

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 4th June, 2014 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 Mr.S.Francis
Mr M. Neale Mr G. Watkins
Mrs J. Williamson**

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

FG39/06/14 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.

Concern was reported that the black arrow signage on the highway by the ‘S’ bend in Southwater Street, were extremely faint.

A member asked what the position of the Parish Council was in relation to the signage which was appearing around the village. The Clerk responded that this matter had been reported to her office and she had in turn referred this to both the planning authority and highways authority but had not as yet heard whether highways would like to the Parish litter team to remove these on their behalf. The Clerk would chase the matter with the relevant bodies and remove if required from areas of highway land such signage subject to planning advertising rules could not be removed from private land.

It was reported that the footway behind Eversfield was overgrown. The Clerk thanked the Member for the report and indicated that this matter had been picked up during a recent risk assessment and added to the maintenance team’s schedule.

Mr.Robert Piper asked whether the Parish Council knew where the new name “Warnham Gate” came from for the Barratt development fronting the Worthing Road came from. The Chairman indicated that this had not been provided by the Parish but agreed between the District Council and the developer. A letter has been sent to the District Council as to the lack of

consultation on this matter.

Mr.Piper advised the committee that he had another name to provide to the Clerk for the War Memorial. This related to a Mr.Chessell who had served in the First World War. The Clerk thanked Mr.Piper for the information and asked that he provide further details.

FG40/06/14**APOLOGIES**

There were apologies received and noted from Mrs.Flores-Moore, Mr.D.Nagy and Mrs.Vickers. Mrs.Flores-Moore asked whether Dr.Cash was on the committee, the Clerk responded that to the best of her knowledge Dr.Cash had not indicated that he wished to stand on a committee, but that this was being checked with the Member.

Members noted this.

FG41/06/14**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Clerk referred Member's of Council to information issued in relation to the Member's Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. This information contained a flow chart which should assist Members in reaching their decision this not being overly complicated.

The Clerk informed Members that her role was to provide impartial information and advice in relation to such matters, but that it was for the Member concerned to decide whether or not to declare an interest and what the nature of that may be. The Clerk referred Members at this point to the Nolan principles setting out standards of behaviour required by Members of a Council.

Members are advised to consider the agenda for the meeting and determine in advance if they may have a personal, prejudicial or Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any agenda item. If a Member decided they do have a declarable interest, they are reminded that the interest must be declared at the commencement of the consideration of the agenda item; or when the interest becomes apparent to them. Details of the interest will be minuted.

Where you have a Prejudicial Interest (which is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) Members are reminded that they must now withdraw from the meeting chamber after making representations or asking questions.

If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Members are reminded that they must take no part in the discussion of the item at all; or participate in any voting; and must withdraw from the meeting chamber; unless they have received a dispensation.

At this point in the meeting the Clerk reminded Members that as Councillors they could not be involved in any lobbying group otherwise they would have

declare this fact in their Registers. The reiteration of this advice follows comments overheard in relation to one particular group which had indicated that Members of Council may be involved in their lobby group behind the scenes. The Clerk was sure that this was not the case in relation to Members of the Council having received advice previously from the County Association. Should this ever be proven however, this could have a direct consequence to the member(s) concerned in relation to the Code of Conduct.

Members NOTED the Clerks comments and advice.

FG42/06/14

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman indicated that he had received a complaint from a Councillor about discussion of items not on the Agenda delaying proceedings and not allowing time for general consideration.

On that basis under it is requested that this action cease and any matter needed to be raised be put before the Clerk giving seven days notice and the councillor raising the item must be present at the meeting at which the matter is to be raised, or it will not be discussed.

This was AGREED by all present.

FG43/06/14

CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk referred members to general correspondence received and asked whether Members wished to comment on any particular item.

West Sussex County Council Bus Shelter Grant Scheme

The Clerk informed Members that should the committee wishes to go forward with a potential grant in relation to bus shelter provision then the closing date for an application would be 23rd June 2014. A short discussion took place about the previous consultation in relation to bus shelters, with the two favoured sites being undeliverable due to the fact that the sites were in private ownership; residents did not wanting a shelter outside their windows.

Councillors NOTED the information provided and asked the Clerk to evaluate possible sites and apply for other streams of funding in order to provide future facilities of benefit to the community.

FG44/06/14

MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th May, 2014 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

The Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 4th June, 2014 including Income and Expenditure and Bank Balances.

Mr. Neale asked the Clerk as to why the percentage to date on both staff expenses and marketing were considerably high at the commencement of the financial year. The Clerk stated that whilst she did not have the detailed answer to hand she would respond to the Member following the meeting. The Clerk suggested that in future with Members now receiving the information a week prior to the meeting, that Members write to her requesting such information for presentation to the meeting.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the financial information provided was a true and correct position of the Council as at 4th June, 2014 and should be APPROVED.

Members to forward any questions in relation to the Income & Expenditure or other financial documents to the Clerk 7 days prior to the meeting to allow time for the Clerk to provide an answer at the meeting.

The Clerk presented a payment schedule to 4th June, 2014 for approval.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedule dated 4th June, 2014 be approved in the sum of £5,212.69.

The Clerk stated that the general tree survey report had been received but not fully investigated, however the Clerk would like to proceed with the tendering process in relation to tree works which would be required. There were at least six trees which would need action within three months. The Clerk suggested that Members would perhaps like to further consider cutting back behind neighbouring properties to a distance of 1M from fence lines. This work had not taken place for at least eight years and should be undertaken to avoid claims for damaged fencing. A short discussion ensued after which Members agreed to tender for the works including the cutting back to boundary fences in areas in and around the woodland.

Mr. Diamond mentioned the need to cut back the pathway behind Eversfield which was becoming overgrown due to the amount of rainfall. The Clerk stated that this area amongst others had been identified on a recent Risk Assessment of Council land. This had been added to the Council maintenance teams list of areas to be trimmed back, until the larger tender produced.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Clerk tender for the relevant works as per the tree survey.

FG48/06/14

OPERATION WATERSHED

The Clerk reported that her office had received the reports in relation to the first phase of Operation Watershed which investigate various areas of flooding within the Parish. As such these were then discussed with Mr.Cole and quotations have been received in relation to all but two of the sites (these being potentially subject to development). The Clerk provided a breakdown on the costs incurred to date including the balance unspent. It was proposed to let the contract to the preferred supplier Wilbar the second phase excluding the two sites at Christ’s Hospital and Church Lane for the present.

There were land issues in relation to both the Cripplegate Lane and New Road sites and discussions would have to take place with both Burrells Estates (Cripplegate Lane), Horsham District Council (Cripplegate Lane) and the Fletcher Trust (New Road) as some of recommendations related to their land ownership. If Council agree to proceed there would possible be a small surplus left of approximately £3,000. Mr.Cole indicated that one of the issues raised in Church Lane for example as that a post had been driven through the pipe, and whilst the Church Lane area had been identified for future works suggest that this post and section of pipe be repaired.

The Clerk indicated that she intended to hold discussions with County colleagues prior to placing the order to ensure that they were fully consulted about the actions to be taken and proposed works.

Wilbar’s if awarded to the contract would be present for the negotiations with adjoining landowners and the County Council who would ultimately given the necessary permissions for the highway sections.

It was APPROVED by all present that the contract for the second phase of the Operation Watershed be awarded to Wilbar, quotations for the works having been received. This to include for the removal and replacement of a section of pipe and post in Church Lane.

FG49/06/14

POLICE MATTERS

The Clerk advised Members that the breakdown for April 2014,

April 2014 Crime Figures

Burglary	3
C/Damage	5
Other Offences	1
Theft & Handling	2

Violent Crime	3
Total	14

It was suggested that the Committee should write to the police asking the following questions, especially as the Council were aware of increasing criminal damage on its own land, the questions being:

- In the reported crimes how many of these related to anti social behaviour?
- The breakdown of the criminal damage figures
- Number of calls to Sussex Police in relation to Southwater compared to those of April 2013
- If these were not recorded, why were they not recorded?

The Clerk was asked to write to Chief Inspector Hodges in relation to the questions raised.

FG50/06/14

BY-ELECTION

The Clerk indicated that she had not as yet received the costs involved in the By-Election at which Mr.Francies had been returned. Whilst there would be costs, these will not be as high as had there been no candidates with the District Council then having had to call another election.

Councillors NOTED that the Clerk had not received the costs of the By-Election but these would be reported in due course.

FG51/06/14

STREET LIGHTING CONTRACT

Following Full Council, the Clerk confirmed that the contract had been let to SSE Contracting for a further three year period. The Clerk confirmed that Nuthurst Parish Council were happy to proceed with a further three year contract.

Members NOTED and APPROVED the contract being awarded to SSE Contracting for a further three year period.

FG52/06/14

AIR CONDITIONING

Whilst the Clerk had anticipated bringing forward a report to the Committee in June, it was likely that this would not now take place until either Full Council in June or the next committee meeting in July, due to further questions to be raised in relation to the quotations received. The Clerk would like to thank Mr.Rose of Rose Building for his invaluable advice and expertise in this matter.

Members NOTED the Clerks comments.

FG53/06/14

LEISURE CENTRE

Damaged Gym Equipment

The Clerk informed Members that damage had occurred to one of the treadmills with a customer admitting to the damage. This is not an insurance claim, and therefore the Clerk had written asking for full payment including the service visit to replace the screen. The customer has indicated that whilst he may be prepared to pay for the £180.90 (new screen) and £61.20 (fitting charge) he is unhappy about the £136.80 call out charge. The Clerk indicated to the customer that she would seek further direction from the committee. The equipment had been used in the morning by other customers; there were no reports of damage. The customer is also to view footage of the inspection of the equipment and arrangements were in hand for this to happen. This footage will only apply should no other customer be shown on the CCTV.

Members felt that as the visual check had been carried out and the fact that the customer had admitted to the damage that the Clerk should pursue payment for the full sum of £378.89 inclusive of VAT. Mr.Diamond, stated that if this was not a criminal act it was at least reckless and should be reported to the local police. Once settled the Committee wished to discuss the question of membership further. The Clerk was instructed to pursue this matter if not settled.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk pursue the customer for the full amount of £378.89 including VAT. The Clerk to report back to the Committee on whether payment is received or not.

Shower Areas

The Clerk has received one plan for the proposed shower units but the consultant is to provide another possible layout. The Clerk would report again when this second plan is received.

Councillors NOTED the Clerks comments.

Lardner Hall Lighting

In order to provide a suitable atmosphere in the Lardner Hall for functions and parties the lighting will need to be changed. It currently consists of two rows of four fluorescent lights (two bulbs per light fitting). Whilst this suits current activities it is not appropriate for functions and parties where the ability to create a more appropriate atmosphere is required. Two quotations have been received one from Volts Electrical in the sum of £3726.01 for the replacement of the current 8 twin fittings and replacement of 8 new dimmable fittings, installation of new digital dimmable control wiring and replacement of the existing light switchers with dimmer switches. The second from B&T Services outlines a different option and advocates keeping the existing lighting and supplementing it with 20 recessed dimmable LED lights in the ceiling. In additional there would be three additional emergency

lights and 12 dimmable LED around the perimeter of the room at a budgeted cost of £2,000.

The Leisure Centre Manager states that whilst there are pros and cons in relation to both systems, the replacement with twin fittings would seem to make general bulb replacement easier, be quicker to install and would mean that there was only one system to maintain. However, it appears that it may be more expensive and additional making good of the ceiling decoration would be required. It may also not be as attractive as recessed lights. The recessed option will be slightly more difficult to replace and will require slighting longer to install. However, the current lighting system would remain in situ and operate as normal for all existing clients. Mr.Brew is therefore seeking permission to tender on the basis of the B&T Services report.

Mr.Watkins, stated that it was imperative that permission be sought from the supplier to use the original quotation specification in obtaining three tenders required.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Leisure Centre Manager should tender for the option of 20 recessed LED light fittings, 3 emergency lights and 12 dimmable LED around the room as proposed in the B&T option. The Leisure Centre Manager to obtain the necessary permissions as discussed.

FG54/06/14

SOUTHWATER CYCLE ROUTE PROJECT

The Clerk reported that Mr.Nagy had met with Ruth Fletcher and that a final report had been received and circulated. The Clerk had concerns about certain assumptions in relation to development gain from a number of sites which appear to have received support at both District and County level without any formal approach by the officers to the Parish Council.

The Clerk is aware from her discussion with Mr.Nagy that some minor signage on Parish Council owned land could assist with routes in and around the village however, it has been agreed that perhaps a site meeting with colleagues from District and County not of course precluding the Cycle Network should be arranged.

During a discussion with the Clerk it was thought that her office should apply for WSCC Community Initiative Funding, seeking the support of the County Councillor for Southwater. This potential source of grant funding linking up both the potential cycling network with an outdoor gym facility situated on the green space adjacent to the Blakes Farm Road bridge.

It was AGREED that a joint meeting between County, District and Parish officers and members take place in conjunction with a representative of the Horsham Cycling Network; the Clerk to organise.

It was AGREED that the Clerk's office should pursue grant funding opportunities to support the cycling network proposed and the installation of a outdoor gym facility; this being both environmentally and socially beneficial to the community of Southwater.

FG55/06/14**SECTION 106 DEVELOPMENT GAIN**

The Clerk reported that following a meeting held in January 2014 in relation to two sites within Southwater, Trollsland and the Meadows various actions were now being put in place regarding the non collection of the Section 106 development gain. A report on the Meadows is to be put to District Council's Cabinet on Thursday, 5th June. Whilst the developer of Trollsland has been asked to pay the full sum within a six week period with interest, this includes the payment of the education contribution to the County Council as the Education Authority for the area. The Clerk's office will continue to keep Members informed of progress. It is hoped that Mr.Diamond, will attend the meeting and report back to the planning committee on the final decision by the District Cabinet. Mr.Diamond stated that it was likely he would be late in arriving at the Planning Committee meeting the following evening, if his apologies could be noted.

The Clerk confirmed that the Deputy Clerk in turn was chasing the District Council for a response to the queries raised in relation to the Martindale Section 106 development gain agreement.

The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken with the WSCC officers in the Stronger Communities team asking for a report on the current position with regard to highways, education and library gain from such agreements; this was still awaited.

Councillors NOTED the comments and information provided by the Clerk, asking that her office continue to pursue the matters discussed.

FG56/06/14**BEESON HOUSE****

The Clerk advised Members that both the Chairman of Council and Chairman of Planning and herself would be attending solicitors on Friday 6th June to signed the Head Lease of Beeson House. The Clerk confirmed that it was hoped that the final documents would be signed on the 11th June by the District Council with the go ahead to proceed in relation to the conversion of area of the building.

Mr.Diamond said that he felt that a vote of thanks to the Clerk and her team including fellow councillors, was in order in getting this matter to a final conclusion despite the problems which had been forthcoming and which had taken years to conclude.

Members NOTED the action to be taken on Friday 6th June 2014 this being a RESOLUTION of the Council.

Members provided a VOTE OF THANKS to the Clerk and Team

including Councillors, in concluding the head lease negotiations in relation to Beeson House.

FG57/06/14

COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND**

Easteds Barn

The Clerk confirmed that she had received the second invoice and payment certificate in relation to the works to the Barn. The final account received is £34,969.04 inclusive of VAT. The retention figure being £2,182.64. There will be a slight additional charge for bicycle racks/fixings required under planning consent but these will be provided prior to formal handover on 9th June. Mr.Cole stated that a Certificate of Completion had been requested from Building Control and that in his view the contractor had done an excellent job.

It was APPROVED by all present that the monies due in relation to the Barn be paid forthwith with any surplice being taken from the Council's reserves.

The Clerk stated that in additional to the build, there would be additional costs in relation to the floor which will have to be treated and re-varnished. A full fire and alarm system quoted for along with a noise limiter and triple glazed units to one of the windows. The Clerk would like to have delegated power along with Mr.Cole, Mr.Watkins and the Chairman of Finance to continue with these works in order to complete the Barn to the standards required with the view to reopening for business as soon as possible.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should obtain quotations for the additional works to ensure that the Barn were operational at the earliest opportunity these being over and above the build contract. This matter being delegated to Mr.Buckley, Mr.Cole, Mr.Watkins and the Clerk.

Larkspur Way

During the recent risk assessments undertaken on Parish owned land, this playarea was inspected and various items identified as needing urgent attention. A quotation has been received from Mr.Paxton in the sum of £1,748, and covered repairs to the side and end climber of the units, repairs to the play surface area under the swings and to the gate which is not closing correctly and could trap fingers. The Clerk confirmed that Mr.Paxton did hold engineering qualifications and was also skilled in woodwork and able to replace the parts identified. The Clerk informed Members that when comparable quotes were received in relation to a further playground repair in Warren Drive, Mr.Paxton has been cost effective.

It was APPROVED by all present that the repairs amounting to £1,748 in relation to Larkspur Way play area be carried out by Mr.Paxton.

Warren Drive Playarea

The Clerk confirmed that having discussed this previously she had managed

after some trouble to obtain a further quotation for the repairs identified in Warren Drive. This quotation was comparable (£2,056) with Mr.Paxton's being only slightly cheaper and not a local contractor.

It was APPROVED by all present that the repairs amounting to £2,123 be awarded to Mr.Paxton.

Skatepark

The Clerk indicated that the following prices had been received:-

Refurbishment Works to the Spine section of ramp Including labour and all materials	£4,305
Refurbishment works to Volcano section of ramp Including labour and all materials	£9,660
Replacement of rear cladding to A24 end of ramp including Handrail faces and handrail top timbers Including labour and all materials	£2,100
Refurbishment works to grind block to rear of ramp Including labour and all materials	£ 475
Total Cost of Refrurbishment	£16,540

The Chairman indicated that the decision to proceed with full repairs had been approved by Council. Mr.Diamond questioned how the users would be prevented from accessing the ramp during repairs possibly causing further damage. Ideally members felt that during the rebuild that any contractor should remain on site as a form of security; the contractor being responsible for security of the site during build. Mr.Cole said, that in the main the repairs were through damage but it was imperative that the Council had access to the Section 106 monies to affect a full repair.

Mr.Watkins suggested that a further quotation for fibre glass film over the surface may help to protect the structure this had been quite effective elsewhere.

It was agreed that the Clerk should hold further discussions with the potential contractor in relation to the refurbishment of the skate park with the total cost of refurbishment being £16,540. The cost of this to be taken from the Council Ring fenced reserves and repaid upon access to the Section 106 monies.

FG58/06/14

PERSONNEL & PENSIONS**

The Clerk informed Members that the Minister for the Department for Communities and Local Government had issued a local pension scheme

statement. The consultation referred to would appear to suggest that the Government view potential savings to the way in which the various schemes operate by pooling/clustering resources. It is anticipated that the West Sussex Pension Scheme will respond.

Members NOTED the comments.

FG59/06/14

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting would be Wednesday **9th July 2014.**

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.