

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 8th April, 2015 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.D.Nagy Mr.M.Neale
Mrs.C.Vickers 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: 1

FG39/04/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

It was brought to the Committee's attention that the footways in the Country Park were virtually impassable and that the protective fencing around the new Dinosaur Island as loose and dangerous. A local disabled resident had been unable to access the area. The Clerk stated that she would report this to colleagues at the District Council.

Mrs.Butler indicated to the Chairman that she was present to discuss the allotment fencing which came later in the meeting.

FG40/04/15 APOLOGIES

There were apologies received and noted from Mrs.S.Alway, Mr.Francies. Mrs.Vickers would be arriving slightly late to the meeting.

Members NOTED AND APPROVED the apologies received.

FG41/04/15 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The 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 made at this point in the meeting.

Members NOTED the Clerk's comments and advice.

FG42/04/15 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements.

FG43/04/15 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.

WSCC Library Consultation – Longer Opening Hours Southwater Library

The Clerk advised that the County Council were consulting local people with regard to extending the current operating hours from 24 to 39 hours per week. The intention is that Monday to Friday the library would open 10am – 5pm and on Saturdays 10am – 2pm.

Members felt that in the main this consultation was a good first step in ensuring that the local library operated regular daytime hours, but would wish to see in the longer term more hours especially later in the evening to accommodate those who worked outside of the village. Members felt that they would wish to review within one year, the current position assuming that the consultation proved to be supported by the public.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should report to the West Sussex Library Service the views of the Committee.

John Lytton & Co.Ltd

Council have received notification from John Lytton & Co.Ltd that it will cease trading as of 31st March, 2015; this being part of a long planned event and is part of a move to partial retirement and part time work. John Lytton, Chartered Surveyor will continue in practice with Lawrence Foot & Partners (London) Ltd on a three day per week basis.

The Clerk advised those present that in the past the Council had used the services of John Lytton & Co.Ltd in relation to land surveys prior to adoption of land by the Council. The Clerk asked whether Members wished to send a letter thank Lord Lytton for his past services.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should write a letter of thanks for past services to John Lytton & Co.Ltd, wishing Lord Lytton every success for the future.

SSALC Updates

The Clerk referred Members to legal updates received from the County Association namely, Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (England) Updated March 2015, Councillors' Travel Allowances and Local Government Ombudsman Consultation.

In relation to the latter the Clerk would like to know how the Committee would wish to respond to the consultation. The consultation relating to whether individuals should be able to refer larger parish councils to the Local Government Ombudsman when they feel let down by that Council's corporate governance. Views are sought on proposals relating to the following two areas: whether the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman should be extended to larger parish and town councils and second how larger parish and town councils should be defined for this purpose.

NALC are suggesting that larger parish or town councils be defined as those with either a population of over 35,000 or an annual precepted income of greater than £500k.

Members felt that they should support the NALC position.

RESOLVED that the Council should support the National Association of Local Council's viewpoint in that with regard to the Local Government Ombudsman this should be defined as those with a population of over 35,000 or an annual precepted income of greater than £500k.

Adopt a Kiosk for as Little as a £1

Council is once again being asked whether it would consider adopting the old telephone boxes and the organisation has given examples of how other local communities have converted or reused theirs.

Having discussed the various ways in which communities were now using such old telephone boxes it was felt that the Clerk should make further enquiries regarding the repositioning of the Foxfield red telephone box to Lintot Square and the implications in doing so with Landowners etc. It was suggested that perhaps the Council should site this in Lintot Square close to the War Memorial, with a further suggestion that this house a defibrillator. The Clerk would also contact the Clinical Commissioning Group to see whether there was any grant funding available to assist the potential project.

RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk make further enquiries about the repositioning of the Foxfield red telephone kiosk to Lintot Square and the implications in doing so and report back to the Committee on this matter when investigations were complete.

FG44/04/15 MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March, 2015 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting, following

the change to the number sequencing which was incorrectly noted. The Clerk informed Members that the final sequence number was incorrect and should be amended according.

FG45/04/15 ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 8th April, 2015 including Income and Expenditure, Bank Balances and Trade Debtors. The Clerk stated that she was pleased to confirm that since the figures were issued both she and the new accounts assistant had closed February's accounts.

The Clerk informed Members that she had that day transferred £13k between the 14 day account and the sweep account to cover payments.

Mrs. Vickers arrived at 7.45pm.

Members NOTED and APPROVED the Member's Financial Pack produced by the Clerk dated 8th April 2015.

Neighbourhood Plan Highways Survey

As previously discussed and authorised by Council, the Clerk confirmed that she had obtained costs for the additional information required in relation to Pollards Hill; there currently being no accessible data available. The cost of the works will be £3,500 for cameras and other methods of monitoring will be required in order to obtain the data required to model and produce the final report to Council.

The Chairman of the Council's Planning Committee stated that he had asked the Clerk to bring this back to Committee for although he was aware that there were delegated powers in this respect, the cost was double that originally approved. The Chairman of the Committee stated that he felt that the works were necessary and would be of benefit in terms of the Council's response to the Inspector and in terms of future development. He would hope that the Committee would although a further contingency over and above the £3,500 of a further £1,000 with delegated powers to the Chairman of Council, himself and the Clerk.

Councillors NOTED and APPROVED this additional cost from Ring-fenced Neighbourhood Plan funds with the additional £1k contingency sum provided for along with delegated powers of authority in terms of the expenditure.

Friday Luncheon Club

It was proposed to replace the existing microwave in Beeson House with a commercial microwave the cost of which being £419.99. This would negate the need to carry out refurbishment works to the kitchen.

The Clerk was AUTHORISED to purchase this equipment, the cost being split between the Parish Council and funding for the Friday Luncheon Club.

Trade Bin Costs

The Clerk stated that having reinvestigated the costs of larger bin collection she would reported that the company Direct 365 again have proven cheaper than the District Council, with a saving of £195 per annum. The Clerk would like to know whether in light of the saving the Council wished to terminate its contract with the District Council?

The Clerk was asked whether District Council officer's had responded when this was previously discussed? The Clerk stated that there had been no contact, but the Committee had asked that her office revisit the tenders again; these had not varied other than as previously reported.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should terminate the agreement with District Council in relation to the large waste bins at the Leisure Centre and finalise the contact with Direct 365.

Electronic Communication

Further to budgetary discussions when it was agreed that the Clerk should investigate in order to reduce on paper costs, the provision of electronic iPad's or Tablets for all members of Council. Having done so it would appear that the recommendations received to date based on security and stability would be the purchase of iPADS. However, this may be problematic with the new Intranet system installed for use by councillors and staff alike. The new server and software has been made compatible with Microsoft software and therefore a trail would be required to assess whether this could be programmed via the Virtual Private Network and IPSAC with the Apple iPad. The Clerk during her investigations has been made aware of difficulties experienced by Parliament in this respect and rather than incur large costs at this point would suggest that one iPad be purchased and that this and the connection with the Intranet system be tested. This test being conducted by a member of the Council.

7.59pm Mrs.Flores-Moore left the chamber to attend an emergency.

7.62pm Mrs.Flores-Moore returned to the chamber having been stood down

Mrs.Flores-Moore offered the Council the use of such an iPad having bought one for her husband and not having used this and following a short discussion it was agreed that Mrs.Flores-Moore would pilot the Intranet using the iPad. Discussion took place regarding the model required and whether this should have cellular capability; it being agreed that Councillors would be using this generally whether WiFi existed. It was reported that the prime objection was to reduce the Council's copying and paper costs.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk in conjunction with Mrs.Flores-Moore conduct an evaluation of the new Intranet system for Councillors using the iPad provided on loan by Mrs.Flores-Moore.

Youth Club Facility

The Clerk informed Members that due to health and safety concerns due in the main to the number of appliances being used within the youth club area, it had been necessary for the Clerk to authorise expenditure of £373.37 plus VAT to rectify the situation with the installation of more power sockets.

Members NOTED and APPROVED this expenditure.

It was reported that there was still a large pile of rubble at the entrance of The Fieldings. The Clerk reported that this had been reported on more than two occasions but would pursue the matter with the relevant parties.

FG46/04/15 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Clerk presented a payment schedules to 8th April, 2015 for approval in the sum of £59,037.08.

FG47/04/15 COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION

The Chairman presented an application by Holy Innocents the Parish Church of Southwater in relation to a grant request of £500 towards replacement graveyard gates, the overall cost of which being £2,444.40.

The Clerk indicated following a short discussion on this matter, that she had requested prior to the meeting a copy of the relevant quotations received by the Church authorities for the replacement gate. There were concerns about the lack of care and maintenance over the years especially due to the fact that the Parish Council had purchase the gate some years before to assist the church authorities. Members were pleased to see that works to the area had commenced. It was suggested following debate that these be obtained and that the matter be deferred back to the Council at the end of April prior to the new Council being installed.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should contact the Church authorities asking for copies of the estimates received in relation to the new gate provision to the Churchyard.

FG48/04/15 PHOTOCOPIER

The Clerk informed Members that she had been carrying out enquiries with the preferred supplier as to a full document management system and scanner. However, the cost of this provision was extremely expensive, so it was now proposed to continue with the order with the basic scanner which will allow a member of the team to scan to the server and then into individual folders.

Members NOTED the Clerk's comments in that she would now place the order with Canon UK.

FG49/04/15 POLICE MATTERS

The Clerk confirmed that letters had been sent to the Right Hon. Francis Maude etc., expressing the Parish Council's concern about the reduction in local policing this already having a detrimental affect on the crime figures over the period of one year. Francis Maude's office have indicated that they will pass on to the next MP for Horsham the Council's letter for response; Mr. Maude having now retired from office.

The Police and Crime Commissioner has been written too requesting a further meeting to discuss the concerns of the Parish Council; a holding response has been received indicating that a response will be provided within 14 days of the 1st April.

The Clerk was unable to provide these due to the timing of the meeting being so close to the end of the month cut off dates. PCSO Cecil will provide these for the Full Council meeting at the end of March.

Southwater Crime Figures

Month	Burglary	Criminal Damage	Drugs	Theft & Handling	Violent Crime	Total
January 15	7	1	2	7	11	28
February 15	2	6	1	13	0	31
March 15						

Total Crime Comparisons 2013/2015

Years	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	17	8	15	18	15	17	27	10	4	20	21	18	190
2014	22	9	24	14	20	23	34	25	34	28	28	36	297
2015	28	31											

It was reported that the Council should be extremely concerned about the massive increase in the reported crime figures, with the member stating that whilst appreciating the troubled circumstances the police were becoming very much a reactionary force not proactive. The current police policy was ill conceived and would prove to be a false economy. Other members stated that it was not acceptable. The Clerk responded to questions in that the matter had been notified to the District Council's Cabinet Member responsible plus all other parties identified by the Council.

It was pointed out that it was the Police Crime Commissioner who was responsible for the police budget not the Chief Constable. It was reported that the Horsham District Neighbourhood Watch had also sent letters, only to receive at this point a holding letter. The Member asked the Clerk whether she received written reports from the local PCSO. The Clerk stated that the Council had not required this only that the PCSO provide the figures monthly and attend the Annual Parish Meeting. The Council had been happy for verbal reports on the figures to be given by the

PCSO to the Clerk and the Clerk in turn report these. The Member stated that he had asked the Inspector for written reports; the Clerk having noted the Member's comments, referred to her previous comment and instructions provided by Council. Should Members wish to vary this instruction then the Clerk would report this onwards; Members did not wish to change the standing instruction at this point.

It was suggested that the Clerk should write inviting the Police & Crime Commissioner once again to a meeting of the Council preferably on the 29th April so that the questions raised could be answered in terms of the reduction in service to Southwater.

RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should invite on behalf of the Council the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner to its meeting on Wednesday 29th April 2015 at 7.30pm.

FG50/04/15 ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk provided a brief outline of the position to date with regard to replacement fence posts to the allotment site, this having been referred back for further investigations. The Clerk reported that the proposal by Council in relation to 'sleeves' was not thought to be an option by two of the contractors who did not recommend this approach.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman proposed the suspension of Standing Orders in order to allow the Secretary of Easteds Allotments Association to speak.

Mrs. Butler stated that since the Clerk had received the tenders further posts had deteriorated and that the situation was quite dire and dangerous especially for those walking dogs or within the allotments on the A24 side of the site. The site was extremely vulnerable to high winds and this could cause further damage especially with the barbed wire to the top of the fencing in terms that this could fall into the path of users and alike.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

It was RESOLVED that the contract for the repairs to the fence posts to Easteds Allotments be awarded to George Potbury in the sum of £1050 + VAT, with a further contingency for other posts of 20% over an above.

The Member of public left the Chamber at this point in the meeting.

FG51/04/15 COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND**

Beeson House

The Clerk confirmed that permission had now been granted subject to conditions. The Council's consultant has forwarded further information on the proposed units but the Clerk would suggest that the Council consider instructing the consultant to now tender for the installation of both the window and air conditioning units.

Following a short discussion the Council asked the Clerk to instruct MSA Surveyors to progress the tenders for both the new window and air conditioning the cost of which being £750+VAT.

RESOLVED that the Clerk asked MSA Surveyors to manage the contract in relation to the tendering and building works required to facilitate the planning application in relation to the provision of a window and air conditioning within Beeson House.

Leisure Centre/York Close Footway & Chicane on Footpath to Lintot Square

The Clerk reported that contrary to requests by Councillors, again contractors contacted did not feel that metal sleeves were appropriate in either of the two locations. The lowest quotation received being from Countrywide, with George Potbury being the cheaper in relation to the Chicane on the footway; there being a difference of £59.35 between this and the quote from Countrywide.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should place an order for the York Close Footway and Chicane fence repairs with Countrywide in the sum of £1284+VAT.

Hazel Close, Southwater

The Clerk reported that further trees had been removed in the bund between Edinburgh Close and Hazel Close bordering Cripplegate Lane. Two households have now been written too in this respect following the Clerk seeking legal advice on this matter and having reported the matter to Sussex Police in terms of trespass and criminal damage to the council's tree stock.

This is in addition to those works required by the Council in relation to another area immediately adjacent to this area of land where trees had also been removed without authority.

A Member of the Council stated that having originally purchased a house in the area, he could provide detailed planting maps for the Clerk should these be required and stated that when residents had bought the houses either at the time of the original sale, they would have been aware of the position with regards to the ownership of the land it had been well documented as to whom was to own and manage the land in question.

Members NOTED that this matter would be discussed further by the Planning Committee the following evening 9th April 2015 when instructions would be provided to the Deputy Clerk.

FG51/04/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting would be Wednesday, 3rd June, 2015. **The meeting closed at 8.45pm.**