

HERSTMONCEUX PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Item: Committee Reports – Finance & General Purposes Committee

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on **Tuesday 01 November 2016** at Herstmonceux Village Hall, Herstmonceux.

Present: Councillors: Mrs J. Angear, M. Goodsell, Mrs H. Kenward, S. Nash, and I. Stewart.
Mrs Clare Harrison, Clerk, attended. S. Goacher, RFO, took the Minutes,
Members of the Public: None.

Councillor Nash, as Vice Chairman, took the Chair in the absence of Councillor Bradshaw.

FIN.01.11.16 APOLOGIES: Councillor M. Bradshaw (Chairman).

FIN.02.11.16 DECLARATIONS of INTERESTS:

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

Councillor Goodsell: Various small maintenance contracts.

Councillor I. Stewart: Herstmonceux Village Hall.

FIN.03.11.16 DISPENSATION REQUESTS: None received

FIN.04.11.16 PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS: None.

FIN.05.11.16 CURRENT YEAR EXPENDITURE:

- The Old Surgery:** The RFO brought to the attention that Mrs Gardner, tenant of the Old Surgery had apparently not kept an appointment with Mr. Angear, Angears Builders, to install the insulation material in the loft area of the property. Councillor Mrs Angear declared an interest and did not take part in the subsequent discussion. The meeting discussed the matter and asked the RFO to write to Mrs Gardiner asking her to supply two or three dates on which she would permit access to the property for Mr. Angear or his men to undertake the work. To inform Mrs. Gardiner that if another instance of not keeping an appointment occurs, that the Parish Council would be billing her for costs incurred.
- Donation:** Mrs. Harrison, Clerk to the Council, informed the meeting that training of Councillors and Officers in First Aid had been arranged. The Community First Response and the Ambulance Service would be undertaking the training and this would be at no cost to the Council. Both organisations indicated that a donation to both organisations would be appreciated as such donations go towards helping new volunteers pay for their kit (circa £2k). The meeting discussed the matter and it was **RECOMMENDED to FULL COUNCIL** that a donation of £50 per organisation be made on behalf of the Parish Council. Proposed: Councillor Mrs. Angear; Seconded: Councillor Mrs. Kenward: All in favour.
- Business Rates:** The RFO had received a notification from Wealden District Council regarding the Business Rates and Rateable Value of the Parish Office as from 01 April 2017. The RFO established from the Valuation Office that the Rateable Value would be £1,275, unaltered from the current year. The charge was liable to go down slightly from the current year charge of £617.10.

HERSTMONCEUX PARISH COUNCIL

4. **Adoption of BT Red Telephone Box, Stunts Green:** The Parish Council had received notice via Wealden District Council that British Telecommunications would be removing the Red Telephone Box situated at Stunts Green. The RFO reminded the meeting that there was a scheme where the Telephone Box could be 'adopted' for a payment of £1, as with the box situated in Cowbeech. The meeting felt that the residents of Stunts Green should be consulted, and the Clerk was asked to produce a letter or leaflet that could be distributed. There was an opinion that the box may be adopted if it could be moved to another site and a use, such as a Defibrillator station. The meeting **RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL** that residents are consulted and costs of moving the box be established before agreeing to the removal of the box. Proposed: Councillor Stewart; Seconded: Councillor Mrs. Kenward: All in favour.
5. **CPRE Donation:** CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England), had written to the Parish Council making an urgent appeal for funds to help fight the onslaught of inappropriate development across Sussex. The meeting believed this was 'political' and that the Parish Council would be monitoring the development in its area through planning applications and its Neighbourhood Plan, and **RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL** that no action be taken on this request. Proposed: Councillor Stewart; Seconded: Councillor Mrs. Angear: All in favour.
6. **Bank, Opposite the Village Hall:** Councillor Nash brought to the meeting that it was agreed that the bank alongside Hailsham Road, opposite to the Herstmonceux Village Hall, regarding its clearance and maintenance. Councillor Nash reminded the meeting that the residents living near the bank were to be communicated with regarding any plants or shrubs that they wished leaving when the bank was cleared. The Clerk was asked to prepare a letter to be circulated to the residents concerned.

FIN.06.11.16 PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT:

A meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee was convened prior to the Finance & General Purposes meeting. The Minutes of that meeting are attached. The F&GP Committee meeting went through the Minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting and the **RECOMMENDATIONS to FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** are thus **RECOMMENDED to FULL COUNCIL**, in full. Proposed: Councillor Stewart: Seconded: Councillor Mrs Angear: All in favour.

FIN.07.11.16 ANNUAL ESTIMATES: Revised 2016-17, Original 2017-18, and subsequent two years:

The RFO had circulated, to the Members of the F&GP Committee, copies of the Annual Estimates Version 2, November 2016.

The RFO stated his disappointment that the process, agreed by Council last year, that was introduced by Councillor Bradshaw, fully supported by the RFO, for Committees and Work Groups meeting in September and completing Estimate Working Sheets for submission by 30 September in each year, had not been followed in the current year. The RFO stated that he had not received any Estimate Working Sheets from the Personnel Sub-Committee, Communications Working Group, and Street Lighting Working Group. Some notes had been given from the Communications and Street Lighting Working Groups but did not provide any figures for use or indications to any changes to

HERSTMONCEUX PARISH COUNCIL

provisions already in the estimates.

The meeting proceeded to look at the Annual Estimates, as presented by the RFO.

Questions were raised regarding the ring-fenced amounts now shown in the Street Lighting Reserve Account.

The Chairman, Councillor Stewart stated that the Parish Council couldn't continue to reserve funds and not spend any money on its intended projects.

The meeting agreed and Councillor Stewart asked that the Street Lighting Work Group prepares and submits by the end of November 2016, a report detailing the requirements of the changes to street lighting, the proposals of the working group to the scheduling of changes to lighting across the parish with approximate costs per year, and in future years.

The meeting looked generally at the provisions and agreed to take out or reduce the following items:

1. HV100803 - Village Hall Maintenance Contribution – take out as this is covered through the Grants system.
2. GR100809 – Recreation Ground, tarmac pathway to School – reduce to £7,500 in 2017-18, and subsequent contributions to £2,500.
3. HV100805 – Maintenance Village Hall Access Road, reduce to £3750, agreement to split costs 50/50 with Dr Simmonds.

The meeting expressed that the target Precept for 2017-18 should not exceed £64,510, an increase of 2.50% on the current years Precept.

FIN.08.11.16 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS:

The RFO reported that he had not received any copy of the review of the Financial Regulations from the Review Working Group. This will be something that the Internal Auditor may pick up at the Interim Audit on 03 November 2016, but until a document is submitted the F&GP Committee cannot appraise any changes. It is **RECOMMENDED to FULL COUNCIL** that a review document is made ready and submitted to the February meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Proposed: Councillor Stewart, Seconded: Councillor Mrs. Angear; All in favour.

FIN.09.11.16 HERSTMONCEUX VILLAGE HALL – VARIATION of LEASE:

Councillor Stewart declared his interest and took no part in the subsequent discussion, and Councillor Mrs. Angear declared an interest. The Clerk, Mrs Harrison attended a meeting with Dr Simmonds, Councillors M. Goodsell and Nash, together with the Kent County Council Solicitor. The meeting discussed the variation of the current lease and it was agreed that the maintenance of the access to the bottom corner where the access road meets the village hall car park should be split 50/50 between Dr Simmonds and the Parish Council, effectively cutting out the Village Hall Management Committee.

Councillor Nash further brought to the attention of the meeting that there was a problem with the drainage at the bottom corner, which needed attention, and possible flushing. The cost of this the meeting agreed should fall on the Parish Council. The Clerk was instructed to arrange this to be cleared.

The access across a small strip of land from the access road to the new Surgery / Pharmacy site would be dealt with at the same time.

HERSTMONCEUX PARISH COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATION to FULL COUNCIL that the variation of the Lease reflect the negotiations whereby Dr Simmons and the Parish Council be responsible for the maintenance of the access road on a 50/50 basis, and that the drainage problem be cleared as soon as possible, the cost being borne by the Parish Council. Proposed: Councillor Nash: Seconded: Councillor Goodsell: All in favour.

FIN.10.11.16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting of the F&GP Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 05 January 2017, commencing at 7.30pm.

FIN.11.11.16 **ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING:** The RFO records that the following items will appear on the agenda for the next meeting:

Annual Estimates: To finalise the Annual Estimates as prepared by the RFO, for further discussion and potential impact on the Precept for 2017/18.

Precept: To recommend to Full Council the amount of Precept to levied on to Wealden District Council for 2017-18.

FIN.12.11.16 **CLOSE OF MEETING:** There being no other business, the Vice Chairman, Councillor Nash thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 21.15 pm