

**FINANCE & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015 AT 7.30 PM  
AT THE STEYNING CENTRE**

**Present:** Cllrs Rogers, Bowell, Alexander, Toomey, Ness-Collins, Toms and Willett.

**Members of the public:** Three

**Clerk:** Rebecca Luckin

**QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:**

1. Q – Working groups - are they open to the public?  
A – No, they are not a decision making forum, any recommendations from them will be taken to the appropriate committee.
2. Q – Regarding the HDC Planning Framework, if you'd had more time it would have been discussed in public?  
A – The HDC Planning Framework is a large policy (available online). Parish Councils are given an opportunity to respond to the amendments that are being made, not the entire document. Amendments will be discussed and recommendations taken to a Parish Council meeting.
3. Q – Has the new PCSO been appointed yet?  
A – There is no plan, that we are aware of, to appoint a new PCSO, but it will be discussed later in the meeting.
4. Q – Our Neighbourhood Wardens, do they work in other areas?  
A – No, only Steyning, Bramber, and Upper Beeding. They would only be called upon in the event of an emergency situation.
5. Q – With the Working Groups, are notes taken? Are we allowed to see them?  
A – Notes rather than minutes are taken.  
A - Discussion takes place rather than agreements, which are fed back to committee, who vote on the matter. Working Groups undertake the spade work only and notes would not be available to the public. Committee minutes will provide information on decisions to the public.
- Q – Sometimes, at meetings, it feels like matters have been agreed prior to meetings?  
A – This is not the case. The Chair would not wish there to be pre-determination prior to a committee meeting. Committee meetings and Parish Council meetings are held in public, but do not involve the public.
6. Written Question regarding SAYS

Cllr Rogers outlined a pertinent question and advised that responses would be included in the minutes of the meeting:

1 Please could SPC explain the nature of the funding mechanism and the funding vehicle actually adopted with particular reference to:

a) All the reasons why some (only) of the funding is channelled through a third party with an independent legal personality completely separate from the Parish Council (SAYS).

*The Parish Councils pay Horsham Matters directly in order to be able to reclaim VAT. Other payments are made into the SAYS account.*

b) What type of legal organisation SAYS is and why this structure was chosen.

*SAYS is a Charitable Interest Organisation. The options considered at the time of set up, were a charity and/or a limited company, but the CIO incorporated the benefits of both types of organisation.*

c) What the decision making process of SAYS is and what input, if any there is from the intended non-parish council representatives, the police and from faith communities and indeed from the parish council itself. If none, or little, why was this important aspect dropped?

*Trustees, appointed by the Parish Councils, make decisions on behalf of SAYS. Horsham Matters, the Youth Worker and other representatives form the Management Group, with Clerks in attendance.*

d) What formal mechanism, if any, there is for decisions of SAYS to be reported to SPC or for SPC to influence those decisions.

*Steyning Parish Council has representatives on SAYS who can report at Finance & Community. Comments noted can be reported back to SAYS.*

e) What formal mechanism, if any, there is for the Parish Council to receive interim and annual accounts from SAYS.

*Trustees are provided with interim accounts and receive and agree the end of year accounts. Currently, the financial report for 2014 / 15 is being finalised. The situation is complicated by Horsham Matters operating on a difference financial year and Steyning Parish Council reporting on an Income & Expenditure basis, while smaller Parish Councils report on a Receipts & Payments basis. The first full financial year completed in March 2015.*

f) Why some payments go to SAYS and some go direct to Horsham Matters and by what process this has been approved by SPC councillors.

*To mitigate VAT costs. In order for a Parish Council to reclaim VAT, the invoice must be addressed directly to them and not via a third party.*

g) Why SAYS seems to be accumulating reserves at about the same rate the public was told the funding of the youth worker would be necessary – about £10 per annum per household.

*Reserves are being held for a specific purpose identified at the time of set up. A SAYS Reserves Policy is available and will be accepted by the F&C Committee in this meeting.*

*h) What control SPC has over SAYS and how that will operate if trustees cease to be councillors.*

*Each Parish Council appoints its Trustees. At the first meeting of the new Parish Council in May, Trustees will be appointed by Steyning Parish Council.*

*2 How will SPC's intended "adoption" of the SAYS reserves policy be relevant to SAYS as an independent legal entity when SAYS seemingly does not report its decisions or its accounts to SPC and SPC seemingly has no means of control over its funds once paid over to SAYS?*

*Minutes, reports and accounts are provided and the Reserves Policy will be presented to the Parish Council at this meeting.*

*3 Will SPC make further funding provision to SAYS conditional on it producing to SPC in timely fashion its agendas and minutes of its meetings and regular written financial updates? Please explain the reasons if not.*

*All four Parish Councils committed to an initial three year period, however, once the first full year's audited financial accounts are received, the monies retained by SAYS and future annual commitments by the Parish Councils can be discussed and if appropriate modified.*

*4 Has SPC given its trustee representatives terms of reference and if so will it make future funding to SAYS conditional on compliance with those terms and if it has not done so will it consider doing so? Please explain the reasons if not.*

*SAYS has a Constitution, which includes Objectives. An agreed amendment (to increase the number of Trustees from four to seven, to increase the level of knowledge and expertise in Youth Work) will need to be made to the document. A copy will be placed on the PC website.*

*5 Will SPC make future funding of SAYS conditional on regular reports from trustees at the meetings of SPC as to what activities SAYS is funding and conditional on reporting the contents of reports SAYS has received from Horsham Matters? Please explain the reasons if not.*

*Reports are regularly received and commitment to SAYS will continue, as agreed at the outset of the three year period, or earlier if agreed.*

*6 Please will the Council publish on its website the SAYS constitution as set out in its governing document together with details of who the controlling individuals are, what their terms of reference are, all SAYS decisions including future ones as they are reported to SPC, and all SAYS financial reports and accounts including future ones as they are reported to SPC?*

*SAYS Constitution, Reports, Minutes and Yearly Financial Reports will be placed on the Parish Council website when received.*

**The meeting was convened at 19.51pm**

## **MINUTES**

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – were received and accepted from Cllrs Hopkinson and Lloyd.
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS** – Cllr Willett declared an interest as a Governor of Steyning Grammar School, with regard to the Cuthman Centre.
- 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
  - 3.1** Cllr Bowell **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ness-Collins that the minutes of the meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015. **Agreed.**
- 4. MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS** – the Clerk confirmed that:
  - 4.1** (6.3) WSCC/016/15/WS Rock Common Quarry proposals. A report of a meeting between WSCC, Washington Parish Council and the Wiston Estate will be provided by those present. The Planning Committee noted that the proposal would be considered by the WSCC Planning Committee rather than delegated to an Officer.
  - 4.2** (3.2) Use of Parish Council debit card. The Clerk confirmed that other Councils used a bank other than HSBC in order to obtain a debit card with more than one signature required.
  - 4.3** (10.1) A grant of £600 had been made to the Chamber of Business for Christmas lighting, as agreed.
  - 4.4** (15.1) The Clerk's performance appraisal was yet to take place.
- 5. NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT**
  - 5.1** Not received in time for the meeting. Report will be circulated and placed on the Parish Council website when available.
- 6. INFORMATION ITEMS**
  - 6.1** The access path between King's Barn Lane and river Adur which has been used for the last 30 years under Open Access Land, is now the subject of an application to be used as a public footpath, as of right. Further evidence, on the way it was used in the past, will need to be provided before it can be designated as a public right of way. The path will be considered at the next Public Right of Way Committee meeting in June 2015. Cllr Rogers had written a personal letter to the landowner to help understand the issues with members of the public using the path, prior to an approach being made by the Parish Council. Members of the public have provided evidence of use.
- 7. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS** – none for this meeting.
- 8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**
  - 8.1** Cllr Muncey provided a report regarding Horsham Area Local Councils (HALC) meeting 10.03.15. Circulated prior to the meeting. Gatwick Airport Ltd spoke regarding the positive impact on a proposed second runway and covered the

implications of increased traffic and house building in the area. Police provision was discussed in light of the new Police Model. A reduction in officers will come into effect and calls will be screened for priority. Steyning is a low crime area and will receive fewer resources, although officers can be called upon regionally. Further budget savings will be made. Councillors were mindful that Neighbourhood Wardens are essential and may discuss additional powers in future. The Clerk will ascertain the difference in enforcement powers between Neighbourhood Wardens and PCSO's.

## **9. FINANCE MATTERS AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

### **9.1** Income & Expenditure Report, Petty Cash Expenditure and Payments List (totalling £51,792.22) for March 2015.

Cllr Toms **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ness-Collins that the reports for March be accepted. **Agreed.**

### **9.2** To receive and agree details of Income & Expenditure for Steyning Area Youth Services (SAYS).

Cllr Willett **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Alexander that the financial reports for 2013 / 14 be accepted. **Agreed.**

Councillors noted that the Youth Worker will report to the next Full Council meeting and agreed that some sensitive issues are covered in the course of her work, regarding young people, and not every aspect can be reported upon. An event will take place later in the year to showcase youth work over the past two years.

Councillors discussed the history, timeframe and aspirations of SAYS and the commitment to hold reserves for replacement accommodation if required.

Expenditure had not been as high as anticipated. Audited accounts for 2014 / 15 are awaited and funds may be returned to the Parish Councils, if appropriate and following evaluation of SAYS. Trustees may wish to expand the service offered, the Management Group will discuss and report back.

Information on SAYS will be re-located on the Parish Council website, to improve access.

### **9.3** SAYS Reserves Policy. Councillors agreed to defer accepting the SAYS Reserves Policy until further information is available regarding the accounts for 2014 / 15.

## **10. STAFF TRAINING**

### **10.1** The Clerk requested to be allowed to attend a Finance / VAT training course provided by the Society of Local Council Clerks at a cost of £75+VAT.

Cllr Howell **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ness-Collins that the Clerk attend. **Agreed.**

## **11. WORKING PRACTICES GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **11.1** Councillors considered Steyning Parish Council revised Standing Orders (following NALC model) as recommended by the Working Practices Working Party.

Cllr Toms **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ness Collins that a recommendation be made to Full Council to adopt revised Standing Orders. **Agreed.**

- 11.2 Councillors considered Steyning Parish Council revised Financial Regulations (following NALC model) as recommended by the Working Practices Working Party. Cllr Rogers **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Willett that a recommendation be made to Full Council to adopt revised Financial Regulations. **Agreed.**
- 11.3 Councillors considered providing recordings of meetings on Parish Council website and agreed to defer the decision to the next Council.
- 12. **ISOLATION & LONELINESS**
- 12.1 Cllr Rogers reported that following discussions with stakeholders, the Isolation & Loneliness group will be launched with terms of reference and will focus on two or three projects until established. The group will be made up of Parish Council, Age UK, District Wardens representatives and the Manager of Impact Initiatives.
- 13. **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY** – none for this meeting.
- 14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015.
- 15. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM:**  
Cllr Toomey **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ness-Collins that Under Standing Orders 1 d) the remainder of the meeting be discussed in confidence, since employment matters will be considered. **Agreed.**
- 15.1 **Regarding the 2015 / 16 budget for Neighbourhood Wardens**  
Following revised projected costs from HDC, Councillors discussed a shortfall in allocation for Neighbourhood Wardens in the 2015 / 16 budget.  
Cllr Howell **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Rogers that the additional £3,774 required would be taken from reserves / contingency. **Agreed.**  
The Clerk will request clearer information in order to budget for 2016/17 and for information on pension requirements for 2015/16.

The meeting closed at 21.28pm

Signed: ..... Date: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015  
Chairman

**Actions F&C 07.04.15**

**8.1** The Clerk will ascertain the difference in enforcement powers between Neighbourhood Wardens and PCSO's.

**11.3** Councillors considered providing recordings of meetings on Parish Council website and agreed to defer the decision to the **next Council**.

**15.1** Regarding the 2015 / 16 budget for Neighbourhood Wardens  
The **Clerk** will request clearer information from HDC in order to budget for 2016/17 and for information on pension requirements for 2015/16.