

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLETON AND HARESTOCK PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
held on Wednesday, 5th March 2025
at 9:30 in the Parish Office, Littleton Recreation Ground.**

Present: Cllr L Winn, Cllr J Biddlecombe, Cllr D Tozer

In attendance: Mrs L Fielding.

Members of the public: None.

F24-045: Apologies for Absence.

Cllr P Cunningham, Cllr T Jackson

F24-046: Declarations of Interest.

None.

F24-047: Minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2024.

The minutes of the meeting of 20th November 2024 were presented, and it was proposed by Cllr D Tozer, seconded by Cllr J Biddlecombe and **RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2024 be approved.**

F24-048: Review of Open Actions.

The actions from the last meeting were reviewed. The current status of actions is shown at the end of these minutes.

F24-049: Public Participation.

None.

F24-050: Employees

- a. To receive a report regarding the Clerk's appraisal.

Cllr L Winn reported that the Clerk's appraisal had been completed, and it was agreed that her work is outstanding and she operates very effectively. The job requires detailed knowledge and high-level competencies in many aspects of the role, and these are executed with well-placed assurance.

The Clerk's experience in the role means that a substantial amount of knowledge about the parish resides with her; this is a highly valuable asset which we need to ensure is accessible for the future. A staff succession plan, and potentially the support of an additional officer should be considered, but this should be delayed until more is known about the Hampshire County Council devolution plans.

Cllr L Winn reported that the council could consider steps to reduce the Clerk's workload as follows:-

- Simplify options on parish GDPR consent form so that consent allows Clerk and Councillors to access emails for future correspondence. This would free the Clerk from fielding all correspondence.
- Adding another person to the circulation list from WCC for planning applications so that the Clerk does not have to access emails throughout leave periods
- Councillors: Considering the impact on workload of new initiatives/actions
- Clerk: Evaluating requests from parishioners to see whether they can be encouraged to refer problems themselves to the relevant authority or whether they should prepare a case to bring to the Parish Council
- Councillors: Potentially agree priorities and objectives for the Parish Council, tailored to the available human resources.

It was **agreed to propose to full council a series of working group meetings to consider a number of topics in more depth, which included devolution, Parish Council priorities and objectives, and use of formal Parish Council policies.**

- b. To consider the clerk's salary for the 2025/26 financial year.

After some discussion regarding the appropriate LGA (Local Government Association) Salary Spinal Points for the Clerk's role, it was **agreed to propose to the full council to increase the Clerk's salary spinal point by one to 28.**

It was also noted that the Clerk's contract of work was now out of date and should be further investigated.

Action: The Clerk to send Cllr L Winn her current contract and a template contract for the Clerk's role.

F24-051: Legal Matters / Health and Safety.

The Clerk reported on the progress that the council's solicitor had made regarding the Recreation Ground Foundation and the proposed letter to the Charity Commission.

It was agreed that the Clerk should arrange an online meeting with the Council as trustees of the Recreation Ground Foundation to decide on the next steps.

Action: The Clerk to arrange an online meeting for the Recreation Ground Foundation trustees

F24-052: Bank Reconciliation.

The Clerk presented the bank reconciliation documents from September 2024 to January 2025 and highlighted the signatures of the councillor who had cross-checked the reconciliation figures against the monthly cashbook and bank statements.

F24-053: Current Financial State including Reserves.

- a. To review payments and receipts in comparison to the Council's annual budget

The Parish Clerk explained the current expenditure and receipts received. She highlighted a number of line items which were under budget and where invoices would be paid in March, she expected the grounds maintenance line item to go over budget, and the property budget line to be under.

It was anticipated that the existing 2025/2026 budget should be revised to allow for additional grounds maintenance, buildings re-valuation and IT Support.

Action: The Clerk to pursue quotes for Littleton Recreation Ground Winter hedge cutting.

Action: The Clerk to revise the 2025/2026 budget for approval at the April Parish Council meeting.

- b. To review the reserves position.

The reserves position was reviewed, and it was noted that £5,000 had been taken from the Strategic Planning Response Fund reserves to put into the 2024/25 budget for ecology advice as authorised at the February 2025 Parish Council meeting.

F24-054: Review / Approval of Policy Documents

- a. To consider adopting revised Financial Regulations based on the new NALC model.

The new NALC model Financial Regulations were reviewed and several modifications were suggested which should be incorporated in a new Parish Council Financial Regulations Policy to be presented for adoption in the May Annual Parish Council meeting.

Action: The Parish Clerk to produce a draft Financial Regulations document based on the NALC model for approval by the council.

Cllr J Biddlecombe then left the meeting, and as it was no longer quorate, the additional policies for review were deferred to future Parish Council meetings.

F24-055: Date of Next Meetings:

- a. Parish Council meeting: 10th March 2025, Henry Beaufort School at 7 pm.
b. Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting: 7th May 2025, Sports Pavilion at 9:30 am

F24-056: Summary of Recommendations for the next full Parish Council Meeting

- a. Recommendation for a series of working group meetings to consider several topics in more depth, which included devolution, Parish Council priorities and objectives, and use of formal Parish Council policies.
b. Recommendation to increase the Clerk's salary spinal point by one to 28.

F24-057: Summary of Actions**Table 1: Action Points**

ID	Owner	Action Points (Open)	Status
F24.09	Clerk	The Clerk to send Cllr L Winn her current contract and a template contract for the Clerk's role	NEW
F24.10		The Clerk to arrange an online meeting for the Recreation Ground Foundation trustees	NEW
F24.11		The Clerk to pursue quotes for Littleton Recreation Ground Winter hedge cutting.	NEW
F24.12		The Clerk to revise the 2025/2026 budget for approval at the April Parish Council meeting.	NEW
F24.13		The Parish Clerk to produce a draft Financial Regulations document based on the NALC model for approval by the council.	NEW
F24.03	Clerk	<p>The Clerk to contact the Council's insurers to understand the options when a contractor's insurance policy would not fully cover a claim.</p> <p>20 Nov 24: The insurance company would not cover a claim if the contractor's full public liability was not large enough, this applies to council contractors and those contracted by the Sports Club. The council should apply due diligence to confirm a contractor is competent, has the necessary qualifications and has public liability insurance suitable for the risk of the intended work. It is a contractor's responsibility to resolve any concern arising from a claim on their insurance, and the council's insurance company would not get involved.</p> <p>The Clerk will check that the legal department at the Parish Council's insurance company would support the Parish Council if anyone were to claim against the council for work done by a contractor who has their own public liability insurance cover.</p> <p>5 Mar 25: The insurers would expect to forward any claim to the contractor, and expect the council to make sure they were appropriately covered.</p>	Closed
F24.04	Clerk	<p>The Clerk to check the insurance cover for the Council's handyman and hedge cutter.</p> <p>20 Nov 24: The hedge cutter and handyman will send their revised insurance due for renewal in December, before planned work in December and January. The Clerk will ensure the public liability cover for the hedge cutter is 10 million.</p> <p>5 Mar 25: The hedge cutter arranged for temporary additional public liability (at a cost to the Parish Council. The handyman has not done any work yet.</p>	Closed