



**(DRAFT) Finance and General Purposes Meeting  
Minutes**

Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019, 7.30pm  
Beeson House  
Lintot Square  
Southwater  
Horsham  
RH13 9LA

**Committee Members**

Cllr Michael Neale (Chairman)  
Cllr Geoff Cole (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr Ross Dye  
Cllr Pauline Flores-Moore  
Cllr Derek Moore  
Cllr Geoff Scoon  
Cllr Hayley Timson  
Cllr Claire Vickers  
Cllr Graham Watkins  
Cllr Neil Whitear



## SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

Beeson House,  
26 Lintot Square,  
Fairbank Road,  
Southwater,  
West Sussex  
RH13 9LA



Clerk: **Mrs.C.M.Tobin**  
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### MINUTES

**The Minutes of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE meeting held on Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2019 in the Council Chamber, Beeson House, Southwater, West Sussex, RH13 9LA commencing at 7.30pm.**

**Present: Chairman: Cllr M.Neale**

**Cllr G.Cole**

**Cllr.R.Dye**

**Cllr P.Flores-Moore**

**Cllr D.Moore**

**Cllr G Scoon**

**Cllr G.Watkins**

**Cllr N.Whitear**

**Clerk to the Meeting: Mrs.C.Tobin, Clerk to the Council**

**County Councillor: Not present**

**District Councillors: Not present**

**Press: Not present**

**Members of the Public: 4**

#### **FG01/04/19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*(Maximum of 2 minutes per person with an overall limit of 15 minutes)*

The Chairman asked those present to turn mobile phones to silent for the duration of the meeting, unless the phone call was deemed urgent in which case phone calls could be received with permission from the Chairman. If a member of the public wished to tape the meeting could they please indicate. In the event of a fire alarm sounding, everyone would be directed to evacuate the building via the exits indicated.

A local resident stated that he understood that all the existing councillors had been returned uncontested, and congratulated them on their new term although this would not commence until after the elections in May.

The Chairman invited any member of the public to speak, the Council having received in advance notice that one member of the public wished to do so.

The resident was concerned that there were a number of items on the agenda which would exclude any members of public who came along to the meetings. The resident referred members to other councils in the local area e.g., Billingshurst and Henfield as good models. He felt that the Council were not being transparent in its actions.

The Chairman indicated that the agenda is prepared at least a week prior to the meeting and the reason for the “stars” denoting possible exclusion of the press and public was simply that should such confidential material come in the Council could then discuss the matter rather than leave this for a further month.

The resident referred to comments made by a current councillor which did not appear to have been issued to the public. The Chairman stated that he believed that these had been finished and the first section of these would be uploaded as per other minutes, the “confidential” session would remain just so.

Councillors reiterated that the Council did comply with Transparency Regulations and Cllr Flores-Moore stated that the Council tried extremely hard to ensure that information was supplied. It was suggested that perhaps the wording at the bottom advising the public could be amended.

Cllr Watkins reminded members if they wished to change the Council’s approach to how meetings were dealt with in particular confidentiality etc., then they would have to reconsider their Standing Orders, which had been based on a model.

No other member of the public indicated that they wished to speak at this point and the Chairman moved on.

#### **FG02/04/19 APOLOGIES**

Apologies received on behalf of Cllrs Dye, Timson and Vickers. Cllr Vickers may arrive late due to other commitments.

**Councillors NOTED and APPROVED the absences.**

#### **FG03/04/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman referred Members of the Council to information issued in relation to the Member’s Code of Conduct and Standing Orders and asked whether any Member had anything of note to declare at this point in the meeting.

**The Clerk stated that there were no declarations of interest received at that point.**

#### **FG04/04/19 MINUTES**

The Chairman referring to the Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March, asked that these be approved.

**At this point the Chairman suspended Standing Orders to allow the member of public who wished to refer to the minutes to speak, this was proposed by Cllr Moore and seconded by Cllr Whitear and agreed by all present.**

The resident indicated that there was an error to Page 3, Paragraph 3 under FG172/02/19.

**Standing orders were reinstated.**

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the minutes of the 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 be accepted as a true and correct record of the meeting following the amendment to Page 3 Paragraph 3 (FG172/03/19), having been proposed by Cllr Moore, seconded by Cllr Whitear and APPROVED by all.**

#### **FG05/04/19 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman stated that the Committee were not receiving the normal financial information due to the completion of year end information being ongoing.

#### **FG06/04/19 CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman asked the Clerk to read out any correspondence received.

#### **FG07/04/19 OPERATIONAL MATTERS**

**9.1** The Chairman referred Members to the Operation Manager's report. With regard to Item 3 this is on hold until further discussion has taken place with the HR Committee.

Cllr Flores-Moore stated that she had already brought the matter of the electronic notice board to the Clerk's attention and did not intend to discuss further during the meeting. The Clerk acknowledged the comment made.

The Clerk further discussed the previous quotation discussed for the provision of the CCTV camera in the lobby of the Council office in that this would be reviewed in April 19 when funds became available. The purchase order price was £1482 plus VAT.

It is also intended to repair the hard drive of the monitoring unit at the same time, however it has been agreed with District Council that they will pay fifty per cent of the cost of this replacement.

Cllr Moore asked about the potential cost of the hard drive, the Clerk stated that she did not have this but would have thought it to be in the

region of £500-£800 but would obtain a quote and speak to District on this.

Cllr Watkins stated that following abusive comments and harassment of staff, advice as to what the Council could do to protect staff was taken, the suggestion being a camera in the lobby. Cllr Flores-Moore said that it was a sad day for the Council to have to take these precautions to prevent such abusive behaviour by members of the public; such a sad state of affairs. Councillors present concurred with this statement.

**It was proposed by Cllr Watkins, seconded by Cllr Whitear and AGREED by all present that the Clerk should progress the original order for the camera and microphone in the sum of £1482.00 + VAT. The Clerk to progress matters in relation to the provision of a new hard drive for the internal recording system.**

The Chairman referred to the Operation Manager's emails on the repair costs for the water boiler at the Leisure Centre, and stated that this should be formally ratified following receipt of the two quotations and order placed. The Chairman stated that the reason for placing the order was due to exceptional circumstances which the Council found itself in with no hot water provision at the Leisure Centre this necessitating the cancelling of some groups including the youth club on a Friday.

Cllr Watkins stated that he had asked the Operations Manager for sight of the guarantee, safety certificate etc. Cllr Moore corrected the Clerk who had described a tank when this was indeed a boiler.

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the contract be awarded to BSW in the sum of £8,570 plus VAT.**

The Clerk informed Members that Bovis Homes had also completed the necessary planning conditions on the Roman Lane site, and this was now ready for transfer; the Clerk would proceed to instruct Surrey Hills Solicitors. Cllr Scoon asked whether the necessary checks would be carried out in relation to the land transfers, the Clerk stated that this was normal procedure but that she would be asking for a ROSPA report on the condition of the play area irrespective of the fact that the District Council had approved all the conditions which had to have been met by Bovis.

## 9.2 RECOMMENDATION

**It was RESOLVED by all that the Operational Report be APPROVED with the exception of Item 3 of the Report, with Councillors RATIFYING the purchase and installation of the hot water boiler at the Leisure Centre in the sum of £8,570.**

**Councillors also APPROVED the adoption of the land at Roman Lane, subject to the necessary checks etc. with certificates being**

**received in relation to the play area. Solicitors to be appointed being Surrey Hills Solicitors.**

#### **FG08/04/19 LEISURE CENTRE**

The Chairman informed those present that due to the Election timetables and other ongoing meetings it had not been possible for the Working Party to meet in order to deliberate information to be provided by officers in order that the CIC option may be progressed.

The Chairman did inform those present that the name previously selected would have to be considered as legal consultants have advised that the name "Southwater" has been taken. Other options will be explored by the Steering Group.

Cllr Watkins stated that there were comments on the Village Facebook site in terms of what a CIC was, and he felt that a statement reflecting what a CIC was and how this would assist the Parish Council reduce the burden on the parish precept by reducing the costs on the Leisure Centre.

Cllr Moore stated that it is was important to state that this would be a separate company, and that there was nothing sub-verse in setting up the organisation it was merely for the benefit of the community.

**Councillors NOTED the information and that a Leisure Centre Steering Group meeting would be called in May 2019.**

#### **FG09/04/19 COMMUNITY WARDENS**

**9.1** The Chairman informed those present that two offers had been made to preferred candidates. It was hopeful that these candidates would commence their duties in May but this would involve a few weeks training in relation to their duties. Thereafter the team would be based in Southwater in Beeson House.

Cllr Flores-Moore stated that she felt that the Parish Council should thank Cllr Timson for her work in relation to this project, especially with her expertise which had assisted in the compilation of the rotas etc., Cllr Flores-Moore also noted the Clerk's office in the process.

#### **FG10/04/19 ELECTIONS**

**12.1** The Chairman referred to information received from the Elections Department of Horsham District Council advising Council that there would be uncontested elections for the Parish of Southwater. The Chairman reminded all members of the importance of purdah during the election period despite the information provided.

Members generally felt unhappy about the fact that the Electoral Commission had in splitting for District Council elections, also split the parish council into wards. Cllr Flores-Moore felt that this was divisive. Cllr Watkins stated that he believed, the Parish Council had been notified at the time.

**This information was NOTED by all present.**

**FG185/03/19 EASTEDS BARN\*\***

The Chairman informed all that the lease to the building had been signed with Little Barn Owls who were now progressing the planning permission works have now commenced on site.

Cllr Neale stated that a planning non material amendment application had been submitted, this being in the name of the Parish Council.

**Councillors NOTED the information provided.**

**FG186/03/19 EXISTING CHURCH LANE PROPERTY & NEW COMMUNITY BUILDING\*\***

**14.1** The Chairman indicated that it had been agreed that Little Barn Owls would continue to lease from Berkeley's the premises which is currently occupied in Church Lane; this to enable them to complete the works at Easteds Barn. It is hoped that a sharing arrangement with the Church and local scouting/guiding groups can be put in place in terms of the car park.

It was reported that Berkeley's intended to take the further extension of a six-month lease with Little Barn Owls in relation to the old church lane building. In turn they would provide this rent by way of a donation to the Parish Council. Cllr Watkins stated that there was a question of the building ownership but once again, Berkeley's were more than happy for the Parish to remove the building and have this re-sited. Cllr Watkins questioned whether Berkeley's or indeed the Parish Council would be responsible for its insurance during this six month and asked the Clerk to check on this matter with the Council's insurers. Cllr Watkins indicated that the old building was c. 87 sq.m. and valued at approximately £20k., so it was worth saving.

Cllr Neale stated that at the present time the Council were considering re-siting the old Council office on land licensed to the Parish Council at the old skate-park; this would necessitate volunteers to assist with this being dismantled as there would be a cost to this which would be hoped to avoid. Discussions were still ongoing as to this potential.

**Clerk to check on the status of the Church Lane building in terms of Insurance during the six-month period when Berkeley's would take the lease and sub-let to Little Barn Owls.**

- 14.2 The Council are awaiting the legal land transfers for this building, new skate-park/BMX track, MUGA and large play-area. The Clerk has also asked the District Council to confirm the use class for this building. The Clerk advised members that there would be commuted sums for future maintenance; when received this will be ring-fenced within the Council's accounts.

The Chairman indicated that he believed that Council had been advised by the Planning Department that the building would have use classes of D1 and D2. The Clerk was asked whether this was to be on the planning permission for the building, the Clerk to check on this for if not it would be better to have a belt and braces approach with the Parish Council putting in a planning application to ensure that the building be used for D1 and D2.

The Clerk was asked to check on a number of clauses within the new documents which followed on from those signed in 2015/16 in that the building would now be used as D1 and D2. The Clerk to also check on the future costs of the maintenance of the access road and Sports Club Car Park in terms of what was a "reasonable proportion of the costs". Cllr Scoon stated that the Parish Council should consider sinking funds for such works going forward, Cllr Cole concurred but reminded Members that the Council should be considering other buildings when discussing forthcoming budgets.

Cllr Cole during the discussion indicated that he had seen young children using the skate-park on the preceding Friday evening when he had been at the Sports Club. Cllr Watkins indicated that this information should be passed onto Berkeley's as it would be their liability should anything go wrong. The Clerk was asked to communication this breach to Berkeley's to make them aware.

Cllr Whitear stated that he and fellow colleagues had visited the site two weeks previously, and he and colleagues had been very impressed with the new building and the other amenities, he felt that the new building was slightly larger overall that Easteds Barn.

**The Clerk was asked to contact the Planning Department to ascertain whether or not the planning permission notice would have D1 and D2 classification on it and if not, then discussion a planning application being submitted to ensure future compliance and documentation in place for the wider community use.**

**The Clerk to check with legal advisors in relation to the requirement to pay "reasonable repair costs for the access road and car park" in relation to the new building and also the deletion of the nursery within the legal documentation with a more varied use defined.**

**All presented NOTED and APPROVED the information and actions being taken to transfer the land and amenities.**

#### **FG187/03/19 PERSONNEL & PENSIONS\*\***

The Chairman indicated that this matter was to be discussed by the Council's HR Meeting which would be held following this meeting at 8.30pm. Full Council will be given feedback at the next meeting of Full Council.

**Councillors NOTED and APPROVED this information.**

**At this point in the meeting a member of public asked if he could address the Council, the Chairman proposed that Standing Orders be withdrawn, this was seconded by Cllr Watkins and AGREED by all present.**

The resident advised Council that he had heard a member of Council make a racist remark during the meeting, pointing out one individual councillor. Councillors present stated that they were not aware of any offensive remark made and asked for clarification from the resident. The resident stated that it was a remark to do with sub-titles which he had interpreted to mean that the Councillor in referring to the need for sub-titles was referring to his distinct accent. Councillors stated that they had no recollection of such a remark during the meeting, the Clerk also indicated that she had not heard such a remark.

The Councillor at this point stated, that he had not made any such racist comment, but had been discussing prior to the commencement of the meeting a television programme which was being serialised and this remark was made in relation to this as he had had problems when viewing the programme in distinguishing the accents. The Councillor stated that if the resident had misunderstood his comments then he apologised but this did not relate to the resident but the television programme. The resident stated to all present that he accepted both the answer and apology.

**The Chairman reinstated standing orders at this point in the meeting.**

#### **FG188/03/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting being Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

**The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.**