
MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD ON 13th JUNE 2023 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllrs S Alexander (Chairman), Sharp, Ballance, Foxwell and Bell.

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Members of the Public in attendance: 1

Meeting commenced: 7:32 pm

MINUTES

ACTIONS

F&GP/23/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

01.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs I Alexander, Trundle, Norcross and Campbell.

F&GP/23/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

02.1 None

F&GP/23/03 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

03.1 None

F&GP/23/04 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

04.1 Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Foxwell that the minutes of the meeting held on the 14th March 2023 be agreed as a true and fair record. **Agreed**

F&GP/23/05 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS – These items taken as read

05.1 Vintage Years Group Annual Grant paid - **Actioned**

05.2 'Love to Move' grant paid – **Actioned**

05.3 Steyning Orchard Group Grant paid – **Actioned**

05.4 Steyning Society Grant paid – **Actioned**

05.5 Steyning and District Partnership Grant paid – **Actioned**

05.6 Ukrainian Refuge Grant paid – **Actioned**

05.7 Adjustments made to staff pay scales – **Actioned**

05.8 Festive season street lighting display preferences relayed to supplier for ordering – **Actioned**

05.9 Notice board movement funding agreed – **Actioned, See item 7.7**

05.10 SPC April Newsletter to be published with amendments – **Actioned**

05.11 External Auditor resolution of outstanding matters taken to Full Council – **Actioned**

05.12 SPC Project setting and Year End Earmarking to be brought back to committee subsequent to external funding application determination – **See item 7.7**

F&GP/23/06 FINANCIAL MATTERS.

06.1.1 To approve the list of SPC payments for March, April and May 2023.

Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Foxwell that the list of payments for March 2023 be approved as a correct record. **Agreed**

06.1.2 Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Sharp that the list of payments for April & May '23 be approved as a correct record. **Agreed.** The Clerk agreed to see members who were keen to understand more about the internal financial SPC procedures as indeed he had done before.

CLERK

06.2.1 To agree F&GP Income & Expenditure reports for March, April and May 2023.

Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Bell to agree the F&GP Income and Expenditure reports for March 2023 as a correct record. **Agreed**

06.2.2 Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ballance to agree the F&GP Income & Expenditure reports for April and May 2023 as a correct record. **Agreed**

06.3 To agree a request for grant funding from the Steyning in Bloom Group – Annual funding agreement. Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Sharp to agree to pay the Steyning in Bloom group a sum of £2,400 as per their grant request. **Agreed**

CLERK

06.4 To agree a request for grant funding from the Steyning First Responders. Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Sharp to agree to pay the Steyning First Responders a sum of £120 as per their grant request. **Agreed**

CLERK

06.5 To receive notification of the End of Year SPC finances position for March 2023. The Clerk elaborated upon the supporting paper details.

F&GP/23/07 GOVERNANCE MATTERS

07.1 To receive notification regards end of year finance reconciliation and to agree End of Year Internal Audit Report.

CLERK

The Rialtus Accounts rep. joined with the clerk on the 25th of May to complete the end of year accounts, and once verified these were among the figures checked by the internal auditing process. The internal audit then took place on the 30th of May and the 11 page report was a supporting paper for discussion. The only issue raised by the report was that of not having the SPC 2021/22 AGAR signed off by the external auditors. SPC were not at fault. Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Foxwell that SPC agree with the End of Year Internal Audit Report. **Agreed**

07.2 Notification regarding the External Auditors correspondence concerning the objection from an SPC Councillor, concerning the 2022/23 Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

The clerk had recently received correspondence from the external auditors {19th May} relating to the 2021/22 AGAR whereby an SPC councillor had raised objections against it being signed off. Because the external auditor had not raised the issues earlier, they could not be dealt with by the clerk and completed before the date of the internal audit on the 30th May. This then effected the 22/23 AGAR because under item 'N' on page 3, the internal auditor had to register that SPC had not achieved its objective {'The authority has complied with the publication requirements for the 2021/22 AGAR'}.

07.3 Notification that a member of staff {Caretaker} has opted into the local government pensions.

CLERK

The clerk explained that a member of staff having previously opted out of the pension scheme had now asked to 'opt in', which he is entitled to do. Because his earnings are within the lower income bracket, there will be a likely annual increase to SPC contributions of approx. £2,000.

07.4 To agree that section 1 and 2 of the SPC Annual Governance and Accountability Return 22/23 with associated notes be recommended for approval at Full Council.

Members present discussed many aspects of the constituent accounts, and especially in regard to the reasons for variance noted between the current year and the previous year as per points 3, 4 and 9 on page 4 of the AGAR, and within the additional 'Explanation of variances' paper.

	Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Ballance that F&GP recommend to Full Council that SPC approve sections 1 and 2 of the 2022/23 SPC AGAR {with associated notes}. Agreed	CLERK
07.5	To agree the SPC level of General Reserves for the next 4 years. Members considered all aspects of this important decision in relation to the need for maintaining fiscal responsibility when balancing the depletion of the authorities' general reserves in view of the risks associated with cost variations within the marketplace, inflationary pressures, the cost-of-living crisis, the climate emergency and the war in Ukraine, against freeing up much needed working capital for the many projects this council wants to complete on behalf of its residents. Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Bell that SPC sets its 'emergency' general reserves based upon 4 months {of net revenue expenditure} as per recommendation and as agreed by F&GP, and that this will be reviewed after six months to see how the financial situation lies at that point. Agreed	CLERK
07.6	To agree the 2022/23 SPC Cil Report as per supporting papers. Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Bell that SPC approves the 2022/23 SPC Cil Report. Agreed	CLERK
07.7.1	To agree the SPC list of Earmarked Reserves for the current year - 2023/24. Members considered four additional items for the existing list as per supporting papers, and predominantly because the monies had already been agreed to be ring-fenced for particular projects. Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Sharp, that SPC agree to £1,500 being earmarked for the High Street notice Board relocation. Agreed	CLERK
07.7.2	Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Sharp, that SPC agree to £3,338 being earmarked for the Steyning Centre Projector installation. Agreed	
07.7.3	Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Foxwell, that SPC agree to £5,000 being earmarked for the Clock Tower maintenance. Agreed	
07.7.4	Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Sharp, that SPC agree to £5,000 being earmarked for the Steyning Centre 'Sinking fund'. Agreed	
07.7.5	Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Ballance, that SPC agree that the 4-month figure of emergency reserves agreed under item 7.5 be the figure held within the '340 emergency reserve', and also held within {monies transferred into} the Unity Bank Account. Agreed	CLERK
07.8	To receive notification that the Chair of F&GP has completed End of Month / Year finance and reconciliation checks with the clerk as per SPC Risk Assessment requirements. The Chair confirmed this process had been undertaken {on the 2nd June}.	
F&GP/23/08	PUBLICITY	
08.1	To agree the content of the next SPC quarterly newsletter. Cllr Trundle had kindly compiled a draft SPC newsletter and this was presented to committee. Members appreciated many aspects of the composition, but felt that it was unwise to suggest within the text that SPC was committed to certain projects when in fact this had yet to be formally agreed by SPC. Cllr Foxwell proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander that F&GP delay the 'Your Steyning' article until September and that the Clerk be delegated to diplomatically draft some amendments so that the article be brought back to next F&GP committee. Agreed	CLERK
08.2	To consider forming a new Community Engagement Committee. Councillors had expressed the desire to engage more closely with the community for this new term of office. Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Ballance that F&GP recommends to Full Council that it forms a community engagement subcommittee to F&GP which could include all members, plus Steyning Partnership, Steyning Business Chamber and key stakeholders and request that Full Council amend the 'Scheme of Delegation' via the Working Practices Group to delegate the community engagement matters from this committee. Agreed	CLERK
F&GP/23/09	CCTV - To agree representation on a working party for the proposed Steyning CCTV installations	CLERK
09.1	Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Foxwell that a working party consisting of Cllrs Sharp, S Alexander, Foxwell, and Ballance be the CCTV working party {delegated with responsibility to obtain appropriate CCTV quotes and permissions}. Agreed	

F&GP/23/10 PROGRESS REPORT

- 10.1** *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. – The Clerk confirmed the Land Register was compiled and agreed by SPC, and the Asset register is to be discussed at a future working party.* **CLERK**
- 10.2** *F&GP/22/48.2 Ongoing conversations with Clock Tower owners to discuss decorative/maintenance works – The Clerk is to meet with the current owner shortly.* **CLERK**
- 10.3** *F&GP/22/59.2 Clerk and Cllr Lloyd to speak with HDC to see if there could be any movement on an increased 'Cleansing Grant' for SPC – The Chair confirmed Cllr Lloyd was no longer a District Councillor and the Clerk confirmed there had been no movement on further negotiations concerning an increase to the SPC Cleaning Grant*
- 10.4** *F&GP/22/68.1 Work on Staff Contracts undertaken and prepared for Personnel Committee. The Clerk confirmed this work awaited discussion at a soon to be convened Personnel Committee* **CLERK**

F&GP/23/11 INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

- 11.1** The Clerk had distributed a letter received from the Steyning Ukrainian Refuge. Cllr Foxwell spoke in support of the recent humanitarian relief operation to bring aid to those affected by the destruction of the dam on the Dnipro River, and the grant application from the Ukrainian refuge group – As the application was received too late for this meeting, it will be brought back to the next F&GP committee. **CLERK**

F&GP/23/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 11th July 2023 @7.30pm.
The Chair closed the meeting at 10.04pm

Signed Date 11th July 2023
Chair

A video recording of this meeting can be found using this link ; -
<https://youtu.be/zHwGQfeF0I4>