

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY 9TH DECEMBER 2013
AT 7.30 PM,
THE VILLAGE HALL, HORSMONDEN.

Present: Cllr Russell (Chair)
Councillors, Davis, and March.

In attendance: Lucy Noakes (Clerk)

Declarations of Interest: Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. None were recorded.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. PRECEPT FOR 2014/2015

The Clerk circulated Appendix 1, the draft Proposed Precept for 2014/15.

The Clerk left the room whilst her salary was discussed by the Councillors. Upon her return, Cllr Russell recommended from the Chair that the Council back date the clerk's salary taking into account the cost of living rise which NALC had announced earlier in the year for 2013/14, so that this rise was effective from 1st April 2013. He further recommended that the clerk remain on point 28 on the NALC Spinal Column for salary calculations, and that her contract be upgraded to show a total of 15 hours per week, as the clerk was currently working at least 2-3 hours overtime per week, sometimes more. This resulted in an annual salary of £9700 for 2014/15.

It was also recommended from the Chair that a Performance related bonus be offered to the Clerk, set at a total of £300, with £150 payable upon the completion of each of the following: 1) the Play area lease re-draft 2) a lease with the Social Club for the Institute Building. It was recognised that some aspects of these tasks were outside the Clerk's control; therefore the bonus would be carried over to the next financial year if they could not be completed in 2014/15.

It was suggested that 'overtime budget' be set at £700 for 2014/15 to reflect the upgrade in hours on the clerk's contract.

The council discussed Village Green Maintenance together with the Landscaping contract, and it was suggested that once the Council were aware of the approximate costs of cutting the Village Green under the new contract with Dukes, they may wish to combine these two items in the budget next year. The Clerk was asked to organise a further soil sample of the Green to see if any further treatments were needed.

Upon looking at the budget for Village Hall it was noted that an agenda item should be raised in January to allow the clerk to go ahead with an asbestos survey for the Hall, as there did not seem to be one available.

The Council discussed the amount which should be raised for the refurbishment of the public toilets and it was considered that £10,000 should cover the entire shortfall from 2013/14 and might provide a small amount left over if this was needed for unforeseen circumstances.

The youth Club was removed from the budget for 2014/15 as it was not running at present.

£1500 was budgeted for Village Celebration fund to cover the costs of the marquee, toilets, security and music.

Village Vision initiatives was increased to £3000 as it was felt that there would be quite a few items coming from this, once it was in print and publicised.

Institute Reserves were increased in case of unforeseen expenditure on the building.

Councillor Russell proposed from the Chair that the Finance Committee should recommend a total precept of £63245 to the full council at the January 2014 meeting, which would result in a 0% increase for the next year's band 'D' council tax payer, based on the figures provided by TWBC. Unanimous.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

The Risk Assessment (Appendix 2) had been prepared by Cllr Davis in its new matrix format and was presented at the meeting. The Finance Committee members took a close look at this, and after discussions, made some amendments to the wording and risk ratings as appropriate. Cllr Russell proposed that the amended Annual Risk Assessment as presented in the new multicolour format be accepted and recommended to the full Parish Council for their agreement in January. Unanimous.

Clerk to contact Valerie Holloway to remind her that the legionnaires testing needed to be done in the Institute and see if she was still able to do this. Clerk to write to the Village Hall committee on an annual basis to remind them of their duties to arrange the electrical testing, fire alarm testing and legionnaires testing.

Clerk to arrange for a computer expert to come into the office and look at the PC problems.

4. STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

It was suggested that the clerk arrange a further meeting to discuss these documents as members had not all had a chance to look at these and make suggestions beforehand.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Discussion only)

None.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.40p.m.