

HARTLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting 11th January 2016 7.00pm, Hartlebury Parish Hall

Present: Cllrs Ms L. Cleaver (Chair), S. Tranter, D. Ingram and D Simons (following notification, arrived during item 9).

In attendance: Brian Gale (Clerk). One member of the public.

- 1. Apologies.** Received from Cllr Mrs S. Hickman. Cllr Brown was absent.
- 2. Minutes.** Acceptance of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of 9th November 2015 was proposed by Cllr Ingram, seconded by Cllr Tranter and agreed.
- 3. Current financial situation.** The financial situation to the end of December 2015 was presented and agreed to be satisfactory and in line with the budget.
- 4. Disposal of Scottish Widows bond monies, £10k.** To be further reviewed but probably to be kept in readily accessible form.
- 5. Investment to improve crime prevention.** It was noted that further discussions on the deployment of Smart water are taking place elsewhere and on their conclusion, the matter would be brought back to the Finance Committee and/or the full Council. Cllr Ingram indicated he could get the product at a lower price than was currently being discussed; he will progress the matter with Cllr Murcott.
- 6. To finalize a budget for 2016-2017.** Cllr Ingram proposed that the preliminary figures for the budget, with income from WDC totalling £22,992, discussed at the last meeting and presented to the full Council, be reconfirmed for presentation to the next full Council meeting for formal approval. This was seconded by Cllr Tranter and agreed unanimously.
- 7. Precept for recommendation to the full Council.** Following agreement that a budget requirement of £22,992 from WDC was appropriate, Cllr Tranter proposed that a precept of £21,500 (which together with the anticipated precept grant of £1,492 would give total income from WDC of £22,992) be requested. This was seconded by Cllr Ingram and agreed unanimously. In total, this represents an increase of 2% from last year. The £10,000 from Scottish Widows will be ear-marked for possible re-investment or possible other projects.
- 8. Participation in the NALC sector led audit procurement scheme.** To obviate any issues which might arise with the Council selecting its own external auditor, Cllr Ms Cleaver proposed participating in the scheme being organized under the auspices of NALC; this was seconded by Cllr Tranter and agreed unanimously. No action is required at this time.
- 9. Grounds Maintenance Schedule.** The schedule, with the addition of a clause to cover the cutting of the grass at the junction of Old Worcester Road and Station Road, was approved and will be sent to selected contractors, including any suggested by Cllr Mrs Abercrombie, by 20th January 2016.

10. Review of Financial Regulations. It was agreed that

1. the “three quote rule” in paragraph 11.1(h) be used to reinforce the similar requirement of paragraph 10.3.
2. the delegated power to the clerk in paragraph 3.2 to spend up to £200 on emergency works be maintained until further review at some future date. In the meantime checks will be made to see if this power has proved adequate in the past.
3. the review history paragraph be removed so that only the date of the most recent review be left.

11. Review of Risk Assessment. The clerk will review the assessment document and incorporate certain new features for presentation at the next meeting. Existing tree wardens will be contacted and new ones sought.

12. Review the Asset Register. An up-dated Asset Register was presented; it was agreed that only four benches currently existed so the Register will be further up-dated and presented to the full Council for approval.

13. Review of Finance Committee meeting dates: It was agreed that the normal meeting day should be a Thursday; the meeting schedule will be adjusted and re-issued.

14. Review of Parish Hall payments in 2014 and 2015:

1. £8,563 in 2014 – clerk to search paper-trail.
2. £9,000 in 2015 - Cllr Ms Cleaver will seek out the NHB application form to check the exact reason for the grant being requested and then confirmation will be sought from PHMC that this is indeed now the money was spent.

Up-dates to issues arising from earlier meetings:-

1. The Hartlebury PCC has been asked to get a quote for refurbishing St Mary’s lych-gate; should this appear to be a reasonable cost, the committee will further consider financial support for the work.
2. Cllr Tranter will speak to the New Elizabethan School about a grant in appreciation of being allowed to hold PC meetings on their premises.
3. The Gardening Club has been asked if there is any other way it could further enhance the environment of the village; it advised that the limitation to extending work was the availability of volunteers but it will consider the matter.
4. The Council’s contribution to the Parish Magazine has been made.
5. The church tower captain has been approached about clock maintenance work; he is open to further discussion at the appropriate time.