

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL

at 2.30 P.M. ON TUESDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER 2017

Present: Councillors Russell (Chair), Richards, Davis, and March

In attendance: Lucy Noakes (Clerk)
1 members of the public.

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. MONITORING OF EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET

The committee went through copies of the working budget looking at each item individually to see how much had been spent against the amount available. The following comments were made under each section of the budget:

Reserves:

It was requested that the clerk look at the lettering on the war memorial to see if any was missing and bring this forward to a meeting if necessary as the council wanted to be sure the memorial was in good condition for the November 2018 commemorative service.

The Council would also be considering a beacon and this should be added to their agenda for 2nd October Parish Council meeting.

The Clerks bonus for completion of the social club lease was also mentioned as this would hopefully soon come to fruition. It was confirmed that £200, as agreed in the Finance meeting in December 2015, should be paid from General reserves as the sum had been put aside for this purpose.

Parish Administration:

It was thought that expenditure on overtime may go over budget again , as the first half of the year had been very busy. However the summer months had been less busy.

The External audit had cost slightly more than was expected.

The Committee were pleased to see that the council were spending its budget set aside for training this year.

Legal fees had been very low, even though advice had been sought on a number of occasions, and the clerk commented that she thought Invicta law had not yet caught up on their billing.

Grounds maintenance:

It was suggested that another soil test should be performed in the spring on the village green to see what treatments were needed that year. It was also suggested that an autumn feed may be required for root growth and this should be added to the agenda for October.

The clerk was asked if she could ask Dan Docker (the tree specialist at TWBC) about pruning the trees either side of the clock face.

Asset management:

The toilet roll holders in the disabled and ladies loos were still proving troublesome as the toilet roll breaks off in the middle which means no paper can be accessed. The clerk had alerted the cleaners to

this, but they were using the correct paper and there had been no improvement. It was suggested that the clerk obtain new holders (like the one in the men's) assuming the cost to be less than £250 in total.

The cleaning of the toilets was also discussed as this was still unsatisfactory. The council had obtained other quotes previously and the prices from SHS had appeared very favourable compared to others. It was suggested that the clerk ask the cleaners if a different approach could be taken to cleaning the floor (perhaps a steam clean was needed once a week?) this may add to the costs but if it kept the floor cleaner it may be considered worth it.

Street lighting:

The electrical testing would need to be carried out next year. It was requested that the clerk ask if this must be carried out by SSE and also obtain a quote from them.

Subscriptions/donations and Miscellaneous:

It was requested that the clerk amalgamate 'Ready Call advertising' in to the 'publicity' heading which already exists as these are both publicity for the council and neither are s 137 payments. The clerk should pay the annual amount of £50 to Ready Call for their printing costs to publicise the council.

3. AREAS OF INVESTIGATION REQUIRED PRIOR TO BUDGET SETTING FOR 2018-19

The following areas were mentioned for investigation (some already mentioned above):

Beacon – cost, what type, where, permanent or stored when not in use?

Extension of footpath along Maidstone Road – this had recently been mentioned by parishioners and briefly looked at in the traffic solution planning. It had been looked at in details in 2010? When Alex King was KCC councillor and had been dismissed because of complications with purchasing front ways from landowners and the expense associated with this. Clerk to investigate if anyone still has any details about this quote and investigations etc as this would be useful if this is revisited.

Neighbourhood planning - costs needed to be worked on before the budget was set for 2018/19. A lot would be down to if the steering group wished to use consultants and which group they wished to use. It was suggested that the PC would need to know which consultants the steering group wanted to use and an estimate of associated costings prior the PC's December finance meeting.

Toilets – Floor cleaning and toilet roll holders.

Gate to Village green- this has dropped on its hinges. It was suggested that this be raised at the next PC meeting so that Cllr Stevens may have a chance to suggest what is the best course of action as he installed the gates.

Councillor Russell proposed that the schedule representing expenditure against budget to date, be noted. Seconded Cllr Richards, unanimous.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Discussion only)

The Council had received notification from the Social Club that they needed to install a new boiler and were going ahead with this on 28th September. It was requested that the clerk find out if the operative installing the boiler was OFTEC qualified and confirm that the boiler to be installed was the approved type for building regulations etc. The PC would consider a donation at their next meeting.

The meeting ended at (9.10pm)