

MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 13th JANUARY 2026 AT 7.30PM

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

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Members of the Public in attendance: 1

Meeting commenced: 7:30 pm

MINUTES

ACTIONS

F&GP/25/39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

39.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Norcross, Trundle, Bell and Ian Alexander.

F&GP/25/40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

40.1 None

F&GP/25/41 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR {in summary}

41.1.1 **Q** – Trevor Cree, made a representation and asked questions.

He believed that the proposed CCTV 'consultation' will not meet the standards required by the Information Commissioner's Office and gave reasons.

Trevor also raised the following questions:-

41.1.2 In budget Line 1600 there is a budget income shown of £3,000 for the Joint Parishes Cemetery Committee. What is the justification for treating these funds as a SPC income?

41.1.3 In Line 1700 a sum of £4,034 is allocated for JYPC Service. Who receives this money in view of the fact that Line 4024 shows a separate budget payment of £28,500 for the Youth Service?

41.1.4 In Line 4016 a sum of £4,000 is allocated for Legal Fees/Elections. If the SPC decides to proceed with a civil case against a fellow councillor then this would cost tens of thousands of pounds in upfront legal costs during 2026/27.

41.1.5 In Line 4080 the cost of the Chairman's Function has risen from a 2025/26 budget of £900 up to £1,400. How can this be justified?

41.1.6 In Line 4977 a sum of £15,000 is allocated for Special Projects. What are the new 2026/27 projects that will be funded by this money?

41.1.7 In Line 1000 it shows a 'Donations' income of £10,000. Could the Committee clarify the potential source or sources of this income?

41.2 **Response** – The Chairman thanked Trevor for his questions and suggested they be answered at the appropriate time on the Agenda, and asked Trevor to feel free to remind members if they were not being answered

F&GP/25/42 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

42.1 Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that the draft minutes of the meeting held on the 9th December 2025 be agreed as a true and fair record. **Agreed 4 For, 1 Abstained**

F&GP/25/43 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS – *These items taken as read*

43.1 Clerk to add Asset items transferred to SPC to 2025/26 SPC Asset Register – **Actioned/ See item 44.5**

43.2 Office to process successful Parochial Church grant request details – **Actioned**

43.3 Canada Gardens Skip removed from site as full – **Actioned**

43.4 Cont. to highlight the true value of percentage income & expenditure minus Ill health cheque–**Actioned**

43.5 Take draft budget figure and use for consolidated draft budget and bring back to F&GP – **Actioned**

- 43.6 Update and discuss further the Action Plan progress – **See item 44.4**
- 43.7 Acceptance of MOU and associated Youth budget – **Actioned**
- 43.8 Office to process successful Vintage Years grant request details – **Actioned**
- 43.9 Office to process Steyning & District partnerships ‘Six sleeps to Christmas’ grant request – **Actioned**
- 43.10 Clerk to send robust response to WSCC outlining demands to hasten Railings renewal – **See item 44.6**
- 43.11 Clerk’s office to send out information to deny direct responsibility for railings renewal – **Actioned**
- 43.12 Clerk’s office to resolve first payment for interpretation board installation – **Actioned**
- 43.13 Compliance with Internal auditor recommendation – **Actioned/ See item 45.3**
- 43.14 Clerk to update on External Auditors position subsequent to completion of final checks – **See item 45.1**
- 43.15 Clerk & Cllr Norcross to update on Cricket Clubs position regards its redevelopment – **Item 45.2**
- 43.16 Clerk asked to obtain if possible a draft of Cricket Club business plan – **See item 45.2**
- 43.17 Clerk’s office to inform contractors concerning one year extension to their tender term – **Actioned**
- 43.18 CCTV consultation doc. to be amended & distributed for members to agree via email – **See item 45.4**
- 43.19 Clerk’s office to compile and then submit new format expression of interest forms – **Actioned**
- 43.20 Local Govt consultation to be dealt with by Planning and Premises Committee – **Actioned**

F&GP/25/44 FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE.

- 44.1 **To approve the list of SPC payments for November and December 2025.**
Members posed questions to the Clerk in consideration of payments covering this period. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that SPC accepts the November and December 2025 SPC Payments lists. **Agreed**
- 44.2 **F&GP Income and Expenditure reports for October 2025.**
Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that the F&GP Income and Expenditure reports for November and December 2025 be accepted. **Agreed**
- 44.3 **To consider and agree the final draft of the F&GP consolidated budget paper for the financial year – 2026/27 and to make recommendation to Full Council concerning the SPC Precept for the next financial year.** Members fully considered this matter, and debated options for keeping the draft precept increase to a minimum without sacrificing future project expenditures. Many budget increases were analyzed, with special attention made to Neighbourhood Plan and Youth service expenditure, with members satisfied with the reasoning behind these decisions. They also dealt with questions raised by members of the public online and in person. Members believed that there ought to be a number of questions answered by the office online, in this instance, to reassure residents who have concerns (on for example swimming pool and staffing expenditure), and to then say that further questions could be raised using the Clerk’s email address. Members wanted the Community Engagement Group to further discuss the matter of active online Q&A, and any staffing/ financial consequences. **CLERK**
- 44.3.1 **Members fully considered this matter, and debated options for keeping the draft precept increase to a minimum without sacrificing future project expenditures. Many budget increases were analyzed, with special attention made to Neighbourhood Plan and Youth service expenditure, with members satisfied with the reasoning behind these decisions. They also dealt with questions raised by members of the public online and in person. Members believed that there ought to be a number of questions answered by the office online, in this instance, to reassure residents who have concerns (on for example swimming pool and staffing expenditure), and to then say that further questions could be raised using the Clerk’s email address. Members wanted the Community Engagement Group to further discuss the matter of active online Q&A, and any staffing/ financial consequences.** **CLERK**
- 44.3.2 **The Clerk had presented a set of bullet points within supporting papers which further detailed reasons for the Council’s need for an 8.77% Precept rise, and members asked that this be put on social media platforms by way of an additional explanation.** **CLERK**
- 44.3.3 **Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that this committee recommends to Full Council the consolidated budget and resultant SPC Precept demand of 8.77% for the next financial year 2026/27. **Agreed** **CLERK**

44.4	Update from the Clerk in consideration of progress on the 2025/26 SPC Action Plan. Progress included:- Meetings have taken place at the Primary School, and with volunteers, with 210 free plants being gifted from the Steyning for Trees Group to help with the Chandlers Way Project: Ensuring Glebe Farm Contractor Communications remains productive: Christmas Light displays are being removed from the High Street in next few days: Steyning Centre door replacement quotes are being discussed at the next Premises Committee.	CLERK
44.5	To agree the contents of the SPC Asset Register for 2026. Items of Street furniture have been added following transfer of these Assets from the Steyning and District Partnership, plus there were additions in terms of the disposals. Members noted it would be clearer if the '<i>updated March 2023</i>' under '<i>Proxy cost</i>' be removed. Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr Foxwell that SPC agree to the details of the Asset register {as per supporting papers, with noted amendment}. Agreed	CLERK
44.6	To consider progress and agree potential match funding of High Street Railings project being undertaken by West Sussex County Council. Further to previous information already minuted there was little new information, as the scope of works details remained commercially sensitive, from the WSCC point of view, so could not be discussed. There was verbal assurance that brickwork and paving renewal would be part of the undertaking, and a new and slightly reduced figure reflected the fact WSCC has removed the traffic management part from the match funding request. Members remained unhappy however about agreeing to funding and asked the Clerk to pursue the matter with the HDC conservation officer to avoid any likelihood of the laminate fencing being part of the solution. The Clerk was also asked to ensure there would be posts placed on SPC social media highlighting to residents that this issue was not SPC's problem, rather that our Council was lobbying WSCC in order to help find a solution. Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander that the Clerk be delegated to approach the HDC Conservation Officer to get their support to ensure the railings are not renewed with the laminate option, rather that proper preserved wood be used. Agreed	CLERK CLERK
44.7	To consider a grant application from the Ukrainian Refuge Group Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr Foxwell that SPC agree to this grant application {for approx. £276 to cover Hall Hire}. Agreed	CLERK
44.8	To consider a grant application from the Horsham District Older Peoples Forum The request was for £44.10 to cover costs of room and kitchen hire. Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander that SPC agree to this grant application. Agreed	CLERK
F&GP/25/45	GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY MATTERS	
45.1	Notification re progress of the outstanding External Audit Report Still no indication of when receipt of this report will be forthcoming.	CLERK
45.2	Clerk to update concerning Cricket Club working party and progress of this project There was a working party on the 17th December, with Cricket Club reps, the newly appointed architect, and the Clerk and Cllr Norcross in attendance. The Architect reported there had been a number of meetings with local residents and the club officials and consequently and in line with the wishes of the Planning and Premises committee, the Architect has produced new and improved plans for the proposed rebuilding of the Clubhouse. SPC were invited to ensure the project was heading in the right direction, and the Clerk confirmed that a number of issues raised by objectors have been dealt with. There is another meeting planned for Friday the 16th January. The main focus of this meeting will be to further discussions concerning the Lease agreement – In attendance will be the Chairs of this committee and Planning and Premises.	CLERK & Cllrs
45.3	Convening of the Working Practices Group and to agree matters to be discussed SPC need to have a Website Accessibility Statement and IT Policy to be added to the website by the 31st March to meet the requirements of Governance Assertion 10, plus there is a need to agree a new SPC Privacy policy, and the SPC Financial risk assessment amendments	CLERK

45.4 To agree the text for the CCTV installation consultation, and the publicity associated with it **CLERK**
 There were two documents agreed at the previous meeting including *Your Mag* promotion, and the details of the online consultation format. Members further discussed the need for information being added to the remaining 'Background' documentation for residents better and potentially more balanced understanding of the reasons for SPC's wanting to pursue this project. Therefore to include the extent of the antisocial behaviour and other incidents faced, the costs involved, the need to help provide a mechanism for residents better safety, and some indication of the nature of the vandalism involved.
 Cllr S Alexander tabled some potential promotional posts for social media, and members asked that they be distributed to them for their input.

45.5 To agree a request for increased Street Cleaning contractual annual expenditure **CLERK**
 At the last F&GP meeting, it was agreed to extend this contract for a year. The contractor has subsequently agreed to this SPC condition but has also requested a 10% rise in the annual fee. In the first instance this may seem like a lot, but the Clerk reminded members that the contractor has not put up their fee for the last three years, and secondly, an increase was anticipated and is covered within the budget calculations for next year.
 Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ballance that this request be approved. **Agreed**

45.6 Update concerning *Devolution* planning for SPC
45.6.1 Members have been involved in a number of meetings with the Grammar School, and some points were raised to the designers concerning some aspects that might be of better benefit to SPC residents. One additional meeting has been requested as part of the community engagement process to discuss their *Community Use Agreement* – this is so SPC can attempt to better understand and potentially positively influence the relationship between the school and the swimming pool contractor. **CLERK**
45.6.2 Another positive meeting has taken place with other Parish Councils who have expressed an interest in the management of their Car Parks, via a company which gains its income by pursuing parking penalty charges.

F&GP/25/46 PROGRESS REPORT

46.1	<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
46.2	<i>F&GP/24/53.4 Spotlights onto the Clock Tower as a proposed project to be brought back</i>	CLERK & CCTV W. Prty
46.3	<i>F&GP/24/53.7 Clerk to contact WSCC to obtain advice in consideration of WSCC property disposals policy</i>	CLERK
46.4	<i>F&GP/24/53.7 Clerk to contact NALC to obtain legal advice behind note LTN 56</i>	CLERK
46.5	<i>F&GP/24/53.10 Clerk to install double socket in Clock Tower for future camera installation</i>	CLERK
46.6	<i>F&GP/24/53.10 SPC to publish strategy for the future of clock tower clock-face future renewal</i>	CLERK
46.7	<i>F&GP/24/54.1 A3 conservation signs to be purchased for Abbey Road</i>	CLERK
46.8	<i>F&GP/24/64.1 Clerk to add Asset items transferred to SPC to 2025/26 SPC Asset Register</i>	CLERK
46.9	<i>F&GP/25/35.5 More meetings hoped for with the Steyning Grammar School to discuss developments</i>	CLERK
46.10	<i>F&GP/24/25.12 SPC finance signatory amendments to take place in March 2026</i>	CLERK

F&GP/25/47 INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS

47.1 None

F&GP/25/48 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 10th March 2026 @7.30pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.22pm

Signed Date 10th March 2026
 Chair

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

<https://youtu.be/az7d0zOp Ug>