

HARBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee of Harberton Parish Council at 7.30pm on Tuesday 2nd April 2024. Harbertonford Village Hall meeting room.

In attendance: Cllrs Beamish, Camp, Davies, Morris (Chair), Paine
Apologies: Cllr Camp, Williams
Clerk: Ms Radford

Agenda

1. **Apologies** were received as above and sanctioned.
2. **Minutes** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of 3rd January 2024 as an accurate record.
3. **Receive and review end of Quarter 4 reports**
 - 3.1. 2023/24 end of financial year bank reconciliation for independent review and signature of reconciliation and of bank statements. Cllrs received the end of year (Quarter 4) bank reconciliation as prepared by the Clerk showing a balance of £53,668.79 including reserves. Cllrs reviewed the bank statements and checked that bank reconciliation figures agreed. **It was RESOLVED** to sign the reconciliation and bank statements, (signed by Cllr Morris).
 - 3.2. 2023/24 end of year budget report for review. Cllrs reviewed the end of quarter budget report and had the opportunity to ask questions and check figures. The income and expenditure figures agreed with the bank reconciliation. The document was read in conjunction with the reserves report, below.
 - 3.3. 2023/24 end of year reserves report for review Cllrs reviewed the reserves report, prepared by the Clerk, showing the level of earmarked reserves and general reserves that would be carried into the next quarter. The following reserves were approved:

Earmarked reserve heading	2023/24 Reserves end Q4	Additional monies allocated from the 2024/25 precept	Total earmarked reserves at beginning of 2024/25 Q1
Office equipment	265.00	0	265.00
Training	730.80	0	730.80
Elections	2,000.00	500.00	2,500.00
Maintenance reserves (includes trees)	4,455.00	300.00	4,755.00
Parish Lengthsman project	7,500.00	0	7,500.00
Emergency planning	150.00	150.00	300.00
Website	200.00	200.00	400.00
Service Level Agreement DAAT Lighting Column	550.00	0	550.00
Neighbourhood Plan	1,829.35	400.00	2,229.35
Parish Council Grants Fund	0	500.00	500.00
Parish Defibrillators	950.00	0	950.00
Harbertonford playground	0	0	0
Subtotal earmarked reserves	18,630.15	2,050.00	20,680.15
Community Benefit Fund reserves	31,087.52	0	31,087.52
Total earmarked reserves	49,717.67	2,050.00	51,767.67
Amount in Parish Council bank accounts at end of financial year (2023/24 Q4 bank reconciliation)	53,668.79		
Remaining 'general reserves' calculation for 2023/24	3,951.12		

It was noted that the remaining 'general reserves' was lower than desired, as the Reserves Policy states that The Parish Council seeks to build up its General Reserves so that the amount held is six months of predicted expenditure. This would be a figure of approximately £10,000 - £11,000.

It was RESOLVED to timetable a review of the Harberton Parish Council Reserves Policy for the next meeting of the Finance Committee in July 2024.

4. Preparation of 2023/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return

- 4.1. Parish Council Register of Assets Having reviewed a draft Register of Assets at the end of the 2023/24 financial year (31/03/24) **it was RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the draft Register of Assets to the Parish Council. The updates included disposal of the Parish Council Dell Inspiron Laptop computer, purchased in May 2014 (purchase value £299) and a webcam purchased in February 2015 (purchase value £16). In disposing of these items, the updated Register of Assets value is £39,609.37. There was a discussion about potential income through charging for parking at the Harbertonford Bridge Car park . It was agreed to raise this at a meeting of the Parish Council when the Register of Assets is discussed.
- 4.2. 2023/24 Draft Accounting Statement Cllrs reviewed the draft accounting statement as prepared by the Clerk ahead of the annual audit and had the opportunity to ask questions and check figures. This was read against the Explanation of Variances shown below.
- 4.3. 2023/24 Explanation of Variances for review. Cllrs reviewed the 2023/24 Explanation of Variances document alongside the Draft Accounting Statement, showing the draft accounting statements at the end of the year, detailing variance in income and expenditure as identified by the end of year budget report. Cllrs checked line items and explanations for variances and approved the document for submission to the internal and external auditor. It was noted that there were no unexplained variances, and that some variances were due to late submission of invoices by suppliers.

5. Review applications to the Community Benefit Fund and consider grant recommendations

- 5.1. Sustainable Harbourne Valley (SHV): Action for Nature and Climate An application was made for £650 towards a project budgeted at £829.97 to increase awareness of the actions which can be taken to improve both our local environment and the planet and give people the support and funding to run projects to help achieve this. Support will enable SHV to address some of the local environmental concerns raised in the 2023 Parish Plan conversation event and help people to find creative solutions. Funds requested will be spent on costs associated with continuation of a website and email address, cost of insurance, venue hire for events, publicity and bank charges. The balance of funds required for the project will be met from SHV's funds, raised through events such as donations at monthly talks, and sale of seeds and plants. After discussion **it was RESOLVED** to recommend a grant of £650 be made, on receipt of a grant acceptance letter. A grant for the website and email address would be made under the Local Government Act 1972, s.142. The remainder would be made under s137 of the same act.
- 5.2. Harbertonford CE Primary School PTFA: 'Moor to Sea' Playground Art Mural An application was made for £785 towards a £1000 project to support the cost of a three day workshop, in which an artist/ex-teacher from Harbertonford will create a mural in the Playground at Harbertonford CE Primary School. The artist will also engage with children in school prior to the workshop and generate ideas together with them. £215 of funding has been allocated from the PTFA's budget. After discussion it was agreed that the committee supported the application in principle, however would like further clarification from the PTFA on how the £1000 total project funds would be spent, before making a formal recommendation to the Parish Council on awarding the grant. **ACTION:** The Clerk will request a budget from the PTFA with the request it be submitted ahead of the next meeting of the Parish Council. It was noted that should the grant be awarded, it would be done so under the Local Government Act 1972 s145 (d) the development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts and the crafts which serve the arts.
- 5.3. Any other applications received: Jan Culf: Helping Harberton Village Parking An application was made for £224 to support the purchase of traffic cones to aid village parking in Harberton Parish Hall upper car park and overflow parking on Harberton Playing Field. Cones are currently often provided, and transported to and from the site, by two village residents who wish to cease doing this. Funds would pay for 6 'no parking' cones to keep the access ramp from the Hall upper car park onto the Playing Field clear to allow access for overflow parking, 6 large traffic cones and 8 smaller traffic cones to control parking. After discussion **it was RESOLVED** to recommend a grant of £224 be made, on receipt of a grant acceptance letter. The grant would be made under the Local Government Act 1972 s137.

6. Personnel Issues

- 6.1. Consider Clerk overtime and holiday claims (if requested) The Finance Committee reviewed the Clerk's overtime and holiday tracker showing the clerk's request to retain 20 hours of Time Off in Lieu in the next quarter and an overtime claim of 63 hours for the quarter, totalling £878.85 **It was RESOLVED** to recommend to the Parish Council approval of the requested 20 hours TOIL and the recommendation that the overtime be approved and paid in three instalments of £292.95 in April, May and June.
- 6.2. Discuss increases to Clerk's leave allowance Committee Members were reminded that the Clerk's currently salary point of SCP17 is at the top of the range for the current role. The Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) had advised that if the Council is looking to recognise the Clerk's length of service, additional leave could be given. Following discussion **it was RESOLVED** to recommend to the Parish Council that the Clerk be awarded an additional 16 hours of holiday allowance, taking her total holiday allowance in the year to 66.4 hours (1st April - 31st March).

7. Confirmation of next meeting date 7:30pm Tuesday 2nd July 2024