

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 3rd June, 2015 at Beeson House, Lintot Square, Southwater commencing at 7.30 pm.

Chairman: Mr P. Buckley

**Councillors: Mr.L.Apted Mr G. Cole
Mrs.P.Flores-Moore Mr.A.Green
Mr.M.Neale Mrs.C.Vickers**

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

FG52/06/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting and then highlighted the housekeeping rules and indicated that should anyone wish to film/record the proceedings could they make themselves known.

Mr.Cole stated that he had thought that the new fencing had been put in. The Clerk responded that it had and had been destroyed by persons unknown. Mr.Cole stated that perhaps it was time for the Council to consider metal fencing. The Clerk stated that she was making enquiries about a more permanent steel construction. The matter had been reported to the police and cameras were in situ.

The Clerk was asked to make enquiries about the cost of metal replacement chicane to the Leisure Centre pathway.

Mr.Neale advised the Clerk that whilst Council had agreed to change some of the proposed Full Council meetings it appeared that some of the Finance & General Meeting dates were missing from the list. The Clerk stated that she would investigate and send out again when corrected.

Mrs.Flores-Moore and Mr.Green both informed the Clerk that along the Worthing Road hedging was overhanging pavements, and asked that the Clerk report this to the relevant authorities.

FG53/06/15 APOLOGIES

There were apologies received and noted from Mr.K.Diamond and Mr.G.Watkins, Mrs.Vickers would be arriving slightly late to the meeting.

Members NOTED AND APPROVED the apologies received.

FG54/06/15 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

There were no declarations made at this point in the meeting.

Members NOTED the Clerk's comments and advice.

FG55/06/15 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that it had been confirmed that Mrs. Alway having not signed her documents in time for the meeting on the 20th May, had been advised that she was not at this time a member of the Council. This has created a vacancy which has been formally advertised. This still left the Council with three other vacancies to fill and asked Members to encourage local residents to come forward.

Members generally felt that Mrs. Alway should be advised of the vacancies and if she so wished to reapply then the Parish Council could in July co-opt her to the Council once again.

FG56/06/15 CORRESPONDENCE

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

Members NOTED the correspondence received.

Southwater Country Park – Dinosaur Island Play Facility

The Clerk indicated that matters in relation to the opening of the facility on the 11th July, 2015 were progressing. It had been agreed at meeting with District Council that the Parish Council officers present would be responsible for the skate park/skate jam competition and the risk assessment relating to this. The District Council would be responsible for the risk assessment for the park and associated areas affecting the opening. Arrangements with other persons involved were progressing well and sponsorship gained to enable a staging and walkie talkies for car parking attendants.

However the Clerk had received numerous contacts via the Parish Council's Facebook site to which response have been given. The main complaints being the need for toilet facilities close to the area, dogs being allowed to enter the area, concern about the footways to and from the area and issues relating to the café. Over and above this, the Dinosaur Island has been well received by the public with some coming from as far as Hastings to visit. This has caused additional pressures as highlighted to the District Council by the Parish Council in relation to the car parking

with the main car park additional spaces not ready by the soft opening. The Clerk had advised those commenting on Facebook to contact the District Council's officers in relation to their comments, but had passed these onto the relevant officers.

The Clerk informed Members that a local resident living opposite the country park in Millstraight has complained in writing to the Parish Council about the amount of vegetation that had been cut back to the Millstraight car park with the 'tacky' signage, again this has been sent to the District Council for comment. Another has complained to both Parish and District Council about the loss of cowslips something they visited the park for over the years again this was forwarded to officers.

Mrs.Flores-Moore in commenting on the proposals for the 11th July, felt that with so many people possibly attending that the District Council's officers should consider a lifeguard being on duty for the entire event especially at the beach area.

Mr.Cole expressed concerns about the parking situation in that whilst he recognised that the District Council had put out bollards in Station Road, this one issue had been the main concern of the Parish Council and highlighted as such at the very beginning of the project. Mr.Cole also asked whether the small café near the Dinosaur Island was permanent or removed each evening; it was thought that this was left overnight. Another concern noted from users of the park surround the provision of toilets which whilst this facility may be difficult to manage should have been thought through initially.

The Clerk asked that should Members not have indicated that availability for the event in terms of car park marshalling could they do so to the office.

Councillors NOTED the information provided with the Clerk, asking the Clerk to ensure that the Risk Assessment in relation to the Parish Council's area of responsibility is completed.

Mrs.Vickers arrived at 7.50 pm., with apologies for being late this being due to District Council business.

Horsham Member of Parliament

Following the Elections the Council wrote to all those returned congratulating them on their appointments. The newly elected MP for Horsham, Mr.Jeremy Quin has thanked the Council for its letter and looks forward to working closely with the Council in future.

Horsham District Councillor – Dr.J.Chidlow following his re-election as a District Councillor for Southwater. Dr.Chidlow looks forward to continued good relations with the Parish Council and staff.

The Clerk reported that a thank you letter had also been received from Dr.Chidlow.

Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill

The Clerk referred Members to this Bill, a pilot of this approach being based in Manchester.

FG57/06/15 MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th April, 2015 be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting, following the change to the number sequencing which was incorrectly noted. The Clerk informed Members that the final sequence number was incorrect and should be amended according.

FG58/06/15 ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Clerk provided Members with information on the current financial position of the Council to 3rd June, 2015 including Income and Expenditure, Bank Balances and Trade Debtors.

The Clerk stated that she was pleased to confirm that since the figures for the meeting were issued both she and the new accounts assistant had closed February's accounts. A copy of the Month 2 figures would be provided to all Members of Council the following day for information.

Neighbourhood Plan – Highways Consultant RGP

The Clerk stated that the planning committee asks that consideration be given to the consultant attending on behalf of the Parish Council, the Horsham District Council Planning Framework Inspection meetings to be held in early July. Whilst her office had tentatively asked the consultant to keep these days free, there would be an additional cost and the Clerk's office is attempting to obtain this potential fee. In addition if the Council requires further consultation and response to the WSCC response to the report produced then again this response was not quoted for within the original fees.

Mr.Cole stated that having gone this far in the process it was a given that the Parish Council should pursue all avenues including attendance at the Horsham District Council Planning Framework Inspection meetings at the beginning of July.

Mrs.Vickers declared an interest in this item, due to her role as the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities at Horsham District Council.

Members discussed this matter and felt that the Parish Council should await the information requested by the Clerk from the consultant, and that any future instruction is delegated to the Chairman of Council, Vice Chairman of Council, Chairman of Planning, Vice Chairman of Planning and the Vice Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Clerk.

It was RESOLVED by all present with the exception Mrs.Vickers who had declared an interest in the matter, that the Clerk obtain the relevant quotation from the Highways Consultant as to the various meetings which the Council wished them to attend. Thereafter matters in relation to costs and instruction to be DELEGATED to Members as described in conjunction with the Clerk.

FG59/06/15 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Clerk presented a payment schedules to 3rd June, 2015 for approval in the sum of £48828.77 this included the April 2015 salaries, direct debits and function deposits paid in May 2015.

Mrs.Flores-Moore stated that having brought up the issue of non payment previously in relation to Southwater Football Club, asked what action had been taken. The Clerk stated that she had written to the Chairman of the Football Club who is also the Chairman of the Sports Club. The Clerk had also spoken informally on the matter with the Vice Chairman of the Sports Club.

Mr.Cole said that it was disappointing that again Southwater Football Club had once again not paid the Council's invoice; he did not think that the same financial situation was experienced by Southwater Cricket Club. He was of the opinion that the Cricket Club would not wish to be associated with such matters and this reflected badly on the Sports Club in general.

Mr.Buckley stated that the on-going concerns expressed previously by the Parish Council in relation to the Section 106 development gain to be granted to the Sports Club were justified. This being the second time within just a few months that the Football Club had not paid invoices relating to the use of land.

Mr.Neale questioned the invoice in relation to Schindler's; the Clerk stated that this related to the contract in place. The Clerk referred to the fact that the Beeson House lift had broken down on the day of the Elections on 7th May.

The Clerk was asked to ensure that should payment not be received 7 days following her letter, that a second letter be issued and then the Clerk should proceed with Court action to recover this money; to ensure that the Council's fiduciary duty to the public purse was maintained.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the payment schedule dated 3rd June in the sum of £48,828.77 be APPROVED.

FG60/06/15 COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION

Victim Support

The Chairman stated that the organisation was applying for £250 towards the recruitment, training and supervision of new volunteers.

After general discussions regarding the accounts for the organisation, it was thought that on this occasion that the grant would be unsuccessful. However, the organisation to represent this after a period of six months, the Council would then decide whether there were sufficient grant funds available.

It was RESOLVED by all present, that the Council would not on this occasion provide a grant of £250 but would ask the organisation to reapply in a period of six months.

West Sussex Mediation Service

This organisation was applying for £250 towards the provision of a free community mediation service for Southwater residents.

A general discussion took place in relation to the organisations accounts at which time Members felt that it should award the grant of £250 to the West Sussex Mediation Service.

It was RESOLVED by all present, that the Council would grant the requested sum of £250.

FG61/06/15 FREEDOM OF THE PARISH

The Clerk referred to the brief resume issued to all members in relation to the three proposed nominees as briefly discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting. However, as there had been no agenda item at that time discussion was deferred until the committee meeting.

Mr.Buckley, Chairman of Council felt that the proposal by Mrs.Flores-Moore that Mr. & Mrs.Piper and Mrs.Broad be considered for the honour was justified in terms of their long standing service to the community of Southwater.

It was being proposed that the awards be presented at the Parish Council Christmas Meeting, subject to the nominees accepting the invitation and award. Councillors felt however, that in future following the awards in December 2015 a two year period should follow in order not to devalue the Freedom of the Parish Honour.

It was RESOLVED that Mr. & Mrs.Robert Piper and Mrs.Audrey Broad be AWARDED the Freedom of the Parish Council at the Council’s Christmas Meeting in December 2015. The Clerk would write to the proposed nominees accordingly.

FG62/06/15 POLICE MATTERS

Southwater Crime Figures

Month	Burglary	Criminal Damage	Drugs	Theft & Handling	Violent Crime	Other	Total
January 15	7	1	2	7	11		28
February 15	2	6	1	13	0		31
March 15	2	10	1	5	15		33
April 15	2	9	1	6	9	1	28
May 15	1	7	-	7	12		27

Total Crime Comparisons 2013/2015

Years	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	17	8	15	18	15	17	27	10	4	20	21	18	190
2014	22	9	24	14	20	23	34	25	34	28	28	36	297
2015	28	31	33	28	27								

The Clerk reported that Council had been advised that the analysis now produced by Sussex Police will be produced in the same format at that for the Neighbourhood Watch.

The Clerk informed Members that following the recent operation within Southwater, it was felt that the situation was under control and therefore another PIER meeting with all parties attending would not at this time be necessary.

Councillors discussed again their on-going serious concerns regarding the increase in the crime and anti social statistics for Southwater, which since 2013 had progressively since 2013 increased as opposed to the policing for the area which had decreased due to the cuts in police numbers. Members felt that the Clerk should write to Sussex Police asking for clarification on the breakdown of figures in relation between violent crimes, domestic and or street violence.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should write to Sussex Police asking for the breakdown in terms of the figures for violent crime asking whether these related to violent crime, domestic and or street violence.

FG63/06/15 TRAINING

The Chairman confirmed that following discussions with Council in April, the Clerk had discussed with a consultant a 'blue sky thinking' training session. This event to be held on Saturday, 18th July 2015. The event will commence at 9.30 am and finish mid to late afternoon. The cost for this event being £250 plus travel costs, excluding a report, however if a report is requested by the committee then this will incur an additional cost.

Mr.Cole said that in his view it was imperative to have such an independent report and not be reliant on the Clerk. The Clerk stated that all reports issued by either herself or her deputy were indeed just that, but appreciated that in this instance, Members wished to have this produced by the independent consultant.

Members also discussed whether they wished the management team present; it was thought that this was particularly necessary. The Clerk stated that unfortunately the Deputy Clerk would be absent due to other commitments, but she would arrange for both herself and the Leisure Centre Manager to attend along with all other councillors not present at the meeting that evening. The Chairman stated that it was imperative to have as many councillors present and the Clerk should write to all Members.

The Clerk informed Members that whilst a new councillor course had been booked

for a new Member unfortunately this was now vacant and should another councillor wish to attend, then could they let the office know.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should book the Visioning Day for the 18th July, and that all members of Council be invited to attend. The Clerk was AUTHORISED to enquire as to the cost of the additional report, and that the decision relating to this cost be delegated to the Chairman of Council, Vice Chairman of Council, Chairman of Planning and the Clerk.

FG64/06/15 COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND**Beeson House

The Clerk confirmed that in tendering for the air conditioning she had been informed by the Council's consultant that the cost from the supplier had risen in the year by approximately £500 this in relation to the costs incurred by the supplier from the manufacture. This system is the one which has been specified in the planning permission obtained.

With the Committee's approval the Clerk would like to continue with the building works if this is acceptable.

The tenders had been issued in relation to the provision of the new window to the community room created during the library project. Tenders are required to be returned by 15th June, 2015.

It was RESOLVED that the additional costs were NOTED and APPROVED in relation to the progression of the final stage of the works to create a new community room and air conditioning to other parts of Beeson House.

It was RESOLVED that the matter of tenders for the creation of a new window to create a new community room be DELEGATED to the Chairman of Council, Chairman of Planning, Vice Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Clerk in order that the works may proceed prior to the Council meeting in July 2015.

Southwater 50+ Club

This non profit making community group commenced some 9 years ago upon the opening of Beeson House, as it was felt that there were insufficient local community groups offering activities for this age group within Southwater. This group was a joint enterprise with the Southwater Methodist Church and whilst the group had secured some funding, this funding has been spent over the last 9 years.

The group current charged a fee for attending the various sessions, with a small proportion going towards the rent, but this leaves the group financially stretched and those attending may find additional costs would preclude them from coming to the sessions. The Group's organiser has discussed this with the Clerk and asked whether in order to continue whether the Parish Council could provide the room free with the rental achieved of £1 per person then put into the account to help pay costs.

The Clerk was DELEGATED negotiations with the Southwater 50+ Club, with the view to the Council assisting the group for a period of one year. The Clerk to discuss with the Group Leader their ability to apply for grant funding to assist in the future with various activities.

Easteds Barn

Of late the office staff, police and fire have been called out to alarm calls at the building, the Clerk has taken the liberty of enquiring as to the cost of the provision of CCTV both to the front and back side entrance of the barn. This coverage would be for infra-red cameras, linked back to the Parish Council office monitor. The approximate cost of this work being £4,490 and whilst the council have not budgeted for this work during this financial year, the committee may wish to consider taking this forward for 2016/17.

Councillors NOTED the information provided by the Clerk and asked that this be brought forward again for discussion when budgeting for Year 2016/17.

Beeson House

The Clerk informed Members that the final instalment in relation to the library extension had now been received in the sum of £1,324.09 including VAT and was on the payment list.

Councillors NOTED the Clerks comments.

Public Open Space

The Council have acquired a cleaning kit for graffiti on land owned by the Parish Council and in order to assist with this type of work, the Clerk proposed that the Council consider the purchase of a small pressure washer. The costs were provided to members, three estimates having been obtained. Members felt that the pressure washer proposed was not substantial enough to deal with the requirements of the Council, and asked the Clerk to look for a more industrial type unit.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk purchase on behalf of the Council a pressure washer for use on the Council's land.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman asked that standing orders be raised in order that a confidential matter in relation to a commercial lease is discussed.

“Confidential Minute”

Councillors NOTED the confidential contractual information received. The Clerk to make necessary enquiries in line with these discussions.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

The date of the next Finance & General Purposes meeting would be Wednesday, 8th July, 2015. **The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.**