

**The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 7.30 pm.**

**Chairman: Mr P. Buckley**

**Councillors: Mr L. Apted Mr K. Diamond  
Mrs P. Flores-Moore Mr A. Green  
Mr B. Greening Mr M. Neale  
Ms O'Toole-Quinn Mrs C. Vickers  
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: Four**

**FG180/02/16 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.**

Mr Diamond commented that the render on the Village Surgery did not give a good impression of the entrance to Lintot Square, this being stained green due to algae. The Deputy Clerk reported that this is being dealt with by the District Council.

Mrs Vickers reported that she had met with residents in Fairbank Rd, who were also not happy with the outer cladding on the blocks.

Mr Diamond reported that trees had been cut down in the footpath section of Easteds Lane. The Deputy Clerk advised that she was not aware of any TPOs in that area, and there were different land owners in that area; she would ask a member of staff to check the exact location.

Mr Condé, local resident, said that the tree surgeons had taken down the post stopping traffic in Easteds Lane, and had been using chain saws.

Mr Condé said that he would like to compliment the Council on organising the painting of double yellow lines around the junction of Station Rd and Cripplegate Lane. Inconsiderate parking had caused issues in the past, with pedestrians having to walk in the road, so it is hope that the restrictions on parking will

resolve the matter.

Mr Condé said that the vegetation around Easteds Barn needed attention; nettles were prevalent in summer months. When he was an employee of the Council, he would undo drain covers and clear the drains, but this is no longer being done. The area needed attention on a regular monthly basis, in his opinion.

Mr Buckley said that the Council had advertised for volunteers to assist in tending the beds etc at the Barn but none had come forward. He will look into the matter.

The Deputy Clerk advised that the Community Pay Back team had done work at the Barn in the past.

Mr Vincent, local resident, in relation to the agenda item “Personnel, Pensions and Training” asked if staff received training, as he was concerned about the number of staff leaving recently. Mr Buckley said that he could not comment on the reasons why individuals had left the council; however, staff also received training.

The Deputy Clerk advised Councillors that at the last meeting, it was suggested that a St George’s flag be flown on occasion, and she wished to clarify which occasions or days this was to be.

**It was agreed that the St George’s flag would be flown on St George’s day, and that the cost of an additional flag pole would be ascertained in order for it to be flown every day in conjunction with the Union Jack.**

**FG181/02/16 APOLOGIES**

There were apologies from Mr Cole and Mr Watkins. Mrs Flores-Moore will be arriving late.

The Deputy Clerk would like to clarify the giving of apologies. These must notified to the office by 2pm of the day of the meeting to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk do not check answerphone messages or emails when they come in to set up for a meeting, so apologies sent after 2pm will not be picked up. If in doubt, the Deputy Clerk suggested that members may like to advise that they will be arriving late, then in the event that they do not get to the meeting in time, their apologies will be minuted.

**Members noted the Deputy Clerk’s advice.**

**FG182/02/16 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.**

**FG183/02/16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reported that government officials from Whitehall, in particular from the Dept of Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Cabinet Office and the Dept of Health, came to visit Southwater last week to see how a parish council operates. Southwater was chosen as it is considered to be one of the top ten councils in the country for its progressive outlook and innovative partnership working.

Our visitors said that they were confident that the wealth of information that they took away will give a positive platform on which to build sustainable links with other departments and to promote the key role parish councils play in delivering policy and local services.

Amongst other issues that the Parish Council raised was the matter of double taxation, whereby the council has to use part of the precept received from the District Council to pay rates back; parish councils are not eligible for business rates.

Both Whitehall and the Parish Council will be issuing press releases about the visit.

**FG184/02/16 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.**

**FG185/02/16 MINUTES**

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.**

**FG/186/02/16 ONGOING MANAGEMENT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

The Deputy Clerk reported that there was no firm date for the Clerk's return to work. She had met with Mr Buckley and Mrs Flores-Moore to plan for the ongoing management of the Parish Council during the long term absence of the Clerk.

This plan will run until the end of March, and will be re-assessed if the Clerk has not returned by this date.

At this meeting, the possibility of appointing a locum Clerk was discussed, a matter which had also been suggested to Trevor Leggo of SSALC. It thought by all parties that there was no need to appoint a Locum, as the Deputy Clerk was considered to be able to take on the role of Acting Clerk in the interim.

**It was RESOLVED that the Deputy Clerk would be appointed Acting Clerk until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, or until such time as the Clerk is considered to be fully fit for work.**

It was considered that there was no need to take on additional administration staff, but the Deputy Clerk herself may be required to work extra hours to cover the work.

It was agreed that the Visioning Project would be postponed until the summer of 2016, which will still give sufficient time to allow for budgetary considerations to be drawn up in time for budget discussions in October.

Other matters discussed needing the Committee's input will be considered during the course of this meeting for approval or ratification.

Mrs Vickers asked if the Deputy Clerk would be able to attend a meeting the following day on parking issues at Christ's Hospital; the Deputy Clerk confirmed that she would be in attendance.

**FG187/02/16 ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The Deputy Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016 having provided the Cash Reconciliation, Income & Expenditure and Debtors Listing.

The Deputy Clerk reported that the month of January had been closed; however, she had to report a discrepancy in the Parish Office petty cash, in that it was £9.39 down. Efforts had been made to reconcile the difference but to no avail, she had therefore signed off the discrepancy. She has asked staff to be vigilant when accessing the petty cash tin, and to get others to check cash transactions.

**Members NOTED and APPROVED the information provided in that this was a true and correct position of the Council's financial affairs as at 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

Tender to carry out Portable Appliance Testing in all buildings

A report has been issued to Councillors in relation to quotes received from four companies to carry out Portable Appliance Testing; this being carried out every two years.

Mr Neale queried the necessity of carrying out PAT every two years. The Deputy Clerk said that guidance states that testing should be done regularly, but does not clarify what "regularly" entails. The Council has previously agreed that it should

be done every 2 years, and this was last done in January 2014.

**It was RESOLVED that CBS Electrical would be appointed to carry out PAT in all council owned building at a cost of £390 + VAT, as this is a local company. The Deputy Clerk will try to negotiate the 10% discount as suggested in the quote.**

Tender to supply new microphone system in the Chamber

This was a project that the Deputy Clerk was asked to progress, as there is an allocation in this year's budget for this.

However, it appears that whilst the original quotations required were for a new microphone system only, in December the Clerk asked for the addition of a camera. This was to be reviewed in January.

The Deputy Clerk sought clarification from Councillors as to what was required; she can then present a full report to March Finance & General Purposes Committee for a decision within the financial year.

**It was agreed that a camera was not required, but to able to audio record meetings may be advantageous. Separate microphones for each councillor were required. The Deputy Clerk would ascertain the quotes already received on this basis, and to present a report to the March meeting, to include leasing and purchase options.**

Payment of next grant contribution to Southwater Youth Project

An invoice has been received for £17,000 as the Parish Council's contribution to Southwater Youth Project. The Deputy Clerk is seeking authorisation for payment; the 2016/2017 budget refers to a £15,000 contribution. She has sought clarification from the Treasurer when Youth Project budget was formally agreed, as this is not clear in the paperwork on file; she apologised as this is something that the Clerk would have known.

The Treasurer has replied that contributions from the three partners are not equal, and that the Parish Council has been the major partner for some years i.e. since the initial start up funding ceased. The budget was tabled for the meetings in February and July 2015, and there was no indication from any of the parties that they did not accept it. As these meetings are relatively informal, there was no resolution to accept the budget.

The Deputy Clerk queried whether charitable has been attained, this being an aspiration for some months. The Treasurer replied that it had hoped that this was to be discussed at the November meeting, but this had been cancelled as many had been unable to attend.

Prior to the meeting, Mrs Flores-Moore had asked the Deputy Clerk to ascertain how much the Parish Council was paying in rates and service charge contributions for the Youth Club area in Beeson House. Year to date these were

in the region of £10,000, to be set against around £3,000 in income from hall hires etc of the room.

**It was RESOLVED to continue to hold the invoice from Southwater Youth Project until after a meeting has been held with Mr Buckley, Mrs Flores-Moore, Youth Steering Group representatives and the Deputy Clerk to discuss the Parish Council's ongoing contributions to the Southwater Youth Project. Councillors were unanimous in declaring support in general for the Youth Project, but wished to clarify the current financial situation.**

Other financial matters

Infinity Gymnastics

Infinity has written to ask for a price reduction in the light of the proposed 3% price increase in April 2016. They are a gym club, also offering parties, and are currently paying the commercial rate, and this will equate to around £25,000 of business in 2016/2017. Members are almost all Southwater residents.

Infinity points out that they offer slightly lower charges than other gym clubs, but other gyms have purpose built facilities.

**It was RESOLVED that the Council would not offer a price reduction to Infinity Gymnastics as this would create precedent, and the Council's hall hire rates are competitive. However, it was noted that Infinity is a non-profit making organisation, and as such could apply for a grant from the Parish Council. The Deputy Clerk is to send the relevant paperwork.**

Pear Techology

Pear are now offering a mapping layer of Land Registry information, showing ID numbers, which would be useful in boundary disputes. The cost of this will be a one off of £75.00.

The Deputy Clerk advised Councillors that Mr Watkins, Chair of the Planning Committee, had previously asked her to find Land Registry details for all public owned land in Southwater, so this new layer would save a lot of office time.

**It was RESOLVED that the Deputy Clerk would order the additional layer**

Beeson House Lift

The existing halogen lights in the lift are often in need of replacement, and it has been suggested that LED lights are installed. It appears that any such replacement by an electrical contractor would void the lift warranty. Schindler has provided a quotation for £840.00 ex VAT, which after negotiation has been reduced to £657.67 ex VAT.

It was generally thought that this price was very expensive to replace six bulb units.

**The Deputy Clerk was asked to ascertain the cost of replacing one halogen bulb, and one LED bulb, including labour, so a comparison can be made. This to be reported at the next meeting for a decision.**

Lighting in Main Hall

The halogen lights at the Barn were installed when it was built, so are over 15 years old.

One unit was replaced a few months ago, and now another has failed. Halogen replacements are now obsolete, and the Deputy Clerk suggested that Councillors may like to consider replacing with LED lights, which last longer, emit a brighter light and are cheaper to run.

The cost of replacing the 10 units with LED lights is £1500 ex VAT. The cost include the fittings, the labour of two men, and the use of a tower for safety reasons.

**It was RESOLVED to replace the units with LED lights at a cost of £1500 + VAT, this to be taken out of Easteds Barn ringfenced funds.**

Boar's Head Street Light

Mrs Vickers asked about the ongoing repair of the street light by the Boar's Head pub. The Deputy Clerk said that she was withholding payment of an invoice for the repair of the light, as it was still not working, apparently due to a cabling issue. She has written a formal letter of complaint about both the length of time the repair had taken, and the lack of communication between SSE Contracting, Network Power and the Parish Council as the customer.

It seem that the cable repair is imminent, but as this will require temporary traffic control lights, the Deputy Clerk awaiting confirmation that the Parish Council will not be charged for this.

**Mrs Flores-Moore arrived at 8.25pm**

**FG188/02/16 PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

The Deputy Clerk presented a payment schedules to 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016 for approval in the sum of £3992.72

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedules dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2016 be APPROVED in the sum of £3992.72**

**FG189/02/16 COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Deputy Clerk asked Councillors to consider the following grant applications, the paperwork for which having been previously circulated:

Outset Youth Action - £350

Paperwork for this application has still not been received.

Southwater Neighbourhood Network - £500

**Mrs Vickers declared an interest in this item, as she is a member of Southwater Neighbourhood Network.**

This organisation usually meets in the home of one of its members who is in a wheelchair; however, numbers have grown, and the grant is to be used for hall hire with suitable access. The group meets every six weeks.

It was felt that it would be preferable for the group to use parish premises.

**It was RESOLVED that rather than awarding a grant, the Parish Council would offer three hours of hall hire every six weeks, free of charge to Southwater Neighbourhood Network.**

Age UK - £250

This grant is to assist with the funding of the Information and Advice Service

**It was RESOLVED following a request from Councillor Watkins, who could not be present, this matter would be deferred to the next meeting.**

**FG190/02/16 POLICE MATTERS**

At the last meeting, 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. She was asked to pose some questions to ACC Smith, and he has responded as follows:

- Apart from the powers to enter licenced premises, what other additional powers, if any, would PSCOs have? PCSOs currently can only enter pubs and bars if accompanied by a police officer. They can enter off-licences without an officer. To have the power to enter all licensed premises would assist in addressing sale of alcohol to children etc
- What are the cost implications for any additional training? The cost of training is absorbed within the training programme, but the cost of abstraction has to be taken in to account.
- What impact would the new model for local policing have specifically on crime and anti-social behaviour in Southwater. The model will have a multi-layered approach, and the response will be based on Threat, Harm and Risk. Crime cannot be predicted, so it is difficult to say what impact this will have on Southwater.
- Would PCSOs be equipped with the skill set to deal with mental health issues. PCSOs will not be trained regarding mental health over and above training already given. Sussex Police are working with partners regarding

which agency is most suitable, and the Mental Health Triage Project is running in West Sussex currently.

Mr Buckley reported that the new police model is to be discussed at future HALC meeting, and suggested that after the model is published, ACC Smith should be invited to a parish council meeting.

Mr Diamond said that the Chancellor had promised that there would be no reduction in police funding, but this referred to warranted officers not PCSOs

Mr Whitear said that he had reported anti-social behaviour on the area in front of the Co-Operative store in Lintot Square, only to be told that this was district council land and therefore could not be addressed by the police.

Mrs Vickers said that this did not sound right, and asked the Deputy Clerk to find out from the District Council Estates Manager what powers the District Council had to deter such behaviour on its own land.

Mr Neale said that the powers described by ACC Smith did not apply to Southwater as Southwater PSCOs already had them.

**FG191/02/16 COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND\*\***

**Easteds Barn**

Recycling Bins

The Deputy Clerk reported that the clothing bin has been removed as requested by the Parish Council.

The District Council has now removed the glass recycling bins, as it seems that these are little used, now that glass is recycling through the blue bin domestic waste.

There remain two bins on site; one for shoes and one for books and DVDs, CDs etc. The Deputy Clerk asked if the Committee wanted these to stay or to be removed.

**It was RESOLVED that the Deputy Clerk would arrange for the removal of the two remaining recycling bins on its land at Easteds Barn. She would also ask for the directional signage indicating that the Barn was a recycling point to be removed.**

Evening parties and functions

It appears that evening parties and functions had been suspended at the Barn due to complaints from a nearby property.

At the January Full Council meeting, a resident of Nutham Lane said that he would support such parties being reinstated, as little noise could be heard outside the Barn during such events.

It was agreed at the recent Ongoing Management meeting that such events would be reinstated, and the Deputy Clerk would like this decision to be ratified. It was also agreed that Steve Brew and Tim Kidd, who are the trained function supervisors would be paid if they worked extra hours, and not take this time as lieu.

**It was RESOLVED that bookings would be taken for evening parties and functions at Easteds Barn will immediate effect, with function supervisors being paid rather than taking lieu time.**

**Southwater Leisure Centre**

Summer Fun Day

It had been provisionally agreed to hold a community Fun Day at the Leisure Centre. In progressing the project, a date of 16<sup>th</sup> July was suggested, as a fun fair could be available for the weekend.

At the recent Ongoing Management meeting, it was agreed that the community event would not go ahead, as such an event takes up considerable staff time, when the office is so short-staffed. However, it was suggested that the fun fair could still take place.

Residents local to the Leisure Centre would need to be advised, and any resulting damage from heavy vehicles accessing the football pitches would need to be made good.

Mrs Flores-Moore thought that local residents would object to the Fun Fair.

As opinion seemed to be divided, a vote was taken, and all were in favour of the Fun Fair, with the exception of Mrs Flores-Moore.

**It was RESOLVED that residents in the vicinity of the Leisure Centre would be informed of the dates of the fun fair in July, but that all activity would cease at 10pm, and all damage to the field would be repaired, both of which would be made conditions of permission.**

**Beeson House**

Horsham District Council is asking for changes to be made to the lease, to allow for easier administration of the four original tenants. The Deputy Clerk has passed details to the Council's solicitors to check the terms.

**Member noted this information.**

Car parking space

It was envisaged that the Council would have to relinquish one of its car parking spaces to the front of Beeson House to accommodate one of the new office tenants.

This has now been confirmed with the District Council, and so the space next to the bottle bank will be reallocated to a tenant of Beeson House.

**Members noted this information.**

Church Lane Premises

**Mr Buckley announced that due to the contractual nature of the matter to be discussed, the public and press would be excluded for the next item.**

**Members of the public left the meeting.**

**The next item is minuted under CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE.**

**Four members of the public returned to the meeting.**

**FG192/02/16 PERSONNEL, PENSIONS & TRAINING\*\***

There were no personnel issues to report.

**FG193/02/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting would be Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016

**The meeting closed at 9.10pm.**

