
MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD ON 12th March 2024 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllrs S Alexander (Chairman), Sharp, Ballance, I Alexander, Norcross, Campbell, and Bell.

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Members of the Public in attendance: 3

Meeting commenced: 7:30 pm

MINUTES

ACTIONS

F&GP/23/72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

72.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Trundle and Foxwell.

F&GP/23/73 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

73.1 Cllr I Alexander declared an interest in Agenda item 6.4, as it was a grant request from an organisation he was a member of, and therefore said he would not take part in the discussion or vote.

F&GP/23/74 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR {in summary}

74.1 ***Q** - Trevor Cree made a statement concerning agenda item 7.4 with reference to the recent drafting of a Steyning Parish Council leaflet which attempted to highlight to residents what each tier of Local Council {Parish, District and County} were responsible for undertaking. He pointed out that because it only listed some, not all, of the things each council was responsible for, in his opinion, it served to confuse rather than clarify the position. He gave examples, and suggested the leaflet was costly and not value for money and that all the information could be placed on Parish Council Notice boards instead.*

***A** – The Chairman replied that the contents of the leaflet were to be discussed by members under that item later in the meeting, and that at £25 for the planned 200 leaflet quantity, it was not costly at all.*

F&GP/23/75 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

75.1 Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross that the draft minutes of the meeting held on the 9th January 2024 be agreed as a true and fair record. **Agreed 6 For, 1 Abstained**

F&GP/23/76 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS – *These items taken as read*

76.1 Clerk bringing back to F&GP consideration of 24/25 projects – **See item 77.1**

76.2 To discuss Earmarking of Reserves options – **See item 77.1**

76.3 SPC Budget recommendations taken to be agreed at Full Council – **Actioned**

76.4 New phone system to be installed at the Steyning Centre – **Actioned**

76.5 To pay £600 grant to the Hope Charity with services based in Steyning – **Actioned**

76.6 To continue to discuss options for 2024 High Street Christmas light displays – **See item 78.1**

76.7 Youth service provision recommendations taken to SPC Full C. for agreement – **Actioned**

76.8 Ensure Community Engagement group consider items noted at last F&GP meeting – **Item 78.4**

F&GP/23/77 FINANCIAL MATTERS.

- 77.1.1** **To consider SPC projects for 2024/25, and earmarking reserves for 2024.** The Clerk explained, assisted by reference to a supporting paper, the timeline which members needed to consider in terms of agreement as to what were to be the priority projects for the next financial year 24/25, and why there was a need in the first instance to agree to earmark reserves, so that at years end, and with the understanding of the latest financial position, the annual Business Plan could be concluded. Members could then gain an idea as to what funds were available for the completion of projects for that year and this would lead to project priority agreement, and this would precipitate SPC Action Plan compilation and agreement. **CLERK**
- 77.1.2** The list of projects being considered included MPF Play area renewal; Chandlers Way Play Park development; High Street Christmas lighting display; MPF Charlton Street entrance re-surfacing; MPF Car Park bollards and planter installation; MPF notice/story boards; Steyning Centre energy cost & carbon saving measures; CCTV enhancement/installation; Bus Shelter improvements; Neighbourhood Plan update; Mouse Lane funding application; Climate Action Travel Plan; White Bridge renewal support; and Youth Service Business start-up.
- 77.1.3** Cllr Campbell raised a point of order stating he did not believe this was an appropriate item to be discussed at Finance and General Purposes Committee as he did not think it was within the committees delegated responsibility to do so. The Clerk and Chairman explained that this item was integral to the formation of the annual SPC Business Plan which was within the committee's remit.
- 77.1.4** The only item currently considered for earmarking was the SPC 'Youth Service' unspent funds. This was being transferred into the new JPYC bank account as previously agreed. It needed to be shown as an earmarked reserve however, as it was intended for just this purpose. The precise amount would be determined at 'Years end' and would depend both upon contributions from other partner Parishes, and the percentage that SPC would be due based upon the agreed 'Memorandum of Understanding'.
- 77.1.5** Cllr Campbell raised a point of order, stating that in his opinion 'agreeing earmarking of funds' does not fall within the delegated authority of this committee. The Clerk explained that it was an integral part of budget planning and the Business Plan compilation process.
- 77.1.6** Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr I Alexander that SPC remove the remaining Youth Services budget from its budget line, and place it under an 'Earmarked Reserve' for the Youth services, ideally to be moved into the new separate account as and when required. **Agreed 4 For, 3 Abstained** **CLERK**
- 77.2** **Income and expenditure reports for F&GP, covering December '23 and January 2024.** Members queried a number of budget line performances and the Chairman and Clerk explained reasons for variations. Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr I Alexander that SPC accepts the F&GP income and expenditure reports for December and January. **Agreed**
- 77.3** **To approve the SPC Payments lists for December 2023 and January 2024.** The Chairman explained some of the larger payments noted. Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Sharp that SPC accept the December '23 and January 2024 SPC Payment lists. **Agreed**
- 77.4.1** **To agree final 23/24 grant requests from local groups.** There were four requests for grant funding and there was £1,530 left within the budget line for this financial year. The Chairman suggested prioritising two of the requests for lesser amounts based upon the fact that SPC had agreed similar requests from these groups in previous years. These were Application 1 – Steyning Community Orchard to cover annual insurance costs @ £157, and Application 3 – Steyning and District Partnership to cover publicity costs for the Vintage Revival event @ £250. Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross that SPC accepts grant request 1, and grant request 3. **Agreed 6 For 1 Abstained** **CLERK**

77.4.2	Following the previous agreement members were left with a budget of £1,123 and two grant requests totalling £1,300. It was felt that both applications were very good projects. Cllr Campbell stated that in his opinion making a discretionary decision without having access to more information about the groups accounts was unlawful, and that the clerk was improperly withholding information. The Chairman explained he and the Clerk had seen the accounts for both groups and there was nothing warranting any concern. The Clerk further explained SPC as a council agrees policies to help make its decisions and that in this instance the committee and Clerk were following the details of the agreed SPC Grant Awarding Policy and therefore nothing was being improperly withheld, nor would the decision be unlawful.	
77.4.3	Members discussed the merits of the two remaining applicants. Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Bell that SPC award the £500 to Steyning Good Neighbours {Grant request 4, to cover 33 of the initial 90 driver registrations required by its volunteers}, and award the remaining budget of £623 to grant request 2 - the Steyning Bowls Club {to cover costs for a new sprinkler system which would reduce water consumption}. Agreed 6 For, 1 Abstention	
77.5	To discuss future project aspirations for the F&GP Committee. Members further discussed the already proposed Mouse Lane project.	
F&GP/23/78	GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY MATTERS	
78.1	To consider next year's Christmas light display on the Steyning High Street. Councillors had not brought forward any new ideas for the Clerks office to investigate, nor had the existing supplier provided the options requested by the Clerk, so this to be discussed at next F&GP. Cllr Campbell stated he did not believe this item should be discussed by F&GP, rather it should be discussed by Community Committee. The Chairman and Clerk explained that F&GP dealt with contracts and that this was indeed a contract, and also that F&GP looked after the Christmas Light display budgets.	CLERK
78.2	SPC Action Plan update. Cllrs considered the various projects that have been prioritised for action for this first year of the current council's term. There was progress on almost every line but some lines were falling behind the original timeframe, and the Clerk and Chairman explained reasons for this. Cllr Bell suggested these reasons should be noted within the 'Risks to Timescale' column and the Clerk agreed. Concern was raised particularly with the Clock Face {on the Clock Tower} maintenance, which will be discussed in more detail next meeting, and the CCTV contractor who was producing the scope of works and the first quote for the proposed installations – Clerk and Chairman to continue to chase, and to reconvene a working party in the meantime, to progress a scope of works which can be used by other contractors.	CLERK & Chairman
78.3	To consider the offer for a free portrait of the King. Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr I Alexander, that SPC accept the free portrait of the King and that it is displayed at the Steyning Centre. Agreed 5 For, 1 Against and 1 Abstained.	CLERK
78.4.1	To consider the work undertaken, following the first meeting of the Community Engagement Group, and to agree the next message/s for the group to be working on. The Group convened on the 22 nd February and agreed representation arrangements for the March Farmers Market; the Clerk actioned some display boards for this and future farmers markets; and the group agreed that Cllr S Alexander draft a leaflet which promoted a theme which would highlight and help define to residents 'Whose responsibility is it' when considering the services offered by each tier of local council. It was also suggested that when the final version of this leaflet was agreed then it would accompany the responses made by the Clerk to those residents who wrote notes into the suggestion box. Many amendments were discussed and by general consent many were noted to be actioned. Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Ballance that subject to the amendments {members} have discussed, SPC accept the drafted {leaflet}, and prepare it for the next Farmers Market and for the {Steyning Centre} foyer. Agreed	CLERK
78.4.2	Members discussed what the next message or messages ought to be for the group to consider. Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr I Alexander that community engagement groups next messages ought to be the Youth Services and the Annual Parish Meeting promotions. Agreed	CLERK

- 78.5 To agree Community Com. recommendation concerning Full Council presentation request.**
Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Campbell that SPC accept the presentation concerning 'Creating a local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan for Steyning, Bramber and Upper Beeding. **Agreed 6 For, 1 Abstained**
- F&GP/23/79 PROGRESS REPORT**
- 79.1** *F&GP/23/42.3 CCTV working party to reconvene when first quotes received – Cllr S Alexander reported that he was continuing to chase the long-awaited quote.* Cllr S Alexander
- 79.2** *F&GP/22/67.5 The need for an out of hours security call out service for the Steyning Centre to be discussed – Ongoing – details to be discussed with new deputy clerk when in post.* CLERK
- 79.3** *F&GP/22/68.3 Set up Working Party to discuss Storyboard/Tourist Signs involving District Partnership – Ongoing – to be arranged when Partnership members more available.* CLERK
- F&GP/23/80 INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS**
- 80.1** **Information from WSCC Cllr Linehan concerning the Steyning Library.** The information received via supporting papers noted closure of the Library for 8 days, from the 19th March, due to a new Fire Alarm installation. CLERK
- 80.2** **Clock Tower clock mechanism maintenance.** The Chairman explained via supporting papers, the reasons for the recent issues with the town's clock which has resulted in it slowing or stopping altogether. Engineers to be back to repair within the next week or so. CLERK
- F&GP/23/81 CONFIDENTIAL SESSION**
- 81.1** Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross to resolve, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, in accordance with Standing Orders 3d to exclude the press and public on the grounds that the confidential matters to be discussed under agenda item 11 may involve disclosure of personal or privileged information which would be inappropriate to put in the public domain. **Agreed**
- F&GP/23/82 STAFFING MATTERS**
- 82.1** **To agree the amended Deputy Clerk and Steyning Centre Operations Manager staff contract.** CLERK
NALC had recently drafted a new 'Template for employment' and the Clerks' office had amended it for use for the new Deputy Clerk position based upon the already agreed Job Description and previous contract. Members considered the document. Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Bell that subject to the amendments including changing {numbered point} vii to vi, and to add the word 'additional', that the new contract be recommended to Full Council for agreement. **Agreed 6 For, 1 Abstained**
- 82.2** **Clerk to notify members as to the details concerning the recent SPC staff selection process.** CLERK
The successful process was almost completed with a proposed start date of the 15th April.
- 82.3** **To be notified as to the JPYC selection process for the recruitment of Youth Service staff.** CLERK
The Clerk informed members that the three Youth Service positions were being advertised, and the process was being assisted by the HDC Youth Provision Worker and the Upper Beeding Clerk.
- F&GP/23/83 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 14th May 2024 @7.30pm.**
- The Chair closed the meeting at 8.59pm*

Signed Date 14th May 2024
Chair

A video recording of this meeting can be found using this link ;
<https://youtu.be/Kss4sfYKK5E>