

Minutes of a meeting of the **SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** held in line with the Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020, on Wednesday, 3 March 2021 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

F Biggadike (Chairman)
P A Redgate (Vice-Chairman)

B Alcock	R Gambba-Jones	G T D Rudkin
J R Astill	R A Gibson	G P Scalse
J Avery	R Grocock	M D Seymour
A C Beal	M Hasan	E J Sneath
M D Booth	J L King	G J Taylor
C J T H Brewis	C J Lawton	A C Tennant
T A Carter	J D McLean	J Tyrrell
A Casson	A M Newton	S C Walsh
P E Coupland	N H Pepper	D J Wilkinson
A C Cronin	G A Porter	A R Woolf
H Drury	J L Reynolds	C N Worth

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors H J W Bingham and S-A Slade,

In Attendance: The Shared Executive Director Commercialisation (S151), the Place Manager, the Executive Manager - Governance, the Strategic Housing Manager, the HR Manager, the Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager, the Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Team Leader.

82. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 20 January 2021.

As no member wished to discuss the content of Restricted Minute 79 of the meeting of Full Council held on 20 January 2021 (attached at agenda item 18), these were also considered at this point in the meeting.

DECISION:

- a) That the public minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 20 January 2021 be signed as a correct record; and
- b) That the restricted minute 79 of the meeting of Full Council held on 20 January 2021 be signed as a correct record.

83. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

The Leader of the Council declared an interest in relation to agenda items 10b and 10c, as they related to the purchase of new properties, as he could know individuals involved. He would take no part in the discussion, and would leave the meeting during consideration of these items.

Councillors Alcock, Booth, Coupland, Seymour, Sneath and Tyrrell did not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, but in the interests of transparency declared that, in relation to agenda item 10b, they were Directors of Welland Homes Ltd.

Councillors Grocock and Newton did not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, but in the interests of transparency declared that they represented the Council as Directors on the Board of PSPS Ltd.

84. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

There were none.

85. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET.

There were none.

86. QUESTIONS ASKED ON NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

87. QUESTIONS ASKED WITHOUT NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

Question to: Councillor Coupland / Councillor Gambba-Jones

Question From: Councillor Newton

Subject: Market charges

Councillor Newton asked, with reference to the report at item 10a of the agenda, why it was proposed to charge market stall holders in Spalding more per pitch than at other markets within the district? Councillor Coupland advised that the Council was considering extending the period of no charge for market stall holders, by a further three months. Consideration would also be given to revising and reviewing charges, and Councillor Newton was invited to be part of the process.

Councillor Newton asked a supplementary question, commenting that if charges were to be discussed further, that reference to the higher charges in Spalding should be withdrawn from the report at 10a. Councillor Gambba-Jones responded that in his opinion, it was premature to discuss the equalisation of charges. He advised that it had been made clear, when the

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issue had first been raised, that one of the key aspects regarding Spalding town centre was to encourage footfall, and that the market was pivotal to this. Revenue was required, and had to be generated, in order to lay on events to encourage people into the town – the return from market charges would contribute towards the required revenue. Currently, there were no market charges. The proposals formed part of the Town Centre Improvement Plan, and some time was needed to consider the way forward. Therefore, the information currently within the budget report should remain, in order to retain the option of using market fees towards initiatives to encourage people into Spalding Town Centre.

Question to: Leader of the Council

Question From: Councillor Brewis

Subject: Drainage Board precepts

Councillor Brewis asked whether there was any further progress with regard to treating Drainage Board precepts as separate precepts, and not as part of the District's expenditure. The Leader responded that there had been no further progress in persuading the Government that the Drainage Boards precepts should be treated as a separate precept, in order that they could be truly sustainable, without being included within the Council's Budgets. He pointed out that, it could be seen, within the Council Tax setting report, that at least 25% of the charge related to the Drainage Boards, and he felt that it was time for this charge to be more clearly illustrated. Only 17 Districts in the country were affected by this issue.

Question to: Leader of the Council

Question from: Councillor Brewis

Subject: Fairer funding

Councillor Brewis asked the Leader whether he had made any further progress in ensuring that Fairer Funding (which would provide more Government funding to rural areas) would not be delayed by yet another year. The Leader responded it was not clear when Fairer Funding would become a reality, and that there had been no mention of it in the Budget announced by the Government earlier in the day. Any equalisation between urban and rural areas now seemed less likely.

88. COMMITTEE MINUTES

The minutes of the following Committees and Panels were noted:

- Planning Committee – 13 January 2021
- Governance and Audit Committee – 14 January 2021
- Joint Performance Monitoring and Policy Development Panel – 21 January 2021
- Performance Monitoring Panel – 27 January 2021
- Special Meeting of the Performance Monitoring Panel – 9 February 2021

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- Joint Performance Monitoring and Policy Development Panel – 9 February 2021
- Planning Committee – 10 February 2021

89. KEY DECISION PLAN

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan.

DECISION:

That the Key Decision Plan be received.

90. REPORT FROM CABINET MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2021

Consideration was given to the report of Cabinet which sought approval for the Cabinet's recommendations:

a) 2020/21 Finance Report Quarter 3

The report was presented to the Council by the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships. He advised that this item, and agenda item 11 were both linked, and that he intended to lay out the situation from March 2020 to 2022 and beyond, detailing budget highs and lows, and a roadmap for Covid-recovery.

- The main factor affecting the Council's finances had been the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in increased costs for, and loss of income to the Council;
- A General Fund overspend of £551,000 was forecast (an improvement on Quarter 2), mainly as a result of Government grants received, and an increase in Planning fees;
- The HRA outturn was forecast to be in surplus of £2.996 million at 31 March 2021
- The General Fund Reserves balance was forecast to be £7.285 million at 31 March 2021
- The HRA Reserves balance was forecast at £25.436 million at 31 March 2021
- The Capital Programme for 2021 was being reviewed and a number of schemes were being re-profiled as a result of Covid-19. A recommendation to Council was that the Capital Programme be revised to reflect the forecast.
- Over the past 12 months, the Council had operated remotely, and with limited staff. It had performed well during the pandemic, and it was believed that this would result in a balanced end of year outturn.

DECISION:

- 1) That the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital

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programme be approved as set out in table 5 and 7 of Appendix A;

- 2) The NNDR S31 grant for expanded retail relief and the nursery reliefs in 2020/21 be carried forward in reserves to cover the NNDR deficits recognised in 2021/22 (as detailed in section 5.3.1 of the report); and
- 3) That the income received from NNDR and Council Tax income compensation scheme be carried forward in a reserve to cover the deficits recognised in future years (as detailed in section 5.3.2 of the report).

(Lord Porter left the meeting during discussion of the following two items).

b) Welland Homes Business Plan Update

The report was presented to the Council by the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Planning.

The report set out a proposal for Welland Homes to deliver a new housing acquisition scheme. This was the Company's fifth housing scheme, and the first in Holbeach. The report provided a business case proposing that the Company purchase four three-bedroom houses in an area where there was a demand.

The appendices, and exempt Cabinet minute 73, relating to this item were attached to the agenda as exempt items however, no discussion of the exempt information was required and the item was therefore considered in open session.

DECISION:

- 1) That the updated Welland Homes Business Plan be approved and included as an amendment in the SHDC Quarterly report to members for quarter 1 2021/22; and
- 2) That the delegated authority, granted by Council on 25 March 2015, to the Executive Director – Commercialisation (S151 Officer), to approve the final mix or use of reserves and borrowing in line with the business plan and Council Treasury Management Strategy, be reaffirmed.

c) Acquisition project to purchase S106 units

The report was presented to the Council by the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Planning.

The report set out a proposal for the Council to acquire 7 additional affordable homes, funded from the HRA. The business case had already been approved by the Cabinet, and the Council decision related to a

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necessary amendment to the Capital Programme.

The appendix relating to this item was attached to the agenda as an exempt item however, no discussion was required on the exempt appendix and the item was therefore considered in open session.

Members wished to seek assurance that there was a need for the type of property in question, within the location stated. Officers confirmed that they were satisfied that there was a housing need for this type of property, and that this was borne out by the number of applicants on SHDC's Housing Register requiring this property type within the Whaplode area. It was also felt that there could be subsequent interest from members of the public for properties of this quality.

DECISION:

That the Capital Programme be amended, to identify this project as an approved scheme in the 2020/21 Budget.

(Lord Porter returned to the meeting following discussion of items (b) and (c) above).

91. BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2021/22

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships and the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151), which asked the Council to consider the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2021/22, revenue and capital estimates, and the Financial Medium Term Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships introduced the report and outlined the main details of the Budget:

- As a result of continued, unprecedented uncertainty from the Government with regard to Business Rates and the Fair Funding Review, the Authority was taking a prudent position;
- The following major service areas would continue to be affected by the Covid pandemic during 2021/22 – Leisure Services (including the South Holland Centre), waste management collection, a reduction in fees and charges, a reduction in Business Rates and Council Tax receipts, and reduced interest on investments. These would all affect the budget throughout the forthcoming year;
- The Government had announced some Covid support packages for 2021/22, to mitigate against the impact to Councils' budget pressures, and these had been calculated into the Base Budget workings;
- The General Fund Budget requirement for 2021/22 was £12.4 million, which included an initial savings efficiency target of £1.676 million to balance the budget; numerous savings and income generating

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opportunities had been identified, and the following had been identified to help with initial savings target - staff pay would be frozen until 2022; the New Homes Bonus windfall payment for 2021 had been certified; expansion of the Garden Waste scheme; receipt of the Council Tax Support Grant; a number of staff vacancies were being held; receipt of the Welland Homes dividend. These items totalled just over £1million, leaving £676,000 savings still to be achieved.

- The Base Budget included a Council Tax increase of £4.95 for a Band D property, a 2% increase in Drainage Board levies, Rural Support Grant and Rural Services Delivery Grants being paid for an additional year, an increased cost in Homelessness, and PSPS costs would remain the same in the forthcoming year as the last.
- The HRA forecast a surplus of £1.97million, including the following – a rent increase of 1.5%, assumed rent loss of 1% and void properties and 1.5% for bad debts. Additional rents arising from new homes acquired within HRA Capital Programme had been factored in. The HRA was set to perform well going forward.
- Capital Programme – the General Fund Capital Programme totalled £19.8 million in the medium term, and the HRA £41million.

Moving forward, a new stable post-pandemic operating normality for the Council would be sought.

A number of community projects were to be undertaken including – Work to be undertaken to tidy up Spalding Cemetery; a refresh of public toilet provision; a tree planting programme across parishes; assistance for parishes with litter picking; establishment of war graves maintenance programme; and improvements at Ayscoughfee Gardens. The costs would be met by S106 monies, use of reserves and grant funding. Regeneration work within Spalding and Holbeach would also continue.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships thanked officers involved in the Budget process, in particular the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151 Officer), the Strategic Finance and Compliance Manager, and the Strategic Finance Manager and his colleagues within PSPS.

The following points were raised:

- If the Authority was fortunate enough to receive more outside funding than anticipated, would the savings programme identified be pursued?
 - The Portfolio Holder agreed that further Government grants would assist the savings programme, but that savings and efficiencies would still be pursued.
- Could assurance be provided that there would be a sufficient human resource to deliver the ambitious programme?
 - The Portfolio Holder responded that staff numbers were

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currently low due to the separation of functions between Breckland and South Holland as a result of addressing the Covid pandemic. It was important for South Holland to agree a new shared management arrangement with a new partner, and it was hoped that by April/May 2021, the authority would be in a position to make a decision regarding this, which members would be involved in.

- Could the Portfolio Holder provide costings for the proposed community projects outlined?
 - The Portfolio Holder responded that the Finance Team's next project would be to cost out the proposals. It was hoped that S106 monies, Government or departmental funding, and potentially some reserves could be identified. Details would be shared with the Council when they were available.

- Had the reductions in travel costs over the last year been quantified?
 - The Portfolio Holder responded that savings in this area had been made, and that they would be identified as part of savings efficiencies in the forthcoming year.

DECISION:

That Council approves:

- a) That the Revenue Estimates for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Spalding Special Expenses for 2021/22 (Appendices A, B, and C) be approved;
- b) That the use of reserves (Appendix D) be approved;
- c) That the Council Tax for a Band A property in 2021/22 be set at £123.12 (a £3.30 per annum increase on 2020/21 levels) and band D £184.68 for 2021/22 (a £4.95 per annum increase on 2020/21 levels);
- d) That the Spalding special expense for a Band A property be set at £16.12 for 2021/22, (previously £15.88 in 2020/21) and Band D £24.18 for 2021/22, (previously £23.82 in 2020/21);
- e) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Appendix B) be approved;
- f) That Housing Revenue Account weekly dwelling rents increase by 1.5% over the previous year, 2020/21, with effect from Monday 5th April 2021. This is in line with current government guidelines and legislation;
- g) That the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme (Appendices E and F) be approved;
- h) That the Treasury Management Strategy, including the Minimum Revenue Provision policy and Investment Strategy be approved (Appendix H and I);
- i) That the fees and charges shown in appendix G be approved for adoption from 1st April 2021.

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In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations (Final Budget, Medium Term Plan and Capital and Treasury Strategy). The vote was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain	Apologies/Absent
Councillor Alcock	Councillor McLean		Councillor Bingham
Councillor Astill	Councillor Newton (Recommendation A)		Councillor Gibson
Councillor Avery			Councillor Slade
Councillor Beal			Councillor Wilkinson
Councillor Biggadike			
Councillor Booth			
Councillor Brewis			
Councillor Carter			
Councillor Casson			
Councillor Coupland			
Councillor Cronin			
Councillor Drury			
Councillor Gambba-Jones			
Councillor Grocock			
Councillor Hasan			
Councillor King			
Councillor Lawton			

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Councillor Newton (Recommendation B – I)			
Councillor Pepper			
Councillor Porter			
Councillor Redgate			
Councillor Reynolds			
Councillor Rudkin			
Councillor Scalese			
Councillor Seymour			
Councillor Sneath			
Councillor Taylor			
Councillor Tennant			
Councillor Tyrrell			
Councillor Walsh			
Councillor Woolf			
Councillor Worth			

(Councillors Gibson and Wilkinson were not in attendance during the vote due to technical issues, and were therefore unable to participate in the vote).

92. COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2021/22

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships, and the Executive Director – Commercialisation (S151), which sought the Council's approval for the setting of the amounts of Council Tax applicable for 2021/22 for each valuation band and in each part of the district.

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The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships introduced the report which set out statutory resolutions that the Council needed to approve in accordance with the Budget set out at agenda item 11.

DECISION:

- a) That Council approves the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A (and summarised at 1.8) of the report, and reproduced as below:
- b) That Council approves that the charge to be levied on the Council Taxpayers of Spalding for services provided in their town (Spalding Special Estimates) will be £226,900 for 2021/22. This equates to a band D equivalent charge of £24.18 (£23.82 for 2020/21), a 1.51% increase.

1.8 Council Tax Resolutions

The required resolutions for the approval of the levels of Council Tax are set out at Appendix A. The figures relating to the District Council and the average of the parishes are summarised in the following table:

Resolution Ref	Description	SHDC	Parish Precept (incl Spalding Special)	Total
		£	£	£
3a	Gross expenditure	36,042,833	1,162,094	37,204,927
3b	Gross Income	30,725,200	0	30,725,200
3c		5,317,633	1,162,094	6,479,727
1a	Tax base	28,794	28,794	28,794
3d 3f	Band D Council Tax	184.68	40.36	225.04

COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTIONS - APPENDIX A

Council is recommended to approve the following resolutions:

1 It is to be noted that on 16 December 2020 the Council calculated: -

- (a) the Council Tax Base 2021/22 for the District as **28,794** (item T in the

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formula in section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended) and;

- (b) Dwellings in those parts of the district to which a Parish precept relates as shown in **Appendix B**
- 2 Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 (excluding Parish precepts and Spalding Special Expenses) is **£5,317,633**
- 3 That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act): -
- a) **£37,204,927** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act;
 - (b) **£30,725,200** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act;
 - (c) **£6,479,727** being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (item R in the formula in Section 31a (4) of the Act);
 - (d) **£225.04** being the amount at 3(c) divided by the amount at 1(a)(item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
 - (e) **£1,162,094** being the aggregate amount of all special items (Including Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (see Appendix B);
 - (f) **£184.68** being the amount at 3(d) less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) by the amount at 1(a) calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts
 - (g) The figures shown in Appendix C, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3(f) the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the district divided in each case by the amount at 1(b), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in

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those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;

(h) The figures shown in Appendix D, being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(f) and 3(g) by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4 That it be noted that for the year 2020/21 the Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lincolnshire have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Council Tax 2020/21	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Lincolnshire County Council	909.44	1,061.01	1,212.59	1,364.16	1,667.31	1,970.45	2,273.60	2,728.32
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire	177.54	207.13	236.72	266.31	325.49	384.67	443.85	532.62

5 That having calculated the aggregate in each case the amounts at 3(h) and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts shown in **Appendix E** as the amount of Council Tax for 2019/20 of the categories of dwellings shown.

6 **Appendix F** provides definitions for the formal Council Tax resolution.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 a recorded vote was taken on each Budget decision. The vote was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain	Apologies/Absent
Councillor Alcock	Councillor Gibson	Councillor Newton	Councillor Bingham
Councillor Astill	Councillor McLean		Councillor Slade
Councillor Avery			Councillor Wilkinson

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Councillor Beal			
Councillor Biggadike			
Councillor Booth			
Councillor Brewis			
Councillor Carter			
Councillor Casson			
Councillor Coupland			
Councillor Cronin			
Councillor Drury			
Councillor Gambba-Jones			
Councillor Grocock			
Councillor Hasan			
Councillor King			
Councillor Lawton			
Councillor Pepper			
Councillor Porter			
Councillor Redgate			
Councillor Reynolds			

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Councillor Rudkin			
Councillor Scalese			
Councillor Seymour			
Councillor Sneath			
Councillor Taylor			
Councillor Tenant			
Councillor Tyrrell			
Councillor Walsh			
Councillor Woolf			
Councillor Worth			

(Councillor Wilkinson was not in attendance during the vote due to technical issues, and was therefore unable to participate in the vote).

(Councillor Seymour left the meeting following discussion of the above item).

93. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 21'22

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Commercialisation (S151) which sought approval of the Pay Policy Statement.

Members were advised that a review was currently taking place of how Breckland Council and South Holland District Council would work together in the future, and the details within the statement could therefore change within the 2021/22 financial year.

AGREED:

That the Pay Policy Statement be approved.

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94. APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER/ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Manager Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer) which sought the designation of an officer as the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer to the Council with immediate effect.

The Portfolio Holder People, Places and Corporate introduced the report. He advised that the current Returning Officer, Rob Walker, had had to stand down for personal reasons, and the Portfolio Holder thanked him for his hard work and service in this role.

AGREED:

- a) That Christine Marshall, Executive Director Commercialisation, be appointed Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer to the Council with immediate effect; and
- b) That an indemnity be granted to Christine Marshall for any personal liability arising from her appointment by the Council as Returning Officer or Electoral Registration Officer.

95. NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEES AND OTHER SEATS AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION.

The following change was reported to the Council:

- Councillor Pepper to replace Councillor Grocock as the Council's Armed Forces Champion.

DECISION:

That Councillor Pepper's appointment as the Council's Armed Forces Champion, replacing Councillor Grocock, be approved.

96. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.57 pm)

(End of minutes)