

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY 25TH AUGUST 2016
AT 7.30 PM,
HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL.

Present: Cllr Russell (Chair)
Councillors, Davis, Richards

In attendance: Lucy Noakes (Clerk)
No 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

Cllr March.

2. ELECTION OF FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR.

Cllr Davis proposed that Cllr Russell should be Chair of the Finance committee, seconded Cllr Richards, unanimous. This position was accepted by Cllr Russell.

3. BUDGETARY CONTROL AND PLANNING

The Council members made the following comments whilst looking at Appendix 1(attached):

Allocated Reserves

The Village Celebration fund has now been paid over to HOVEC in full, and the Council will see their accounts to monitor usage.

£915 has been paid out of General Reserves currently. £500 to the TWBC Traveller Reserve Fund and £250 as a donation to Horsmonden Sports Club. £165 used to pay for the servicing of the Speedwatch equipment.

The Council had agreed to pay £250 for the aircraft noise monitor and this would probably also come from General reserves, as there was no allocated precept for this.

Income.

Grants had been received for the Queens Birthday celebrations from TWBC (£400) and KCC (£250).

£611.86 received from the Youth Club to spend on youth activities such as the street cruiser , as the club is no longer active .

Cllr Richards noticed that the Contribution for Fromandez Drive had not yet been received by the Council. This was towards the cutting of the grassy area outside Fromandez during 2015/16. Clerk to chase this.

Parish Administration.

The Council will go over budget on the clerks pay, as they were not aware of the increase for 2016/17 when setting the budget.

Some of the performance related bonus had been paid for the completion of HOVEC, however the other projects specified had not yet come to fruition.

There was already an overspend on overtime. However as Cllr Russell explained, this was difficult to assess when budgeting as one could never guess how busy the council would be. As NI was connected to pay and overtime, this was likely to go above budget.

Telephone costs were still high and the current arrangement with BT not considered totally suitable. The cost of a mobile for the clerk instead of desk phone would probably be cheaper and should be explored.

The annual insurance had been cheaper than expected, after several quotes had been obtained. Village Hall hire was likely to be slightly cheaper than expected unless extra meeting required.

Asset management

The clerk had received a letter from TWBC about the small business rate relief. This needs completion to try and continue claiming relief.

It was noted that the clerk had received some notification about the possibility of changing suppliers for water and sewage at the toilets, although she had not received any detail of how this worked at present. Cllr Russell commented that if the urinal changes had the desired effect then the water bills should start to decrease shortly.

Subscriptions/donations.

There had been a request to help the church pay for the resurfacing of a path way in the churchyard, which was a PROW, however it was thought that the Church now had sufficient funds for this project. Cllr Richards queried why the council should pay towards this, as they have no responsibility/authority over the church grounds. Cllr Russell explained that when the church yard becomes 'closed' it will be the PC's responsibility hence the wish to up keep it to a certain standard to avoid having to do a lot of work in the future. However there was general agreement amongst the council members that there was no indication as to when the church yard would become closed.

Miscellaneous

Councillor Russell suggested that as there was still an amount in the budget for computer training, the council may wish to look at this again after Christmas, as people receive computers and iPads for gifts.

The amount of £1000 had been put aside for the civic amenities vehicle and it was thought that the invoice for £800 from TWBC would come to the clerk soon as the new arrangements had now started. It was requested that the Clerk ask parish news to put the new timetable for collection in, as there was some confusion about the weeks.

To conclude Cllr Russell said that he felt everything was progressing to plan and the reserves currently looked healthy.

4. PENSION UPDATE/DECISION

Cllr Russell outlined what the Council knew about LGPS so far:

The costs of the scheme could not yet be quantified. In order to do so the council had to pay £200 to get a valuation carried out by the actuary which would take into account the age of the employee. The current range for employer contributions is between 9.7% and 31.5%, making the average approx 19.78%.

The fund is reviewed every three years and employers had to pay for this. The contribution rate would then be adjusted up or down depending on the fund. If the council wished to leave the scheme they would have to pay a price for this, which was not quantifiable at present.

The benefits of the scheme were equivalent to one forty-ninth of the average salary of the employee over the term for each year of pensionable service in the scheme.

The Clerk said she had looked again at the People's Pension and Nest and these were offering similar schemes although the charges differed slightly. A lot of other councils who were not already in the LGPS had decided to use Nest it seemed.

Clerk to ask if all schemes offer tax relief on contributions and prepare a spreadsheet for the finance group which compared the costs/benefits of Nest and Peoples pension. It was felt that a

decision should be made at the October Council meeting which scheme to go for as this would then leave plenty of time to get the scheme set up before the deadline of 1st April 2017.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Discussion only)
None.

The meeting closed at 8.35p.m.