

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 12th June 2013 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 7.30 pm.

Chairman: Mr P. Buckley

**Councillors: Mr L. Apted Mr A. Bull
Mr G. Cole Mrs P. Flores-Moore
Mr R. Jackman Mr A. Prosser-Snelling
Mr G. Watkins Mrs J. Williamson**

Co-Opted Member: Mr M. Neale

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: One

FG31/06/13 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, members of the public not being permitted to tape or film meetings of the Council.

There were no members of the press present.

Mr Jackman said that at the AGM in May, he had raised Highways issues that he had previously raised at the May Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting. Brad Watson, the County Councillor, had said that he would address all these issues, but this has not been done.

The Deputy Clerk said that as previously advised, the Highways department had just underdone another reorganisation, and the Clerk was to meet with the new officers to go over any outstanding works.

Mr Cole reported that the manhole outside the Sports Club in Church lane is still leaking, which means a blocked drain, in his opinion.

Mr Prosser-Snelling said that Councillors will have seen the exchange of emails over the Southwater Action Team's Memorandum of Understanding. He said that SWAT did not need to change its structure. Mr Bull said that he had met with Stephen Chapman, the Chair of SWAT, and the terms of the MOU had been agreed. Mr Bull was concerned that SWAT did not want to

form a Company Limited by Guarantee, but that was its choice. As the Clerk has sought legal advice on the matter, he would rather wait until her return from annual leave to finalise the matter. However, he believed that the District Council would not deal with Partnerships who did not have a correct MOU in place. Mr Prosser-Snelling said that he was aware of this.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman suspended Standing Orders to allow members of the public to speak.

Mr Piper reported that the grass has not been cut outside the Village Hall at all this year. The Deputy Clerk will contact the grass cutters.

Mr Piper said that he had noted that the County Council was inviting grant applications under Operation Watershed, and asked that the drainage system behind his house could be considered. The whole area including Chestnuts and Brookfield House was prone to flooding. In addition, Cripplegate Lane and Station Rd areas should also be considered.

A map dated 1982 showed all the drainage system in these areas; the Parish Council should have a copy of this. The Deputy Clerk said that the Parish Council was not in existence at that date, and asked Mr Piper for a copy of this map. He did not have one, but said that there should be one in the archives at County Hall.

Mr Bull said that the Parish Council would pass Mr Piper's comments regarding ongoing flooding, but there were limited funds available.

Mr Piper asked that when development was permitted in the old builders' yard, off Station Rd, that this be named after the Deacon family, who had two names on the War Memorial.

The Deputy Clerk said that this application was up for consideration at the Planning Committee tomorrow, but the Parish Council had objected to a previous application on the site. However, should this or a future application be permitted, then she would pass this name onto the Committee for consideration.

Mr Piper said that the Library project would not go ahead until after September. The Deputy Clerk asked him where he had got this information, but he was not prepared to reveal his source.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

FG32/06/13

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs Vickers due to Horsham District Council business. Mrs Flores-Moore will be arriving late.

Members noted the apologies.

FG33/06/13 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Deputy Clerk advised Members that she was still awaiting completed Register of Interest forms from Mrs Alway, Dr Cash, and Mr Prosser-Snelling these having been due by 7th June 2013.

RESOLVED that these members would have until 19th June to return documentation.

There were no declarations of interest on any item on the agenda.

FG34/06/13 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr Buckley reminded Councillors about the Civic Service to be held at the Holy Innocents Church on Sunday, 16th June commencing at 10am. He asked those Councillors who had not yet replied directly, to respond via the Clerks' Office, who could reply on their behalf.

Mr Apted and Mt Watkins said that they could attend, but the others present could not, having family commitments due to it being Fathers' Day.

Mrs Williamson said that she would be attending as a regular church goer, but not as a Parish Councillor. She was disappointed that so few Councillors were attending.

FG35/06/13 CORRESPONDENCE

The Deputy Clerk referred members to general correspondence received and asked whether Members wished to comment on any particular item. The Councillors present had no matter they wished to raise.

Members did not wish to raise any particular matter at this point.

Highways works in Lintot Square/Worthing Rd

The District Council has appointed a contractor to carry out works in the Lintot Square/Fairbank Rd/Worthing Rd area prior to adoption by the County Council. These works are due to commence on 17th June for two weeks, and included pot hole repair, kerb replacement and white line marking.

The Deputy Clerk reported that there had been another accident at the traffic lights last Friday, with one car turning into Lintot Square across the path of another. She had asked the Highways Engineer to re-paint the whites lines for the turning lane at this junction. This was not part of the proposed works, but the Highways Engineer had agreed that this extra work was necessary.

FG36/06/13

MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th May 2013 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

FG37/05/13

ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Deputy Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 12th June 2013.

She drew Councillors attention to the debtors' list, where the Library Service were shown to be owing £3072.99 and Sussex Police £737.56, both over 60 days late.

RESOLVED that the Deputy Clerk would instigate late payment charges for both these organisations.

FG38/06/13

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Deputy Clerk presented a payment schedule to 12th June 2013 in the sum of £9550.10

It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedule dated 12th June 2013 be approved in the sum of £9550.10

FG39/06/13

ARCHERY PROJECT

The Parish Council recently received a grant of £4472 from Sport England to enable it to provide Archery as an activity. This sum was to be put towards:

£2,222	Equipment
£1,000	Initial instruction (pre-training our staff)
£750	Training our own staff
£500	Marketing costs

Steve Brew, the Centre Manager has sought four quotes for the purchase of equipment, these being:

Bowsports	£2548.28
Clickers	£2223.17
Merlin	£1700.92
Quicks	£2308.33

The equipment list includes, bows, arrows, targets, maintenance equipment, netting and personal guards.

Mr Bull asked how successful the archery sessions were. The Deputy Clerk replied that all 12 places for each session were filled, with others on the

waiting list. It was an activity in which all ages could take part at the same time.

It was RESOLVED that the Council would purchase archery equipment from Merlin.

FG40/06/13

COUNCIL INVESTMENT POLICY

The Co-Operative Bank

Councillors will be aware that the Co-Operative Bank's credit rating has recently been downgraded, and it has ceased lending to new customers as a consequence.

The Clerk contacted the Co-Operative Bank to enquire what penalties would be incurred should the three sums on deposit be withdrawn early. The Bank responded that it was not possible to withdraw the deposited sums, unless the Council prove that it was in severe financial difficulty.

However, the Council does have other monies which could be placed on deposit with other financial institutions, which amount to just under £300,000. She asks that the Council consider putting two sums of £75,000 on deposit.

Enquiries with other financial institutions for deposits for six and twelve months have resulted in very low rates quoted, but some information is still awaited.

Mr Bull said that he was very uncomfortable with this response. However, he had seen reported on the Money Programme that the Co-Op movement as a whole which included the very successful funeral service, would not go bust.

Mr Buckley said that the Council reviewed its investment accounts at the time that the Co-Operative Bank took over Britannia. He was of the opinion that the Council should now open other accounts to spread the risk.

Mr Jackman said he understood that the Co-Op was also in difficulties over mortgage lending.

The Deputy Clerk was asked if she had the Co-Op's refusal to allow the monies to be removed, in writing. She replied that she believed this to be a verbal response.

The Deputy Clerk will ensure that the Co-Operative Bank puts its refusal to close investment accounts in writing.

The Clerk seeks delegated powers from the Council to allow Mr Buckley as Internal Controller and the Clerk to deposit two sums of £75,000 at the best possible rates.

It was RESOLVED by all present to give delegated powers to Mr

Buckley and the Clerk to deposit two sums of £75,000, a total of £150,000, with two separate financial institutions at the best possible rate of interest.

FG41/06/13

COUNCIL POLICIES

Dr Cash asked for this item to go on the agenda, but was not present at the meeting.

The Deputy Clerk drew Councillors attention to the list of current policies as issued at the May Annual General Meeting. She asked which of these, if any, the Committee wished to review, reminding them that amended staff contracts of employment and terms and conditions of employment were currently being Drafted.

Mr Bull said that it would be good idea to review the Council's policies regularly.

The Deputy Clerk said that the majority of the policies related to employment, and these were generally governed by legislation.

Mr Prosser-Snelling said that the list of employment-related policies was not unreasonable for an organisation of the Council's size. He suggested that the advice of AiRs HR Consultant should be sought in relation to the employment policies. The Deputy Clerk said that AiRs was indeed assisting with the re-drafting.

RESOLVED by all present, that the Deputy Clerk would provide a list of policies in date order, by the date they were last reviewed, and two of these would be reviewed every three months, with the oldest being first. Employment policies will be excluded from this review, these being governed by legislation. This to commence in September.

The Deputy Clerk will ensure that each Committee member receives a copy of the policies to be reviewed prior to the meeting.

FG42/06/13

SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2009/2014

This document was circulated prior to the meeting. The Deputy Clerk asked Councillors for their comments.

Mr Bull said that this document proved how much work the Parish Office were currently processing.

He said that the Clerk should be thanked for producing this document, at short notice.

RESOLVED that this document would be reviewed in three months' time, at the September meeting, with progress to date included.

The Deputy Clerk asked Councillors to keep their copies of this document, so as the progress report would refer to it. This would save the cost of photocopying increasing lengthy reports.

FG43/06/13

BUTTERFLY PROJECT

Dr Cash asked for this item to be put on the agenda, but was not present at the meeting.

This project relates to involving local schools with a project to run a competition to design butterflies. The winning designs will be made in acrylic and mounted on the railway bridge.

Difficulties have been experienced in arranging a meeting date that all parties could attend.

However, a meeting has now been arranged with the schools, which will take place on 24th June.

Members noted this action.

The Deputy Clerk was asked if any monies were available to improve the appearance of the bank itself. She said that this had been planted with a wide variety of wild flowers, donated by local residents. However, these were destroyed when the District Council's grass contractor inadvertently scythed the whole bank.

RESOLVED that any spare monies from the £7155 set aside for the Butterfly Project should be put towards improvements to the bank.

FG44/06/13

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

Dr Cash arrived at 8.15pm

Dr Cash asked for this item to be put on the agenda.

With regard to hall hirers, the Deputy Clerk advised that the Council's insurance policy provides third party liability cover for non-commercial ventures. Low-risk profit making organisations were required to have £5million public liability insurance, and high risk profit making organisations are required to have £10 public liability insurance. It was agreed that the Clerk would decide what activities are high risk.

This policy is working well, with all hirers now complying with the requirements. Booking levels on all halls have increased; indeed the issue is now of one trying to find space for new customers.

With regard to contractors, the Council requires proof of £10 million public liability insurance.

This is in line with other large councils in Sussex.

This policy has been discussed on two occasions during the last year.

Dr Cash said that the Council was penalising groups by requiring them to have £10 million public liability insurance. The Mayor of London only asked for £2 million, rising to £5 million for exceptional projects. The Council had lost customers through this approach.

Mr Buckley said that the policy was changed to that outlined by the Deputy Clerk, in that only high risk hirers were asked for £10 million insurance. The Clerk has been given the responsibility to decide which activities are high risk. Customers are all happy with this process.

Dr Cash said that he did not agree with the £10 million requirement for contractors. Mr Buckley said that he would not be happy to reduce this. Mr Cole said that it was not that expensive to increase insurance levels from £5 million to £10 million.

Dr Cash asked if customers were aware of the insurance requirements. The Deputy Clerk said that the information was included on every Hall Hire Agreement booking form, and that staff were happy to explain, should this be necessary.

RESOLVED by all present, that this policy should remain unchanged, but should be reviewed at the time that the Council set its annual budget.

FG45/06/13

SOUTHWATER LEISURE CENTRE

Insurance Claim

The insurance claim recently lodged by a gym customer is ongoing.

Mrs Flores-Moore arrived at 8.20pm

FG46/06/13

EASTEDS BARN

The Clerk is to meet with Planning and Environmental Health Officers at the Barn on her return from annual leave to discuss the ongoing planning application.

FG47/06/13

BEESON HOUSE

Ventilation works

Some works to the system have been carried out, but there are still some matters outstanding.

After discussions with Tony Appleby, HDC Building Maintenance Officer, it has been decided to wait until all works are complete prior to considering a

service contract.

The Deputy Clerk reported that she would be meeting with another possible service contractor the next day.

It has been suggested to the Deputy Clerk that the Council might consider removing responsibility for ventilation system from the lease agreement.

Members noted the Deputy Clerk's report.

Chamber Kitchen

The fridge in the Chamber kitchen is no longer working to the correct temperature. The Deputy Clerk advises that she will be purchasing a new fridge in the region of £110 inclusive of VAT as a replacement.

Members noted this action.

FG48/06/13

LIBRARY PROJECT

Prior to going on annual leave, the Clerk spoke to the County Council, and it appears that WSCC accept the Clerk's proposals as to how to deal with future apportionment of utility bills, but are to write to confirm this. Once this letter is received, indicating that WSCC is happy to proceed with the whole project, then the Parish Council can instruct our agent to go ahead with the building control permissions required.

It is hoped that realistically the works could commence end September/early October, provided that all tenders for works received and approved by that date.

Members noted the Deputy Clerk's comments.

FG49/06/13

COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND

Skate Park

The insurance claim relating to recent vandalism is ongoing.

An order for the next stage of the refurbishment works, together with the vandalism repairs has been placed under delegated powers with Mr Cole, for a total sum of £6,370. The insurance element of this is £695.00, with a £100 excess, and the recent grant of £6000 will cover the rest. It is hoped that the work will take place at the end of July.

Members noted this action.

The Deputy Clerk is still in discussion with the District Council in relation to permission to install a brick BBQ facility on the site.

Mrs Flores-Moore asked what the hold-up was.

It is still the intention to hold a Skate Jam event on the site in September.

FG50/06/13

PERSONNEL & TRAINING**

Friday Night Youth Club

At the last meeting the Clerk was instructed to advertise for a new member of staff to assist with the Club, as numbers had increased.

However, there has been no response to the advert, despite putting this on local notice boards, Facebook, and sending to Horsham Job Centre.

The Clerk will be meeting with the Club leader, Martin Minton to discuss the matter, but it may be that a limit is set on numbers relating to the number of staff members on duty.

Members noted the Deputy Clerk's comments.

Working Party

Dr Cash has asked for the Working Party to be disbanded, as any outstanding issues can be dealt with by the relevant committee, whether this be the HR Committee or Leisure Centre Sub-Committee.

Mrs Flores-Moore agreed with Dr Cash.

RESOLVED that the Deputy Clerk would go through the list of outstanding items from the Working Party, and assign these to the relevant existing Committee, after which time the Working Party would be disbanded.

FG51/06/13

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes Meeting will be **Wednesday, 10th July 2013.**

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.