
MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9th DECEMBER 2025 AT 7.30PM

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

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Members of the Public in attendance: 1

Meeting commenced: 7:30 pm

MINUTES

ACTIONS

F&GP/25/29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

29.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Norcross, Foxwell and Johnson.

F&GP/25/30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

30.1 Cllr Trundle declared an interest in Agenda item 6.8 as is a member of the Church Parochial Council, and Cllrs I Alexander and Sharp are members of the Steyning & District Community Partnership in consideration of agenda item 6.7.

F&GP/25/31 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR {in summary}

31.1 None

F&GP/25/32 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

32.1 Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that the draft minutes of the meeting held on the 14th October 2025 be agreed as a true and fair record. **Agreed**

F&GP/25/33 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS – *These items taken as read*

33.1 Communications to continue with Cricket Club concerning proposed club house development-**Item 35.2**

33.2 Continue informing members re. Ill Health payment skewing percentage figures – **See item 34.3**

33.3 Bring back F&GP first draft budget for final reckoning to this meeting – **See item 34.4**

33.4 Clerk to update Action Plan list, plus amend text and bring back to next F&GP meeting – **Actioned**

33.5 Cil reports to go onto SPC web site – **Actioned**

33.6 Place external audit notice on web site and update members on audit reports next F&GP – **Actioned**

33.7 Move forward with WSCC and their High St railings project and bring back to members – **Actioned**

33.8 Submit to HDC the '*SPC Expression of Interest*' listings re potential Asset transference – **Item 35.7**

33.9 Clerk's office to complete Steyning in Bloom grant transaction – **Actioned**

33.10 CCTV referendum text to be further discussed at Community Engagement Committee – **See item 35.6**

The Chair brought forward agenda item 6.8 as a member of the Public was appearing in support of it

F&GP/25/34 FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE.

- 34.1 To consider a grant request from the Parochial Church Council of St Andrew and St Cuthman.** CLERK
There were briefing notes supporting this request and Father Mark was also in attendance to speak in support of the application. The £1,000 grant was to be part payment towards a £4,889 lighting improvement to the public pathway across the churchyard, and was to be installed for health and safety reasons. There were additional wiring improvements to ensure any later lighting installations would be future safe. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that SPC agree this grant request (for £1,000). **Agreed 5 For, 1 Abstained**
- 34.2 To approve the list of SPC payments for October 2025.** CLERK
Members posed questions to the Clerk in consideration of payments covering this period. Members requested the Canada Gardens skip which is now full, should be removed off site. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that SPC accepts the October 2025 SPC Payments lists. **Agreed**
- 34.3 F&GP Income and Expenditure reports for October 2025.** CLERK
The Ill Health insurance payment was skewing the percentage on the reports and the Clerk had manually amended the figures to omit this unbudgeted figure from the total percentage noted, for the benefit of Cllrs as per previously agreed at this committee. Projected end of year income target was suggested to be 93 to 95% of target, due mainly to access to Neighbourhood plan funding opportunities being withdrawn by the government earlier in 2025. Expenditure was on track. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Trundle that the F&GP Income and Expenditure report for October 2025 be accepted. **Agreed**
- 34.4 To consider the F&GP budget paper for the 2026/27 financial year.** CLERK
Members fully considered this matter, and debated options for keeping the draft precept increase to a minimum without sacrificing future project expenditures. The draft precept increase was noted as being an 8.77% rise to the current 2025/26 figure, this being mainly due to the underlying 4% inflationary figure; increased utilities costs over and above 4 % over the last two to three years; the increased National Insurance Contributions and minimum wage figures; an increase to potential legal fees for 2026/27; and Neighborhood Plan Review funding requirements in the absence of government funding support. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that SPC accepts the draft budget plan for SPC. **Agreed**
- 34.5 Update from the Clerk in consideration of progress on the 2025/26 SPC Action Plan.** CLERK
Progress included:- the planting of 120 hedgerow species at Chandlers way pocket park by a determined group of volunteers: The continued and positive engagement with the Glebe Farm developers: Two memorial benches installed at the MPF, and two planters on order: Armistice day event completed successfully: Christmas lights have now been installed on the High Street: Devolution process proceeding with 'Expression of Interest' document now submitted: The Cricket Club resubmission of amended plans progressing with a representative meeting convened on the 17th December: And reports concerning Railings, CCTV and Neighbourhood Plan projects to be further discussed at this meeting.
- 34.6 To discuss the JPYC memorandum of understanding budget for the next financial year** CLERK
Members considered if the youth service was still on track and whether SPC was confident in its commitment to further and continued service in terms of value for money. Anecdotally it has been reported that session numbers were good, at least for the under 13s, and the holiday activity sessions had been a success. Members requested however, that key performance indicator reports should be implemented, including monthly attendance figures and to note which community attendees are coming from. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that SPC accept the Youth MOU / Budget for 2026/27, {with this proviso}. **Agreed**
- 34.7 To agree payment of the Vintage Years grant request for this financial year** CLERK
Members considered the Vintage Years request as per supporting papers. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ballance that SPC accept the request {and pay the grant of £1,750}. **Agreed**

34.8	To discuss a grant request from the Steyning and District Partnership Members considered the Partnership's request for support with their <i>'Six sleeps 'til Christmas'</i> event, as per detailed within supporting papers. Cllr S. Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Ballance that SPC accept the grant request from the Steyning and District Partnership and pay the £300. Agreed 4 For, 2 Abstained	CLERK
34.9	High Street Railings project being undertaken by WSCC The Clerk updated that a quote had been received from the Highways department at WSCC. A 50% match funding amount had been requested by WSCC to enable the project specification to be elevated beyond the functional and to include a finish more in keeping with previous installations and the historic conservation aesthetic. Members rejected the request as it stood and asked the Clerk to ensure a new quote/ request could be obtained which would include a more detailed and itemised scope of works, ensuring that for example the retaining wall and paving repairs were part of the planned works. Also, that there needed to be an understanding of what guarantees were in place if it had to be another source of wood rather than the reclaimed boards obtained by SPC for the project, and that there was no way SPC would want to be part funding the traffic management part of the quote as this was surely the remit and responsibility of WSCC. Members questioned whether restoring the railings to their prior state was in fact the entire responsibility of WSCC, to meet its own conservation rules. Members also requested that SPC should highlight via social media, the fact that this was not the responsibility of the Parish Council, and that the County Cllr and MP be contacted about the issue.	CLERK CLERK
34.10	First project payment associated with the interpretation board installation project Members were concerned as to whether the sign content, due to potential future asset transferances and possible emblem change was taken into account – in other words if agreed at this meeting, would the content potentially be immediately out of date. The answer was that the content was unlikely to change due to the consequences of devolution, but will be checked anyway, and if the emblem was amended subsequent to installation, it could be easily physically changed on site. Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander that SPC pay the first 25% of the quote to the Partnership for this project, so that the order is confirmed, and that prior to the commencement of works via the next 25% payment, the content of the printing/ maps is future proofed. Agreed	CLERK
F&GP/25/35	GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY MATTERS	
35.1	To consider recent Internal Audit Reports and agree any actions, and for the Clerk to notify re progress of the outstanding External Audit Report	
35.1.1	The Spring and Autumn Internal Audit reports were discussed as per supporting papers with only one recommendation noted regarding a new requirement following the recent <i>'Assertion 10 AGAR'</i> amendment. Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr Ballance that SPC accepts the internal audit reports and the recommendation noted requiring that SPC publishes on the web site by 31 st March 2026, an access and security statement and IT policy. Agreed	CLERK
35.1.2	The Clerk notified regarding the external audit:- He has had many communications first with the three residents who have submitted objections to SPC's Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and then subsequently with the external auditors as a follow up to check on their objections, and then also to make their own more standard checks. There had been more questions raised this year than any of the previous 5 or so years when two of the three same residents have previously submitted their objections. The process of responding to questions has now ended, and a final report is expected imminently.	CLERK
35.2	Notification re the convening of Cricket Club working party and to update project progress	CLERK
35.2.1	Since SPC's objection to the initial plans that were submitted in the early summer, the Cricket Club have appointed a new architect, and they have been busy having discussions with local residents to collaboratively work through some of the issues raised. Next Wednesday the 17 th	

Dec., the Clerk and Cllr Norcross will be again convening with their representatives to check the newly drafted drawings to ensure appropriate mitigating adaptations are being considered. Subsequently the Architect will no doubt compile more detailed plans and drawings, for the scrutiny of a larger SPC working party prior to a final submission of the plans to HDC.

35.2.2

Cllr Sharp had spoken to the Steyning Football Club Chairman; to ascertain how important it was for a local club to include an element of commercial enterprise, in order to run the club successfully. Indeed, his sense of how it works has changed somewhat, in that he suggested there will need be opportunities to make a reasonable financial surplus within the shorter Cricket season, in order to make the overall business plan work. The Clerk was asked to request from the Cricket club their proposed Business Plan in connection to the new development.

CLERK

35.3

To agree the extension of grass and street cleaning/bin contracts for one year as per Community Committee recommendation

Contract renewals for *Grass cutting* and *Street cleaning* are due next year. However, the situation concerning HDC is unpredictable with the *Cleansing Grant* fund potentially being reduced, then certainly removed when HDC ceases to exist, and until favourable negotiations might reinstate it when the unitary authority is set up. Plus in the next two years it is very likely that the scope of the grass cutting contract could change dramatically due to potential asset transfers. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that SPC extends both the contracts for Grass-Cutting and Street Cleaning by one year. **Agreed**

CLERK

35.4

Update on status of Neighbourhood Plan project

The NP group have been very useful, and especially due to the combination of elected and voluntary members, with additional skill sets they bring. This has enabled the following:

- Prepared phase one of the Neighbourhood plan revision
- Generated robust feedback on the Glebe farm application with pushback on some matters and collaboration with our district councillors and developers.
- A comprehensive response to the reserved matter planning application.
- Effective insertion of planning requirements throughout the consultation.
- Considered and responded to a consultation initiated by SDNPA on the development opportunity opposite the school off the Horsham Road
- There are also many potential development sites, and SPC has little control over these as things stand but having an effective Neighbourhood Plan and Planning committee will certainly help, continuing with the development of the N.P. revision and working in collaboration with developers and district councillors, there is an effective voice.
- Going forward the pressure from central government and the uncertainty associated with devolution means local skill and resources are needed to guide the towns development

35.5

Chair to update members in consideration of the Steyning Grammar Schools development, and agree any actions.

There have been two meetings convened with N. plan Steering Committee members and the Grammar School and their planning representatives as well as the Architects and reps from West Sussex Highways and the Department of Education to continue to inform and engage with SPC over the major redevelopment which is likely due to start Summer of next year. The Chair summarised the points raised at these meetings where members were given further details associated with the project. He reported that the plans are very good with clearly a lot of thought going into them. Due to the state of the current facilities, it was also very clear that the redevelopment was essential. Notably, aspirations from the Walking and Cycling plan, and the SPC Neighbourhood Plan had been taken into account by the Architects during this initial planning phase and had helped shape the concept/site layout. There is also a great deal of positive community use space potentially being made available. Members had challenged the developers on some matters during these meetings, including the need for an enhanced bus stop arrangement on the Horsham road on what would become the main entrance. The 'Green' elements were of the highest possible specifications. Further

CLERK

details will follow, and the Clerk has requested more meeting dates – and especially in relation to understanding more about the plans for their proposed Community Use Agreement.

35.6 To agree the text for the CCTV installation referendum, and the publicity associated with it. CLERK
{Cllr Trundle had to leave at this point in the meeting}

35.6.1 There were three supporting papers for this item. Their content and the nature of their being published and promoted had been worked on by members of the Community Engagement working party over a number of months, and it was hoped that they would receive support at this meeting. There was however some additional feedback which had been received in the run up to the meeting, and this led the members discussion. The documents being further considered were a draft two page CCTV public consultation explanation paper {item 7.6.1}, a google consultation form {Item 7.6.2}, and a one page publicity paper {Item 7.6.3} (to include links to the other Docs when all confirmed) .

35.6.2 Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that SPC agree all three documents, and their subsequent publication/ publicity, but with Doc 7.6.1, there needed to be some amendments to content and format, and so members agreed that this could be done via email communications between them over a period of a week and via the Clerk's office, and subsequent to Cllr Johnson providing an improved first draft. **Agreed**

35.7 Report on work undertaken so far on potential asset transference from HDC CLERK
The 'Expression of interest' document has been sent into HDC. A response has been received now asking for a separate form to be completed for each asset, and the Clerk's office will compile and submit these forms based upon a reuse of the information presented within the supporting paper. There continues to be discussions with many third parties in association to most of these assets.

F&GP/25/36 PROGRESS REPORT

36.1	<i>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 deputy clerk.</i>	D. Clerk
36.2	<i>F&GP/24/08.2 CCTV project to be further discussed with contractors on site</i>	CLERK & CCTV W. Prty
36.3	<i>F&GP/24/53.4 Spotlights onto the Clock Tower as a proposed project to be brought back</i>	CLERK
36.4	<i>F&GP/24/53.7 Clerk to contact WSCC to obtain advice in consideration of WSCC property disposals policy</i>	CLERK
36.5	<i>F&GP/24/53.7 Clerk to contact NALC to obtain legal advice behind note LTN 56</i>	CLERK
36.6	<i>F&GP/24/53.10 Clerk to install double socket in Clock Tower for future camera installation</i>	CLERK
36.7	<i>F&GP/24/53.10 SPC to publish strategy for the future of clock tower clock-face future renewal</i>	CLERK
36.8	<i>F&GP/24/54.1 A3 conservation signs to be purchased for Abbey Road</i>	CLERK
36.9	<i>F&GP/24/64.1 Clerk to add Asset items transferred to SPC to 2025/26 SPC Asset Register</i>	CLERK
36.10	<i>F&GP/24/25.12 SPC finance signatory amendments to take place in March 2026</i>	CLERK

F&GP/25/37 INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

37.1 Letter of thanks from the SPC Bowls Club in recognition of benefits associated with the receipt of the SPC grant earlier in the year.

37.2 Local Govt Consultation Request for an SPC response – Members decided that this could be dealt with by the Planning and Premises Committee on behalf of SPC **CLERK**

F&GP/25/38 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 13th January 2026 @7.30pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 10pm

Signed Date 13th January 2026
Chair

A video recording of this meeting can be found using this link:

<https://youtu.be/hDwh561uRsk>