

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 7th October, 2015 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 7.30 pm.

Chairman: Mr P. Buckley

**Councillors: Mr G. Cole Mrs P. Flores-Moore
Mr A. Green Mr M. Neale
Ms.R.O'Toole-Quinn Mr G. Watkins
Mr.N.Whitear Mrs.C.Vickers**

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: Nil

FG104/10/15 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.

Mrs.Flores-Moore stated that she was delighted that the dormouse run had been replaced.

Mrs.Flores-Moore stated that she wished to bring up the fact that the promised footpath in Blakes Farm Road from the RSPCA to Hangman's Hill was still not delivered. The Clerk was asked to find out the exact position of this within the County Council Programme of Works.

Mr.Watkins advised the committee that there was continuous obstruction of the footpath and churning of verges in Millfield by a vehicle owned by Caremark of Pulborough. The Clerk was asked to write to the company concerned asking that consideration be given to the local community.

Mr.Whitear advised members of concerns about the speed of traffic on Bonfire Hill and also a vehicle which parked on the bend along with a sign which was proving to be quite dangerous. The Clerk was asked by the Members to discuss the matter with the resident to whom the vehicle belonged.

FG105/10/15 APOLOGIES

There were apologies received and noted from Mr.L.Apted, Mr.K.Diamond and Mr.S.Tresadern.

Members NOTED AND APPROVED the apologies received.

FG106/10/15 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.

Members NOTED the Clerk's comments and advice.

FG107/10/15 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Neil Whitear to his first committee meeting.

FG108/10/15 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.

FG109/10/15 MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th September, 2015 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting, following the change to the number sequencing which was incorrectly noted, plus the date of the next meeting which was incorrect.

FG110/10/15 ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 7th October, 2015 including Income and Expenditure, Bank Balances and Trade Debtors.

Transfer of Funds

The Clerk reported that it was necessary to transfer back to the Nat West Account monies for deposit following the receipt of the 2nd half of the annual precept. The Clerk would suggest that £30k be transferred.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the sum of £30k be transferred to the account; this would necessitate two signatories signing the transfer letter.

Grant Funding

A letter of thanks has been received from Victim Support in relation to the Parish Council's grant of £100. Victim Support advise that 48 new volunteers were recruited and training in Sussex since November 2013-19 of these are based in the north of Sussex. All volunteers can take additional training in domestic violence, sexual violence, homicide and hate crime.

Councillors NOTED the letter of thanks.

Insurance Premium Tax

The Clerk informed Members that following the Summer Budget the Council has been advised of an increase in the rate of Insurance Premium Tax which will rise from 6% to 9.5% from 1st November 2015; this increase will apply to all insurance premiums after this date.

The Clerk advised that she remained concerned about the loss of income in relation to the premises in Church Lane with some projects still to be delivered within the budget. Mr. Neale stated that looking at the figures, the Council was substantially underperforming. The Clerk stated that the figures to hand were to Month 5, with the Chairman indicating that this was quite the norm for the business generally performed better in the third and fourth quarters. It was hoped that a more accurate reflection to Month 6 could be produced in the next week or so.

The Clerk indicated that she would be meeting the Chairman of the Meeting to discuss budget forecasts the following week, prior to presenting some information to a working party meeting later in the month. The Chairman reminded that all the Committee had the ability to review the figures at the working party meeting. Mrs. Flores-Moore stated that it had been disappointing that in previous years only a few turned up on the evening. Mr. Buckley stated that once the working party were happy that there were no fundamental errors in the calculations, then this was then a matter for public discussion in both November and December when the local Council tax is generally set.

Members NOTED the information provided.

FG111/10/15 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Clerk presented a payment schedules to 7th October 2015 for approval in the sum of £20,713.47.

The Clerk reported a further schedule of refunds and payment of the final payment in relation to the MUGA was also presented for authorisation this figure amounted to £5,456.84.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedule dated 7th October, 2015 in the sum of £26,170.31 be APPROVED.

The Clerk informed Members that both she and the Chairman were to attend a meeting being held by Sussex Association of Local Councils and Sussex Police. A report would be provided at Full Council.

It was reported that the Worthing and Horsham Division of Sussex Police were to merge and that Chief Inspector Howard Hodges would remain the commander.

Members then discussed the pending cuts and implications for Southwater. The Chairman advised that both he and the Clerk had been invited to a meeting with the Sussex Association of Local Councils and Sussex Police to look at the future.

The Clerk indicated that she would take up the various points about lack of general statistical information and related matters. The Clerk confirmed that she had still to write to the Chief Constable on the issues discussed at the Finance Committee in September 2015.

Members NOTED the meeting to be attended and information provided.

FG113/10/15 SOUTHWATER CHRISTMAS EVENT

The Clerk reported that two local companies had offered to sponsor the main stage, these being Cubitt & West and Flackwoods, other business sponsors are being sought. The Clerk was hopeful of further sponsorship as this would be essential to provide first aid etc.

Local shops have all indicated that they will be providing gifts for the Find the Santa competition. Various local groups have been contacted and are willing to perform along with other attractions. Play Innovation have kindly indicated that they will attend with the Snooker attraction a great hit previously.

Trees and lighting by Blachere Illuminations are on order and arrangements in hand.

The Clerk indicated that and the other parties involved in the Christmas Event had put forward a West Sussex County Council Community Initiative Fund grant to assist with not only the Christmas event, but also future events and potential market for Southwater. This bid was for 25 gazebos, large staging and covering; this would save money for the organising committee going forward.

Amazon are currently offering gazebos at £55.98 each including feet at a total cost of £1399.50. Caution was advised regarding the quality of the gazebos proposed, but the Clerk stated that the committee still had to verify certain aspects of the metal.

The Committee remained grateful for the support of the volunteers, councillors, retailers and businesses in Southwater for their support on the day and prior.

Councillors NOTED that a bid had been submitted by the Southwater Events Committee which included volunteers, Southwater Community Methodist Church, Southwater Sports Club and the Parish Council.

Councillors NOTED the submission of a grant to WSCC.

The Clerk was authorised to place such orders as was necessary with the hope that the expenditure would be covered by either the budget/sponsorship of the event.

FG114/10/15 COUNCIL CHAMBER RECORDING OF MEETINGS

The Clerk apologised but indicated that whilst all quotes had been received further details requested had not as yet been forthcoming in order to evaluate the proposal. The Clerk would proposed that this matter now be discussed at the November Finance & General Purposes.

A general discussion took place about the necessity of purchasing the equipment and its need in general. During this discussion it was proposed by Mr.Watkins that perhaps the Parish Council rather than purchasing such a system consider leasing this. Mr.Whitear stated that as he was a broker perhaps he could provide some details of company whom the Parish Council could consider.

The Clerk stated that she would be happy to discuss any suggestions with Mr.Whitear and the potential for leasing the Council did currently lease the gym equipment and this company could also be a contact. Mr.Whitear would not be party to the discussions going forward because of his personal interest and stated that any lease would be on the basis that it was an operating lease with no ownership by the Council at the end of the period, other than if the Council wished to then renew or continue with the leased equipment.

Members NOTED that the proposed purchase of equipment for the recording of Council meetings would be discussed at the November Finance & General Purposes Committee. The Clerk would investigate potential leasing company's based on an operating lease for the equipment proposed; this would give greater flexibility in relation to both the sound equipment and recording facilities which going forward could be of benefit to the community at large.

FG115/10/15 LEISURE CENTRE

The Clerk advised those present of the discussions at the preceding meeting.

The discussions at the Leisure Management Sub Committee were NOTED.

Southwater Property Promotion Ltd

Notification has been received that the sale of the freehold interest in land in Church Lane has taken place from 29th September.

Members NOTED the information provided.

Beeson House and Lintot Square

The Chairman reported on a meeting held with Horsham District Council in relation to various ways the Parish Council could become involved to a greater extent in Lintot Square. The discussions also surrounded Beeson House, and permissions to alter and sub-let the new offices by the Parish Council.

It was agreed that the various proposals in relation to parking enforcement, car parking in general, landscaping would be investigated and an officer would report back to the Parish Council.

In relation to the building and permission to alter and sublet it had been agreed that subject to the Parish Council giving the District Council indemnity for any works and an agreement being issued that this would give the Council's greater flexibility without need for further recourse in the future, especially with the lease being 125 years.

Mr. Watkins suggested the wording "subject to the building being designed to the correct specifications in the first instance prior to any works being undertaken, then the Parish Council would give provide the District Council with indemnity for the works." Members were concerned that there may be issues in relation to the structure of the building not identified in the original schedule of remedial works and attached the lease which would become evident during the course of any works.

The Clerk stated that she would check the matter out with both the Council's solicitor and appointed contractor McLellan Starling who would be managing both contracts for the air conditioning and creation of a new window. The contractor to ensure that the council's contractor were operating within the regulation guidelines set by District Council.

Mr. Buckley said that the meeting had been encouraging, but as always the Council should await whether actions would be forthcoming.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk subject to the condition proposed by Mr. Watkins should provide the District Council with the required indemnity; this to be check with both insurer, consultant and solicitors acting for the Council.

FG117/10/15 PERSONNEL, PENSIONS & TRAINING**

The Clerk informed members that a new member of staff had been employed at the Leisure Centre, this member replacing a vacancy created by a recent promotion internally.

Members NOTED the current position with regard to staff.

FG118/10/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting would be Wednesday, 4th November, 2015 at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.