

**FINANCE & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 5th May 2015 AT 7.30 PM
AT THE STEYNING CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs Lloyd, Bowell, Alexander, Toms, Rogers, and Willett.

Members of the public: Four

Clerk: Rebecca Luckin

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:

1. Q – On last month’s agenda, item 15, confidential item on employment, according to the minutes 15.1, it was regarding a shortfall in the Warden’s budget. Are you saying that the £3,774 that was agreed, is that for their wages?
A – Not the full amount, a breakdown has been requested from HDC.
Q – I was more concerned that it was a confidential employment item on the agenda, when it was actually about the budget.
A – It was to do with terms and conditions.
2. Q – Reserves and contingency, are they the same thing?
A – Cllr Lloyd explained that the shortfall would be taken from the contingency, since funds were available.
3. Q – Regarding F&C Meeting of 03.02.15, Cllr Bowell, Rogers and Toms were not present. I asked a question whether or not the Wilson Memorial Trust could take over part of the SAYS / Horsham Matters payments, as part of their social care remit and that would in turn help SPC build up their financial reserves. In the following week, I found out from the Charity Commission website that SAYS had over £40,000 in their account. The question is, at the meeting on that day, nobody was able to say that SAYS had the money in the bank and would not need support from the Wilson Memorial Trust. Were the members of F&C Committee aware that SAYS had £40,000, or had they not been told by the SAYS Trustees?
A – Cllr Lloyd – not sure that I can recall.
A - Cllr Bowell – I’m struggling to understand the issue, are you asking whether the F&C Committee were aware of the reserves in SAYS? I can’t recall the timeline. SAYS started in June 2013, following much discussion, (when I had not even joined the Council) we had no idea how the finances were going to work out. The first year was only 10 months and didn’t reflect any useful numbers. The second year only ended a month ago and it is those figures that need to be clarified and agreed. The four Parish Councils make payments to Horsham Matters for their costs and the balance, as agreed at the time, is held by the SAYS Charity. During that period, WSCC withdrew their youth provision. WSCC and HDC gave grants to SAYS which inflated the reserves held. Trustees were aware that the tenure of the Cuthman Centre was not necessarily secure. We know we

have a surplus issue, but we don't have an accurate figure. Now that we are aware of the excess, we have asked the Youth Worker to look at opportunities to extend the Youth Service.

A - Cllr Rogers – I can't recall if I was aware of the SAYS reserves held on 03.02.15.

A – We cannot give a definitive answer.

Q - Cllr Bowell knew in April 2014 that SAYS had £40,000 and had not revealed the information to SPC in February 2015?

A – Not all of that money belongs to SPC.

A – Cllr Bowell – to my knowledge, SAYS didn't have that sum in April 2014. I wasn't aware of the funds available at that time, because the accounts had not been completed and we didn't know what we had. Your statement is incorrect, I will come back on that matter.

4. Written question regarding SAYS accounts for 2014/15:

" Will the full Steyning Area Youth Service (SAYS) 2014/2015 accounts be published on the Steyning Parish Council website in time for the 5th May 2015 SPC Finance & Community meeting and if not could the residents of Steyning be told why they have not been made public."

A – Cllr Bowell, Trustee for SAYS, advised that the year had only just finished, one of the issues is that some funds go to Horsham Matters and some to SAYS, bringing it together with all four Councils, agreeing to the final figures takes some time and it is taking longer than expected. Accounts have not yet been agreed or audited. Trustees meet in June for an AGM, with a Finance meeting prior. The SAYS Chairman is in agreement that full accounts will be on the website when they are available.

The meeting was convened at 7.59pm

MINUTES

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Ness-Collins and Cllr Hopkinson.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS** – there were none.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
Cllr Rogers **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Willett that the minutes of the meeting of 7th April 2015 be approved as a correct record and duly signed. **Agreed.** Cllr Lloyd was not at the previous meeting and abstained from voting.
4. **MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS**
 - 4.1 **(10.1)**The Clerk had attended a VAT course recently and reported that it had been extremely helpful and beneficial, raising and answering many questions.
 - 4.2 **(15.1)** Regarding the 2016/17 budget for Neighbourhood Wardens, HDC advise that there is advance work to be undertaken, before budgets can be drafted, but would currently recommend an increase in budget of 1-2%.
5. **NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT** – circulated prior to the meeting and placed on the Parish Council website. Councillors noted the report and considered that

the Local Action Team (LAT) could be refreshed and made aware of issues raised in the report. The Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, Youth Worker, and Debbie Wood could join LAT. House break-ins were a concern and use of drugs in South Ash play area.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS

- 6.1** Councillors had received a reminder regarding the WSCCC Big Society Fund for 15/16.

7. ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS – none for this meeting.

8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- 8.1** Joint Parishes Burial Board - Cllr Bowell reported that Botolphs Cemetary will need extending. A two year process. A local landowner has been approached. Rules and regulations exist regarding change of use, but members were concerned regarding lack of Archaeological advice from WSCC and HDC. Reserves of £10,000 have been set aside. The Wilson Memorial Trust may be approached for funding.

9. FINANCE MATTERS AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 9.1** Councillors received details of the Income & Expenditure Report, Petty Cash Expenditure (£2.00) and Payments List (total £27,281.90) for April 2015. Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Bowell that the reports be accepted. **Agreed.** The Clerk will provide F&C with all Committee budgets in future in a consolidated pdf format.
- 9.2** Cllr Lloyd confirmed that bank reconciliations for 2014/15 had been signed for the period that Rebecca Luckin has been the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).
- 9.3** Councillors received an Income & Expenditure Report for the period 01.04.14 – 31.03.15 and a Balance sheet for 31.03.15. Cllr Rogers **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Bowell that the reports be accepted and the balance sheet signed by the Chairman, subject to auditor's approval 06.05.15 **Agreed.**
- 9.4** The Clerk provided an explanation of statements and list of evidence that is required by the External Auditor for completion of Section Two of the Annual Return (Annual Governance), prior to the document being signed by the Chairman at Full Council.
- 9.5** Councillors considered the appointment of an Internal Auditor for 2015/16. The Clerk advised that according to Governance & Accountability for Local Councils (2014), the Auditor should:
- a) Be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council,
 - b) Report to the Parish Council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year
 - c) Demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships;
- and

d) Have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council.

The Clerk confirmed that Mr Mark Mulberry was the SALC recommended Auditor. He had undertaken Steyning Parish Council audits previously and provided an interim and full audit annually, with verbal advice and written reports. He was independent of the Parish Council and had no involvement in the decision making, management or control of SPC.

Clerk will ask SALC if good practice to continue with same auditor.

Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Willett that Mr Mark Mulberry be instructed to undertake the Parish Council audit for 2015/16. **Agreed.** Cllr Bowell abstained.

A scope of audit and contract will be agreed at a subsequent meeting.

10. WORKING PRACTICES GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Cllr Rogers expressed concern that Working Practices Group recommendations and documents should not be accepted, prior to the new Council taking office, although Councillors noted that they were standard, documents.

Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Rogers that documents have been considered and will be brought to the next F&C for the new Committee to consider. **Agreed.**

11. ISOLATION & LONELINESS

11.1 Cllr Rogers reported no further progress, although there were extensive plans for the future.

12. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY – none for this meeting.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 2nd June 2015.

14. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM:

Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Rogers that under Standing Orders 3 e) the remainder of the meeting be discussed in confidence, since an item of correspondence, relating to a legal issue, would be considered. **Agreed.**

The public left the meeting at 21.01pm

14.1 Councillors noted advice from Hedley's Solicitors, and considered a response to a 'without prejudice' letter regarding a potential appeal. Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Rogers that no letter should be sent for the time being. Following the outcome of the Dransfield V Devon County Council case, and if an appeal is granted, the Council will make a decision on how to proceed. **Agreed.**

The meeting closed at 21.20pm

Signed: Date: 2nd June 2015
Chairman

F&C Action list 05.05.15

9.5 Clerk will ask SALC if good practice to continue with same auditor. SALC advised that the matter should be considered every five years, but Councils are not obliged to change auditor if he is considered competent, independent etc. 06.05.15.

14.1 CONFIDENTIAL

The Clerk will ask Hedleys' if their suggested response from Councillors would change the position with regard to costs.

The ICO can be asked what their position is and for information regarding progress of the Dransfield case.