

**The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 8.00 pm.**

**Chairman: Mr P. Buckley**

**Councillors: Mr L. Apted Dr.A.Cash  
Mr G. Cole Mrs.P.Flores-Moore  
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: Not present**

**FG01/04/14 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.

Mr.Neale informed the meeting that he had received a report that youths were walking down the side of the old railway bridge in Worthing Road; it was a matter of time before someone is injured. The Clerk asked had this been reported to the police at the time, Mr.Neale stated that he would be meeting with PCSO Cecil on the Friday following the committee meeting.

**The Clerk would report to PCSO Cecil.**

Mrs.Flores-Moore reported vandalism at the skate park in that there was large holes in the surfaces and litter everywhere, coupled with young people camping. Mrs.Flores-Moore said that the Council had stated before that it would close the site if vandalism took place again. Members were concerned as to the safety of young people using the facility and asked the Clerk to look at the situation.

The Clerk informed Members that she had sent a litter warden to clear the rubbish from site and that photographs would be taken. She would herself visit and assess the site first thing the next day.

**The Clerk asked to visit the skate park site to assess the situation and authorised to take the necessary measures if required to close the skate**

**park.**

**FG02/04/14**

**APOLOGIES**

There were apologies received and noted from Mr.D.Nagy and Mrs.Vickers although Mrs.Vickers was attending a District Council meeting and therefore may be late or unable to attend.

**Members noted this.**

**FG03/04/14**

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Clerk referred Member's of Council to correspondence issued in relation to the Member's Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. The reason behind the information being recirculated was due to proper concerns raised by a Member of Council as to procedures and protocols in relation to the Code, as it was felt that these may have been breached at the last Full Council Meeting. The information contained a flow chart which should assist Members in reach their decision this not being overly complicated.

The Clerk informed Members that as previously indicated 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.

Mr.Apted declared a Personal and Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 8 – Parish Community Grants due to the fact that he was a member of the Arts Club. Mr.Apted stated that in the circumstances he would leave the room.

Mrs.Flores-Moore stated that she had a personal and pecuniary in possibly Items 15 and 18, she would however leave the room during discussions.

Mr.Cole declared a personal interest in Item 8, as his wife did attend the arts club but was not a member.

**FG04/04/14**

**CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman indicated that it was important for Members to comply with all Council policies, Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. Not to do so would leave Members open to complaints being received.

The Chairman indicated that the Secretary of State is considering whether to allow the Council’s agendas to be sent by email. Currently the Clerk is required to forward these to Councillor’s home addresses. The Clerk will no doubt update Members when appropriate regulations or changes to the law when it becomes relevant.

A general discussion took place in relation to whether members could bring their iPads and other portable computer equipment and view the documents on line. The Clerk stated that the intranet was currently being tested internally. There had been a general discussion at a previous meeting about the cost of paper and the hope was to do a costing as to whether there would be value in providing all the councillors with iPads in the future for council work and papers. This matter is to be discussed at a future meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

**FG05/04/14**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Clerk confirmed that the Chief Executive of Horsham District Council had responded to the Council’s question in relation to when the District Council would be publishing its Policy on CIL. The response was that this would follow the same path as the District’s Planning Framework with the hope that both will be adopted in the Spring/Summer of 2015.

Mr.Cole stated that other authorities seem to have their schedules in place without their framework documents. The Clerk confirmed that at a recent conference the information would concur with that statement.

**Members NOTED the Clerks comments.**

Gatwick Diamond Business

The Gatwick Diamond Business, Chief Executive has written in relation to the Gatwick Airport Expansion Plans (the formal document has been received by the Parish Council). These plans are to be exhibited locally and this will be discussed briefly at Planning with the view to discussing the implications in May 2014. Gatwick Diamond Business is however

supportive of the Plans in that they believe that this is vital to the continued economic prosperity and diversity of the region, leading to infrastructure investment that will serve the airport, the business community and local population. This support is evidenced by signatories to their website <http://www.isupportgatwickexpansion.co.uk/133-campaign-backers.html>

**Members NOTED the consultation.**

NALC Policy Review Survey 2014

The Council is being asked to complete this online Survey. The Clerk would like to know whether the Committee would like her to complete this on behalf of the Council, based on her knowledge of the previously stated views of the Council?

**It was APPROVED that the Clerk complete the NALC Survey on behalf of the Council.**

The Safer West Sussex Partnership

This organisation, is conducting a survey in relation to crime and disorder and are inviting the views of local residents, businesses and partner agencies across West Sussex. The relevant posters have been displayed on Parish Notice Boards. The website: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SWSP2014>.

**It was APPROVED that the Clerk should complete the survey on behalf of the Parish Council.**

Operation Watershed

Council have been notified of a new grant funding stream in relation to Operation Watershed. The Clerk would like to know whether the Committee would like her office to apply for further monies, costings on the original contract coming in slightly above that previously budgeted. A report is currently awaited with regard to future recommendations.

**It was APPROVED that the Clerk submit a further bid on behalf of the Parish of Southwater; this complimenting the works currently being undertaken.**

**FG06/04/14**

**MINUTES**

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.**

**FG07/04/14**

**ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 including Income and Expenditure and Bank Balances.

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the financial information provided was a true and correct position of the Council as at 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 and should be APPROVED.**

**FG08/04/14**

**PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS**

**Mr.Apted declared a personal and pecuniary interests in this matter and left the room. Mr.Cole declared a personal interest in this matter.**

Southwater Art Group - £250 Grant

The Chairman welcome the Chairman of the Arts Group, Mr.Derek Golledge to the meeting and **proposed the suspension of standing orders in order to allow Mr.Golledge to speak, this was seconded and approved by all present.**

Mr.Golledge indicated that the group had applied for a community grant from the Parish Council previously, however the years had gone by and they required some assistance again in order to provide new and improved signage, exhibition stands etc.

The group normally hold their autumn exhibition in October, and generally this is extremely successful. However of late the exhibitors had depleted with the loss of members some of which had died. The Group were trying to find ways of increasing their membership through a number of different ways and had launched their biggest recruitment drive. Numbers had fallen from between 80 and 90 to 69.

The group exhibited as stated in Beeson House, school fete where they had a marquee and were discussing a possible mural with the Children & Family Centre.

Mrs.Flores-Moore questioned the need for the grant, but was informed that the groups signage and exhibition stands required refurbishment.

Mrs.Williamson asked what the annual subscription was, the response was £15 per year. Mrs.Williamson suggested that the group may like to consider raising their subscriptions slightly. Mr.Golledge stated that the fees whilst slightly lower than some, were comparable.

**It was APPROVED by all present that the Southwater Art Club be awarded a £250 Community Grant from the Parish Council.**

**Mr.Apted returned to the Chamber.**

Victim Support - £250 Grant

The Chairman said that having looked at the national accounts, the group had funds available to them. In past years the Council had supported the local organisation. A general discussion took place between Members in relation to how much support was provided within Southwater.

**It was RESOLVED by all present that on this occasion, the Council would not provide a grant.**

**FG09/04/14****ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

The Clerk presented a payment schedule to 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2014. The Clerk informed Members that due to year end this schedule had been produced on excel and there was an error in that a credit note had not been deducted. Therefore the correct figure to be approved is different from that originally issued, this being £15,806.08 including VAT.

**It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedule dated 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 be approved in the sum of £15,806.08 including VAT.**

**FG10/04/14****END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS PROCESS**

The Clerk indicated that correspondence had now been received from the appointed External Auditors, Littlejohn. The Audit day is set for the 9<sup>th</sup> June, therefore Council must discuss, recommend and approve by Full Council at the end of May; this being the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Internal Auditors have been asked to attend on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2014 and it is intended to finalise the year end account on the computer system on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2014. The Clerk would be hopeful therefore that following the internal audit to ensure that all Members have a full set of year end documentation for discussion at the May Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

**Councillors NOTED the tight deadlines.**

**FG11/04/14****SOUTH OF ENGLAND SHOW ARDINGLY 5<sup>TH</sup> – 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2014**

Following the Council's decision to put forward an application to attend the South of England Show, the Clerk confirmed that the application had been successful.

The Council has been provided with the Saturday 7th June, with exhibitors arriving able to arriving between 6am – 8am and leave at 7pm and 9pm. All four counties East and West Sussex, Surrey and Kent will be represented at the Parish Fayre. The Council would be provided with three tickets, although it would be difficult in terms of manning the marquee to swop these to others. The cost of a further set of tickets being £35, available

through the County Association.

It is for the Council to now provide display boards highlighting the services, functions and duties it undertakes. Subject to approval of the Committee the Clerk would like to proceed in producing four, 1M boards providing pictures and story lines for each activity/partnership work. The Clerk would look for local sponsors to provide the small flags used previously with Iggie so that these can be given out on the stall. Each Council are require to provide three people on the day, as there will be a requirement to man one of the fun stalls in the middle of the Fayre.

**It was APPROVED that the Clerk could incur the necessary expenditure in order to promote the work and community of Southwater Parish at the South of England Show on Saturday 7th June 2014. It was APPROVED that the Clerk should obtain a further set of tickets for the Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2014 in order that other councillors may represent Southwater.**

**FG12/04/14****POLICE MATTERS**

The Clerk referred to the report received from PCSO Cecil; this report indicated that there had been an increase of 9 incidents of reported crime over the same period of March 13 compared to that of March 14.

The Chairman suggested due to the fact that Members were concerned about the apparent rise in reported crime, that the Council monitor the figures and if these rise for April, then the Inspector McKnight be invited back to Council to explain the increase since changes were made to the policing of Southwater. Southwater only had one PCSO and he was being shared with two smaller parishes but a large land mass. Councillors were concerned about the pressure being put on the PCSO in that he was unable to cover areas due to the lack of a vehicle always being on call.

**The Clerk to monitor the police figures for Southwater and report in May 2014 the current position.**

**FG13/04/14****SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT**

Further to instructions received the Clerk stated that she had prepared the proposed wording for the submission bid to Government in relation to the Sustainable Communities Act this being.

“The proposal is in relation to the Town and Parish Council sector who own and manage community buildings to received from the relevant Rating Authority the benefit of a 100% Business Rate Relief reduction in relation to these buildings. This will enable the sector to use such savings to further invest in community services many of which are currently being reduced or devolved from principle authorities and encouraged through the Localism Act and Power of General Competence.”

**It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should submit the application on the basis of the wording provided.**

**FG14/04/14**

**BY-ELECTION**

The Clerk confirmed that ten electors from the Parish of Southwater had asked for a by-election following the resignation of Mr.Sunderland from the Council.

The Clerk confirmed that the Official Notices would be issued on the 14<sup>th</sup> April, and nominations submitted from 15<sup>th</sup> April – 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2014. The Clerk will not be aware of any candidates until the close of nominations and cannot therefore inform the Council as to what expenditure will be incurred by the public purse. On the basis of the Council's financial risk assessment, no provision was made within the Council's budget for by-election costs with none having been called to the best of the Clerk's knowledge throughout the lifetime of the Council. Such processes were normally dealt with by way of co-options, which was perfectly acceptable in terms of the law and election process should candidates not come forward at the time of the notice (certain conditions prevail).

If only one candidate stands there will be no formal election and the person will be returned uncontested. If however there are two candidates then the Council will have to meet half the expenses incurred via the European Elections (the day of the election if to be held). If candidates still fail to come forward, the process is that the District Council will call another election day and therefore in such circumstances, the public purse (local council tax) will bare the full cost of an election estimated to be in the region of £10k.

Should Councillors be aware of any potential candidates, then they should refer them to the Elections Officer at Horsham District Council for nomination papers, and to the Clerk in relation to the role of a Councillor and what this might entail as a Councillor for Southwater.

As previously advised it is better to wait and see if the election is to be contested before sending out poll cards although the Parish Council will be required to request them before the close of nominations. The potential cost of this would be in the region of £1750 plus VAT. The Clerk would like to have some direction from the Council as to their view in relation to the poll cards.

Mrs.Flores-Moore asked the Clerk whether any of the ten electors who had called the election were standing. The Clerk stated that in relation to the comment on Facebook whilst this matter had first appeared on Keep Southwater Green's Facebook site none of the individuals writing had shown an interest in standing from the comments seen. The Clerk stated that if a candidate were standing for a lobby group or politically motivated group

then the Election rules would apply in terms of registering with the Electoral Commission, but the Elections Officer would provide further information not the Clerks office.

Mrs.Flores-Moore stated that she believed that the Clerk had tried to advise those concerned of the financial implications, but that the comment had been that this should have been budgeted for. In terms of risk assessment she would refute this, for so far as the Clerk was aware there had been no by-election called since the inception of the Council. All co-options were open and transparent, and Mrs.Flores-Moore and other members were concerned as to where the money was going to come from to pay the electoral costs; the parish raising council tax! Mrs.Williamson said, that the very same people would no doubt, then criticise the Parish Council for raising the council tax in the future. Members were extremely angry about the cost to the public purse and felt that the electorate of Southwater should be informed once the election purdah had passed.

The Clerk confirmed that the Council were low on its reserves, having always kept this to the minimum.

A general discussion took place in relation to this matter and the provision or not of poll cards and the cost of the provision. However, Councillors felt that if they were to save the costs involved, then they could be accused by those who had called the poll of not being open and transparent in that there was a local election.

**It was RESOLVED that the Clerk informed the Elections Officer that the Council would like to have poll cards issued in the event of an election being called.**

**At this point in the meeting the Chairman proposed the suspension of standing orders and asked the press and public to leave the room in order that matters of a confidential and exempt nature in relation to contractual and staff matters may be discussed.**

- FG15/04/14**      **BEESON HOUSE\*\***  
**“Confidential Note”**
  
- FG16/04/14**      **COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND\*\***  
**“Confidential Note”**
  
- FG17/04/14**      **PERSONNEL & PENSIONS\*\***  
**“Confidential Note”**

**FG18/04/14            SOUTHWATER LEISURE CENTRE\*\***

**“Confidential Note”**

**At this point Standing Orders were reinstated.**

**FG19/04/14            DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting would be  
Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

**The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.**