

## 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 August 2017** at the Meeting Room, Herstmonceux Village Information Centre, Gardner Street, Herstmonceux.

Present: Councillors: Mrs J. Angear, M. Bradshaw (Chairman), Mrs H. Kenward, and S. Nash. Mrs C. Harrison, Parish Clerk was also in attendance.

S. Goacher, RFO, took the Minutes,

Members of the Public: None.

#### **FIN.01.08.17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Councillor M. Goodsell – Family Reasons.

Councillor I. Stewart – Annual Leave.

#### **FIN.02.08.17 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTERESTS:**

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

Councillor M. Bradshaw – Herstmonceux Business Association.

Councillor S. Nash – Herstmonceux Village Information Centre, 1<sup>st</sup> Wartling (St Mary Magdalene) Brownies.

#### **FIN.03.08.17 DISPENSATION REQUESTS:** None.

#### **FIN.04.08.17 PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:** None.

#### **FIN.05.08.17 PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE:**

No meeting. Outstanding items Staff Appraisals. The Clerk's appraisal had been undertaken, but the RFO's appraisal remained outstanding. Reports to be made to future meetings of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

#### **FIN.06.08.17 CURRENT YEAR EXPENDITURE:**

- 1. Defibrillator, Windmill Hill:** The RFO reported that he had spoken with MAS Systems regarding the installation of the defibrillator and cabinet at the Horseshoe Inn, Windmill Hill. MAS Systems had indicated that the walls of the Inn were stone blocks and, therefore, did not provide a flat surface to install the cabinet. MAS Systems indicated that the only place was on the wall of an outbuilding towards the back of the Inn. The meeting was not in favour of the proposed position and asked the RFO to contact MAS Systems to investigate the placing of the defibrillator and cabinet within the recently purchased Windmill Hill Telephone Box.
- 2. Herstmonceux former Public Conveniences, Hailsham Road:** The Clerk reported that she was awaiting one quotation in respect of a feasibility study in respect of the former public conveniences, adjacent to the Woolpack Public House. The meeting discussed the quotations already received and what was required at this stage. The meeting **RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL** that the quotation from Lawson Queay, Chartered Surveyors, at

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£595, plus VAT for a site visit and preparation of initial proposals and feasibility report be accepted.

3. **Telephone Kiosks:** The Clerk had indicated in her report to Full Council dated 15 January 2017, that possible refurbishment costs would be required ranging from £50 to £450 (estimated) once the telephone boxes had been purchased. The meeting discussed the Stunts Green telephone kiosk and that this should be for discussion at a future meeting of the Committee.
4. **Clerk's Overtime Claim three-months to 29 June 2017:** The Clerk had submitted, as required, a timesheet record of working hours worked to 29 June 2017 for a three-month period. The additional hours claimed amounted to 49.20 hours. The meeting agreed that the hours claimed should be paid, and Councillor Bradshaw as Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee authorised payment. The meeting reiterated the need for the Personnel Sub-Committee to review the hours of the Officers and to recommend to the Committee any amendments to the term of the Contracts of Employment, currently in being. The RFO reminded Councillors that hours worked up to 37 hours in any one working week are paid at 'Plain Time', and only hours worked above 37 hours in any one working week are subject to an enhanced rate of 'Time and a Half'.
5. **Safety Inspection Works:** Councillor Nash reported that another Parish Council used a contractor to carry out their safety inspections, which appeared to be less costly, than the current contractor used by the Parish Council, and which covered all the Council's equipment and recreational premises / facilities. Councillor Nash had instructed Agrifactors to carry out all immediate and necessary work as per the latest safety report, and had asked for costings to re-cover the BMX/Skateboard ramps and the repainting of the Youth Shelter, for estimate purposes.
6. **Parish Website:** The Clerk reported that despite her efforts to obtain a meeting with the new Website developer, she had not been able to contact him. The meeting referred to the need to ensure that the website developer adhered to his obligations under his contract with the Parish Council.
7. **Member Surgery Sign:** The Clerk reported that the new signs advertising the Members Monthly Surgeries should be received soon.
8. **Open Office Sign:** The Clerk enquired whether a similar sign was required for the 'open office' each Thursday for access to residents. Councillor Bradshaw stated that this was a very good idea, and informed the Clerk to have made 'magnetic' type signs that could be used on the Members Surgery sign unit.

### FIN.07.08.17 ANNUAL GRANTS REPORT 2017-18:

1. **Review of Grants Scheme:** Councillor Bradshaw believed the Parish Council's Grant Scheme was in need of a review. Councillor Bradshaw stated that the requirement of 'Audited' Accounts was an over requirement because small organisations and charities didn't necessarily have their accounts audited. The RFO stated that 'Audited' was a term to cover being inspected by an independent person, too. Councillor Bradshaw continued by saying that the Grant system should be more flexible and that grants should not be restricted to once a year. Councillor Nash disagreed and stated that

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the once a year review by the Parish Council of considering Grants engendered a more business-like approach from organisations and charities, who may wish to apply. Councillor Mrs Angear asked the RFO if this would entail additional work, and the RFO stated that a separate grants report would be needed on each occasion, but that the grants awarded would need to be monitored against the provision made in the estimates. The meeting discussed the matter at length, and it was agreed to **RECOMMEND to FULL COUNCIL** that a review of the Grants System should be undertaken by the Standing Orders Review Committee and its recommendations be brought back to this Committee, as soon as possible. Proposed: Councillor Bradshaw; Seconded: Councillor Mrs. Kenward; All Members in favour.

2. **Annual Grants Report:** The meeting referred to the Annual Grants Report as prepared and circulated by the RFO, together with the Grants History report covering the financial years 2009-10 to 2016-17. Councillor Bradshaw scrutinised each grant application form and accounts as received and the meeting discussed the merits of each application, accordingly, and the amount of grant to be recommended.

The meeting **RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL** the amounts of Grant to be awarded to the organisations as set out in the Annual Grant Report – Recommendations. **Please see separate report.**

Proposed: Councillor Bradshaw; Seconded: Councillor Nash; All Members in favour.

### **FIN.08.08.17 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT:**

Councillor Bradshaw had requested this item to be included, as he was not present at the previous Finance & General Purposes Committee when this was discussed. Councillor Bradshaw had no items to discuss. The Clerk reported that copies of all the Parish Council Newsletters, and Bulletins were now being sent to the British Library, as required under the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003.

### **FIN.09.08.17 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR:**

Councillor Bradshaw reminded the meeting that the guidelines in respect of internal audit provision stated that it was good practice to review the Parish Council's internal audit provision every five years. The RFO had contacted and invited two local government personnel, recommended by SALC, who carry out internal audits for other Town and Parish Councils to apply and submit their CV and Internal Audit Testing procedures. One person was unable to apply as she had taken a conscious decision not to take on any additional work. The other, Mr K. Robertson, of Catsfield, had submitted suitable documentation. The meeting agreed that the Clerk take up references from Alfriston Parish Council, Catsfield Parish Council, and Chiddingly Parish Council, and to refer these references back to a future meeting of the Committee, for consideration.

### **FIN.10.08.17 DATA PROTECTION OFFICER:**

The RFO reminded the meeting that the Parish Council's Data Protection Officer was the Clerk. There are new General Data Protection Regulations due to become law in May 2018, and SSALC are going to arrange for a training session to be organised during the Autumn of 2017. The meeting asked if the Clerk would be prepared to attend, and Mrs Harrison agreed. The meeting

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**RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL** that the Clerk be booked onto the appropriate SSALC training course, and appropriate expenses be paid. Proposed; Councillor Nash; Seconded: Councillor Mrs Kenward; All members in favour.

### **FIN.11.08.17 HERSTMONCEUX CRICKET CLUB:**

The RFO referred to the recent correspondence regarding the Herstmonceux Cricket Club's application to ECB for specific funding to complete the cricket nets project. The refurbishment of the cricket nets comes under Part 12 – Development by Local Authorities, which means that the application for funding must be made by the local authority. The ECB would process the application form and the Grant money would be paid to the Parish Council.

If the Parish Council takes over the project and makes application to the ECB then the grant money and any other funding receivable towards the project must be paid over to the Parish Council to cover the full costs of the project. Councillor Bradshaw stated that this must be a condition to avoid and breach of the 'Money Laundering' Regulations.

The meeting discussed the matter and **RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL** that the Parish Council make application to ECB on behalf of the Herstmonceux Cricket Club, and that all monies received by the Herstmonceux Cricket Club, in respect of the nets project, and in Grant from ECB must be paid to the Parish Council, who will become the contractor for the cricket net project.

Proposed; Councillor Nash; Seconded; Councillor Mrs Kenward; All members in favour.

### **FIN.12.08.17 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN:**

Councillors Bradshaw, Stewart and the RFO to arrange a meeting and 'kick-start' the Business Continuity Plan.

### **FIN.13.08.17 EAST SUSSEX PENSION FUND:**

The RFO enquired of the meeting whether publications of the Employers Newsletter, Strategy Reports and other reports issued by the East Sussex Pension Fund should be circulated to all Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, for their information. The meeting agreed.

### **FIN.14.08.17 ESTIMATE PROCEDURE 2018-19:**

The RFO informed the meeting that he would produce Estimate Working Sheets for each Committee / Work Group and distribute these at the beginning of September. All Committees / Work Groups were expected to meet during the month of September to discuss and complete the Estimate Working Sheets for submission by 01 October 2017.

### **FIN.15.08.17 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:**

The RFO had distributed to all Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee a statement of the costs of the Neighbourhood Plan to 31 July 2017, amounting to £24,647.33 (net). The RFO informed the meeting that he had received the final invoice from Action in Rural Sussex, which corresponded with the monies owed from estimates received, and amounted to £3,682.50 plus VAT. This would be paid in August 2017. Other transfers of costs such as photocopying needed to be undertaken to reflect the true cost of the Plan.

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Councillor Mrs Angear left the meeting at 21.50pm

Councillor Bradshaw suggested that the Parish Council should be looking to appointing a Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Committee, supported by an appropriate number of workgroups, allied to the number of policy decisions contained within the plan. The meeting discussed this idea, but it was agreed to **RECOMMEND to FULL COUNCIL** that a Special or Extraordinary meeting of Full Council be called with the one Agenda item to sort out the future administration requirements and business plan of the Neighbourhood Plan into future years.

Proposed: Councillor Nash; Seconded; Councillor Bradshaw; All members in favour.

### **FIN.16.08.17 VILLAGE HALL ACCESS ROAD:**

The Clerk informed the meeting that all legal documentation regarding the Parish Council and Herstmonceux Village Hall had been signed and were awaiting finalisation. Legal documents regarding Dr Simmonds Surgery were with his Solicitors.

Councillor Bradshaw and Councillor Stewart were considering and monitoring the legal fees being charged by the Parish Council's Legal Advisors.

### **FIN.17.08.17 RECREATION GROUND ACCESS ROAD:**

Councillor Nash had nothing to report.

### **FIN.18.08.17 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE VENUE:**

Councillor Bradshaw had suggested that the Village Information Centre was sufficient for most of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings, the Precept meeting being the January meeting of the Committee, remaining to be held at the Herstmonceux Village Hall. This would provide an opportunity for a greater number of residents to attend and observe / comment on the setting of the annual precept. The meeting agreed and the Clerk agreed to make appropriate arrangements for bookings and cancellations.

### **FIN.19.08.17 MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME:**

Councillor Bradshaw, having read the Wealden Parish Remuneration Panel's recommendations for the maximum allowances to be paid for the Members Basic and Chairman's Allowances for 2017-18, proposed that the Parish Council adopt the recommended rates. The RFO stated that he would write to all Members giving the opportunity to change their individual decisions in respect to claiming their entitlement to Allowances and that any change would be backdated to 01 April 2017.

The meeting **RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL** that the maximum rates under the Members Allowance Scheme of Basic Allowance; £156 and Chairman's Allowance; £269 be adopted for 2017-18. Any Member wishing to change their previous decision to receive allowances would be backdated to 01 April 2017.

Proposed: Councillor Bradshaw; Seconded: Councillor Nash, All Members in favour.

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### **FIN.20.08.17 BANKING PROVISION:**

The RFO reported that the change of signatories on the Barclays Bank accounts were now virtually complete, and that he had full online banking facilities. The RFO was yet to hear anything from Unity Trust Bank regarding the opening of a current and tailored deposit accounts.

### **FIN.21.08.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting of the F&GP Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 05 September 2017, commencing at 7.30pm.

### **FIN.22.08.17 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING:** The RFO records that the following items will appear on the agenda for the next meeting:

- 1. Personnel Sub-Committee Report – Staff Appraisals, Job Descriptions, Contract amendments.**
- 2. Estimate Working Sheets.**
- 3. Neighbourhood Plan – Update.**
- 4. Village Hall Access Road – Update.**
- 5. Recreation Ground Access Road – Update**

### **FIN.23.08.17 CLOSE OF MEETING:**

There being no other business, the Chairman, Councillor Bradshaw thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 22.00 pm