

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES of the meeting of the Finance Committee of Harberton Parish Council held at 6pm on Wednesday 3rd January 2024 at Harbertonford Village Hall Meeting Room.

In attendance: Cllrs Beamish, Camp, Davies, Paine (Late), Williams

Apologies: Cllr Morris

Clerk: Ms Radford

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above and sanctioned.

In Cllr Morris's absence **it was AGREED** that Cllr Camp would Chair the meeting.

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of 3rd October 2023 as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

2. **Receive and review end of quarter 3 reports**

- 2.1. 2023/24 end of quarter 3 financial year budget report Cllrs reviewed the end of quarter budget report and had the opportunity to ask questions on expenditure in the quarter. All items of expenditure on the contingency line were checked.
- 2.2. 2023/24 end of quarter 3 bank reconciliation Cllrs received the end of quarter (Quarter 3) bank reconciliation as prepared by the clerk along with bank statements for the quarter showing a balance of £60225.18 including reserves. **It was RESOLVED** to sign the reconciliation and bank statements (signed by Cllr Camp).

3. **Consider the 2024/25 budget** to make recommendations to the Parish Council on the Precept Demand

- 3.1. In advance of the meeting cllrs had received a budget preparation document and a reserves statement. Cllrs reviewed the 2023/24 budget figures, looking at projected end of year costs, considering potential variations in costs for 2024/25 and how to use or build reserves. A proposed budget was compiled for review by full council at its January meeting.
- 3.2. **It was AGREED** to recommend to the Parish Council that the 2024/25 precept be set at £21364. This is an increase of 10.13%; £2252 on the previous year and an increase of £3.66 on the Band D Parish Rate.

4. **Review applications to the Community Benefit Fund and consider grant recommendations (if any)**

- 4.1. Harbertonford Village Hall Chairs Correspondence had been received from the Village Hall Committee and the Finance Committee considered if conditions of the grant had been met. After discussion **it was AGREED** to recommend to the Parish Council that the grant be paid.
- 4.2. Harbertonford General Playpark Improvements and Upkeep An application for £1000 was made by the Harbertonford Playpark Action Committee for the cost of playpark improvement project conducted via progressive improvements over the coming year. Improvements will focus on three key areas: general upkeep, low level improvements and larger level improvements. The application noted that the majority of this application would be spent on larger improvements, the cost of which is estimated at circa £15,000-£25,000 as it will likely involved the purchase and installation of new equipment for the playpark, after consultation has been conducted with the local community. After discussion **it was AGREED** to recommend to the Parish Council that a grant of £1000 be made.
- 4.3. Any further applications received by deadline of 31st December 2023
 - 4.3.1. Harberton Playing Field Equipment Repairs & Maintenance An application for £1000 was made by the Harberton Playing Field Association for retrospective funding to cover the costs of necessary repairs following the outcome of the annual inspection report. It was noted that the funding had been applied for retrospectively in part due to association roles changing, the sad loss of the HPFA Chair, a new secretary and treasurer appointed in 2023 and that costs for necessary repairs had used the majority of HPFA's account funds. Funding would put the HPFA in a better position to meet maintenance and project costs for 2024. After discussion **it was AGREED** to recommend to the Parish Council that a grant of £1000 with the condition that the grant be used for capital expenditure and major repairs to equipment, but not for ongoing general maintenance such as grass cutting or tree maintenance.

5. Personnel Issues

5.1. Review Q3 clerk overtime and holiday tracker and consider overtime payment requests

The finance committee reviewed the Clerk's overtime request, of 25.5 hours for the quarter totalling £355.73. **It was RESOLVED** to recommend to the Parish Council that the overtime be approved and paid in three instalments of £118.58 in January £118.58 in February and £118.57 in March. It was agreed that the clerk retain the 20 hours of Time of in Lieu and carry forward to the next quarter.

5.2. Review response from DALC re Clerk Salary Pay Scale It was noted that the Clerk had met with Cllrs Beamish, Camp and Morris in November to for an annual review, following which it had been agreed to make contact with Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) and ask for guidance on whether the Clerk's current salary point is already at the top of the range for the role. Advice received from DALC confirmed that the Parish Council used appropriate tools for evaluating the post of Clerk to Harberton Parish Council and the benchmark of LC1 was considered a reasonable outcome. The Clerk's current salary point at SCP17 is therefore at the top of the range, so any further salary increases would simply be the annual pay award. Advice was given that if the Council is looking to recognise length of service other than salary, additional leave is often given. **It was AGREED** that the Finance Committee would discuss making an increase to the Clerk's leave at the next meeting in April, in order to make a recommendation to the Parish Council in the new financial year.

6. Confirmation of next meeting date 7:30pm, Tuesday 2nd April 2024