.

Mr Watkins said that he had recently seen a new type of grating which would assist in keeping the gullies clear, and would give the Deputy Clerk the information. The New Rd flooding would not have occurred if the gullies had

been kept clear of leaves.

Mrs Vickers reported that Tower Hill had flooded to a foot deep and was flowing like a river. A car was stuck in it outside the School gates – she has never seen it this bad. The water was coming off the fields, and Christ Hospital School needs to be told to take action in relation to its land.

Mr Greening reported that the pothole at the Devine Homes development at the northern end of Worthing Rd had not improved, and that cars were still parking there.

The Deputy Clerk reiterated that the police had advised that there was nothing that could be done about the cars; as they were taxed and not parked on double yellow lines. She does have the Site Manager details and will try to meet with him to discuss issues in this area.

Mr Watkins said that it was possible to report “anti-social” builders on the NHBC website, and suggested that the Deputy Clerk look at this.

Mrs Vickers said that as the street light at the Boar’s Head junction is still out, and the pub itself is closed, the junction is unlit, and this is affecting visibility when trying to exit.

Mr Whitear reported anti-social behaviour by the Co-Op and The Forge/Timbermill. Youths on scooters were jumping out at passers-by. The Deputy Clerk asked if he had reported this to the police and he had not.

Mr Green said that there had recently been vandalism in the Country Park, with a window being broken. It was important to report to the police at the time, he advised, as then problem areas could be identified.

Mrs Flores-Moore asked if the Section 106 monies had been received by the District Council from the Courtlands development. The Deputy Clerk said that she believed that this was still an ongoing legal issue.

Mrs Flores-Moore reported that trees had been felled at the Hop Oast Waste Site. The Deputy Clerk advised that a planning application had just been lodged for re-development of the refuse site; the District Council had consulted with the Pre-Application Advice Group before Christmas.

Mrs Flores-Moore reported that the road surface at the traffic lights at the Park & Ride junction was in a very poor condition.

Mr Diamond asked that the wreaths be collected from around the War Memorial, as these were not looking at their best.

Mr Green reported that he had recently had to remove a wooden post originating from the damage post and rail fencing outside the Junior Academy from the middle of the road. The Deputy Clerk advised this damaged fence has been to

WSSC on several occasions now; she was asked to do so again, copying in County Councillor Brad Watson.

Mrs Vickers reported that a meeting was to be held with Itchingfield Parish Council in relation to parking issues at Christ's Hospital Station. She was concerned to note that Southwater Parish Council was not invited, even though the station is in its parish. She agreed to forward email correspondence to the Deputy Clerk who will pursue the matter.

Mrs Vickers asked why the Christmas lights were still up. The Deputy Clerk replied that she had been liaising with the District Council over the matter; it appeared that no order has been raised for their removal, and she is chasing this as a matter of urgency.

Mr Watkins reported that the drainage ditches around Dinosaur Island in the Country Park were full, being about a foot deep. The sides were slippery, and as the ditches were not fenced off, he was very concerned that if a child were to fall in, they would not get out.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would report this as a matter of great urgency.

Mr Apted reported that he has received notification that Church Lane is to be resurfaced.

The Deputy Clerk will report all the above concerns to the relevant authorities.

FG167/01/16 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies, all Committee members being present.

FG168/01/16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Deputy 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 should assist Members in reaching their decision this not being overly complicated.

There were no declarations of interest at this point.

FG169/01/16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

FG170/01/16 CORRESPONDENCE

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

Members NOTED the correspondence received.

Three Southern Counties Devolution Bid

The Clerk has previously circulated information from the County Council in relation to the bid by East and West Sussex, and Surrey to devolve powers from central government to a new unitary authority made up of the three existing County Councils. This project is called Three Southern Counties or 3SC

This initial presentation to the Government will be on 14th January, whereby 3SC will need to prove that it will have the infrastructure in place to support

- Fiscal devolution and investment
- Housing and planning
- Governance
- Infrastructure such as transport operation services
- Other necessary skills

The 3SC area has a combined Gross Value Added or GVA of £74 billion, which is bigger than Wales or Greater Manchester, both of which have successfully applied for devolution.

The Clerk has written to Tom Crowley, Chief Executive of Horsham District Council asking if there has been any discussion within the District Council regarding possible devolution of services to parish councils as part of the devolution process. He has replied that there have been no such discussions at this stage.

Trevor Leggo, Chief Executive of Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils, has written to advise that SSALC will be holding a briefing and networking event on Friday 11th March at the Hawth Theatre in Crawley, which will be attended by the three County Councils, the 23 borough and district councils and the South Downs National Park. Mr Leggo would like an indication of how many town and parish councils would like to send representatives.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would respond to Mr Leggo that the Chairman Mr Buckley and the Clerk would like to attend.

Electoral Review of West Sussex County Council – Draft Recommendations

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has opened a public consultation on its draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements for West Sussex County Council. This consultation runs from 15th December 2015 to 8th February 2016.

These draft recommendations propose that 70 county councillors be elected in future, when currently there are 71. There are also some changes proposed to electoral division boundaries across the county.

Southwater comes within the Southwater and Nuthurst Ward, which is all of the

parish of Southwater, and part of Nuthurst parish. The proposals are that the section of Nuthurst to be included in the ward will be reduced, leading to an overall reduction in the ward electorate of 9%. It is not clear whether this figure includes or excludes the predicted increase in electorate due to the increase in Southwater housing.

Councillors recalled that County Councillor Brad Watson had indicated at the December Full Council meeting that there would be no changes to the Southwater and Nuthurst Ward.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk will write to Councillor Watson to clarify the matter.

Posters will be put on the parish council notice boards advertising the consultation and the recommendations can be viewed on

www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk.

Gatwick Airport Expansion

Gatwick Airport has issued a press release in response to the Government's announcement of a further delay in deciding where the third London airport runway will be sited.

Gatwick Airport states that the final decision should be based on balancing the economy and the environment, and expansion at Gatwick would give the country the economic benefit it needs at a dramatically lower environmental cost.

The Deputy Clerk reminded members that CAGNE or Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions has offered to give a presentation to the Council on its campaign, and that the Planning Committee has decided to wait until after the runway decision is made.

It hoped that the Government will make its decision this summer; the independent report commissioned to look at a third runway recommended that this be at Heathrow.

Mr Buckley reported that CAGNE will be giving a presentation to the January HALC meeting.

FG171/01/16 MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2015 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

FG172/01/16 ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Deputy Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 6th January 2016 having provided the Cash Reconciliation, Income & Expenditure and Debtors Listing.

Members NOTED and APPROVED the information provided in that this was a true and correct position of the Council's financial affairs as at 6th January 2016

Clerk's Financial Report

The Deputy Clerk referred Councillors to the Clerk's Financial Report previously circulated, and the recommendations therein for discussion and consideration.

As Councillors did not have copies of this Report to hand, it was agreed that this matter would be deferred to the January Full Council meeting.

Purchase of "Green Book" Subscription

The Green Book is the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service for Local Government Services, which defines job evaluations and pay scales for local government employees.

The latest edition that the Council possesses is 2005. Enquiries have been made about purchasing a more updated edition, and it seems that 2005 is the latest edition, and updates and amendments are supplied via a subscription service.

This subscription is available at a cost of £399 ex VAT per year.

The Deputy Clerk advised Councillors that this will be a useful document to have, taking into account the Council's ongoing Visioning exercise. It is likely that only one year's update will be required.

Mr Buckley advised Members that the Human Resources Committee scheduled to take place on 14th January would not now take place, due to the Clerk's absence.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the decision whether to purchase an annual subscription to the Green Book would be deferred until after the HR Committee had met.

Clio Information System

The annual renewal for the Clio Information System has been received, at a cost of £160 ex VAT. The Parish Council was established as an Information Point some years ago, and has access to the Clio system as a result. Clio is a search engine hosted by WSCC Library Service which assists staff in finding answers to queries from members of the public, such as refuse bin collection dates, or contact details for local organisations. The number of times the system is accessed is logged, so staff activity can be monitored.

However, the process of finding information can be lengthy, with council staff knowing much of the information requested without the need to look it up. In addition, Southwater Library, which also accesses Clio, is now open for longer hours than the Council Office.

The Deputy Clerk met with the County Officer responsible for Clio, who agrees that as access by members of the public is retained via Southwater Library, there is little benefit to the Parish Council of renewing its licence.

It was RESOLVED that access to the Clio system would not be renewed, as this service is provided by Southwater Library.

Easteds Barn Doors

There is a problem with the double entrance doors to Easteds Barn due to the hinges failing due to general wear and tear. A temporary repair has been made, but a general refurbishment of the doors is urgently required to ensure the ongoing security of the Barn.

To that end a quote has been sought at a cost of £305 ex VAT, which would include removal of both doors, shaving if necessary and to supply and fit and heavy duty brass hinges. Doors to be treated and re-hung.

It was RESOLVED to accept this quotation, on the proviso that the hinges should be stainless steel and not brass, which should not affect the price; this work to be completed as a matter of urgency.

FG173/01/16 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Deputy Clerk presented a payment schedules to 6th January 2016 for approval in the sum of £15774.33

It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedules dated 6th January 2016 be APPROVED in the sum of £15774.33

FG174/01/16 PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANT

The Deputy Clerk advised that this matter had been put on the agenda in the hope that the paperwork would be received; however, it has not, so discussions will be deferred until the next meeting.

FG175/01/16 SMOKING BINS

Jeremy Quin, Member of Parliament for Horsham, has written enclosing a letter received from a young local resident.

A seven year old Southwater girl has asked his views on installing smoking bins around Southwater Leisure Centre and at Southwater Schools, as she sees lots of cigarette butts lying in the streets. Mr Quin replied to the little girl that he thinks that this is a good idea, and has in turn written to the Parish Council to seek its views.

It was generally agreed that the Parish Councils supported the health and well-being of the community and as such, it did not want to encourage people to smoke outside a fitness centre. Whilst Southwater Schools were

not in its remit, it would not support provision of smoking bins outside primary schools. The Deputy Clerk will respond to Mr Quin accordingly.

FG176/01/16 POLICE MATTERS

The Deputy Clerk reported that a letter has been received from Assistant Chief Constable Robin Smith in relation to the ongoing development of a new model for local policing. The programme has three core objectives, these being:

- To deliver an affordable resilient model of local policing in Sussex in the future
- To deliver the benefits on time and in line with the programme plan
- To implement changes whilst maintaining operational stability and effectiveness.

A three-month staff consultation with PCSOs commenced on 14th December, to discuss the design of a new PCSO role for the future.

The number of PCSOs proposed under the model are not impacted by funding, but are based on demand analysis for the role, which provides the minimum number of staff and officers required.

It is proposed that PCSOs will:

- Be deployed more flexibly in teams to vulnerable locations across Sussex assessed on the level of threat, risk and harm
- Have an increased focus on prevention and problem solving, rather than predominantly on reassurance
- Be equipped with a range of skill to enable to them to resolve problems and prevent crime and disorder, alongside partners
- Have additional powers to enter certain licensed premises and enforce certain licencing offences in order to discuss the selling of alcohol to those under age, street drinkers and people who are drunk
- Be issued with body worn cameras and have enhanced staff safety training
- Provide a tailored approach to the specific needs of communities and neighbourhoods.

Information on the detailed design and the outcomes of the role will be shared once the staff consultation ends in February.

Mr Cole reported that he had been in Rye for three days over the Christmas period, and had seen PCSOs out in the streets both morning and afternoon for all three days; it was disappointing that Southwater did not have similar cover.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would write to Assistant Chief Constable Smith and ask the following questions:

- **Apart from the powers to enter licenced premises, what other additional powers, if any, would PSCOs have**
- **What are the cost implications for any additional training**

- **What impact would the new model for local policing have specifically on crime and anti-social behaviour in Southwater**
- **Would PCSOs be equipped with the skill set to deal with mental health issues**

FG177/01/16 COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND**

29, Charlock Way, Southwater

The Deputy Clerk has been in correspondence for some two years with a resident in Charlock Way in relation to roots purportedly emanating from trees on parish council land causing damage to his patio.

Up to this point, the Deputy Clerk has advised the resident that he is entitled to trim back branches and roots to his fence line, as per the Council's policy on trees. The matter has been referred to Zurich, the Council's insurance company, who are unable to assist, given that no damage or subsidence has occurred to any building.

The resident has previously sought and received permission from the Council to fell a willow tree close to his fence line, which has been carried out.

The resident has now written to the Council, as he would like information relating to the following issues:

- The Deputy Clerk has stated in previous correspondence that the Council fulfils its duty of care by carrying out tree surveys every five years to ensure that the trees are safe and in good health. Branches which have brushed the house have been removed, but tree roots entering the property were not addressed, although clearly visible. Why not?
- The offending roots have lifted paving slabs over two inches, and the resident is concerned that should these continue to extend, they will damage the house walls and foundations; indeed fibrous root masses have been found adjacent to the house.
- The resident has a quote of over £500 from a qualified tree surgeon to sever the roots at his fence line, a sum which is he not prepared to pay.
- He is of the opinion that there are two options; that he digs up his patio and severs the roots himself, although he is not a qualified tree surgeon, or to wait until the damage increases in scale, possibly leading to damage to his house, whereby he could submit claim to the Council via Zurich.

The Deputy Clerk would like clarification from the Council as to how best to proceed. The Council is responsible for trees on its land, both branches and roots, and guidance states that resolution of root issues is a matter for discussion and mediation. Precedence has been set in that branches have been cut back, but there is no such Council policy with regard to roots.

It was RESOLVED that the Deputy Clerk would arrange for Jim Quaife from Quaife Woodlands to visit the site and write a report which would give

the Council guidance as to how to address root issues in future.

Easteds Barn Clothing Bin

Councillors may recall the discussions surrounding permission for a clothing bin to be sited in Easteds Barn car park. This has been in place for over fifteen years, and permission was given by the Parish Council on the proviso that the District Council would empty and monitor the bin.

Of recent months, the bin has been causing issues within the Parish Office, as the District Council has refused to empty it, instead passing responsibility to the Salvation Army, as it is stated that the bin now belongs to them. The bin is sometimes overflowing, leading to an unsightly appearance in the car park.

The Deputy Clerk is seeking the Council's views about the ongoing siting of the clothing bin on Parish Council land. There are no ongoing issues relating to the glass recycling bin.

It was RESOLVED that the Deputy Clerk would arrange for the immediate removal of the clothing bin.

FG178/01/16 PERSONNEL, PENSIONS & TRAINING**

There were no personnel issues to report.

FG179/01/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting would be Wednesday, 10th February 2016

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.