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

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

Clerk: John Fullbrook

Members of the Public in attendance: 1

Meeting commenced: 7:30 pm

DRAFT MINUTES

ACTIONS

F&GP/26/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

26.1 Apologies were received from Cllrs Norcross, Foxwell and Trundle.

F&GP/26/27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

27.1 None

F&GP/26/28 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR {in summary}

28.1 None

F&GP/26/29 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

29.1 Cllr S Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Bell that the draft minutes of the meeting held on the 8th September 2026 be agreed as a true and fair record. **Agreed, 4 For, 1 Abstained**

F&GP/26/30 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS – *These items taken as read*

30.1 Clerk to amend STC 2026/27 Action Plan – **Actioned/ See item 31.3**

30.2 STC Business and Finance Plans to be published following agreement – **Actioned**

30.3 Draft Equality Impact Assessment to be discussed at next meeting – **Actioned/ See item 32.1**

30.4 Approved Budget Planning Schedule to initiate delegated STC Committee responsibilities – **Actioned**

30.5 Allotment Association Grant to cover AGM room hire to be processed – **Actioned**

30.6 STC Annual Insurance Cover payment processed – **Actioned**

30.7 Lamp post testing report details to be used for installation submission when available – **Actioned**

30.8 Clerk and Cllrs to attend the *Henfield Devolution Update* meeting – **Actioned/ See item 32.4**

30.9 Clerk & District Cllr to meet with HDC Car Parks Manager to discuss poss. Asset Transfers- **See item 32.3**

30.10 Principles of a 3 year finance plan compiled by October 2026 for F&GP – **See item 31.4**

30.11 Working party to be convened to discuss three separate Lease agreements – **Actioned / See item 36.0**

30.12 Clerk to respond to enquiry/ complaint from Steyning visitor concerning MPF play area – **Actioned**

30.13 Clerk's office to process Steyning in Bloom Groups annual grant – **Actioned**

30.14 Clerk's office to process annual staff salary increase as per NALC guidance – **Actioned**

30.15 JPYC meeting to be convened to discuss future youth service provision – **Actioned/ See item 31.5**

F&GP/26/31 FINANCIAL MATTERS.

31.1 **To approve the list of STC payments for August 2026.** Members posed questions to the Clerk in consideration of payments covering this period. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that STC accepts the August 2026 STC Payments List. **Agreed**

31.2 **F&GP Income and Expenditure report for August 2026.**

Members interrogated many aspects and especially future Cil income, and budget lines from the report and the Clerk responded to these questions. Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S. Alexander that the F&GP Income & Expenditure report for August 2026 be accepted. **Agreed**

31.3	Update on progress on 2026/27 STC Action Plan The Clerk briefly updated on progress and members discussed those elements of the plan that were due to be undertaken, notably: MPF access upgrades; High St. Christmas lighting installation; Devolution planning; Glebe fields access ramp plans; and Neighbourhood plan review meeting dates (being reliant on Consultants availability).	CLERK
31.4	To agree this committee's longer-term projects in so far as it helps to establish parameters of the STC 3 Year Finance Plan The Chair noted this item overlapped with agenda item 6.10, which was looking at future Cil income, but asked members for their ideas on longer term project plans, and the following list was established in the first instance: 1. Twitten management – Attempt to transfer these assets from WSCC, and for STC to manage 2. Pedestrianisation of the High Street – As per examples in the Benelux countries 3. Putting more Yellow lines on High Street 4. Youth Service having its own Building (potentially with Scout group) 5. More Interpretation boards and Finger Posts installed like at the MPF and Abbey Road 6. CCTV rolled out for further Town coverage 7. Further Play Area upgrades – especially the MPF This item to be brought back with members to further consider before that meeting.	CLERK
31.5	To receive JPYC meeting update, and further discuss budget implications for 2027/28 The Joint Parishes Youth Committee met the previous evening (12 th October), and unanimously agreed to recommend to each affiliate Council going forward that the presumption is the youth service will be maintained and financial support will be automatically renewed each year unless objected to. The Youth Leader had presented reports and an updated business plan, and subsequently the STC Clerk confirmed he would continue to look at progressive budget planning for this service.	CLERK
31.6	To consider latest STC grant funding situation, and consider next year's budget Members considered this item separately to the whole budget discussion, with three strands to be decided, the ' <i>General Grants</i> ' line where more requests were now being received annually, ' <i>Steining in Bloom</i> ' and ' <i>Isolation and Loneliness</i> '. Members put forward ideas and agreed to an average of their suggestions, that the general budget increase to £2,850.	
31.7	To consider the first draft of the F&GP Budget papers for the 2027/28 Council Year The Clerk had prepared a first draft F&GP budget paper, and the members discussed its contents and looked at in particular the following budget lines - Cil income, Youth Service, Showcase and Bank Charges. With Cil amount to be determined at the next meeting.	CLERK CLERK
31.8	To consider 2026/27 list of STC Annual Direct Debits It is a financial Regs requirement for members to be made aware of, understand and approve of variable direct debits every two years. Members wondered if some arrangements could be interrogated with better deals sought, but understood that there were time constraints. Cllr S Alexander proposed, seconded by Cllr Sharp that STC was aware of the Direct Debits list, however, it will need to be brought back to a future meeting for further discussion. Agreed	CLERK
31.9	Update from Clerk concerning Internal and External Audit situations and to agree to next inhouse audit date	
31.9.1	The 2024/25 end of year has been agreed by the external auditors despite Cllr Campbell's request for it to be revisited, and the End of year report has been published on the STC Website.	CLERK
31.9.2	The 2025/26 End of year external report has subsequently been delayed so the Clerk has published on the website an interim statement whilst Council waits for a final sign off and report from the auditors.	

31.9.3	The next interim internal audit is planned for the 23 rd October, and Cllr Sharp may well attend once more.	CLERK
31.9.4	The Clerk reminded Cllrs Sharp and S Alexander that the next inhouse audit was due, and they both agreed to undertake it at a soon to be agreed date.	Cllrs Sharp & S Alexander
31.10	To begin to consider Cil funded projects list over next 5 years. Members agreed that they had already covered this matter under items 31.4 and 31.7 above.	CLERK
F&GP/26/32	GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY MATTERS	
32.1	To agree to recommend the draft STC Equality Impact Assessment Policy. Cllr Johnson had compiled a draft policy and checklist, and the Clerk had made some minor alterations, and this was the document being considered by members for this meeting. In general, committee thought it was not too long and yet covered everything that needed to be discussed when required. Cllr Bell commented that the Checklist would need adding to it, room at the top of the page for a descriptor and project heading. Cllr Bell proposed, seconded by Cllr I Alexander that subject to this amendment, this policy and checklist be recommended for Full Council's agreement. Agreed	CLERK
32.2	To consider and be updated upon the recent HALC situation, and consider any actions. The last 18 months have seen a slowing of HALC inspired activity, and many Parish Councils had started to complain that this was the time HALC really needed to be articulating the views of the third tear of Local Government as the Devolution situation progresses. There has however, very recently been a newly inspired regime voted in place and supporting papers summarised the situation and revamped HALC organisation plus noted the forthcoming agenda, and the Clerk asked members to support or otherwise the revamped Committee structure. Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander that STC supports the new HALC organisation and agenda. Agreed	CLERK
32.3	Update concerning potential Asset Transfers from HDC, and agree any actions.	CLERK
32.3.1	To recap, STC have been offered two small parcels of land in Penlands that STC have agreed could be useful and are at very little annual maintenance cost. STC have also been offered a small parcel of land approaching Normans Way Play Area, which again could be useful if for example STC chooses to increase the play park potential of this area. STC have been offered two thirds of the Fletchers Croft Park, but not the main Car Park itself. And offered the twitten that runs past football club and schools through shooting fields.	
32.3.2	The Clerk still hopes to convince HDC via a business plan that STC be offered the Car Park at Fletchers Croft and the High Street Bus Shelter/ toilet block which STC lease anyway.	
32.3.3	The Clerk was recently at a meeting in Henfield with Clerks and Cllrs and HDC officers including the HDC CEO, where this was further discussed, and when time allows hopes to have a meeting with the HDC Car Park Manager and Cllr Finnegan and then complete the Business Plan with this then to be brought back to this committee for approval.	
32.4	Update concerning Devolution planning for STC	
32.4.1	The Devolution process continues to be on hold, but this does not change the date on which Horsham is due to stop functioning as a District Council, and a unitary authority set up, it just means that the transfer of processes has been somewhat, though not entirely, held up. The handover will therefore still happen in 2028 to the unitary authority.	
32.4.2	The recent Henfield meeting where the Horsham CEO Jane Eaton, was main speaker and two directors were also in attendance and where Cllrs were invited was very informative, and especially on two main aspects – that of Devolution and secondly on changes to planning processes and procedures due to the national scheme of delegation, NPPF changes and local planning procedural changes.	
32.4.3	In terms of devolution Jane explained that in reality the non-agreement to Devolution plans being progressed, was due to financial pressures and the uneven distribution of a Council's tax base, and therefore on occasion the ability to raise equitable funds via its tax payers.	

32.5	Freedom of Information Request update – Two recent requests to agree any actions.	CLERK
32.5.1	The Clerk updated members on the two outstanding Freedom of Information requests. One from Cllr Campbell, and one from a visitor to Steyning, with both wanting to know more about the maintenance of the MPF Play Area. Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander that the Clerk answer the FOI requests in the most efficient manner possible and that if there is a further request, that the FOI panel is convened to consider whether the ancillary request has merits or if it is a vexatious request. Agreed	
32.5.2	The second request is requiring quite a lot of information. The Clerk asked for the scope to be reduced and the requester refused, so the Clerk may well ask for a fee to be paid if the workload exceeds the FOI policy stated - reasonable limitation.	
32.6	Clerk to brief members following recent attendance at Clerk's Forum There was a Networking Finance and Governance day on the 10 th September organised by the Mulberry group, at East Grinstead, and attended by 71 local Councils. The day was spent explaining how much more complicated the role of Clerking was continuing to evolve into and the many extra layers of procedural change that needed to be implemented such as Assertion 10, – this being the web site accessibility and IT policy updates plus data auditing which STC are well on the way towards compliance but with still much to do, plus it discussed the digitisation of the end of Year AGAR system, which will come on line for all in April 2028. What was particularly concerning was that a Council either passes or fails the Assertion 10 assessment at years end. It's a binary process meaning that if you only get one thing wrong, you fail and then this will affect the external audit report henceforth for that year.	
32.7	Request from Rugby Club for permission to have Tea & Coffee mobile unit at the MPF for training days The Rugby Club have asked permission for a mobile unit to service the days/ mornings when the club have training as well as potentially some other days – potentially helping a service provision for the football club during their training days. The Clerk has asked for and received insurance and Catering hygiene Docs from the vendor, and sought Committee's approval for this operation, initially at no cost, for use of the Car Park. Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander that STC accept the request from the Rugby Club {Use of mobile unit at MPF @ Nil cost} subject to it being monitored for the first year. Agreed	CLERK
32.8	To consider proposed telecommunications base station upgrade at King's Barn Lane The Clerk supplied supporting papers containing a diagram and location map of existing Mast as well as written explanation for the consultation request and the detail of the newly proposed mast. Members were asked for their comments in terms of planning consent for this application. Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr Bell that STC had no objection to the development. Agreed	CLERK
32.9	To consider extending the Grass cutting and Street Cleaning contracts by one year	CLERK
32.9.1	Last year this committee agreed to extend the 3-year Grass cutting and Street Cleaning contracts by a single year as STC did not know what additional land was due to be transferred to it, and therefore what changes were needed to the grass cutting contract, nor whether the Cleansing grant would be affected by the demise of HDC – the thinking being that it was best to wait until there was a better understanding before entering into a three-year contract which would otherwise likely need to be rewritten during its term.	
32.9.2	STC are now in a better position than a year ago to understand what will likely come STC's way, however there is still some negotiating to be done. Indeed it is likely that the situation will be resolved by this time next year and so the Clerk asked members consideration of an extension for one more year for both contracts.	
32.9.3	Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander that both of these contracts be extended for one year. Agreed	

F&GP/26/33	ONGOING ITEMS - The following items will be taken to the next F&GP meetings	CLERK
33.1	<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>	
33.2	<i>F&GP/24/53.7 Clerk to contact WSCC to obtain advice in consideration of WSCC property disposals policy</i>	
33.3	<i>F&GP/24/53.7 Clerk to contact NALC to obtain legal advice behind note LTN 56</i>	
33.4	<i>F&GP/24/53.10 SPC to publish strategy for the future of clock tower clockface future renewal</i>	
33.5	<i>F&GP/24/55.3 Staff & Cllr Data Protection training date & trainer confirmed with Cllr S Alexander to assist</i>	
33.6	<i>F&GP/26/07.6 Principles of a 3 year finance plan compiled by October 2026 for F&GP</i>	
33.7	<i>F&GP/26/07.7 Asset Register review working party meeting to be convened</i>	
33.8	<i>F&GP/26/08.7 All 3 phases of the CCTV project to be completed when funds are available</i>	
33.9	<i>F&GP/26/12.2 Working party to be convened on the 6th Oct. to discuss three separate Lease arrangements</i>	
F&GP/26/34	INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE ITEMS	
34.1	There was a letter from the Steyning Ukrainian Refuge requesting assistance to obtain household items for a new family, and members agreed to help spread the word via website and social media promotion if needs be.	D. CLERK
F&GP/26/35	CONFIDENTIAL SESSION	
35.1	Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander 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/26/36	FINANCE & GOVERNANCE MATTERS	
36.1	To agree to an updated draft Bowls Lease agreement, as per recommended by the Lease working party, so that it can be taken to Solicitors and subsequently to Bowls Club Committee for their initial approval.	CLERK
36.1.1	The existing Lease is due for renewal on the 14 th December 2026. Bowls members had recently and in the run up to this discussion only raised initial concerns about their Trustees' liability, however, it was pointed out that under point 7.0, this had already been dealt with in the current agreement, and records that the Lease shall be limited to the amount of the assets of the Bowls club.	
36.1.2	The working party highlighted two recommendations involving length of term and 'right of renewal', and the Chair was a member of the group and spoke in support of the suggested amendments, and these were summarised within confidential supporting papers.	
36.1.3	Cllr Sharp proposed, seconded by Cllr S Alexander that the draft Bowls Lease agreement has met criteria apart from the amendments noted and that the Clerk go back to Solicitors and Bowls Club reps for revision of agreement and initial discussion before bringing back to this committee. Agreed	
36.2	To consider an updated draft Cricket Club Lease agreement, as per recommended by the Lease Agreement working party, so that it can be taken to Solicitors and subsequently to the Cricket Club Committee for their initial approval.	CLERK
36.2.1	The existing Lease is due for renewal in 2028, however with the Cricket club seeking redevelopment of the Clubhouse the lease is also being revised. Cricket Club representatives had recently and in the run up to this meeting raised their need to extend the length of the term of a new lease and it was felt that the terms of a new lease would also need to adequately address any concerns about future pavilion ownership, as well as from a council and residents perspective ensure that any commercial operation was in keeping with location and the status of the club.	
36.2.2	The working party had previously worked on a set of criteria for a new lease which for example raised the length of the term to 50years, and the Clerk had subsequently asked the STC solicitors to compile a first draft of a new lease and this was the document which had been considered at the last working party. The Chair spoke in support of the new document and noted 5 additions and amendments which the working party had recommended and this committee further considered these items. Cllr S Alexander suggested a further amendment concerning future STC CCTV equipment location and Wi-Fi access provision.	CLERK

36.2.3 Cllr Sharp **proposed, seconded** by Cllr S Alexander that the new draft Cricket Club Lease agreement has met criteria apart from the amendments noted above and within supporting papers plus to seek further advice of Bar opening hours, and that the Clerk go back to Solicitors and subsequently organise a meeting with Cricket Club members to consider revision of the agreement before being brought back to this committee for final agreement. **Agreed**

F&GP/26/37 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 8th December 2026 @7.30pm.**

The Chair closed the meeting at 9.50pm

Signed Date 8th December 2026
Chair

A video recording of this meeting can be found using this link: <https://youtu.be/uC7pwL-Eji8>