

**Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held at
Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on Tuesday 12 March 2019
commencing at 7.34 p.m.**

Councillors present: Mr I Davies (Chairman), Mrs A Brindle, Ms L Clarke, Mr V Davies, Mr P Dengate and Mr G Hayday, Mr B Hinder and Mrs W Hinder together with the Assistant Clerk Mrs M Fooks.

1. Apologies and non-attendance

Apologies: None All councillors were present

2. Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying.

As no members of the public were present the meeting was not adjourned.

3. Minutes of the meetings of 13 & 20 November 2018 & 28 January 2019

To consider the minutes of the meetings (previously circulated) and if in order to sign as a true record.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

4.1 Minute 3184/4.3 Bank mandates. UTB changes have been progressed. The Assistant Clerk advised members that due to the current workload in the office this was ongoing. **Noted.**

4.2 Minute 3184/4.4 Replacement of laptop. This was delivered and installed on 28 February 2019. **Noted.**

4.3 Minute 3184/6.2 Long Term Investments Working Group. Members **agreed** a meeting should be scheduled in early April and will confirm the date once the Clerk has returned from annual leave. **Action Clerk.**

4.4 Minute 3185/7.2 Future proposals for parish office. Cllrs Bob Hinder and Ivor Davies are waiting information from the office. **Action office.**

4.5 Minute 3185/8.3 Cyber Crime. Cllr Dengate reported that amendments having been made to the draft it awaits the Clerk's return from annual leave for her comments. **Action Clerk.**

4.6 Minute 3185/11 Website. Parish office is undertaking the plan of action identified at a recent informal meeting. A written request to the Website hosting company to contact the Parish Council has been sent. **Considered under item 7 below.**

4.7 Minute 3212/5 Upgrade to fire alarm system. A quotation, well within the budget allocation, has been accepted and work will proceed shortly. It is planned to install the external cabinet for the defibrillator at the same time. **Noted.**

4.8 Any other matters arising from the minutes, but not on the agenda. **None.**

5. Financial report.

5.1 Reconciliation of accounts. The Chairman reported that, prior to the meeting, he had successfully undertaken a reconciliation of all the bank accounts. **Noted.**

5.2 Income/Expenditure report as at 28.02.19 which included explanations to budget codes were **Received** and **Noted.** Clarification was sought for code 4545/260 Grounds Maintenance as it is showing as an overspend and members **agreed** to carry forward the remaining grant for Vinters Valley Nature Reserve code 4285/150 to 2019/20. **Action office.**

5.3 Petty cash reconciliation. The Chairman confirmed that he had checked and reconciled the account prior to the meeting.

5.4 Investments Report. **Received** and **Noted.**

Beechen Hall Extension expenditure report. **Received** and **Noted.**

5.5 Independent Internal Audit Reports. The auditor's reports of 5 December 2018 and 6 March 2019 (the latter just received) were **received and noted**, Cllr Bob Hinder thanked the office staff for their work in ensuring there were no serious issues. Members asked that the Clerk investigate, take action and

report action on the auditor's comments regarding contracts of employment and the Parish Council having crossed the £200k threshold this financial year.
Action Clerk.

6. General Data Protection Regulation

- 6.1 Draft Subject Access Request (SAR) process and checklist. Members **received and agreed** the Clerk's drafts with two minor queries regarding the checklist and the following responses to the Clerk's queries regarding the process:
- The Clerk to notify the Chairmen of the PC, F&GPC and relevant Committee when an SAR is received.
 - The Clerk to inform the above immediately if any problems, or a possible need to refuse access to information wholly or in part, are foreseen or subsequently come to light. Any such refusal to be dealt with in accordance with GDPR.
 - Any necessary redactions should be made on an electronic copy of the relevant document following a procedure outlined by Cllr Dengate.
 - Routine SARs and action taken to be reported to the full Parish Council at its next meeting.
 - Any complaints regarding the handling of an SAR to be dealt with under the parish council's normal Complaints Procedure. **Action Clerk.**
- 6.2 Compliance update. The Clerk's report was **received and noted.**
- 6.3 Data Protection Officer (DPO) The Clerk's report **received and noted.** Members asked for a report on the services received from Satswana to date and **agreed** that it would be useful to see if the parish council's current practices could be audited if already paid for. If not, what would it cost? **Action Clerk.**

7. Changes to IT

To consider the current and future needs of the parish council. The Clerk's report on the ad hoc meeting on this subject was **received and noted.** Cllr Dengate was thanked for his guidance on this complex issue.

Members were given an update on the website. The office has failed to establish contact with the host company despite numerous attempts by phone and e-mail and a letter sent by registered post has gone unanswered. After discussion Cllr Hayday proposed, seconded by Cllr Bob Hinder, that the process of developing a new website be started. **Agreed unanimously. Action Cllr Dengate/office.**

8. Personnel matters

- 8.1 TOIL, training, leave and sickness cover. A verbal update was **received** from the Assistant Clerk who set out the heavy demand made in recent weeks, on an Office already under pressure, as the result of planning applications for three major developments arising at once and other complex issues. The accrued extra hours worked by both she and the Clerk were now far in excess of the set ceiling of 30 for time off in lieu and it was difficult to see how this backlog could ever be cleared.

Members then considered the impact of this on staff well-being and the Council's Duty of Care. The need to seek to lessen the office workload was clear and prompted a number of suggestions for embracing technology to do so, in particular for dealing with the modern expectation of an instant response to e-mail queries.

In the meantime, Cllrs Wendy Hinder and Brindle, who had visited the office that day and witnessed the strain staff were under, stated that as working extra hours was at present essential, the time should be paid for. A lively but very sympathetic discussion then ensued which the Chairman concluded, after first pointing out that there might be administrative obstacles to any such additional remuneration and the Clerk would have to be consulted, by asking the Assistant Clerk if she would be prepared to work, say, an extra two hours per day on basic pay to meet the immediate need. Having secured her agreement in principle, the Chairman

then proposed that **“that the Assistant Clerk’s hours be increased by 10 per week, worked on a flexible basis, for a period of one month”**. **Agreed unanimously.**

Attention then turned to the outstanding excess TOIL, i.e. above 30 hours, already accumulated by the Clerk and her Assistant. All were in agreement in principle that recompense was due and, after the Chairman again reminded them of the possible difficulties, asked that this be looked into. **Action Office.**

9. **Policies and Procedures: Reports and Reviews**

- 9.1 Policy and Procedures Calendar 2019/2020. **Agreed** with the addition to report the Public Works Loan payments to the Committee in May and November. **Action office.**
- 9.2 Financial Regulations (committee review). Members **received** and **noted** the Clerk’s report.
- 9.3 Chairman’s Pendant (wearing and transport) Procedure. The Clerk has undertaken a review and considers it still fit for purpose. **Noted.**
- 9.4 Insurance (review) **Received** and **noted**. Members confirmed they did not wish to have any further information or notifications during the review but would welcome a short report in due course.

10 **Contingency Fund and Budget adjustments**

None identified.

11 **Grants**

To consider a request for a grant from Citizens Advice Maidstone. Members **received** the request and report and after discussion Cllr Wendy Hinder proposed, seconded by Cllr Vic Davies a donation of £200. **Agreed unanimously. Action Office.**

12 **Matters for Information**

None received.

13 **Items for Next Agenda**

Councillors’ reports and requests for items to be included on the agenda to be submitted no later than 13 May 2019.

14 **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 21 May 2019 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Meeting closed at 21.29 p.m.

Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman.....

Date.....