

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 15th February, 2017 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 7.30 pm.

Chairman: Cllr M.Neale

**Councillors: Cllr L.Apted Cllr G.Cole
Cllr K.Diamond Cllr P.Flores-Moore
Cllr C.Pearce Cllr G.Watkins
Cllr N.Whitear**

Co-Opted Non-Voting Member Mr.D.Moore* (No Voting Rights)

County: Apologies provided by Cllr B.Watson OBE

District: Apologies provided by Cllr Dr J.Chidlow

Acting Clerk: Mrs.J.Whitcombe

Leisure Manager: Mr.S.Brew

Press: Not present

Public: None

FG135/02/17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting, then highlighted the housekeeping rules and indicated that should anyone wish to film/record the proceedings could they make themselves known if they had not already done so to the Clerk.

The Chairman advised that the meeting was being recorded. The meeting was being Clerked by Mrs. Whitcombe due to the Parish Clerk being absent at the meeting.

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

FG136/02/17 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Dye, O'Toole-Quinn, Cllr Vickers has indicated that she may be late in arriving due to other commitments at the District Council. Cllr Greening no apologies received.

Members noted these apologies.

FG137/02/17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Acting Clerk referred Members of Council to information issued in relation to the

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

There were no declarations of interests made at this point in the meeting.

FG138/02/17 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that he would like to thank Mrs. Whitcombe for acting as Clerk at the meeting and indicated that she would be working with the Council on a temporary basis. The Chairman of the Council advised that he had sent a card to the Parish Clerk on behalf of the Council, albeit that she was still working from home.

FG139/02/17 CORRESPONDENCE

The Acting Clerk indicated that there was no list for consideration at this meeting other than previously circulated.

FG140/02/17 MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2017, be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

FG141/02/17 ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Clerk presented to Members the financial pack produced for the meeting, detailing income and expenditure, cash and investment analysis and debtors to 15th February 2017.

The Chairman referred Members to the cash situation detailed on the balance sheet provided within the Members packs, which showed a current year fund of £33,415 and general fund of £36,766. The current balance of £33,415 the current balance being £38,582 as of the date of the meeting, however this was quite low.

The Accounts Co-Ordinator had finished the work on the committed expenditure column, the sum deleted being £15,285. This will be reflected in the next months analysis. The Chairman then went through the figures which had been adjusted due to the fact that the payments had been put through the system and not justified against the purchase orders. Cllr Watkins asked how this could be stopped in the future? There was a short discussion about this matter. Cllr Pearce said that this now brought the accounts back into line with good accounting practices.

Councillors congratulated the Accounts Co-ordinator for the work undertaken to resolve the committed expenditure previously shown.

Cllr Whitear asked for clarification on the amount for Legal and General Insurance. The Acting Clerk indicated that she would report back to the Member the following day, but thought that it was the ill health insurance cover taken out by the Council. Mr.Derek Moore referred to the previous authorised payment of the ill health insurance. No further clarification was required. Cllr Diamond asked that the financial reports be put on the overhead projector, with perhaps a footnote. The Chairman said that this would have

resource, confidentiality and connectivity implications; it was a direct link off the RBS software.

The outstanding West Sussex County Council Library Service invoices were being chased and this should be settled shortly. Cllr Flores-Moore asked how long would the Parish Council allow the County Council not to pay. The Chairman advised that the Parish Clerk was dealing with this matter and payment was expected within 7 days.

The Chairman reported that Month End 10 was completed as of 15th February 2017.

Members NOTED and APPROVED the information provided in that this was a true and correct position of the Council's financial affairs as at 15th February 2017.

Lloyds Bank Deposit

The Chairman advised Members that the Lloyds Bank deposit of £30,000 had matured. The question was whether the Council should keep this sum plus the interest on deposit. Alternatively, the Council could just retain this in a Lloyds account due to the current cash flow situation as it would be easier to access this money than the Virgin deposits which also provide a higher interest should funds be required. The account generated £316 of interest which could be reinvested for 12 or 9 months however if we were to do so it would lock-in the money. The Parish Clerk had recommended that it go into a general Lloyds account rather than reinvest at this point. Cllr Diamond asked whether the Council should seek financial advice but Members felt that this was unnecessary due to the costs involved.

Cllr Cole advised Members that salary and operating costs for three months were required. The Chairman stated that the sum would not cover three months salary costs, at this point no money was being moved around but this may be necessary in the future.

The Chairman asked that delegated authority be provided to transfer monies when required due to the need to pay salaries and other invoices. Cllr Cole agreed that the money was available but informed Members that despite it only being a phone call with the bank to release monies, it was a difficult process.

It was agreed that there would be a future discussion on investments.

Cllr Diamond declared an interest in this matter at this point as he was employed by a financial management company.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Council should retain the £30k plus interest in a standard bank account with Lloyds.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Parish Clerk be given delegated authority to transfer monies from deposit as and when required in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council.

FG142/02/17 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Acting Clerk advised Members that they had been issued with the payment schedule in their packs. The total payment schedule for this meeting being £10,333.28 with overall

payments since the last meeting of £58,206.34.

The Chairman of Council indicated that the sum of £17k had been released to the Southwater Youth Project. Cllr Cole said that he felt that there should be further discussion in relation to this matter at some point, this was agreed by Council.

Members NOTED and APPROVED the payment schedule of £58,206.34

FG143/02/17 LEISURE CENTRE MANAGER'S REPORT TO JANUARY 2017

The Chairman referred Members to the Leisure Centre Manager's report which had been distributed with Member's packs. Cllr Watkins said that he had on numerous occasions asked for information on how many of the gym members lived in Southwater. The Leisure Centre Manager stated that this was the first he had heard of this, but would arrange for the information to be forwarded to Cllr Watkins as requested.

The Leisure Centre Manager to arrange for Cllr Watkins to be issued with the total member numbers for those customers who lived in Southwater.

There was further discussions regarding two accidents. The Leisure Centre Manager stated that the broken arm was due to a trampoline accident and an ambulance had been called. The second was during a customers hire when the mother had a child in her arms and the child pulled the tea onto itself; not due to negligence. The question was asked whether people should have hot drinks during an activity. Mr.Brew advised that there were risk assessments in place and that the children are supervised within the area. Cllr Watkins asked Mr.Brew if he was happy that all relevant risks were assessed; Mr.Brew stated that wherever you have recreational activities you would have accidents.

Cllrs Whitear and Diamond both questioned the Manager on signage in place, Cllr Diamond said that we should ensure that there was signage up in the area. Mr.Brew responded that he was unsure whether additional signs were of any real value for as at Zurich seminars, for example it was pointed out that some people and children cannot read. Various suggestions were made, after which Mr.Brew was asked to ensure that there was the relevant signage in place. Mr.Brew felt that the signs may be of little value, and you would have a building full of signs. Mr.Moore said that for the sake of a few pounds there should be signs stating that parents are responsible for their children. A vigorous discussion took place about insurance liability.

It was RESOLVED that additional signage would be put in place stating that parents are responsible for their children at all times when using the leisure centre and that this would be written into the risk assessment regarding the serving of hot drinks within the facility overall.

Cllr Whitear said that he would like to ask a question of the Manager, in that the marketing budget currently stands at 43% of the budget. Mr.Brew said that there was in place a regular monthly advert in relation to the gym in Southwater Life, with a lot of advertising using the Council's social media pages and website. He would like to do a leaflet drop before the end of year but had not put together the copy for discussion.

Cllr Whitear stated that perhaps he could look at increasing the size of the banner sited to

the north of the village. Mr. Brew said that he could not increase the size of the banner due to planning constraints. Cllr Watkins said that perhaps if the Manager wished a larger banner the Council could apply for planning permission. Cllr Flores-Moore said that there used to be a larger banner which was more effective. Cllr Whitear asked whether the Manager could put one to the south of the village? Cllr Watkins said that we can go on any land owned or controlled by the Parish Council. The Manager said that there was also a restriction on the length of time it could remain in place. Cllr Flores-Moore suggested that if the Manager spoke to Cubit and West, they may like to advertise the Leisure Centre on the back of their leaflets. The Chairman indicated that there was a new marketing employee commencing shortly who could look at this further.

Cllr Watkins asked that the report in future show the income percentages against budget, for example the figure of £38,403 was this not a minus? The Leisure Centre Manager stated that these were indeed a minus figure, but that he would show these as such in the next report. Cllr Flores-Moore asked about the 109% for the pension contributions, was this because the original figure set was incorrect? Questions were raised regarding the pension against salary contributions. It was thought that this was due to the fact that it may be down to incorrect budgeting the previous year.

Cllr Watkins asked whether any feedback had been received regarding not having the new gym equipment in place; the Manager responded from only one or two users. He then went on to explain that a new gym servicing company had been brought in to do an initial service. It was hoped that this company may provide a year's service contract with them but are awaiting confirmation as to price. Cllr Whitear asked about staff moral, with Cllr Pearce asking whether the Centre had lost members. The Manager felt that this was not the case the gym runs generally each year with the same customer base. Mr. Derek Moore asked if the Steering Group would be looking at this. The Chairman indicated that this group would look at everything to do with Easteds Barn and the Leisure Centre. The Manager indicated that the staff were happy and settling down with no major loss of customers.

It was AGREED by all present that the Parish Clerk should investigate with Horsham District Council as to whether the size of banners could be increased to ensure that they could be read without causing any possible accidents. If required planning permission for a banner should be applied for. A second banner should be explored for the South of the village.

The Parish Clerk and Chairman of the meeting to check the pension contributions relating to the leisure centre staff.

Members NOTED the report.

Replacement flooring to the kitchen, two changing rooms and five toilets

The Chairman referred to the Leisure Centre Manager's Report. The Clerk he believes had not seen the original tender document used to acquire the prices. Estimates are between £4178.17 excluding VAT and £5,400 excluding VAT. The Leisure Centre Manager's recommendation being a quotation from Horsham Flooring in the sum of £4178.17 excluding VAT.

Members agreed to defer decisions on all non Health & Safety related work until after the

Steering Group had met to allow for a proper plan of improvements to be formalised.

It was AGREED by all that the question of whether to replace the flooring to the kitchen, changing rooms and five toilets be DEFERRED allowing the Leisure Centre/Easteds Barn Working Party to look at this matter in more depth.

Plumbing Works to the Plumbing System

The Chairman referred to the Leisure Centre Manager's Report, again the Clerk had not seen the original tender document for these works. The Leisure Centre Manager's recommendation being that the works be awarded to TripleGas in the sum of £3,567.48 excluding VAT.

At this point Members discussed the need for these works, and due to this potentially being a Health & Safety issue agreed that the works should go ahead following further investigation as to the cost of water softeners being fitted which would reduce the need to replace parts in the future.

It was RESOLVED by all present that this matter be DELEGATED to the Clerk to progress in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council. The Clerk to obtain from the contractors who had tendered prices for water softeners being fitted.

FG144/02/17 GYM EQUIPMENT

The Chairman advised that during the course of investigation of Section 106 development gain there appears to be a sum of just over £10k which would be claimable from the Courtlands development.

The leasing company De Lage Landen has advised that if Council terminated the current contract on April 2017, and then wished to purchase the equipment the cost would be £5,895 plus VAT this compared to on-going monthly leasing costs would be a better proposition for the Council. Lombard from whom the Council currently lease the Smiths Machine at an annual figure of £366.24 have also been asked to supply a price on termination of any agreement; a quotation is awaited but if this is over the annual figure, then it is proposed that this lease cost would continue until a decision is made to replace the equipment potentially in April 2018.

The only issue to be resolved is that of the repair of any equipment a yearly contract currently being £6747.86 from Technogym, another company has been asked to service and provide a cost for a one year contract; this figure is not available at the time of the meeting unless the Leisure Centre Manager has an update. Alternatively Council may wish to consider just call outs as and when required which may prove to be more economical although there would be a risk to this strategy.

Cllr Whitear was concerned as he did not feel that under the terms of the lease De Lage Landen could sell on the equipment as this could only be done through another party. Cllr Diamond was concerned that the Section 106 funds were available and at this point there was also a discussion as to the Council perhaps purchasing on termination through its general funds in April.

Members wanted to understand the legal mechanisms and asked for a report from the Parish Clerk. It was AGREED that this matter be deferred to the Finance & General Purposes Meeting in March 2017 in order to allow the Clerk to assimilate the further information required.

FG145/02/17 SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE UPDATE

The Chairman indicated that both himself the Parish Clerk and another member of staff had attended a meeting with the Council's current website provider Intouch CRM. The Parish Clerk had prepared a report for consideration along with a recommendation that the Council approve the report and approve the cost of £1650 plus Vat in order to upgrade the website by April 2017.

A number of councillors stated that they were unhappy with the proposed styling etc., of the website and suggested that this project required a small working group to progress. Councillors were of the view that they would like to have an online booking system.

It was AGREED by all that this matter be DEFERRED to allow a small working party to progress and look at other sites. The working party to be Cllrs. Neale, Pearce, Whitear, the Parish Clerk, Marketing Officer and Office Manager. Councillors would like to consider an online booking system. The Parish Clerk to investigate whether NALC had given any Councils awards for their website designs.

FG146/02/17 HORSHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTORAL REVIEW BY THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION

The Chairman advised Members of the proposals indicating that it was the Parish Clerk's view that the Parish Council should insist that the area to be known as Shipley/Southwater South be known as Southwater South and Shipley. The reason being is that Southwater would have the most electorate within that electoral boundary.

The electoral area would have another District Councillor.

However the main area of contention would be the current Wates development site which appears to be outside of the electoral Southwater South and Shipley boundary; this should be within that boundary and not Shipley.

Council should also consider representations in relation to the moving of the parish boundary area to the south of this site as previously requested of District Council, for whilst Shipley will gain in housing numbers and precept accordingly, Southwater will take the pain in terms of the delivery of schooling, libraries etc.

It was PROPOSED and AGREED by all present that a strong representation be sent to the Electoral Commission regarding the naming of the southern Electoral Area, this should be known as Southwater South but would accept Southwater South and Shipley.

It was PROPOSED and AGREED by all present that the Council should write to the District Council with regard to the moving of the Southern Parish Boundary to the southern edge of the Wates/Millar site. It is thought that it was far removed from the centre of Shipley itself, and that residents were more likely to use Southwater

amenities with all the gain going to Shipley Parish.

FG147/02/17 POLICING MATTERS RELATING TO SOUTHWATER PARISHED AREA

The Chairman provided Members with the most recent police statistics.

The Chairman informed Members that Chief Inspector Howard Hodges was leaving as the District Commander and would be replaced by Chief Inspector Miles Ockwell. Inspector Claire McKnight had moved two weeks previously being replaced by Inspector Steve Chalcraft and before the Neighbourhood Policing Team Sergeant had been replaced. The Chairman questioned whether a letter thanking him for his support should be sent, however through discussion Members felt that as the crime figures were increasing it was not appropriate. Members did wish to invite the new Chief Inspector to discuss his plans for tackling anti social behaviour in Southwater. Cllr Diamond said that he was not impressed with the figures and the way people reported crime was more difficult and people generally just gave up.

Members NOTED the information provided and asked that an invitation to attend a future meeting of the Council be sent to the new Chief Inspector Miles Ockwell.

FG148/02/17 COUNCIL PREMISES & LANDLeisure Centre Play Area

The Acting Clerk reported that the Parish Clerk had met with a local contractor in relation to the removal of the dizzy discs and was awaiting a quotation along with another from the same contractor for two sets of gates. Meanwhile the area has been made safe around the discs. With regards to the small slide a section of wood now prevents any child falling from a height; the previous piece having been removed sometime ago through vandalism.

The Parish Clerk will report back at the next meeting as to costs involved.

Members NOTED the information.

Southwater Leisure Centre Gym

A claim has been settled by insurers in relation to the gym. The Parish Clerk has written to the Leisure Centre Manager asking that strict measures be maintained to reinforce the Council's gym induction procedures. The Council has a three year insurance policy agreement in place, but the Clerk thought it likely that this claim could slightly affect the Council renewal in 2018.

Council NOTED the information provided by the Parish Clerk.

FG149/02/17 LONE WORKING POLICY

Following previous discussions, the Parish Clerk presented a further draft of the Lone Working Policy on behalf of the Council.

Mr. Moore asked for confirmation as to where this would apply; the Chairman stated that it would relate to all within the Parish Council, people, land and buildings. Cllr Watkins stated that he is not in favour of lone working especially in relation to the Leisure Centre which he felt needed a further risk assessment undertaken. Lone working is not an acceptable risk to any council employee. Cllr Watkins stated that the risk assessment

needed to be adapted for each individual.

The Chairman stated that this also related to lone working supervisors at the Barn, Cllr Diamond stated that Councillors were also at risk and advice would be if you feel unhappy you should step away from it. Cllr Watkins suggested that the Council sends the draft policy to the Council's insurers.

The Acting Clerk said that whilst this was an excellent start, both staff and councillors will need to be interviewed as to their views and these could be incorporated within procedures attached to the policy. The Acting Clerk stated that there was a lot of work to be carried out and indicated that there may be a cost implication that Members should be aware of. It was pointed out that a lone working incident had occurred previously with the member of staff unharmed but shaken.

It was AGREED by all that the adoption of the Lone Working Policy be DEFERRED allowing the Parish Clerk to check with the Council's Insurance Company obtaining their written view on the draft Policy. The Parish Clerk to ensure that there be a HEALTH & SAFETY ITEM put on future agendas so that this draft and procedures could be discussed. The Parish Clerk to write to all members of staff regarding their personal safety whilst at work.

FG150/02/17 PERSONNEL, PENSIONS & TRAINING**

The Chairman reported that the temporary Neighbourhood Plan Officer would be leaving post on the 16th February 2017. Arrangements are in place regarding the advertising of this vacancy and others within the Parish Council. Other arrangements are being put in place to ensure the continuity of the Neighbourhood Plan by way of a possible temporary appointment until a suitable candidate is found.

The staffing advertisements have appeared for three weeks in the District Posts, Job Centre and via Twitter, Facebook and the Parish Council website, with only limited response.

Members NOTED the information provided.

FG151/02/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting will be **Wednesday, 8th March 2017.**

The meeting closed at 9.29pm.