

SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

The Minutes of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE meeting held on Wednesday 10th May 2017 in the Council Chamber, Beeson House, Southwater, West Sussex commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Chairman: Cllr M Neale

**Cllr L Apted
Cllr R Dye
Cllr B Greening
Cllr G Watkins**

**Cllr G Cole
Cllr P Flores-Moore
Cllr C Pearce
Cllr N Whitear**

Mr D Moore, Co-Opted Non-Voting Member of Council

Clerk: Mrs C Tobin

County Councillor: Not present

District Councillors: Not present

Press: Not present

Members of the Public: None

FG20/05/17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman asked those present to turn off their mobile phones for the duration of the meeting, unless in an emergency, when they should go through the chair. In the event of a fire alarm sounding, everyone should evacuate the building via the exits indicated.

The Chairman advised that the meeting was being recorded.

FG21/05/17 APOLOGIES

There were apologies noted and agreed from Cllr Vickers and Ms Timson.

Members NOTED and APPROVED the absences.

FG22/05/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No declarations were received.

FG23/05/17 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman indicated that he had no announcements.

FG24/05/17 CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman indicated that there was no correspondence for consideration at this meeting other than that previously circulated.

FG25/05/17 MINUTES

It was RESOLVED by all present having been proposed by Cllr Watkins and seconded by Cllr Whitear that the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 12th April, 2017 be accepted as a true and correct record of the meetings.

FG26/05/17 SONIA MANGAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AGE UK HORSHAM

The Clerk apologised but indicated that The Chief Executive Officer of Age UK Horsham was ill and could not attend the meeting. A further date will be arranged and notified to members.

Members NOTED the Clerk's comments.

FG27/05/17 END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2016/17

- **To consider and recommend, for approval to Full Council, the Annual Governance Statement for 2016/17 – see attached documentation.**

The Clerk informed Members of the Committee that Section 1 of the Annual Return (the Annual Governance Statement) must be approved before Section 2 (the Annual Accounting Statements) is approved and the minutes should show clearly that this has been done.

The Clerk asked whether members wished to comment on Section 1.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Finance & General Purposes Committee RECOMMEND to Full Council on 31st May 2017 approval of Section 1 of the Annual Return the Annual Governance Statement.

- **To consider and recommend, for approval to Full Council, the Accounting Statements for 2016/17.**

Section 2 the Annual Accounting Statements as previously stated these should now be approved and the minutes show clearly that this has been done.

The Chairman asked whether members wished to comment on Section 2 of the Annual Return.

Cllr Flores-Moore asked whether the fixed assets listed in section 2 were subject to depreciation or increases in value. The Clerk explained that assets owned by the

council were not subject the depreciation rules generally applied in the commercial sector. Council assets for accounting purposes were considered to have a bought purchase price and an evaluation price for insurance purposes. The insurance value will increase depending on percentage increase of the insurance cover, normally expected to be around 3%.

Cllr Flores-Moore questioned whether appreciation would be applied to buildings owned by the council. The Clerk explained that buildings were re-valued every five or six years rather than annually and any increases would reflect that valuation. Assets may be written off with the Council's approval.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Finance & General Purposes Committee RECOMMEND to Full Council on 31st May 2017 approval of Section 2 of the Annual Return the Accounting Statement.

○ **To consider and approve the Annual Return documentation for 2016/17.**

The Clerk informed Members that they should now consider all other documentation within the pack provided to all Council Members including the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2016/17, bank reconciliation, detailed balance sheet, explanation of variances, outstanding balances at year end, creditors at year end, trial balance, income and expenditure account to year end, balance sheet at 31st March, detailed income and expenditure by budget heading, analysis of reserves, ring-fenced accounts, grants for 2016/17, internal auditor reports and recommendations, breakdown of leases and tenancies, Section 137 payments, agency work, advertising and publicity and contingent liabilities and employers contributions for each staff member in relation to pensions. Risk Management Policy 2016/17, Members Allowance for 2016/17, Year-end Journals. Precept and budget information for Year 2016/17, Zurich Insurance Policy and Asset Register.

The Clerk referred to the revised bank reconciliation sheet, which now included figures for the receipts and payments for the year.

The Chairman asked whether members wished to comment on any specific document.

Cllr Watkins highlighted for reference the last line of the Clerk's report **Internal Audit 2016/17 and Audit Response** document vis a vis *'The Council are aware that with the refurbishment of the building, that there is a potential risk in not hiring the proposed office units at market rental'*.

Members NOTED the comment.

Cllr Flores-Moore had a question regarding the ring fenced end of year figures, specifically regarding the MUGA balance showing zero after accruing a balance across the year of £3310. The Clerk explained the balance had been transferred to the general reserves.

Cllr Watkins acknowledged the achievement of the MUGA to run to a profit of £3310 this year and re-iterated that since the leisure centre does not have its own bank account the monies transferred into the general reserves will indirectly go back to the leisure centre.

The Clerk explained there was one document, the Bank Reconciliation regarding receipts and payments, which had been updated and sent out to counsellors prior to the meeting.

Cllr Watkins questioned whether loss of rent is covered under the insurance. This was confirmed by the Clerk who also explained the cover extended to things like loss of power and other business continuity activities etc.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Finance & General Purposes Committee RECOMMEND to Full Council on 31st May 2017 approval of supporting documentation relating to support the end of year Annual Return. These being, Annual Review of the effectiveness of internal audit 2016/17, bank reconciliation, detailed balance sheet, explanation of variances, outstanding balances at year end, creditors at year end, trial balance, income and expenditure account to year end, balance sheet at 31st March, detailed income and expenditure by budget heading, analysis of reserves, ring-fenced accounts, grants for 2016/17, internal auditor reports and recommendations, breakdown of leases and tenancies, Section 137 payments, agency work, advertising and publicity and contingent liabilities and employers contributions for each staff member in relation to pensions. Risk Management Policy 2016/17, Members Allowance for 2016/17, Year-end Journals. Precept and budget information for Year 2016/17, Zurich Insurance Policy and Asset Register.

FG28/05/17 ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Chairman referred Members to the meeting pack containing current income and expenditure, cash and investment reconciliation, debtors listing and payment schedules.

The meeting pack containing the financial information relating to the current financial position of the Council was APPROVED by all present.

Skatepark

The Clerk informed members that an additional payment run had been incorporated for the evening meeting to include the cost of repair for the skate park. An insurance claim regarding this vandalism has been sent to Zurich, with a further one being sent in relation to the grind-box which was not repairable. This invoice allowed for a discount on prompt payment being made.

Members NOTED and APPROVED the action taken by the Clerk

The Clerk informed members that there were no up to date figures at this point following year end due to the fact that the staff were still inputting the information for April 17. The Chairman of the Meeting said that the accounts team were he was aware working hard to bring the figures up to date following the end of year.

Councillors NOTED this information.

FG29/05/17 PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Clerk presented to Members payment schedules to 10th May 2017 in the sum of £69,725.48 plus the additional figure of £850.00.

It was AGREED by all present that the payments schedule dated 10th May 2017 in the sum of £ 70,575.48 be APPROVED.

FG30/05/17 SUBSCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

Following discussions in April with the Planning Committee it was felt that the Council should subscribe to the Development Management Bulletin the cost of which would be £195 per annum.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Council should subscribe to the Planning Development Management Bulletin periodical at a cost of £195 per annum.

FG31/05/17 LONE WORKING POLICY

Following Council's request that the draft policy be sent to the Zurich Local Council Advisory Service, the Clerk has been informed by this body that this is one of the best examples which they had seen of late. The Clerk would therefore like to recommend the adoption of the Lone Working Policy with the omission of "management regulations" in item 1.3, in order to consult with the staff team on the policy, training and produce procedures to supplement the policy going forward.

It was APPROVED by all present that the Committee APPROVE the Lone Working Policy and that the Clerk should proceed with the necessary training and implementation of procedures to support the policy.

FG32/05/17 GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER – RUNNING FREE, CONSULTATION ON PRESERVING THE FREE USE OF PUBLIC PARKS

The Clerk referred to information supplied previously to Members on this and the media reports on the matter and asked whether the Committee wished to comment on the white paper.

Government wished to have feedback, the Clerk did not feel that this particular topic was an issue for the Parish Council.

Members NOTED this information.

FG33/05/17 LEISURE CENTRE MANAGER'S REPORT

The Clerk referred to the Leisure Centre Manager's Report No. 2 produced for Members comment. Members will note that there is no duplication of income and expenditure figures as previously reported by the Manager.

Cllr Watkins requested that figures specifying gym income and hall hire income are extended to include MUGA, sports equipment and any other income generated that can be separated out.

The leisure centre received an accident report from a member of public who had been hit in the face by a hockey ball. This was not a leisure centre organised event. The member of the public highlighted the accident to a member of the leisure centre staff who attended and made the report.

A question of monitoring activities not connected with the Council but occurring on its public open spaces should be considered. Cllr Cole highlighted the use of one such group practicing yoga on leisure centre grounds for example. The Clerk explained the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984 infers a legal responsibility to the land owner. A discussion occurred around legal responsibility, liability and contributory negligence. The Clerk stated a policy needs to be written to clarify Council procedure in these matters.

The Clerk explained that damage was sustained to a post outside the Leisure Centre apparently caused by the Southwater Parish News delivery driver. Leisure Centre staff recorded the incident and enquiries are on going to identify the driver and repair options are being pursued.

An anomaly between the number of visits received by direct debit payers and overall members was questioned. Both figures for 2016 were the same at 1232 and these figures need to be checked to verify the accuracy of the data presented.

Cllr Flores-Moore identified the increase in hall hire income by £5,452 over the year. The Council extended thanks to the Bookings Clerk for all her hard work done to generate this.

Members NOTED this information.

Leisure Centre Football Pitch Tenders

The Clerk indicated that the Leisure Centre Manager had tendered for works to repair the goals and football pitches at the Leisure Centre, due to an administration error on one of the quotations this had been held for approval until quantified.

The Clerk would recommend that the quotation from Active Grounds Maintenance be accepted as this includes the essential verti drainage to the pitches, not to do so would compromise the underground drainage ultimately resulting in loss of income as the pitches would become unplayable. The revised quotation to include this being £2,048.00 plus VAT.

This effectively means that the budget provided for this financial year would be over by £48 for this work.

It was RESOLVED by all present that the quotation from Active Grounds Maintenance be accepted in the sum of £2,048+VAT.

FG34/05/17 POLICING MATTERS RELATING TO SOUTHWATER PARISH AREA

The Chairman referred to the information provided to members prior to the meeting. Increases of note are figures for violent crime and sexual offences. The meeting with the Chief Constable has not yet taken place but the Southwater Parish Council representative is in possession of questions to ask on behalf of the Council. The Clerk explained the new Inspector is now in post and will be addressing the recent anti-social behaviour in Lintot Square.

Members NOTED this information.

FG35/05/17 COUNCIL PREMISES & LAND

Ponds in Turners Close, Eversfield and Hazel Close

The Clerk informed that the grass cutting contractor had provided a quotation of £1550 per pond and that this expenditure for Turners Close had been approved due to the health and safety implications of people accessing this area and being unable to exit. The pond in Hazel Close is a concrete based balancing pond that falls under the Council's remit. Currently trees are coming through the pond floor. Cllr Watkins suggested that as a concrete balancing pond there may be a collateral warranty on the pond, held by the original developer, worthy of further investigation.

A further quote will be sourced for the pond maintenance in Eversfield.

Members APPROVED the expenditure in relation to the ponds refurbishment in the sum of £1550 per pond by TEM the Council's grass cutting contractor. Council NOTED that these areas are to then be incorporated into the grass cutting contract.

Beeson House – Ground Floor Gents Toilets

The Clerk informed that it had been necessary to carry out a replacement of a heater the internal jacket of which had cracked and was causing leakage to the toilet area of Beeson House, the cost being £770. The heater itself had been leaking and was close to electrical circuits this was a matter of health and safety.

Members NOTED and APPROVED the expenditure of £770 and the action taken by the Clerk.

Easteds Barn

Cllr Watkins has spoken with Horsham District Councillors and the planning officer regarding the opening hours of Easteds Barn and with their support the Council would submit a planning application to amend the working hours of the Barn. The application will be completed in-house.

Members NOTED this information.

FG36/04/17 PERSONNEL, PENSIONS & TRAINING**

Staff Appraisals

The Clerk advised Members that having spoken to the appoint HR Specialist engaged previously by the Council, the Clerk would advise that the Council's appraisal system should be changed to meet changes in procedures for appraisals. The cost to provide the training for the management team and councillors would be £750 with the review of the relevant documentation a total of £520, a total sum of £1270.

It was APPROVED that the Clerk should proceed with the revised training and documentation in relation to the Council's adopted appraisal procedures and that this be provided by HR Services for the sum of £1270.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman suspended standing orders to exclude Members of the Public and Press from the meeting due to confidential matters to be discussed.

“Confidential Note”

Members NOTED the information and APPROVED the report received.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

FG37/04/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 14th June 2017.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.