

MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL

ON TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7.30 PM

Present:

Cllr Russell (Chair), Councillors, Richards and March.

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 Davis. Cllr Davis' reason for absence was proposed for acceptance by Cllr Richards, seconded Cllr March and voted for unanimously.

2. PUBLIC SESSION (no decisions)

None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS FINANCE MEETING

The Minutes of the Parish Council Finance Committee Meeting 23.07.2024 had been previously circulated by the Clerk and were proposed for acceptance by Cllr March, seconded Cllr Richards, and voted for unanimously.

4. BUDGET MONITORING

(Appendix 1 –Detailed Receipts & Payments)

Cllr Russell commented on the following headings:

110 Administration

4080 Training – Not much had been spent as yet , but the budget was there so that the Deputy Clerk could commence her CILCA training this financial year, if the opportunity allowed.

4095 S137 – The Clerk reminded Cllrs that as the Council no longer had the General Power of Competence, grants and other expenditure items which were not provided for in specific legislation relating to the Parish Council's powers to spend would need to be accounted for as S137 expenditure which is limited to a specific amount per parish elector, each year.

4140 Professional /Legal Fees – it was requested that the Clerk move the amount of £850 which was paid on 17/06/24 from this account to Clock Tower 4710 instead so that it could be added to the other expenditure for the clock tower works .

4240 Elections – This had not been required but this could always be vired to another budget heading if required later on in the year.

120 Outside Spaces

4320 Christmas lights – This will result in a overspend for the new lights, as already agreed. The Clerk was requested to obtain a price guide for budgeting the amount needed for checking over the Christmas lights next year .

4330 Tree Works – nothing left in this budget. Full Council had requested that the Clerk obtain quotes for a further general tree survey and a more detailed survey for the large horse chestnut tree located at the crossroads, so that these can be considered when budgeting for next year.

4360 Electricity – The Clerk had checked and the current contracts run until October 2025. However, Clerk to ask the Broker if they felt it might be beneficial to enter into a renewal at this stage ahead of time , if large increases are expected next year . This could improve the Council’s forward planning and budgeting .

150 Street lighting

4350 Equipment Replacement – The £3000 budgeted for was to start off an EMR for replacing columns and/or light heads as required at a future date.

170 Asset Management

4710 Clock & Clock Tower – It was noted by the Chair that the Clock Tower works had come out fairly much on budget, which was a good outcome considering extra works had been found to be required during the procedures. It was noted that the cost of the roof restoration project had been offset by a grant from the UK Community Grant Fund which had helped the Council to keep on budget. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk were thanked for their hard work during the restorations, which had taken up a lot of their time. Cllr Davis had also played a major part in examining the works as they went ahead and thanks were given to him for his part in this .

4730- The Institute Building – it was requested that the Clerk move the amount of £377.88 for ‘metal supports’ for the Clock Tower into Clock Tower 4710 instead, as these had ben put under Institute by mistake.

Statement from the Chair:

The Committee examined the current report of expenditure against budget headings. Broadly speaking expenditure was considered to be in line with what would be expected at this stage in the financial year .There were no significant items which needed to be brought to the attention of the Full Council .

5. CONSIDER ITEMS FOR BUDGET SETTING

The following items were discussed and it was requested that the Clerk obtain quotes for these prior to Finance Committee’s next meeting, to be held on 26 November 24:

- Tree survey (general) and Picus (or other specialist survey/s as suggested) for the large Horse chestnut on the corner of the Village Green by the crossroads.
- Maintenance charge for Christmas lights in 2025
- Details and quote for Lightning Conductor requirement/s for the Clock Tower.
- New Laptop for Clerk (same as recent set up for Deputy Clerk)
- Costs of new office equipment which may be required – printer/shredder
- Explore potential replacement laptops/tablets for Cllrs- these need to be able to access Zoom & Teams meetings and be capable of taking a full mouse if required
- Electricity prices – explore options for renewing contracts early if considered feasible and beneficial by Broker.
- Insurance – the renewal of the Council’s LTA comes up on 01/06/25 so Clerk and Deputy Clerk to explore options for renewal (This will most likely not be carried out until Feb 2025 at earliest which will be too late for budgeting. However, if new

building reinstatement values are known earlier this may guide a more realistic estimate when budgeting.)

- Parish Office – costs for potentially renting/leasing an alternative office in the centre of the Parish .

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Discussion only)

None.

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting ended at 9.00pm.

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