

F and A/27.1.2020 – 002026

Minutes of a meeting of the **FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION**
Committee held on Monday 27th January 2020 at 7.30pm at
The Old Station, Groombridge

PRESENT: Councillors Nick Anderson, Diana Kelly, Marcus Tarling,
Paul Watkins (Chair), Linsey Winter

In attendance: Deborah Siddle – Parish Clerk

Members of the public are encouraged to come to the meetings and there is a 10-minute opportunity at the start of the meeting for them to address the Council. There were no members of the public present.

1. ENQUIRE WHETHER ANYONE PRESENT INTENDS TO FILM, PHOTOGRAPH AND/OR RECORD THE MEETING - None.

2. APOLOGIES - None

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – None.

4. MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2020

001823 RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2020, and these were duly signed by the Chairman

4.2 Matters outstanding from these minutes

- The Clerk reported that interest from the Nationwide account is very low and will bring alternatives to the next meeting.
- Regarding part night lighting the Clerk would seek comments from Sussex Police.
- Cllr Tarling intends to mend the Cooks Corner noticeboard and reinstall it.

Completed actions from previous minutes

Page No	Who	Action
Pg. 1910	Assistant Clerk	Wildflower verges on future Road Safety and F&A agendas
Pg. 1948	Clerk	Audit of noticeboards on future agenda
Pg. 2000	Cllr Tarling	St John's Preschool access path on future agenda
Pg. 2000	Clerk	Granted £250 to Groombridge Tennis Club towards a cabinet for their new defibrillator
Pg. 2000	Clerk	Adopted the Procedure for Bank Reconciliations
Pg. 2001	Clerk	Station Road fence and hedge included in Hedge Policy
Pg. 2001	Clerk	All WPC streetlights to part night lighting from the 2020/21 budget

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Pg. 2002	Clerk	Recommend to Council 2020/21 expenditure of £154,485 and a Precept request of £139,716
Pg. 2002	Clerk	2020/21 Training Plan circulated
Pg. 2002	Clerk	Ear marked Reserves for 2020/21 scheduled March Council

Outstanding items not on this agenda

Page No	Who	Action
Pg. 1821	Clerk	Consider Sussex Resilience Forum proforma
Pg. 1863	Clerk	Research whether Junction Inn can be registered as an Asset of Community Value
Pg. 1867	Administrative Assistant/Cllr Thirkell	Take forward Park Corner project as a volunteer project
Pg. 1867	Administrative Assistant	Gauge volunteer support for cutting back epicormic growth and if feasible as a WPV project to identify a councillor lead
Pg. 1867	Clerk/Administrative Assistant	Put a notice on the Balls Green community space gate asking for volunteers and seeking feedback on the community space.
Pg. 1867	Cllr Tarling	Speak with young people about Balls Green community space
Pg. 1908	Environment Group	Monitor the progress of PV lights until likely to be a viable option
Pg. 2000	Clerk	WPC to take ownership of Withyham defibrillator on the condition that the cabinet is accessible and not locked
Pg. 2000	Clerk	Ensure signage at Balls Green noticeboard to show defibrillator available at Kings' Hall
Pg. 2001	Parish Maintenance	Cut top of Station Road hedge and maintain fence
Pg. 2001	Clerk	Notify parishioners of part night lighting via parish notes and notices
Pg. 2002	Clerk	Pursue free opportunities for advertising the meeting rooms
Pg. 2002	F&A	Review meeting room hire at next Precept setting meeting
Pg. 2002	Cllr Anderson	Meet with the Assistant Clerk to discuss Councillor IT support

Actions from this meeting

Page No	Who	Action
Pg. 2026	Clerk	Research alternatives to Nationwide account
Pg. 2026	Clerk	Seek comments from Sussex Police on part night lighting
Pg. 2026	Cllr Tarling	Mend the Cooks Corner noticeboard and reinstall it
Pg. 2029	Clerk	Recommend to Council the updated Financial Regulations
Pg. 2029	Clerk	Recommend to Council amendments to the Scheme of Delegation
Pg. 2029	Clerk	Recommend to Council the List of Fees and Charges
Pg. 2029	Clerk	Recommend to Council the Pensions Discretions Policy
Pg. 2029	Clerk	Recommend to Council the Investment Strategy
Pg. 2029	Clerk	Adopt the Grants Policy
Pg. 2029	Clerk	Circulate the 2020/21 Grants paperwork to previous applicants and publicise its availability
Pg. 2030	Clerk	Update Council of F&A's decision to <i>not</i> pursue a request to purchase of Groombridge Recreation Ground or a longer lease
Pg. 2030	Clerk	Circulate lease and trust Deed to Committee
Pg. 2030	Clerk	Obtain quotes for Blackham bus shelter removal to be circulated on email, and for temporary fencing
Pg. 2030	Clerk	Conduct a survey online and at Blackham Market to ascertain whether an alternative should be provided to the bus shelter
Pg. 2031	Clerk	Recommend to Council that the Corseley Road ornamental lantern is moved to Newton Willows steps and a standard LED is installed at Corseley Road
Pg. 2031	Clerk	St John's Preschool access path, Wildflower verges, Blackham bus shelter, Audit of noticeboards and Policy for Treatment of WPC Planning Applications to next agenda

5. GRANTS

There were no applications to this meeting. The Clerk reported that £9,185 had been spent in 2019/20 from a Grants budget of £10,000. Applications to the March Committee meeting would be for the 2020/21 budget.

6. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

6.1 Financial Regulations - emergency expenditure limits (Staff Committee & Audit)

Following discussion, the meeting agreed the following wording to 4.5 of the Financial Regulations: "In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £5,000. The Clerk will endeavour to consult with Council Chairman or Vice Chairman and in the event that this is not possible shall report such action to the Chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter."

- 001824 RESOLVED** to recommend to Council the Financial Regulations with the above amendment.

6.2 Scheme of Delegation – authorisation of expenditure (Staff Committee)

The meeting agreed amendments to the wording of 3.2.16 and 3.2.17 as recommended by Staff Committee and the Staff Evaluation Report.

- 001825 RESOLVED** to recommend to Council amendments to 3.2.16 and 3.2.17 of the Scheme of Delegation.

6.3 Fees/Charges

- 001826 RESOLVED** to recommend to Council the List of Fees and Charges.

6.4 Pensions Discretions

- 001827 RESOLVED** to recommend to Council the Pensions Discretions Policy

6.5 Investment Strategy

The Committee noted the Clerk's preference to seek accounts that could be viewed online in order to monitor interest received. The Committee recommended that when a new account is agreed the transfer should be made in branch rather than online.

- 001828 RESOLVED** to recommend to Council the Investment Strategy

6.6 Grants Policy

- 001829 RESOLVED** to adopt the Grants Policy

The Clerk would circulate the 2020/21 Grants paperwork to previous applicants and publicise its availability.

6.7 Policy for Treatment of WPC Planning Applications

Deferred to next meeting following further research by the Clerk.

7. HEALTH & SAFETY

7.1 Fire safety

The Clerk updated the meeting that the fire alarms and emergency lighting had been installed and procedures are being put in place for tests. An independent fire risk assessment had been carried out and the report awaited.

8. GROOMBRIDGE RECREATION GROUND LEASE

Council had asked the Committee to consider whether it should make a request to purchase Groombridge Recreation Ground or obtain a longer lease. A paper had been circulated outlining similar protracted negotiations that had been undertaken in securing the current 21 year lease which has 15 years remaining. A discussion took place regarding why it might be beneficial to secure a permanent or lengthier tenure, however on balance it was recognised that this had been attempted quite recently and that re-opening such discussions could be costly and time consuming.

001830 RESOLVED to update Council that F&A Committee agreed to not pursue a request to purchase of Groombridge Recreation Ground or a longer lease until the negotiation of the next lease.

Some members of the Committee requested scanned copies of the current lease and the Trust Deed. The Committee AGREED by a majority that this should be provided to Committee members for information but that there should be no further action. Any comments that Committee members would like recorded for consideration at the time of negotiating the next lease should be held on file until that time.

9. ST JOHN'S READING ROOM LAND – feedback on path request made by Preschool

Deferred to next meeting. Cllr Tarling would meet with the Preschool Supervisor and report back so that the Clerk can obtain quotes.

10. QUOTES - Blackham bus shelter

The Clerk had obtained quotes and designs from a local company and provided these to the Committee. The Committee noted that the bus stop is rarely used and that the cost of replacement would be high. Due to the state of the current bus shelter the Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for its removal and for temporary fencing to be circulated on email for agreement. Once removed, a survey would be conducted among residents online and at Blackham Market to ascertain whether an alternative should be provided and whether an alternative purchase should be made.

11. ACCOUNTS & FINANCE

11.1 To note expenditure against budget report to January 2020 (to be circulated prior to the meeting) - Noted.

11.2 To consider virements and journals required

It was noted that some of the streetlight budgets are overspent but that virements between these and other budgets would make no material difference.

11.3 Three Year Budget – Deferred to after Business Planning.

11.4 Cashflow - Noted.

12. CLERK/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

The Clerk reported that the streetlight on Newton Willows at the step requires a new lantern and bracket. It had been suggested that it might be

a more suitable place for the ornamental lantern on Corseley Road, which has a wider coverage and has been reported to shine into the adjacent homes. Moving these lanterns would be an additional £75 on the quote for just replacing the Newton Willows one.

001831 **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that the Corseley Road ornamental lantern is moved to Newton Willows steps and a standard LED is installed at Corseley Road.

13. MATTERS OF URGENT IMPORTANCE FOR NOTING OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA –

- St John's Preschool access path
- Wildflower verges (following Road Safety Committee)
- Blackham bus shelter update
- Audit of noticeboards
- Policy for Treatment of WPC Planning Applications

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS –23rd March 2020 at 7.30pm (or 7pm should there be no Planning Committee) at The Old Station

1The meeting ended at 8.25pm