

**The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 7.30 pm.**

**Chairman: Mr P. Buckley**

**Councillors: Mr L. Apted Mr G. Cole  
Mrs P. Flores-Moore Mr.M.Neale**

**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**

**FG69/09/13 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, members of the public not being permitted to tape or film meetings of the Council.

There were no members of the press present.

**The Chairman proposed the suspension of Standing Orders, this was AGREED by all present.**

Mr.Cole reported his concerns regarding tyre tracks on the road surface close to Londis in the Worthing Road, and also in Cripplegate Lane. Mrs.Flores-Moore said that this was similar to those she had reported in Blakes Farm Road. The Clerk and Mr.Neale reported that such matters could be automatically reported through Operation Crackdown. A news release to be issued via the Parish Newsletter and local media.

Mrs.Flores-Moore said that she was concerned about the fact that many employees from the RSPCA were using the parish land close to the Bridge in Blakes Farm Road, and wondered therefore whether the RSPCA would sponsor a dog bin for that area. The Clerk stated that she was unaware of this fact but would investigate the possibility of such a sponsorship.

Mrs.Flores-Moore asked whether pressure could be put on the WSCC Highways Department to provide improved safety measure at the Hop Oast Roundabout, this being a concern of local residents especially with vehicles approaching from both directions at high speeds. The Clerk suggested that

this matter be highlighted to the County Councillor, Brad Watson who could discuss this issue perhaps at the County Local Area Committee. Members felt that this would be appropriate.

The Clerk to write to the County Councillor Brad Watson in relation to concerns raised about traffic speeds approaching Hop Oast roundabout.

Mr. Neale reported that he had attended a District Council Road Safety meeting and that the documentation would be sent to the Clerk's Office. The issue of road safety in the District was discussed, there being 7 fatalities year to date, 31 serious collisions and 35 injured. There was no one factor identified although young drivers were one identified. There will be a series of workshops with a view to training and increasing the skills of these drivers. Operation Crackdown saw 91 interventions with the police going around to houses where individuals were identified. It was the intention that Operation Crackdown be widely advertised and promoted.

Mr. Neale asked whether he could be provided with his photo identification card so that when visiting residents in relation to planning applications he had some identity. The Clerk apologised for the delay but believed her assistant was awaiting two photographs from other members before producing these. Mrs. Flores-Moore asked whether such ID could be provided on mobile phones; the Clerk said she would investigate this possibility, although one member of Council did not have either IT or mobile phone.

**The Clerk to chase her office for Member ID Cards and investigate the possibility of having ID on mobile phones.**

Mr. Neale also asked whether anyone knew of the reason behind the loud bang north of Cedar Drive on Friday night. The Clerk stated that she had heard this along with neighbours but had not identified the specific site. This had been discussed with the fire service at a meeting on Monday and that she would chase to see if the Fire Service had any further information.

**The Clerk to check with the Fire Service as to whether they had any further information in relation to the loud bang in Southwater north of Cedar Drive the previous Friday.**

Mrs. Flores-Moore said that she was concerned about the highway in the Castlewood Road Area of the village as there was a large crack down the road. The Clerk indicated that the District Council had not as yet transferred the woodland and balancing pond to the Parish Council; this being some six years in the pipeline.

**The Clerk to chase the District Council in relation to the transfer of land to the Parish Council in the Castlewood Road area.**

**The Clerk to report to WSCC Highways the large crack in the middle of the carriageway in Castlewood Road.**

**Standing Orders were reinstated.**

**FG70/09/13**

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Dr.A.Cash, Mr.D.Nagy, Mr.A.Prosser-Snelling Mr.G.Watkins, Mrs.J.Williamson and Mrs.C.Vickers.

**Members noted the apologies.**

**FG71/09/13**

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations at this point in the meeting.

**FG72/09/13**

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reminded Members of meetings arranged and asked that all Councillors ensure their attendance:-

- Working Party on Draft Budget for Year 2014/15 – 2nd October in the Council Chamber 7.30 pm
- Councillor Briefing Session – 14<sup>th</sup> October 7pm in the Council Chamber
- Councillor Training – 21<sup>st</sup> October 7pm in the Council Chamber

The Chairman asked that Member's of Council made endeavours to attending these meetings.

**FG73/09/13**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk referred members to general correspondence received and asked whether Members wished to comment on any particular item. The Councillors present had no matter they wished to raise.

**Members did not wish to raise any particular matter at this point.**

Resident's Survey

The Clerk advised member that the District Council were currently consulting with residents and businesses to find out how well the Council was delivering services and help to decide where changes need to be made. The last such survey being carried out in Autumn 2011.

An electronic version is available on line via the District Website [www.horsham.gov.uk](http://www.horsham.gov.uk).

**Members NOTED the information provided.**

SLOP (Southwater Locals Opposing Poo

A new community group has been set up SLOP. The aim of the group is to combat the on-going problems of dog fouling and help keep Southwater a nice clean village to live. Advice has been given by the Clerk's office to the group along with contacts.

The residents would like two further dog bins provided by the Parish or District Council (yet to be assessed) one in Timbermill and another close to Woodhatch cut through.

Mrs.Flores-Moore stated that perhaps local businesses would like to sponsor a dog bin and that the Clerk should write making enquiries and advise SLOP of this. The group could also make enquiries of local businesses to see if this were the case. The Clerk indicated that irrespective of the Parish Council currently providing and paying for the collection of 18 dog bins, these were installed in consultation with the District Council the relevant authority. If it were not deemed that there was a need and the location not accessible, then it was not likely that the locations identified would be provided with a bin. The District Council have not in recent years provided additional dog bins, as any bin can be used to deposit such waste.

**The Clerk to contact her colleagues at District Council and discuss the possible provision of two additional dog bins. The Clerk to thereafter contact local businesses with a view to seeing whether they might wish to sponsor dog bins in the community.**

DCLG Pooling Prospectus

Information was issued to all members in relation to the Governments Briefing Note on Pooling Prospectus. This would enable pooling authorities to be treated as single entities with regards to business rates.

**Members noted the Clerks information.**

First World War Centenary

The Clerk referring to documentation circulated informed Members that the Government were promoting the recognition of the First World War Centenary. The Clerk asked whether it was the intention of the Council to work with the local churches and schools in relation to this historic anniversary?

Mr.Buckley thought it was strange that the Government were to promote the beginning of the World War, when in his view the end of the War should be commemorated. The general view being that the Government seemed to be trying to find a number of different ways of commemorating or celebrating

events which lifted the country's morale. Mr.Cole said that from the newspapers it was clear that the church authorities felt that both sides had suffered. Members generally felt that the Council should commemorate the end of the World War at the appropriate time. The Clerk to ensure that this matter was again brought before Council during 2017, the War ending on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

**Clerk to diarise the end of World War I in order that the Council may decide on what actions should be taken to commemorate the end of the War rather than the commencement.**

**FG74/09/13**

**MINUTES**

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2013 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.**

**FG75/09/13**

**GRANT APPLICATIONS**

No applications received.

**FG76/09/13**

**ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013, including Income and Expenditure and Bank Balances.

Mrs.Flores-Moore questioned the Clerk in relation to any bad debts. The Clerk responded that unfortunately, one customer had failed to pay their account during the recess. Court action had been imminent but the customer had paid the amount in full. However, in future the customer would have to pay in advance or via cash/card for any hire due to the credit history on the account.

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the financial information provided was a true and correct position of the Council as at 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013.**

**Members NOTED and APPROVED the action taken by the Clerk in relation to bad payment by customers.**

New Bank Accounts

The Clerk confirmed that accounts were being opened with National Westminster, Lloyds Plc and Virgin Money.

The Clerk would proposed therefore that the Council consider the following:-

From the existing Co-Operative Bank Accounts transfer the sums of-

- £50k to Virgin Money

- £30k to National Westminster
- £30k to Lloyds Plc

From the existing Co-Operative Deposit Account maturing on the 16<sup>th</sup> September-

- £118,556.00 to Virgin Money

The rate being achieved being 1.35% with Virgin on line.

Mr.Buckley stated that in his opinion the Co-Operative would get itself out of the current position it found itself in the longer term by Capitalising Bonds. Mr.Cole said that it was best placed as a Mutual, Mr.Buckley agreed.

**It was RESOLVED by all present, that the Council would transfer the monies to the relevant bank accounts as recommended by the Clerk, subject to the correct approval being signed by authorised signatories.**

Christmas Event

The Clerk confirmed that whilst the Council had a number of bands and choirs signed up for the Christmas event, there was a possibility of acquiring the major attraction ‘The Military Wives Choir’. However, they would require travel expenses in the region of £1,000. Would the Committee wish the Clerk’s office to pursue this avenue further, this may bring in further sponsorship and ensure a higher profile within Southwater and the District. The group would make a collection on the day.

Mr.Buckley felt that this would be an excellent idea provided that the Parish Council obtained sponsorship for the event, with an opt out clause for a month prior to the event, should the Council not acquire the sponsorship. Mrs.Flores-Moore agreed as did other Members, provided that there was a cancellation clause in any agreement for one month prior to the event, if no sponsorship were forthcoming to meet the cost. It was felt that this would compliment the other choir The Rock Choir, who had also committed to attend. The Clerk stated that most organisations did take part free of charge, for to date only limited sponsorship had been found for which the Council had been extremely grateful.

**The Clerk to progress the possibility of having as the major attraction as this year’s Southwater Christmas event, The Military Wives Choir the cost of which in relation to travel being £1k. The Clerk to ensure that this cost be met by sponsorship, if not a cancellation be agreed with the Military Wives one month prior to the event on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013.**

Talk Talk

The Clerk reported problems in relation to the youth club account with Talk

Talk in that despite notifying the company of the change of responsibility in terms of payment the Company have continuously failed to send the Parish Council invoices in relation to the outstanding amount of approximately £180. The Youth Club Treasurer had provided sufficient notice of the change and at that time there had been no outstanding amount. The Clerk's office had been pursuing the opportunity of providing payment since April 2013.

The Clerk is awaiting a call from the CEO's office of Talk Talk in order to resolve this dispute, if not the Clerk would suggest that the Council submit a small claims court award again Talk Talk.

**It was AGREED that the Clerk should await a call from the Talk Talk CEO's office, if this call did not materialise then the Clerk should progress a claim against Talk Talk through the small claims court in respect of this matter; the Parish Council wishing to ensure that payment was made.**

Nuthurst Parish Council – Pear Mapping System

The Clerk indicated that over the last year she had been in discussion with the Chairman and Clerk of Nuthurst Parish Council who had indicated that Nuthurst Parish Council whilst unable to afford the full Pear Mapping System would like to work with Southwater Parish Council and obtain access to their area.

Having evaluated the Parish Council's costs in this matter and that of providing a licence to Nuthurst, the Clerk believes that the costs are agreeable and therefore seeks permission to continue with this partnership project.

**It was APPROVED that the Clerk should work with Nuthurst Parish Council in partnership in relation to the Pear Mapping System; the Parish Council bearing no cost with costs for any such work paid for by Nuthurst Parish Council.**

Southwater Christmas Cards

The Clerk confirm that Southwater Christmas Cards would again be available to the general public to purchase. These depicted various areas of the parish. The Clerk stated that the previous years the Council had sold out of cards; this year an additional supply had been purchased.

**Members APPROVED the Clerk's action and costs in that income would be received in relation to the sale of these cards.**

**FG77/09/13**

**ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

The Clerk presented a payment schedule to 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013 in the sum of £42,935.21 including payments made during the recess under delegated powers.

It was **RESOLVED** by all present that the payment schedule dated 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 be approved in the sum of £42,935.21.

**FG78/09/13****POLICY DOCUMENTS**

This matter was discussed in June, and the Clerk was asked to have this put on the agenda for the meeting. Copies of both the Public Open Space Regulations and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) Policy Statement had been issued to Councillors.

The Clerk asked whether the Committee wished these documents to be reviewed. With regard to the RFO Policy the Clerk has requested a copy of such a policy from another Council from within Sussex of a similar size; this Council had it believed incorporated such information within its Financial Regulations. It may therefore be prudent to await this copy documentation and review both the Council's financial regulations and the RFO policy simultaneously; members felt that this proposal was sound.

Mrs.Flores-Moore suggested an amendment to the Public Open Space Regulations due to changes in society in that there should also be a prohibition clause in regards to any target practice on Parish owned land.

**It was APPROVED that the Clerk should amend the Public Open Space Regulations to include for each area of land the prohibition of target practice on Parish owned land. The Clerk to then reissue all regulations.**

**It was APPROVED that the Clerk should review both the Council's RFO Policy and Financial Regulations upon receipt of another Council's recently revised Financial Regulations after which the Clerk to present to the Committee for further discussion.**

**FG79/09/13****SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2009/14**

The Clerk stated that this document had been issued in June for discussion but such discussion had been deferred until September. This plan was last review in 2009 following the completion of the Parish Plan; thus incorporating much of this plan and previous plans within the Parish Council's Corporate Plan for the Community.

Mr.Buckley felt that the natural process of reviewing this plan would be through the Neighbourhood Plan process which would identified both those still an aspiration of the community and any new aspirations which could then be included within the Parish Council's Corporate Plan. The Clerk stated that the Parish Council's Corporate Plan would be the basis on which future community development contributions could be obtained; this already having been submitted to the Chief Executive Officer of Horsham District Council, the planning authority.

**It was AGREED that the proper process of reviewing this document**

**would be through the Neighbourhood Plan process in order to maximise future community gain from potential development within the Parish.**

**FG80/09/13**

**POLICE MATTERS**

Crime Figures for Southwater

The Clerk confirmed that she had written to Inspector McKnight on the issue of the reported increases in relation to Southwater which although minimal did raise concern due to the fact that it was not now proposed to replace the second PCSO who had been assigned to Southwater. No response has been received to date.

Mr.Buckley said that it was apparent that whilst PCSO Cecil who did an excellent job was assigned to Southwater the reality was that he was rarely in the community of late with no visual police presence despite assurances received. Mrs.Flores-Moore said that she agreed with Mr.Buckley, this lack of presence being only too evident with increasing amounts of vandalism, criminal damage and anti social behaviour occurring; the recent vandalism on the skatepark being the most recent event. Mr.Cole stated that there had in the past been incidents in Cedar Drive which were generally ignored with action only being taken when someone's car window got broken.

Mr.Neale said that it was important that residents continued to report any police matters via the 101 number, in order to record incidents. Mr.Buckley asked the Clerk to ensure that this number was again promoted within the Council's newsletter.

The Clerk indicated that she had been provided with the current police figures and that these too showed an increase in criminal damage.

**The Clerk was asked to write again, asking Inspector McKnight for a response to the Council's previous letter.**

**FG81/09/13**

**SOUTHWATER LEISURE CENTRE**

Functions

Plans are in an advance stage to produce a Functions Brochure at the Leisure Centre with a photography session planned for the next week. As part of the process it will be necessary to discuss additional staffing for any functions although this is within the budget set for the functions during 2013/14.

**Members NOTED the progress and that the additional staffing costs had been accounted for within the budget for Year 2013/14 in terms of hall income to be received.**

Premises Licence

During the review in relation to functions behind held at the Leisure Centre,

and the provision of temporary events notices, effectively this would allow both the Lardner and Café or Main Hall and Café to have 12 licences per year; these to be applied for by prospective clients. However, to ensure that the Council are not limited in its approach to functions during the course of a year, it is now proposed that the Council apply for a Premises Licence (the building have held one previously). This will require an extension to the dance and music licence to 11.30 pm along with the provision and sale and supply of alcohol. The cost of which would be approximately £180 plus advertising costs.

**Members APPROVED the application for a Premises Licence for the Leisure Centre and asked the Clerk to progress this application.**

**FG82/09/13**

**COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND**

Beeson House

The Clerk stated that she had received revised Head of Terms in relation to the building for discussion and report at Full Council; these were currently subject to discussions between District and Parish officers.

Mr.Buckley stated that this was the eighth or ninth edition of the draft lease but hopefully the Clerk's report to Full Council would enable the Council to instruct solicitors.

The Clerk stated that it was her opinion that apart from legal advice the Council should also be considering appointing a surveyor to ensure that there were no other issues in relation to the building prior to any lease being agreed. Mr.Cole indicated that the Clerk should speak to Mr.Watkins who had experience in this field; the Clerk stated that she would do so. The Clerk felt that the terms were beneficial to the Parish Council. Mr.Buckley stated that the youth club lease had been dramatically reduced in the interim period with a small income stream from rental and service charges. District Council would pick up any voids in respect of any empty space.

Mrs.Flores-Moore said that it was a credit to the Parish team that this matter was now drawing to a satisfactory conclusion.

**The Clerk to prepare a written report on the draft lease terms in relation to Beeson House for discussion and authorisation by Full Council.**

Easteds Barn

The Chairman reported that a meeting had been held with Senior Officers of the District Council in relation to the Barn and that subsequently a letter has been received apologising to the Parish Council for the delays which have been experienced in processing the planning application.

The application for the Variation on the Section 106 Agreement will now go to the District Council's Planning North Committee on the 1st October 2013.

The Council's consultant has been asked to ensure that the matter is also lodged with Building Control, in order that when permission is granted the Council can proceed with tenders for the works required.

Mrs.Flores-Moore said that she felt that the Clerk and her team had done everything within their power to ensure that the application be progressed and should be congratulated.

**Members noted the action currently being undertaken in order to progress the planning application and Section 106 variation agreement and the letter of apology received.**

Skatepark

The Clerk stated that it was with great regret that she had to report to Council major vandalism overnight to the skate park. This has resulted in the Council having to Heras fence off the area due to the site now being extremely dangerous and also the cancellation of the Skatejam event on the 14<sup>th</sup> September. It would not be possible to repair the site in time for such an event, should the Council authorise the further expenditure pending an insurance claim being received. Access to the site is therefore not permitted other than by approved contractors and representatives of the parish council.

The Clerk stated that with the assistance of her colleagues in the County Council Highways Department, she had been able to acquire Heras Fencing which should be in situ by close of business 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013. The cost of this being far less than quoted by other contractors; for which she was most grateful.

**The Chairman asked the Clerk to write thanking WSCC officers for their prompt attention and assistance in this matter.**

The Chairman referred to the News Release issued by the Council today which will be issued to the media.

The Clerk referred to the schedule provided from which Councillors could see that approximately £8,500 of the cost of works could be reclaimed through Section 106 monies and insurance. This would enable the contractor to carry out the immediate end repair, to be followed by the contracted work already underway. The end section is considered to be the priority.

The general opinion of the Members present that whilst the Council should be prepared to bring the ramp up to the standards previously agreed, once fully repaired should further vandalism take place then the Council would reconsider as to whether it would be prepared to continue to repair the ramp or remove it entirely, other than for general repairs.

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should place an order to replace with immediate effect the platform park end in the sum of £3,900.**

**The works to the spine section and volcano section to be discussed at Full Council with the view that Full Council would approve the additional sum of £9,100.**

**Street Lighting**

The Clerk advised that during the recess period that a three year energy supply agreement with Lazer has been agreed, the provider being Southern Electric. Southern Electric also happened to be the maintenance company for the street lighting through a separate agreement.

**Members APPROVED the three year Street Lighting contract issued during the recess period.**

**FG84/09/13**

**SNACK WAGON**

The Clerk informed Members that an approach had been received from the WSCC Youth Worker in Charge of the Snack Wagon enquiring as to whether it would be possible to bring the Snack Wagon back to Southwater on a Monday evening between 6.45pm and 8.45pm for 12 weeks from January 2014.

The Snack Wagon offers a mobile café facility for young people giving an informal meeting place and aims to:-

- Provide a safe space for young people where they are already gathering;
- Provide a base from which outreach and detached youth work can be delivered;
- Reduce the numbers of young people engaging in anti social behaviour

The Clerk stated that the preference for siting of the vehicle would be in the car park of the Leisure Centre behind Beeson House, it would be necessary to seek the permission of the Piper Trust as this use would not directly relate to the land and the use of the leisure centre.

Another site which was discussed between the officers being the layby outside of the Children & Family Centre/Infant School.

Mrs.Flores-Moore said that as she recalled the situation it had been the County Council who at the time had pulled the Snack Wagon out of Southwater. The Clerk confirmed that this was indeed the case, and that neither she nor the Southwater Youth Worker, Angie Choat has been consulted.

A further conversation took place and it was thought that a meeting should be held between the WSCC Youth Worker in Charge, Angie Choat Southwater Youth Worker, Claire Ebelewicz and the Clerk in order to share information and agree location etc., in time for the Snack Wagon to come back to

Southwater in January 2014.

**It was AGREED that subject to a meeting between all parties involved in youth work and the Clerk that the WSCC Snack Wagon be situated in Southwater on a Monday evening from January 2014 for a period in time as yet to be agreed.**

**FG85/09/13**

**SKATEJAM**

The Clerk announced that unfortunately, this event has had to be cancelled due to the fact that the skate ramp following overnight vandalism could not be repaired in time.

**Members NOTED the Clerks comments.**

**FG86/09/13**

**PERSONNEL, PENSIONS & TRAINING\*\***

**At this point in the meeting the Chairman suspended standing orders due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted this being related to staffing matters.**

Confidential Note.

**FG87/09/13**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting would be 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

**The meeting closed 9.00 pm.**