

## HERSTMONCEUX PARISH COUNCIL

### Agenda Item: Committee Reports – F&GP

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on **Tuesday 04 October 2016** at Herstmonceux Village Hall, Herstmonceux.

Present: Councillors: Mrs J. Angear, M. Bradshaw (Chairman), M. Goodsell, Mrs H. Kenward, and S. Nash.

Mrs Clare Harrison, Clerk, attended. S. Goacher, RFO, took the Minutes,

Members of the Public: None.

**FIN.01.10.16 APOLOGIES:** Councillor I. Stewart.

**FIN.02.10.16 DECLARATIONS of INTERESTS:**

Councillor Mrs. Angear: Herstmonceux Village Hall, Herstmonceux Bowls Club, Angears Builders.

Councillor Goodsell: Various small maintenance contracts.

**FIN.03.10.16 DISPENSATION REQUESTS:** None received

**FIN.04.10.16 PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:** None.

**FIN.05.10.16 CURRENT YEAR EXPENDITURE:**

The RFO read out a request from the Clerk asking for consideration for the purchase of 'voice recognition' software, so that transcripts of the recordings of meetings may be used in Minutes to ensure accuracy. Councillor Bradshaw stated that he and Councillor Stewart had experience of such software and thought that such software was fine for dictation purposes but would not necessarily be able to be used with recordings from meetings, where differing voices of Councillors were recorded. Mrs Harrison, Clerk, had also had experience of voice recognition software at the East Sussex County Council and found that the software worked well. Councillor Nash stated that he could understand the request from the Clerk and appreciated the benefits of the use of such software. Councillor Nash said that such software could be used to provide a transcript of a meeting to a member of the public, where a copy of a recording could contain confidential discussion.

Councillor Bradshaw proposed that voice recognition software should be investigated and, if possible, the Parish Council should undertake a trial period of such software before purchasing. Seconded: Councillor Nash. All Councillors in favour.

**FIN.06.10.16 PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Councillor Bradshaw reported that the Personnel Sub-Committee had met immediately prior to the F&GP Committee, and that it was agreed that Councillors should meet with the Clerk on the 20 October 2016, to undertake an appraisal on the completion of the Clerk's probationary period. Also the Sub-Committee would be asking for various information of the RFO, prior to providing various provisions to be included in the Annual Estimates.

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### FIN.07.10.16 ANNUAL ESTIMATES: Revised 2016-17, Original 2017-18, and subsequent two years:

The RFO circulated, to the Members present, estimate working sheets received from Committees and individual Councillors requesting provisions to be included in the Annual Estimates.

The RFO also provided details of those Special / Capital Projects and of the ring-fenced items in the various Reserve Accounts, as agreed by Council in January 2016, and directed the meeting through each item to determine what provision requirement in the forthcoming estimates was to be made.

The meeting determined the following:

**Amenities – Allotments:** The Allotments Reserve Fund is to be continued to be used to defray the excess expenditure or cost of the provision of the allotments by withdrawal to the general fund. The meeting discussed whether the Parish Council would like to either extend the lease of the land or purchase outright the land if possible. The RFO suggested that the Amenities Committee write a report and present this to Council for consideration.

**Amenities – Footpaths:** The working group requested a provision of £300 per year for the general improvement and signage of footpaths within the parish.

**Amenities – Grounds:** The working group requested that the provisions for the Recreation Ground car park access road passing place, resurfacing, possible legal costs, and car park upgrade amounting to £30,000 should be provided for in the Special Projects in 2017/18. Ring-fenced items within the General Reserve Fund for an enhanced play area and footway to rear of the school to be continued and incorporate provisions from 2016/17.

**Amenities – Highways:** The working group requested that a provision for signs deterring vehicles from parking on the grass verges around the parish of £300. Enhancing the Village Centre by provision of cycle racks, an additional seat, planters, hanging baskets and an additional litter bin to sited beside the bus shelter £1600, with provision of further £500 per year in subsequent years. Councillor Bradshaw, had also requested provision for cycle racks adding a further £1550 in 2017/18. This provision would be counteracted by taking out the current provision wooden posts (£750), Cycle Path contribution (£1000), bollards at Victoria Road, Windmill Hill (£300) and parking lines also in Victoria Road (£1500). Provision for Grit / Salt bin provision and fill of £350 to be retained. Discussion took place in respect of replacement and maintenance of fingerposts within the parish. It was agreed that the Parish Council should retain these, rather than having them replaced by metal signs, and that the working party will review all signs and present an annual report as to which fingerposts require maintenance work and undertake to produce a schedule to cover all fingerposts within the parish. A request to increase the provision of maintenance of fingerposts to £2500 per year, was agreed.

**Amenities – Trees and Landscaping:** It was agreed that a contingency provision of £500 per year to cover any work required in connection with trees and landscaping work within the parish.

**Communications Working Group:** No estimates working sheet had been received, therefore, the RFO would provide general expenditure provision in accordance with actual or year to date expenditure. Any specific provisions would need to be notified to the RFO following the group's next meeting.

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Councillor Nash recommended that the general expenditure heading 'website maintenance' should re-designated 'IT Support' and the provision increased to £1000 per year. The Clerk asked for clarity on the ring-fenced provision for 3x Information Boards in the General Reserve Fund. The meeting provided the answer and it was agreed that these should be referred to as 'Parish Noticeboards'. The General Reserve Fund will need to reflect that the new noticeboard at the Parish Office had been installed and that a withdrawal of £780, but that a further £1000 for a new noticeboard at Cowbeech and refurbishment of the board outside the Brewers Arms Public House.

**F&GP – Administration:** There were no Special Projects required on the Administration and, therefore, it was left to the RFO to make provision for income & expenditure based on actual to date, and known commitments.

**F&GP – Emergency Planning:** No estimate working sheet had been received, but the meeting felt that all Councillors and Officers should receive some form of First Aid training, and a provision of £500 was requested.

**F&GP – Personnel Sub-Committee:** No estimates working sheet had been received, therefore, the RFO would provide general expenditure provision in accordance with actual or year to date expenditure. Any specific provisions would need to be notified to the RFO following the group's next meeting.

**F&GP – The Old Surgery:** Expenditure in accordance with actual to date or known commitments would be provided by the RFO. The meeting agreed that The Old Surgery Reserve Fund, which recorded the receipt of the Deposit required under the lease, should be kept at £14,500 (£12,500 general plus £2,500 Deposit) for any emergency maintenance expenditure.

**F&GP – Parish Office:** Expenditure in accordance with actual to date or known commitments would be provided by the RFO.

**F&GP – Herstmonceux Village Hall:** Ring-fenced provisions within the General Reserve Fund in respect of a maintenance contribution, access road legal fees, re-surfacing contribution and provision of yellow lines to be retained.

**Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee:** No estimates working sheet had been received, therefore, the RFO would provide general expenditure provision in accordance with actual or year to date expenditure. Any specific provisions would need to be notified to the RFO following the group's next meeting. The RFO, haven spoken to the Clerk to the Steering Committee advised the meeting that he would be including a contingency sum of £4,000 in 2017/18 in case the plan required resubmission or further public consultation was required. Further to this the meeting felt that an annual sum of £2,500 should be included each year to cover an 'Annual Review' of the Plan.

**Planning – Building Development Working Group:** The meeting agreed with the RFO that there should be no expenditure associated with this group, and therefore, no provision would be included.

### **Individual Councillors:**

**Councillor Naish:** Councillor Naish highlighted the need for the Parish Council's involvement in the provision of the joint sports development at Lime Cross, and the possibility of providing funding via PWLB loan. The meeting discussed this and it was recognised that the project was very much reliant on the required strip of land from developers, being donated or made available. The individual financial circumstances of the Bowls, and Football Clubs plus the Scouts was another area of concern. The meeting agreed that the Parish

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Council should build-up a provision for the future involvement of the Parish Council in the project and that a provision of £5,000 per year be ring-fenced within the General Reserve Fund for this purpose.

**Councillor Bradshaw:** In addition to the cycle rack provision, included in Amenities- Highways above, Councillor Bradshaw requested provision of a further defibrillator for Windmill Hill, possibly sited at the Horseshoe Inn. The meeting fully agreed with this and the RFO was asked to make provision in the estimates for £1300.

The meeting **RECOMMENDS TO FULL COUNCIL** that all provisions, as discussed, to be included in the Annual Estimates for final consideration at the January 2017 meeting.

The RFO would be bringing the estimates to the next meeting of the F&GP Committee, which would incorporate the provisions discussed above.

### **FIN.08.10.16 RISK REGISTER:**

Councillor Bradshaw outlined to the meeting the reasons for the Parish Council requiring a Disaster Register. It was to highlight and assess the impact on the Parish Council of any one event. Councillor Bradshaw gave the example of a lorry getting out of control in Gardner Street and destroying the Parish Office, this would highlight the need to temporary relocate, know where or have access to the Council's records, etc., etc. The matter was deferred to a future meeting of the F&GP Committee.

### **FIN.09.10.16 RISK POLICY:**

The RFO had circulated to all Members a copy of the latest Risk Policy reviewed and agreed in February 2015. The matter was deferred to a future meeting of the F&GP Committee.

**FIN.10.10.16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting of the F&GP Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 01<sup>st</sup> November 2016, commencing at 7.30pm.

**FIN.11.10.16 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING:** The RFO records that the following items will appear on the agenda for the next meeting:

**Annual Estimates:** To receive version 1 of the Annual Estimates as prepared by the RFO, for further discussion and potential impact on the Precept for 2017/18.

**Financial Regulations:** To receive from the Standing Orders / Financial Regulations Review Group, the proposed review of the Parish Council's Financial Regulations for discussion.

**FIN.12.10.16 CLOSE OF MEETING:** There being no other business, the Chairman, Councillor Bradshaw thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 21.45 pm