

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL at 9.30 A.M. ON FRIDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2018

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

In attendance: Lucy Noakes (Clerk)
0 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. **ELECTION OF FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Cllr Davis proposed that Cllr Russell be appointed Chair. This was seconded by Cllr Richards, unanimous, and the appointment accepted by Cllr Russell.

3. **MONITORING OF EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET**

The Councillors examined **expenditure from Reserves**, noting that there had not as yet, been a lot of expenditure from this area in the current financial year.

The Clerks bonus was objectives were examined as the Institute Lease had been signed at the last full Council meeting and the Clerk was now merely awaiting a phone call or email from Invicta Law to say that the completion had taken place. It was proposed by Cllr Richards that the bonus of £200 in respect of this should be included in the Clerk's September salary provided completion could take place by the end of the month. Seconded Cllr Davis, unanimous.

Looking at the **Income** section of the accounts it was noted that the Council had not yet received the Public Toilets Scheme income from TWBC. Clerk to ask for this.

Each item in the current year's budget was examined in detail, looking at the expenditure so far against expected expenditure for the year. Comments were made on the following:

Clerks/Assistant Clerk's remuneration: it was noted that the Clerk's remuneration may go over budget because of the amount of extra time required with training a new Assistant Clerk. Training may also take the Assistant Clerk into extra hours and hence remuneration over budget. It was pointed out that this was not owing to a miscalculation of hours required but because of the amount of extra time needed for training a new member of staff.

Village Green Trees: It was requested that the Clerk transfer any underspend in 'Village Green Trees' in to a 'Landscaping and Maintenance Reserve' and this could be saved for future pollarding of the trees.

Institute /Clock Tower Repairs /Maintenance: There was an apparent overspend under the current years 'Institute and Clock Tower Repairs/Maintenance' budget. The Clerk had inadvertently charged the recent clock repair and service amounting to £192 to this heading instead of the heading 'Clock Service Repairs' and this was corrected. The rest of the over spend could be taken from the ample reserves held under 'Institute Clock Tower Maintenance Reserves' as most of this expenditure was long term maintenance of the roof, and rainwater equipment.

Play area maintenance: The Clerk was still to ask for a quote from Mr Filtness for cleaning the play equipment in the play area.

There was an overspend under this heading as the Council had carried out some major repairs to the play area this current year. However, the Clerk was awaiting some section 106 monies from TWBC towards these costs. (Clerk to chase Peter Every TWBC regarding this). It was suggested that the over expenditure from the current year's budget should come from 'Play area Reserves'.

Public conveniences: The Assistance Clerk was currently negotiating with SHS about the standards of cleaning of the toilets. If a suitable agreement could not be reached shortly the Council would need to go out to retender this contract. Cllr March asked if the Council could assess the lighting of the public toilets to see if a saving could be made by putting in more energy efficient lights. It may be possible to get a Low carbon Grant from KCC for this.

It was also mentioned that a full health and safety check should be carried out for the Public Toilets, Village Hall and Institute Buildings, with special attention being paid to adding rubber seals around the hinge side of doors which could otherwise be finger traps.

Office equipment: The Clerk said that it was highly likely that both she and the Assistant Clerk would require new laptops in the forthcoming year as both laptops were over four years old and running out of date software which could not, cost effectively, be updated to allow encryption and networking facilities, which may be required. She would look into this with Arron Services and upon the advice of the DPO when she visited in November.

Traffic Solutions: Cllr Davis was shortly to receive a quotation from KHS for putting in the Gateways which would be a large expenditure item on the budget.

Neighbourhood Planning: The Clerk had asked Fera for an estimate of the costs of embarking on the next stages on the plan, however it was possible that some grant monies could be applied for in respect of this.

4. FUTURE ACTIONS IDENTIFIED

The clerk was to add 'Finance Meeting update' as an agenda item on the October agenda, so that the Full Council could be updated as to the discussions.

The Clerk had circulated to Full Council a copy of the Financial Regulations which had been agreed in November 2016.

It was suggested that the Finance Committee look at these and pass on their recommendations to the Full Council in October.

Under section 4.1 it was suggested that the Vice Chairman should also be allowed to authorise items below £500 and above £200 with the Clerk, in case the Chairperson is away. Otherwise the levels of expenditure under this section were thought to be adequate.

Under section 11.1.h – it was suggested that the parameters be set between £200 and £5000 for the Clerk to strive to obtain 3 quotes.

Under item 6.11 of the regulations it was noted that the Chairperson should be furnished with copies of computer passwords to the Clerk and Assistant Clerks' computers, in a sealed envelope.

Under item 8.3 of the regulations it was noted that the Chairperson should receive copies of all bank statements direct from the Council's bankers or investment providers at the same time as each one is issued to the RFO. Clerk to submit a request to Co-op and HSBC.

Cllr Davis recommended that the changes above be put to the full Council as recommended alterations to the Financial Regulations prior to them being approved by the Council. This was seconded by Cllr Richards. Unanimous.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Discussion only)

None.

The meeting ended at 11.50am