

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 13th February 2013 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 7.30 pm.

- Chairman:** Mr.P.Buckley
- Councillors:** Mr.L.Apted Mr.A.Bull
Mrs.P.Flores-Moore
- 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
- Police:** Apologies received.

FG185/03/13 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.

Mr.Bull in responding to a question raised by Mrs.Flores-Moore indicated that he had written a personal letter to Cllr Scozzafava following comments made at previous meetings by Cllr Jackman and others as to why he had not attended any meetings of late. Mr.Bull stated that his concern was that perhaps due to business commitments or illness Mr.Scozzafava had been unable to attend; he had received no response to date.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

FG186/03/13 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dr.A.Cash, Mr.R.Jackman, Mr.A.Prosser-Snelling and Mrs.Vickers.

Members noted the apologies.

FG187/03/13 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations at this point in the meeting.

FG188/03/13 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman indicated that there still remained a vacancy on the Parish Council for a Councillor.

FG189/03/13 CORRESPONDENCE

The 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.

National Association of Local Councils

The National Association are to hold a number of one day conferences in the summer, with the London Conference being the 6th June, 2013 at the CBI Conference Centre, Centrepont. The Rt.Hon Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is confirmed as the key speaker. The Clerk advised that in the past both she and Dr.Cash had attended this conference which had been extremely informative.

It was agreed that the Clerk and Dr.Cash if available should attend this conference in London in June 2013 to keep abreast of the various changes in legislation and projects which may assist the community of Southwater.

Letter of Satisfaction

A letter has been received from a local resident congratulating the Council and in particular the Leisure Centre Manager and his team for the services provided at Southwater Leisure Centre. The resident stated he had found the team “extremely helpful and a pleasure to deal with..... and are clearly demonstrated in the efficient, contemporary services run at the Centre.”

The Clerk reported that she had now met with the resident, and had approached him in relation to the Councillor vacancy. Meanwhile the resident has made some further suggestions regarding energy saving measures which the Leisure Centre Manager will evaluate.

Members were extremely pleased to note the comments of the local resident.

Southwater Street

The Clerk reported that she had received an email from the Chief Executive of Horsham District Council in relation to land in Southwater Street, indicating that this matter would be referred back to the District Council’s Cabinet on the 21st March, 2013.

Members noted the Clerk's comments.

Larger Council's Survey

Referring to the survey received from Surrey and Sussex Association of Local Councils (SSALC) and distributed the Clerk asked whether Member's wished her to produce a response based on previously discussions in relation to the subscriptions payable. However, it would be necessary for Member's to indicate how they would like the NALC service to develop to the Town and Parish Council sector, most especially as one of the Larger Town and Parish Councils in England and Wales.

The Chairman, Mr. Buckley stated that once again it was the question of what did the Council receive in terms of value for money from NALC as an organisation, the Council could see benefits from SSALC. Unfortunately, unless you are a member organisation of NALC you cannot be affiliated to SSALC; however if the situation changed he would be in favour of withdrawing from NALC but retain services of SSALC.

Other members agreed with this viewpoint stating that the cost being one of the Larger Councils in Sussex was high; Councils did not get anything from NALC with little coming from consultations with Government, the council tax benefit u-turn by the Secretary of State being a prime example of how ineffective a voice NALC had at Government level, despite the continuous dialogue.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk complete the questionnaire which had been circulated, whilst making the point that the cost of the NALC subscriptions was not thought to be value for money compare to the local provision offered by SSALC.

NALC Consultation

The Clerk referred Members to the NALC consultation in relation to the Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) response being requested by 1st May. Members felt that the Clerk should respond to this consultation in that whilst it was the Government's intention that 25% of CIL would be passed to local communities where they had community led plans, where development was a major issue it was unlikely that those communities would actually be able to get a referendum through and therefore fail to achieve the 25% of any Levy with only 10% of the Levy being provided to support local infrastructure required when development took place. Dependent on housing numbers this could have a dramatic impact on how a community could ensure that they had adequate infrastructure to meet the future needs of that community.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should respond to the NALC Consultation on the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Community Organisers

The Clerk confirmed that as directed she had sent a letter to Locality and a meeting had been arranged between the Clerk and a Director of Locality in order to discuss concerns previously expressed. Members asked whether the Clerk had spoken to the Organisers Line Manager over matters raised by Council; the Clerk indicated that unfortunately the Line Manager had been unable to attend on three occasions when requested, although one of these occasions was down to the fact that there had been substantial snow.

It was RESOLVED that the Chairman of Council and Clerk would attend the meeting arranged with Locality.

Parish Council's Work Experience Scheme

The Clerk was delighted to announce that the Southwater Parish Council scheme whereby it was enabling young people by helping them gain essential employability skills was mentioned in a news release today by Horsham District Council. The Clerk reported that currently two young people were assisting the Council, with one leaving this week after completing eight weeks. Another young person has been lined up to commence as soon as practicable on the Work Experience Scheme.

Members were delighted to note the District Council's remarks and the scheme was progressing well and felt that the Council should continue to offer work experience when possible.

FG190/03/13

MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2013 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

FG191/03/13

ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Clerk presented to Members the Bank Reconciliation Information, Income and Expenditure and Debtors Listing to the 13th February 2013 and asked if Members had any questions.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the documents as listed and provided by the Clerk represented a true and correct reflection of the Council's financial affairs as at 13th March, 2013.

Insurance

The Clerk indicated that whilst looking at the Youth Club Steering Groups insurance details and renewals, it has become obvious that whilst the computers are insured by the Parish Council other items are insured

separately at a cost over and above that which can be achieved through the Council's insurance eg., £35. The Clerk would proposed that as much of the equipment had been purchased by the Council that it would be appropriate in this instance to insure the remainder. There was the Clerk advised an on-going issued about insurance, and a meeting had been arranged with the Church Management Group in order to formulate how to take this forward.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should insure the remaining youth club equipment with the Council's insurance company, ensuring that a complete asset list is provided.

Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

The Clerk advised Members that she had written to the Surrey & Sussex Association of Local Councils in relation to this matter, for she was concerned that having received a summary document in relation to the Act, that this could add further administrative duties to the parish office in terms of tendering and contract issues. The Clerk awaits a formal response to her request.

It was agreed that the Clerk should await further information before implementing any of the possible measures which may be required.

FG192/03/13

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Clerk presented a payment schedule to 13th March, 2013 in the sum of £35,051.59.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedules dated 13th March, 2013 be approved in the sum of £35,051.59.

FG193/03/13

COMMUNITY GRANT

Victim Support

The Clerk indicated that she had circulated the papers in relation to this request to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee.

Victim Support are seeking £250 to assist them with the recruitment, training and supervision of volunteers to provide continued services to victims of crime etc., within Southwater.

The Chairman indicated that the Clerk had requested a full set of the national association's accounts and therefore as they had already received a grant within the financial year, this matter should be deferred to April 13.

It was RESOLVED by all present, that the Council would discuss this grant application further in April 2013.

FG194/03/13 PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

The Clerk indicated that the current distributor of the Parish Newsletter had retired therefore it had been necessary to investigate others who could provide this service. This had proven difficult however a meeting had taken place with Southwater Life and they are prepared to distribute the Parish Council's newsletter at the same time as their periodical but on a quarterly basis.

The cost of distribution therefore will be £55 per thousand, with 4,000 to be distributed to include Christ's Hospital, Two Mile Ash, Salisbury Road and Denne Park which are currently excluded from the delivery run. This would be a saving of £60.

Whilst looking at these costs also, the costs for printing were also evaluated, and it appears that further savings can possibly be made, the Clerk would therefore like authorisation to negotiate new costs for printing and thereafter place the contract. The Clerk indicated that whilst it was too late for the edition to be circulated in April 13, small savings could be achieved.

It was RESOLVED by all present, that the Clerk be delegated authority to place the order for the distribution of the Newsletter with Southwater Life, and that the Clerk be further delegated authority to negotiate and place a contract in relation to the printing of the Parish Newsletter.

FG195/03/13 COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND

Leisure Centre, Boiler Room – Fire Precautions

Following comments received from the Fire Officer in relation to the boiler area in the loft space at the Leisure Centre, the Leisure Centre Manager had provided three quotations for these works.

It was RESOLVED by all present, that the contract for these works be awarded to Mr.D.Paxton in the sum of £456.

Table Tennis Area

Following previous comments the Leisure Centre Manager had provided quotations for works to provide a post and rail fencing this being 6M long and 1M high.

A general discussion took place as to the risk posed by this equipment, and it was felt that it was too early to assess the positioning of the equipment in terms of risk for since the installation the weather had been particularly inclement with little use having been made of the equipment. The Clerk

indicated that the Leisure Centre Manager had indeed highlighted this as low risk in terms of those playing on the table then running into the car park. The Committee felt that a three month period should lapse prior to making a final decision as to whether these works should proceed based on the small risk identified. Members felt that for the time being and in order to minimise the risk that the staff at the Centre should make people aware of the low risk and that suitable signage should be installed.

It was RESOLVED by all present that this matter should be further discussed in three months to see whether the risk posed requires the installation of the fencing proposed. Meanwhile suitable signage would be displayed to remind those using the table tennis table of the proximity of the car park area.

Lardner Fire Exit Doors

The Clerk indicated that the fire exit doors to this area have develop problems in that they would not close properly having become swollen. It is intended that both doors be removed, the bottom of the doors shaved, then refitted with the necessary adjustments made. Three quotations for these works have been received.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the contract for these works be placed by Fowler & Son in the sum of £85+VAT.

Play Areas

The Clerk indicated that during her annual risk assessment visit to all play area sites, it was noted that there was ever increasing areas of moss. Currently the parish personnel do not have the necessary qualifications to carry out these works, therefore contractors have been asked to quote. Two quotations having been received.

A general discussion took place regarding the proposals, with Mr.Buckley stating that he was against the use of weed killing chemicals of any sort, and that in his mind the proposal from Horsham Gardens was the most environmentally sound method, subject to this company having £10M public liability insurance in place.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Clerk should discuss with Horsham Gardens whether or not they would be willing to have in place the £10M public liability insurance required for works on the Council's play areas and if this is produced then the Clerk should place the order for the works. If however, they are unwilling to take out the additional insurance required then the contract would be awarded to the other contractor Countrywide who would use environmentally/person friendly chemicals.

Flowers to Reception – Leisure Centre

The Leisure Centre Manager has asked that the Clerk once again, speak to the Committee about the fresh flowers in the reception of the Leisure Centre, which whilst providing a focal point are causing health issues for a member of his team. Mr.Brew states that there are some first class artificial flowers which would also create the same affect, but without the health issue surrounding this. At the present time the cost of this provision being £10 per week and they are stored within the cabinet to reduce the affect on the staff member.

It was RESOLVED that the Leisure Centre Manager should continue/make arrangements for the replacement of the fresh flowers with an artificial display in the reception of the Leisure Centre.

Easteds Barn

The Clerk informed Members that following the previous meeting and a further meeting with the Council’s Consultant, it had been necessary to take forward this project in light of the sound report and reposition the fire doors to the end of the building to ensure that Building Regulations Approved Document B, could be complied with.

The Clerk indicated that Dr.Cash continued to express his concerns, but having spoken with both the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Mr.Geoff Cole who has expertise in this field it was agreed that rather than further delay any proposed works that the slight amendment would be submitted based on both the noise and building Consultants recommendations. The noise attenuation survey recommendations had also been submitted.

Members present NOTED and APPROVED the actions taken by the Clerk in this respect.

FG196/03/13 HEALTH & SAFETY

The Clerk informed members that there was nothing to report.

FG197/03/13 EMERGENCY SERVICES - POLICE, FIRE AND AMBULANCE

Police Report

Unfortunately PCSO Cecil was unable to obtain the statistical analysis to provide the figures for the Council, these not currently being available.

The Council noted the Clerk’s comments.

Fire

Nothing to report

Ambulance

Nothing to report, not having received any comments from residents,

however should Members wish to comment or report any matter the Clerk would be pleased to report this matter or concern.

Mrs.Flores-Moore advised Members that from April 2013 there was to be a new non Emergency NHS Telephone No: 111, whereby if someone was ill and did not know whether to call an ambulance or otherwise will be given advice by a professional at the other end of the phone. A general discussion took place on the health service and reduction in funding and beds within hospitals.

Councillors NOTED the comments regarding the new telephone number 111 and hope to receive the formal announcement which would come in due course.

FG198/03/13 LIBRARY PROJECT**

The Clerk informed Members that the Consultant has been asked to submit the building regulations application, based on the plans received. Copies of these plans have been submitted to both the District and County Councils for formal approval for the scheme proposed.

Mr.Bull, Chairman of the Parish Council asked whether the principle authority officers were responding in line with the timetable for works completion by the end of June. The Clerk stated that she hoped that this would be the case, but she was awaiting responses from officers on differing issues despite chasing.

Members noted the progress in relation to this project.

FG199/03/13 YOUTH PROJECT**

Commission for Rural Communities

The Clerk referred to District Cllr Sue Rodgers circular regarding youth provision in the Horsham District and the article in a report produced by the Commission for Rural Communities. Within this report, there is mention of the lead taken in providing a community youth project by Southwater, and its great success.

FG200/03/13 PERSONNEL & TRAINING**

“Confidential Note”

FG201/03/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm.