

MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD ON 10th JANUARY 2023 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllrs Lloyd (Chairman), S. Alexander, Goldsmith, Trundle, Norcross and Bell.

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Members of the Public in attendance: 0

Meeting commenced: 7:30 pm

MINUTES

ACTIONS

F&GP/22/42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

42.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Northam and Parsons. Cllr Trundle was to attend after approx. 15 minutes delay. Cllr Campbell was absent.

F&GP/22/43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

43.1 None

F&GP/22/44 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

44.1 None

F&GP/22/45 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

45.1 Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Alexander that the minutes of the meeting held on the 13th December 2022 be agreed as a true and fair record. **Agreed**
Cllr Goldsmith stated he had attempted to contact the clerk to inform of his absence at the last meeting, but the phones were not working that day at the Steyping Centre.

F&GP/22/46 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS – These items taken as read

46.1 Clerk to bring back agreed committee draft budgets for final F&GP decision- **Actioned/item 47.5**

46.2 SPC project priorities and Draft Budget brought back for final agreement – **See item 47.5**

46.3 SPC Street cleaning contract 2023 – 26 details amended – **Actioned**

46.4 SPC Street Cleaning contract application process enabled – **Actioned /item 48.3**

46.5 SPC Grass cutting contract amended and application process enabled– **Actioned/item 48.3**

46.6 SPC midterm audit letter approval processed by Clerk – **Actioned**

46.7 Audit letter recommendation – notification agreed at last meeting – **Actioned**

46.8 Newman's Gardens Proposed Car Park Development working party convened – **Actioned / See item 48.4**

F&GP/22/47 FINANCIAL MATTERS

47.1 **To approve list of payments.** Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross that the list of payments for December 2022 be approved as a correct record. **Agreed**

47.2 **I & E Reports.** Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander to agree the F&GP Income and Expenditure reports for December 2022 as a correct record. **Agreed.**

- 47.3** To agree a request for grant funding from the 'Steyping for Trees group' - £120 for a Tree Guard. **CLERK**
Cllr Goldsmith **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross to agree to pay the Steyping for Trees group £120 as per their grant request {as per supporting papers}. **Agreed**
- 47.4** **SPC 2022/23 Action Plan update.** The Clerk answered queries that were raised with regards to current SPC projects. Cllr Trundle arrived during this item.
- 47.5** **To agree the SPC Consolidated Budget for the next financial year 2023/24, which includes the Precept figure, for recommendation to SPC Full Council.** The members discussed two main options following previous discussions. Either to increase the SPC Precept figure by 2% or by 4.44%, depending on whether they thought it appropriate to reduce the annual budgetary requirements from a £14,737 increase, as per the three agreed draft committee budgetary recommendations, to a more modest £6,640 increase. The Clerk had suggested that the money could be found by not reserving £5,000 this coming year for Steyping Centre unforeseen capital expenditure (Depreciation cover) with these monies possibly being earmarked from SPC general reserves instead, and that the rest of the money could come from the annual 'Tree reports and Essential Works' budget line, as there was already additional SPC Earmarked reserves in place to deal with tree works if necessary for next year.
Members decided upon the 2% Precept increase option and to go with the Clerk's suggestion noted above. Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Trundle that F&GP recommends to SPC Full Council that the SPC Precept request will be £338,997.00. **Agreed 5 For, 1 Abstained** **CLERK**
- 47.6** **To agree to postpone 2023/24 SPC Project setting arrangements and Year End Earmarked reserves until external funding applications are determined.** The Clerk outlined why it was important to wait until at least one of the applications {from the Wilson Memorial Trust} was determined, because if those monies were not forthcoming then council would have to reconsider its whole spending strategy and project priorities for next year – with perhaps its main proposed renewal project – the MPF Play facility - having to be financed over two years from the SPC general reserves instead, and then subsequently there being little room for anything else to be spent. **CLERK**
- F&GP/22/48 GOVERNANCE MATTERS**
- 48.1** **Update concerning the Joint Parishes Youth Contract 2023 – 2026.** The clerk reported that at the Joint Parishes Youth Committee meeting the previous evening (9th January), there had been agreement to recommend to Full Council that SPC continue to use the existing service provider. The Clerk was also tasked with delegated responsibility to work with the provider to come up with a more detailed contract so that it could be agreed at committee and council level, in time for an April 23 start date. **CLERK**
- 48.2.1** **Update concerning the Steyping Clock Tower Project.** When given the project the Clerk explained he had first sought an historical perspective on what had been done before by SPC and checked office files, past documentation and correspondence.
Initial checks unearthed a scope of works and tender documents from the last time maintenance was completed by SPC, but rather puzzlingly it seemed no title deeds were available. Imagining they were archived the office pressed on with attempting to contact any interested surveyors and construction companies.
The last time SPC had maintained the Clock Tower it seems was in the Summer of 2000. It Included scaffolding, general cleaning and re painting of the Dovecote tower including the wooden louvres and specialist regilding of the weathervane and the Clock faces – Total cost £3,532.00. In the Autumn because we still couldn't locate the title deeds the deputy clerk asked in the first instance the Leaseholders, then the owners of the Freehold for assistance in the clarification as to precisely 'who owns what'. In reply and after a few conversations in early December, the owner sent through a copy of the title deeds showing that SPC do not in fact own the Clock Tower, but confirmed what the office already knew for certain and that was that SPC do have access and ownership of the clock faces and the mechanism itself.

48.2.2	This clearly completely changes the nature of the project that had been considered, and the Clerk confirmed he would be changing the SPC Asset Register accordingly plus was already in conversations to reduce the necessity for insurance cover and thereby was actively consulting with the insurance brokers to provide an amended cover policy at a reduced cost. Further to this, and in discussion with the current owner, there is ongoing correspondence about the need to complete maintenance on the building anyway, and that if this was to take place, SPC could be in a position to joint fund any scaffolding being arranged so that there is still an opportunity to complete Clock Face renovation works.	CLERK
48.3	Update concerning the SPC Grass cutting and Street Cleaning contract selection process. The clerk reported that so far, six tender documents/ contract packs have been distributed to prospective Street Cleaners. And 12 Grass Cutting tender document packs. One having already been returned. The Tenders are due to be opened at a working party meeting on the 31st of January, with an F&GP EOM taking place on the 13th of February at 6.30pm, to approve the working party's recommendation.	CLERK
48.4	Update concerning the proposed Newman's Gardens Car Park development. Cllr Lloyd updated that he, Cllr S. Alexander and the Clerk had attended a working party with representatives from the HDC Car Park Department and project management teams. They presented their plans and thought processes which led to their conclusions. Main reasons for their redesign included incorporating wider and longer bays to deal with the modern car requirements, better lighting, wider access paths and better notifications, a one-way system to alleviate obvious traffic issues, more disabled parking bays, ground works preparation for future electric charging points and some redesign and to augment the surrounding foliage / planting / landscaping. Cllr Lloyd also pointed out that on the advice of members the HDC representatives also had a subsequent meeting with Steyning and District Partnership and Steyning Business Chamber reps concerning the scheme. The draft plan was distributed as a supporting paper. The final plan is yet to be sent to the Clerk but will be forthcoming well before the project start date – This due to be late spring of this year - 2023.	CLERK
48.5	To discuss what could be included in the pre-election publicity leaflet. Cllrs S. Alexander and Trundle volunteered to work with the Clerk to come up with a draft publicity promotion which could be discussed further when completed.	CLERK & Cllrs
F&GP/22/49	PROGRESS REPORT	
49.1	F&GP/22/15.10 Clerks office produce an interim Land and Asset register whilst waiting for Registry search to be completed via the SPC solicitors. – Ongoing	CLERK
49.2	F&GP/22/38.3 Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Chair & Vice Chair of F&GP to open SPC contracts at working party meeting – See item 48.3	
F&GP/22/50	INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS	
50.1	The Clerk informed that the office had received a request for the £1500 annual grant from the Vintage years group and advised that he would process it, unless there is any objections, and that it could be agreed to be paid retrospectively at the next meeting.	CLERK
50.2	Cllr Goldsmith asked about including an item on the next Full Council agenda. - To be considered.	CLERK
F&GP/22/51	DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 14th March 2023 @7.30pm.	
	The Chair closed the meeting at 8.44pm	
	Signed Date 14 th March 2023	
	Chair	
	Here is the link to the video recording of this meeting:- https://youtu.be/Yik1dAhEBCI	