DRAFT MINUTES OF HORSMONDEN PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT HORSMONDEN VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Cllrs Russell (Chair), Richards, & Sheppard
In attendance: Lucy Noakes (Clerk). No members of the public
Declarations of Interest: Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct were invited. None were provided.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
   Cllrs Davis and Boon . The reason for absence was proposed for acceptance by Cllr Sheppard and seconded Cllr Richards. Unanimous.

2. **PUBLIC SESSION (no decisions)**
   None.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS FINANCE MEETING**
   The Minutes of the Parish Council Finance Committee Meeting 28.07.2026 had been previously circulated by the Clerk. Unfortunately, there were not enough members present within the quorum to verify the minutes as only two of the members present had attended the meeting in February . The minutes would therefore have to be considered again for approval at the next quarterly Finance Committee meeting, alongside the draft minutes from 24.02.2026.

4. **BUDGET MONITORING – END OF YEAR (Appendix 1 –Detailed Receipts & Payments)**
   The Clerk had circulated Appendix 1 beforehand for Cllrs to consider. The Committee made the following observations:

   There were likely to be overspends on the following items:
   110 ADMINISTRATION
   4140 Professional /Legal fees
   It was likely that the final costing for the consultancy work with Pillory Barn would exceed the £10,000 budgeted under this heading. There could also be expected legal fees associated with the parish office if the move went ahead this financial year, as planned.

   4210 Computer consumables and Maintenance
   This budget heading would like be an over spend as the Rialtas Software for Asset Management had been purchased which had not been an expected cost.

120 OUTSIDE SPACES

4300 Landscaping and Groundworks

This budget head was likely to exceed the budget as fertilizer and herbicide treatments on the Green had been required but were not budget for.

4330 Tree works

It was not yet known what tree works would be required form the planned survey , but it was possible with rising prices, that this work could potentially exceed the budget

170 ASSET MANAGEMENT

4710 Clock and Clock Tower

It had recently been identified that works were needed to the bell at the top of the clock tower as the bracket holding the bell needed replacing and the bell itself also had a crack at the top. Costs were not yet known but these essential were totally unexpected and were likely to far exceed the budget.

Likely underspends were also identified:

110 ADMINISTRATION

As the parish office move had not yet been able to go ahead the new lease had not commenced and there was likely to be a larger underspend on parish officer rent.

The following statement was proposed from the Chair:
The committee reviewed the current expenditure against budget for each heading and identified a few areas where overspend was going to happen and also some projected underspends. The overall position was considered to be satisfactory with overspends resulting for unforeseen emergency expenditure.
This statement was seconded by Cllr Richards, and voted for unanimously.

As the next Finance Committee meeting would be discuss the Councils potential budget for 2027-28 the committee discussed and identified items for which the Clerk may need to gather some quotations and prices so that the committee could factor these costs in to their recommended budget :

- Gather quotes to repaint soffits and facias at The Institute Building including a sand down and treatment of the front door
- Costs for additional Christmas lighting for Christmas 2027 (costs per additional tree lit).
- Contact P&F Cleaning to see if their costs would remain similar or increase next year .
- The Clerk was also asked to check continuance of contracts for electricity and grounds maintenance to ensure continuance at the same price or as previously agreed.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (DISCUSSION ONLY)

Having attended the Mulberry Finance Conference Cllr Russell explained that there may be an opportunity for the PC to have their external audit fees refunded during 2027-2028 if the Council agreed to trial the new digital AGAR software to complete its audit during that year . It was felt that this was an opportunity which the Council may wish to consider.

Cllr Russell understood that the Clerk should also be contacted at some point to ask whether the Council wished to remain part of the smaller authority group which underwent a limited audit review . This was again something the Council would wish to consider when asked.

The Clerk suggested that she could ask the Council's internal auditor about these two items, when she met with her during the next week and report back to council , as she had not heard anything direct on either of these as yet .

There being no further matters to discuss the meeting ended at 9pm.