

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Finance + General Purposes Committee held at 8.00pm on Thursday 9 February 2017 in the Village Centre, Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint.

Committee Members Present

Stephen Hand (Chairman)
John Lowman
Rodney Jackson

Martin Machan
Julia Shorrocks

Also Present:

Stephen Hoyles – CLERK to the COUNCIL

F16/065. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest: The following apologies for absence were received prior to the meeting and accepted: Allan Brown, Amanda Geel, Judith Marsh. The following declarations of personal interest were recorded: Stephen Hand, John Lowman, Martin Machan: Item F16/070.6 Hurstpierpoint Bowls Club – lease.

F16/066. Minutes of the meetings of Finance + General Purposes Committee of 12 January 2017: The Minutes were received and adopted and signed by the Chairman.

F16/067. Matters arising from Minutes of the Finance + General Purposes Committee of 12 January 2017: There were no matters not otherwise covered on this agenda.

F16/068. Adjournment for questions from the public: There being no members of the public present the Committee was not required to consider whether to adjourn the Meeting in accordance with clause 3(e) of Standing Orders, in order to receive questions.

F16/069. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

F16/069.1 Payments and receipts: The Committee was asked to RESOLVE to approve payment of accounts totalling £40,902.35 for month 11 (February 2017) and the total receipts of £1,888.00 for Month 10 (January 2017). (Ref: Schedule 1 and 2)

RESOLVED: The Committee approves the schedule of payments of £40,902.35 for February 2017.

F16/069.2 Financial monitoring: The Committee noted the Accounts Records for Month 10 (January 2017), in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Council, as follows:

(1) Bank reconciliation and Trial Balance Month 10 January 2017.

F16/069.3. Deposits and Investment: The Committee noted that the Council was holding the following funds on the dates shown:

Ref	Statement Date	Amount	Bank	Ref	Comment
8	31/01/2017	256,510.20	Unity Bank	'20365408	Current
1	31/12/2016	10,354.43	CCLA	'0663140001PC	Deposit
7	06/07/2015	52,140.42	Nationwide	'90001826	Deposit
	TOTAL	319,005.05			

F16/069.4 Internal Auditor: The Committee noted that the Internal Auditor has confirmed the terms of his appointment for the Financial Year 2017/18. (Ref: Mulberry & Co ltr 17 January 2017)

F16/070. CONTRACTS: The Committee was asked to note the following contracts with a cost over £500 + VAT :

F16/070.1 Streetlighting Replacement Scheme: The contract with SSE is continuing, although there have been further delays due to the wrong sizes of the 'heritage' style embellishments being manufactured. The contractor has advised that completion should be achieved by end of February. The following roads remain to be completed: Manor road, Albourne Road, Manor Gardens, Kemps, Wickham Hill, Hassocks Road. It was reported that 60 lampposts had been installed to date, with about 33 lampposts and 36 bracket lanterns remaining to be installed or completed. The Committee expressed its concern at the lack of progress and it was agreed that the contractor would be informed of the concern.

F16/070.2 High Street Improvements Scheme: Responses were awaited from WSCC regarding the introduction of advisory signs. Arrangements are in hand for the repairs to the dislodged kerbs, to allow the s278 Agreement to be sealed, but our contractor (Landbuild Ltd) is awaiting designated roadspace from WSCC.

F16/070.3 Bus Shelter – Willow Way: The Committee noted that MSDC had agreed to a s106 grant of £4,500.00 to meet the cost of the new shelter and the order had now been placed. (Ref: Finance and General Purposes Committee Minute F16/062.3; MSDC email 26 January 2017)

F16/070.4 Cemetery trees: Two tenders had been received for the removal of the eight Swamp Cypress trees in the cemetery. A site meeting had been held 31 January 2017 with the contractor offering the lowest price, but following a detailed discussion on the precautionary methods that were required for this particular job, the contractor agreed that he had not adequately priced the work and withdrew his offer. It was therefore recommended that the work is awarded to JL Trees. (Ref: BRIEFING NOTE Removal of tree – Cemetery – 31 January 2017)

RESOLVED: The work for the removal of the 8 Swamp Cypress trees in the Cemetery is awarded to JLE Trees at a price of £4,600 + VAT.

F16/070.5 Trees - land behind old telephone exchange: A quotation had been received for the pollarding of 6 ash trees at the site. This work is part of the ongoing management of this site owned by the Council. (Ref: James Wilson quote 4 December 2016)

RESOLVED: The work for the pollarding of the 6 ash trees in the telephone exchange land is awarded to James Wilson Tree Care at a price of £1,000 (no VAT applied).

F16/070.6 Hurstpierpoint Bowls Club – lease: Committee Vice-chairman Rodney Jackson chaired the meeting for this item. The agreed lease and Deed of Surrender had now been signed by both parties and were about to be engrossed. However, the Council had been advised that the Bowls Club Trustees had expressed their concern that the lease excludes the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, which gives tenants additional security of tenure beyond the end of the lease period. The Council's solicitors advise that it is their normal practice to recommend to landlord clients that such exclusion is made, to protect the interests of the landlord, and this was followed in this case. The Council now had the option of amending the lease to allow the inclusion of the Act, or to maintain the current arrangement. It was recommended that the Act remains excluded from the lease and the Bowls Club is advised accordingly. However, the Club were concerned that their significant investment in the pavilion is not matched by a sufficiently secure lease. One possible option could be to offer an extended lease period of say 30 years in place of the current 20. Legal advice had been sought and had confirmed that there was no further liability if the term was extended to 30 years. (Ref: Mayo Wynne Baxter email 30 January 2017)

RECOMMENDATION to Council: The Council's lease for the pavilion to the Hurstpierpoint Bowls Club is not amended, but consideration is given to extending the term to 30 years.

The Committee Chairman resumed the chair for the meeting.

F16/070.7 Little Park parkland – land transfer: This matter was reported to the Parkland management committee (17 January 2017) and it was noted that a meeting had been held with the landowners on 11 January 2017, with the Clerk and Council's solicitor present, to clarify a number of proposed boundary matters. The following matters had been raised (with reference to the transfer plan):

- (a) Landowners requested that the permitted pedestrian access R to S be deleted and that pedestrians utilise the public right of way 62bHU. The Clerk had refused this request.
- (b) Landowners had requested that permitted farm vehicle access across parkland from X to T be changed to a new point (C) (midway between X and B) to allow access along the existing track. It was recommended that this be agreed.
- (c) The Landowners had requested that point X be moved approximately 50 m to the east and that that section of farm track be retained in the landowners ownership. There was no material loss to the Council and it was recommended that this be agreed.
- (d) The Council would have right of pedestrian access along A to B, into the parkland. There was concern that this access was shared with the farm vehicle access along the metalled road. This section was narrow and would probably become one of the main access points to the parkland. It had therefore been suggested that a separate footpath be constructed on the north side of A to B, and fenced to prevent pedestrians straying onto the road or into the woodland. (The woodland to the north side has steep down gradients, is boggy and quite hazardous.) The Council had therefore requested that the land boundary be set immediately to the north side of the metalled road, to enable the footpath and its entrance to be in place.

The Parkland Management Committee agreed that these matters should be included in the transfer and agreement was reached with the landowners. However, the Council had now been advised that the landowners would wish to proceed with the transfer deed as currently drafted, and agreed with the housebuilders Bovis, and deal with the minor matters (a) to (d) above by way of a subsequent amendment (Deed of Grant). It was clear that the landowners and housebuilders are keen to complete the transfer, which is also in the interests of the Council, and the Council's solicitors had confirmed that the subsidiary matters could be addressed in a supplementary deed of variation.

It was therefore proposed that a RECOMMENDATION to Council is made to authorise the Chairman and one other Member to sign the Transfer Deed and Deed of Variation on behalf of the Council in accordance with Clause 22 of Standing Orders.

(Ref: Little Park Parkland transfer plan; MWB email 30 January 2017; HP&SCPC email 12 and 19 January 2017; Houlton email 19 January 2017)

RECOMMENDATION to Council: Council authorises the Chairman and one other Member to sign the Little Park Country Open Space Transfer Deed and Deed of Variation on behalf of the Council in accordance with Clause 22 of Standing Orders.

F16/070.8 Salaries – incremental increases: The Committee was asked to approve a cost-of-living increase of 1% for all staff salary grades with effect 1 April 2017. This is in accordance with National Joint Council for Local Government (NJC/NALC) as settled in May 2016 and is part of the 2-year settlement agreed to be effective 1 April 2016. Provision is in the Council's 2017/18 Budget. (Ref: NALC/SLCC advice sheet E02-16 May 2016).

RESOLVED: The NJC/NALC national salary cost of living award of 1% is applied to all staff salary grades with effect 1 April 2017.

F16/071. PROJECTS:

F16/071.1 Action List 2016/17: The Committee noted the Action List for the Council Year 2015/16. It was noted that no progress had been made on the Staff Manual. For the possible Sayers Common Reeds Lane play equipment it was agreed that a draft questionnaire would be prepared for consideration, for consultation of local residents. (Ref: ACTION LIST 2016/17 rev19 17 January 2017)

F16/072. OPERATIONS: (exception reports only)

F16/072.1 Street lighting: Nothing to report.

F16/072.2 Toilets: Following the structural surveyor report (Finance + General Purposes Committee Minute F16/056.2 8 December 2016) a structural engineer (McCary Simmonds of Steyning) had been appointed to prepare designs and specifications for the underpinning work. (Ref: McCarey Simmonds ltr 30 January 2017)

F16/072.3 Trees: Nothing to report.

F16/072.4 Cemetery: Nothing to report.

F16/072.5 Recreation Grounds: Instructions had been issued to our term maintenance contractor to install a paving slab path around the entrance to the play area in South Avenue Recreation Ground.

F16/072.6 Dog waste bins. Nothing to report.

F16/072.7 Buildings: Nothing to report.

F16/072.8 Allotments: Nothing to report.

F16/072.9 Public enquiries: The Committee was advised that the Parish Office maintains a Customer log of all public enquiries and which is available for inspection by Members.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.58 pm

Chairman
