

MINUTES

**HERSTMONCEUX PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES (FGP) COMMITTEE
Tuesday 11th January 2022 7.00 p.m.**

Councillors in attendance: Cllr Alder, Cllr Angear, Cllr Harding Cllr Kenward (Ch), Cllr Porter, Cllr Stewart.

Ex-Officio – None

Clerk/RFO in attendance – 0

Members of the Public - 0

No	Agenda Items	Action
1. FGP_2022.01.01	TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE The meeting opened at 19.03, the Chair reminded all that the meeting was being recorded. No apologies had been received.	
2. FGP_2022.01.02	DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS Declarations of Member's Interests were as declared at beginning of this administration term. Cllrs Stewart, Angear and Porter declared an interest in Agenda Item 7i on this agenda – letter from Village Hall Trustees.	
3. FGP_2022.01.03	DISPENSATION REQUESTS There were none.	
4. FGP_2022.01.04	PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA There were no members of the public present.	
5. FGP_2022.01.05	PERSONNEL – To receive any report(s) from the Personnel Committee for noting or action <i>A resolution will be made to exclude press and members of the public in the event of making any staffing decisions being made in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions t Meetings) Act 1960</i> A meeting is to be arranged for February	
6. FGP_2022.01.06	FINANCE MATTERS To Recommend to Full Council for Approval the following: Month end reports – 31 st December 2021 i. Barclaycard Reconciliation Reconciliation of the Barclaycard had been circulated prior to the meeting. ii. Bank Reconciliations Reconciliations of all Banks had been circulated prior to the meeting. iii. Reserves Balance and Transfers Report There were no transfers to report.	All recommend - ations to FCL for approval and Clerk/RFO actions

iv. Bank Summary
The Bank Summary had been circulated prior to the meeting.

v. Statement of Accounts
The Statement of Accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting.

vi. Reserves Balance and Transfers Report
The Reserves Balance had been circulated prior to the meeting.
There were no Transfers to report.

vii. Cost Centre Report
The Net Position by Cost Centre Report had been circulated prior to the meeting with a request for Cllr Working Groups to identify any significant underspend for action.

Cllr Porter had some queries on the Cost Centre report. A discussion followed about needing to give consideration to the Cost Centre report separately to the budget figures, (as budget figures include bank balances / reserves). All questions satisfactorily answered.

There were no further questions about the above financial reports. All the above documents were **Proposed** to be **Recommended to Full Council** to be **Approved** by Cllr Alder, seconded Cllr Stewart. **All in favour.**

viii. Q3 2021-2022 VAT List and Recommended Approval for Q3 Return
The Q3 2021-2022 VAT list and Vat 100 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Net VAT to be re-claimed in this quarter was agreed at £4,324.32. **Proposed** to be **Recommended to Full Council** to be **Approved** by Cllr Stewart, seconded Cllr Angear. **All in favour.**

ix. Payments and Receipts January 2021
All payments and receipts had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was **Proposed** to **Recommend to Full Council** by Cllr Stewart seconded by Cllr Alder that the presented lists of payments totalling £10,691.89 (inc VAT) and receipts totalling £4,503.79 be **Approved**. **All in favour.**

The RFO advised of a recent rent payment from the Tenant of The Old Surgery. The Committee recalled the recently issued Statement of Accounts to the tenant. The RFO advised a return of the most recent rental payment to ensure the account was kept as close as possible to the payment schedule outlined in the Tenancy Agreement.

The Committee asked the RFO to draft a Banking Standing Order letter for the tenant to give to her bank to ensure payments were made for the correct amount at the correct time

Proposed to be **Recommended to Full Council** to be **Approved** by Cllr Stewart, seconded Cllr Angear. **All in favour.**

Additional matters:

- i. Consider any quotations for work on behalf of Herstmonceux Parish Council Grounds
 - Jubilee Sign

The Committee had received a report from Cllr Watson detailing a quotes for refurbishment costs of old jubilee sign:

Removal of sign

Shot blasting / zinc primer / powder coating in satin black

Repainting of various colour parts

Re-fitting of sign on original post

£450.00

Cllr Alder and Cllr Kenward advised that the 'old' sign had been repainted a couple of years ago. Committee therefore felt this piece of work was not necessary at this time.

And

New (replica) Platinum Jubilee Sign:

Making of sign – materials

Change of wording to Platinum / 2022

Shot blasting / zinc primer / powder coating in satin black

Repainting of various colour parts

Re-fitting of sign on new (oak) post (not included in quote but approx. £600)

£1234.00

Cllr Stewart Proposed to order the new sign in anticipation of payment to be taken out of next year's budget therefore for HPC to take delivery after April 1st 2022.

Discussions and proposals for the placement of the new sign are to be deferred to Amenities.

Cllr David Harding joined the meeting at 19.30hrs.

Seconded Cllr Kenward. Cllr Porter abstained from Voting. **All other Cllrs in favour. Recommended to Full Council.**

- ii Any other considerations for Working Group agreed projects
There were none.

- iii Urgent financial matters which cannot be held over until the next meeting – Chairs discretion

The Committee had received a briefing from Cllr Porter regarding his researched findings for an updated EPC and MEES report for the Old Surgery.

Cllr Stewart **Proposed to Recommend to Full Council** to authorise an Easy EPC report for a cost of £155 +VAT and a follow up MEES Report (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Report) for an additional cost of £50+VAT. Seconded by Cllr Kenward. **All in favour.**

7.
FGP_2022.01.07

FINANCE OFFICER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Cllrs Stewart, Angear and Porter left the room for the duration of Agenda Item 7i and took no part in the discussions or decision making.

- i. Consider request within letter from Village Hall Trustees

A letter had been received from the Trustees of Herstmonceux Village Hall to formally request that the Parish Council waive the rent due on the Village Hall (to the Parish Council) for a period of three years from the rent due on 24th March 2022.

The request was made due to the recent energy crisis that required the Village Hall to enter into a three year deal with a new supplier which has resulted in an increase of energy charges of over 100%.

A savings audit has additionally been carried out and new practices are in place for users of the hall.

Full consideration was given this request. The knowledge of past necessary grant applications from the Trustees was also considered.

Summarising the Committee's careful consideration, it was **Proposed** by Cllr Kenward to **Recommend to Full Council** to revert to the original terms of the lease of £1 p/a peppercorn rent, **subject to a discussion** about Hall Hire charges to the Council for their meetings from the three recommended option choices below:

Option 1 – peppercorn rent and pay full hall hire charges approx. £1k p/a

Option 2 – Peppercorn rent at £1p/a but request no charge for Planning and Full Council meetings. HPC continue to pay for all other use, including Annual Full Parish meeting.

Or

Option 3 – not revert to peppercorn rent but continue to charge rent, rental charge to be agreed plus provide grant / donation towards Village Hall running costs at end of the Financial Year, dependent on Village Hall end of year accounts.

Seconded by Cllr Alder. **All in favour.**

- ii. Confirmation of Signing of Letter of Engagement for Internal Audit and Payroll Services.

The Clerk / RFO confirmed the above. Noted.

- iii. Finance training follow up – establishing of operational plan
The Clerk / RFO is to meet with Cllr Harding to start on this piece of work as per December 2021 FGP minutes:

It was agreed by all at the meeting to defer this to February 2022 F&GP and this is to merged with the existing Business Plan to give more detail in one document. This will link it into the Final Year Account and allocation of reserves.

8.
FGP_2022.01.08

PUBLIC TOILETS LONG TERM PLANNING

The report from Cllr Alder will be circulated prior to Full Council.

Cost Centre budget reports and costings of running the public conveniences since opening will be collated for Cllr Alder to enable her to complete her report.

9.
FGP_2022.01.09

TO APPROVE THE BUDGET FOR 2022-2023 AND TO SET THE PRECEPT FOR SUBMISSION TO WEALDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

i Presentation and final consideration of circulated Final Budget 2022-2023

Cllr Porter raised some queries on some of the cost centre headings and was satisfied with the explanations.

ii Agree final draft and RECOMMEND approval of Final Budget to Full Council, including allocation of Reserves

The Working Groups of the Amenities Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee had undertaken a four-month drafting budget setting process to include all general running costs, services and projects that had come forward from the Council's Officers, Committees and Working Groups.

The final draft of the budget, V5, was **Proposed** Cllr Harding for **Recommendation for Full Council approval**.

Seconded Cllr Stewart. All in favour

iii Consider and Agree 2022-2023 Precept Request and **RECOMMEND** Approval to Full Council

Following the above recommended approval of the budget 2022/23, V5, the Committee agreed to **Recommend to Full Council for Approval** to levy a Precept on Wealden District Council in the sum of £88,758 for the financial year 2022/23.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee were pleased with the budget preparation by the Council over the last 4 months, in this time of devolved responsibilities and rising costs, that resulted in this precept calculation equating to a minimal annual increase, of only 27p per Band D household, for the coming precept year.

Proposed from the Chair, Seconded by Cllr Stewart. Approved by all.

10.
FGP_2022.01.10

RELEVANT CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED INCLUDING AFTER THIS AGENDA HAS BEEN PUBLISHED

There was none.

11.
FGP_2022.01.11

ITEMS FOR REFERRAL TO NEXT AGENDA

Items agreed in this meeting.

12.
FGP_2022.01.12

CLOSE OF THE MEETING

The meeting closed at 20.19.

Date of the next meeting - 1st February 2022