

EAST HOATHLY with HALLAND PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the East Hoathly with Halland Parish Council Finance and General Purpose committee meeting held on **Monday 9th September, 2024 at 6.45pm.**

Present: Cllrs. Butcher, Freezer (chair), Thatcher and Whitlock.

Also in attendance: Malcolm Ramsden (clerk) and Verne Heath (rfo) (via Zoom).

AGENDA

0.ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Following a proposal by Cllr. Thatcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer
FGP0090 **RESOLVED** that Cllr. Butcher be appointed as chair.

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend. The first fifteen minutes of the meeting will be available for the public to express a view or ask a question on relevant matters on the agenda. The public and members of the press are also welcome to stay and observe the rest of the meeting (subject to any items considered as confidential within the terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960).

No members of the public or press in attendance.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to make any declaration of personal or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and are reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it then becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is to be considered.

None.

3. APOLOGIES – to receive apologies for absence

None.

4. MINUTES

4.1 To resolve that the minutes of the Finance and General Purpose Meeting held on Monday 12th February, 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chairman

Following a proposal by Cllr. Thatcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer

FGP0091 **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th of February, 2024 be taken as read, confirmed as correct and be signed by the chairman.

4.1.1 Matters outstanding from minutes (not listed as separate agenda items)

4.1.1.1 Policy re. plots of land coming on the market

Officer's recommendation: Proposal to Full Council that, until such time as a formal policy be approved, the clerk be authorized to respond when plots of land become available in the parish stating that the clerk may be instructed to enter into preliminary discussions.

Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Whitlock

FGP0092 **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that the Clerk be instructed to investigate, attend, without committing Council, and report back from meetings when plots of land in the parish come on the market.

5. GENERAL PURPOSE

5.1 To consider proposing an investment policy to Full Council

Officer's recommendation: As transparency and clarity required to formalize, amongst other things, how funds in excess of the FCSC limit of £85,000 be dealt with and what forms of investment are, and more importantly, aren't, seen as appropriate for this Council.

Following a proposal by Cllr. Freezer and seconding by Cllr. Thatcher

- FGP0093** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that the previously circulated draft Investment Policy be adopted by Full Council.
- 5.2 To consider offer from ESCC re. streetlighting maintenance and energy supply for proposal to Full Council
Officer's recommendation: That ESCC streetlighting maintenance and energy supply agreement be adopted.
Clerk reported that a meeting of various local Councillors had been held at Framfield and that a number of issues had been raised with the proposed ESCC contract. In the meantime it might be prudent to check the condition and insurance cover relating to the streetlights owned by Council and consider period checks in future.
- 5.3 Verge grass mowing for 2025 season
Proposal from chair that more frequent cuts than seen this season be proposed to Full Council
Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer
- FGP0094** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that the number of grass verge cuts during 2025 be increased.
- 5.4 To approve budget/precept setting timetable for 2025/26
Officer's recommendation: Agenda item for September's meeting of the Full Council request members for items to be considered for 2025/26 be submitted to the clerk and members reminded at the October meeting of the Full Council with an agenda item at November's F&GP meeting to draw up a proposed budget and precept for submission and approval (subject to any unforeseen items being raised subsequently) at the November meeting of the Full Council.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Whitlock
- FGP0095** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that the previously circulated timetable for next year's budget and precept setting be adopted and that the process for the following year be commenced at the AGM.
- 5.5 To propose to Full Council that, as sole trustee of the East Hoathly and Halland War Memorial Sports Ground, Council support the charity's efforts to improve/replace as necessary at the Sports Ground and meet the costs of AirS subscriptions in this regard
Proposal from chair that this would enable of guidance and support from AirS experts in respect of the charity project. AirS subscription is currently £120+vat per annum.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Freezer and seconding by Cllr. Thatcher
- FGP0096** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that Council subscribe, at an initial cost of £120, to Action in rural Sussex.
- 5.6 To propose to Full Council that Council investigate the legal costs of actions required to regularize the unsatisfactory positions regarding the East Hoathly and Halland War Memorial Sports Ground and Village Hall governance as registered with the Charity Commissioners
Officer's recommendation: That in view of the confusion with the Charity Commissioner's records at the time of registration of both charities that Council investigate the costs of clarification which might require a new 'scheme' for East Hoathly and Halland War Memorial Sports Ground.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Thatcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer
- FGP0097** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that Council's solicitors be instructed to review the Charity Commissioner's records to clarify if the unsatisfactory position be untenable going forward.
- 5.7 To receive report of meeting with the Garden Plots chair
Meeting scheduled for 10th September, 2024. Carried forward.
- 5.8 To note deadline for new Wildlife/Meadow verge applications and removals for 2025 is 15th September, 2024
Current designated areas are on the south east side of the road between some garage buildings and No. 75 South Street, from Rectory Close to approx. 20m beyond the bus shelter to the north of the bus shelter at the beginning of the High Street and the verge to the south of London Road between the Garden Plots and the layby along the approach to the Shaw roundabout.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Thatcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer
- FGP0098** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that the two South Road grass verges no longer be designated 'wildflower' in order that regular mowing be restored and that cultivation licences be sought for the two benches closest to the High Street/The Mews junction.

6. FINANCE

- 6.1 Grant application for proposal to Full Council
*Application received from Wealden Citizens Advice requesting £350 to contribute to them being enable them to continue providing a service to parish residents.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Whitlock and seconding by Cllr. Freezer*
- FGP0099** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that Wealden Citizens Advice grant request be approved.
- 6.2 Christmas: Tree and tree light funding for proposal to Full Council
Cllr. Whitlock declared his personal and pecuniary interests in this item and left the meeting.
*Officer's recommendation: To fund provision and removal of Christmas trees and associated tree lights at both villages.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer*
- FGP0100** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that Council fund the cost of both village's Christmas tree purchases, erection and subsequent removal together with such lights and replacement decorations as are required.
- Cllr. Whitlock rejoined the meeting.
- 6.3 Account signatory update
*Update to be provided by RFO
Members learnt from the RFO that Unity arrangements had been successfully completed but that issues still remained with the Cambridge Building Society.*
- 6.4 Bleed kits: financing and placement proposal to Full Council
*Proposal from chair to arrange for the purchase and installation of bleed kits at Blacksmiths Arms and East Hoathly pavilion (subject to owner agreement).
Following a proposal by Cllr. Freezer and seconding by Cllr. Butcher*
- FGP0101** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that Council fund the cost of two bleed kits and consider placing one at the pavilion and the other close to the Halland roundabout.
- 6.5 Additional notice boards and placement proposal to Full Council
*Proposal from chair to arrange for the purchase and placing of additional Notice Boards (subject to owner agreement).
Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer*
- FGP0102** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that Council fund the cost of an additional notice board to be placed centrally with East Hoathly.
- 6.6 Insurance renewal proposal to Full Council
*Officer's recommendation: To propose to Full Council that insurance cover for Village Hall (building only), Parish Council and Sports Ground charity be renewed. One quote, so far, received with a premium of £5,637.93
Cllr. Freezer asked that reference to the sports ground pond and the Council element of Moat Wood be included.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer*
- FGP0103** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that Council approve renewal of Council's insurance for a further year.
- 6.7 To propose to Full Council that bramble pulling costs be funded using s106 funds
*Officer's recommendation: To propose to Full Council that bramble pulling costs at the bluebell area of the Council portion of Moat Wood (expected to be less than £500) be taken from Woodland s106 funds.
Not taken forward at this time.*
- 6.8 To propose to Full Council that Moat Wood boardwalk specification costs be met from s106 funds
*Officer's recommendation: To propose to Full Council that the costs relating to the provision of the boardwalk specification at the Council portion of Moat Wood (£550) be taken from Woodland s106 funds.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Thatcher*
- FGP0104** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that costs relating to the provision of the boardwalk specification at the Council portion of Moat Wood (£550) be taken from Woodland s106 funds.
- 6.9 To propose to Full Council that Moat Wood tree safety survey costs be met from s106 funds
*Officer's recommendation: To propose to Full Council that the costs of the tree safety survey at the Council portion of Moat Wood (£300) be taken from Woodland s106 funds.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Butcher and seconding by Cllr. Freezer*
- FGP0105** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that costs relating to the tree safety survey at the Council portion of Moat Wood (£300) be taken from Woodland s106 funds.

- 6.10 To propose to Full Council that Council pay for hiring the Village Hall for meetings
*Proposal from chair that Council pay when hiring the Village Hall for meetings.
From the number of comments and requests for grants received from hirers of the Village Hall it would suggest that the Hall finances are in a somewhat parlous state. Council have, for some time, benefitted from hire of the hall for meetings at no cost.
Following a proposal by Cllr. Freezer and seconding by Cllr. Butcher*
- FGP0106** **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that a payment, in lieu of hall hire, of between £800 and £1,000 be offered to the Village Hall.
- 6.11 Member audit
*A number of payments made, selected at random, reviewed for compliance with and, as required by, Council Financial Regulations.
The member audit confirmed conformance of:-
04Jne2024 – JAKK (Fingerposts) £1,067.76
10Jne2024 – Garden Plot rent (JDB****r) £50.00
14Jne2024 – Dday 80 Oak tree £355.17*

7. ITEMS FOR REFERRAL TO NEXT AGENDA OR APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE

None.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 8.1 To note that the next meeting of the Full Council will be held on Monday, 30th September, 2024 at 7pm at the Village Hall, Church Marks Lane, East Hoathly.
Noted.

Meeting closed at 8.05pm

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