

Finance & Governance Committee - Minutes

Unconfirmed

Minutes of the Horsted Keynes Parish Council Finance & Governance Committee held on 4 December 2017 in the Parish Council Office at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Cllr. D Colville, Cllr J Humphreys-Davies, Cllr S Webster and Cllr. C Vince

Attending: Michaela Frost (Clerk)

No members of the public were present

1. Apologies for absence to be received.

None.

2. To receive Declarations of Interests from Councillors in respect of any matter on the Agenda.

(Members are invited to make any declarations of personal or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and are reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it then becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is to be considered).

Agreed that discussion under item 6 on this agenda is limited to the Council's "Duty of Care" as an employer therefore no declarations of interest required from Councillors.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 June 2017 were AGREED.

4. RISKS AND CONTROLS.

The Risks and Controls document had been circulated.

It was noted that the following amendments should be made by the Clerk:

- Page 1 – Cllr Webster and Cllr Vince needed to be set up for online banking again.
- Page 5 Assets and risk controls – the Parish Council needs to identify the concept of annual depreciation and the risk of loss and damage. The diminishing value on assets needs to be considered. Replacement costs should be considered.

RESOLVED – to consider building a reserve for the depreciation of assets.

5. TENNIS CLUB AGREEMENT

it was agreed at the last Parish Council meeting that the F&G Committee would undertake a review of the Tennis Club Agreement. The Trustees of the Recreation Ground are responsible for setting the fees and the Charity Commission advises Trustees that they had a duty to obtain a reasonable rent from facilities. The Clerk needs to obtain advice from SALC about appropriate rates of rent for similar facilities. In the meantime, it was AGREED that the Clerk and Councillor Vince would arrange a meeting with the Tennis Club Committee to review the agreements, rent and insurance. The Clerk and Cllr Vince would then report back with recommendations to a future meeting.

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6. COFFEE SHOP

The coffee shop had opened a couple of times on a very adhoc basis. The Parish Council would like to encourage and assist the coffee shop as much as possible. The Clerk would liaise with the coffee shop licensees and obtain an update of future opening times etc.

7. DRAFT BUDGET - To review the draft budget prepared by Clerk, propose amendments and agree recommendations to be made to the full Parish Council on 09/01/18 prior to submission of precept information to MSDC.

The F & G Committee considered the draft budget prepared by the Clerk. The following points were made:

- The Committee discussed that there was a need to make improvements to the website and also include a possible subscription service – the costs of this would be included in the draft budget.
- In last year's budget, provision was made for the recruitment of an Assistant Clerk. Recruitment was not successful. Provision is still in the budget, but the F&G Cttee agreed that this should be separated out form the Clerk's salary in the figures.
- The Clerk reported that grass cutting for the village green had increase in 2017 due to the climate and weather conditions so provision should be made in the budget for next year for increased cuts.
- The Clerk reported that the Parish Council's other contractors prices were remaining the same.
- The Clerk reported that the TGR & H Committee had made some provision for increases in maintenance at the Memorial Pavillion as this was a Council asset and may require some improvements and maintenance in the future.
- The draft budget showed an estimated figure for possible loan repayments in the loan application for the replacement/refurbishment of the play area was successful
- The F & G Committee also discussed increasing the amount available for donations. This would be subject to a clear procedure for the application for donations being updated. See Minute below about grants and donations.

Proposed budget / precept options attached – See Appendix A

9. BOULES PITCH

The Clerk reported that there had been a significant bill in from the solicitor regarding the installation of the Boules pitch. It was AGREED that although the Boules Group had contributed £200, the Clerk would contact them again to see if they would be prepared to assist with some of the costs

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10. DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

The F& G Committee considered the process for applying for discretionary grants. The HKPCC had approached the Parish Council about the increased costs for maintaining the churchyard and had requested more funds from the Parish Council next year. The F& G Committee also considered the latest accounts from the HKPCC.

The F& G Committee agreed that the Parish Council donation towards the churchyard running costs pays towards the Parish Council's civic duty with regard to the provision of a cemetery/burial ground.

The F & G Committee AGREED that section 137 grants means that

A grant is any payment or gift made by the Parish Council to an organisation for a specific purpose that will benefit the Parish, or residents of the Parish, and which is not directly controlled or administered by the Parish Council. The law requires that **Section 137** grants must be "in the interests of or will directly benefit the area or its inhabitants, or of part of it, or of some of it" and "the direct benefit should be commensurate with expenditure".

The Parish Council budget includes an allocation for discretionary grants to local clubs and organisations. Grants will normally only be made to those clubs and organisations that provide a benefit to the residents of the Parish.

The F& G Committee agreed that the process for next year must be made clear for applying for grants and will only be considered on the above mentioned basis.

11. WEBSITE

The F& G Committee agreed that the website needed some updating and that a subscription element should be included. The costs of this would be included in the draft budget.

12. CLERK – MANAGING PRIORITIES, TRAINING AND HOURS – deferred until a future meeting.

13. FUTURE ITEMS

- Freedom of Information
- Model Publication Scheme
- Scheme of Delegation
- Top up card
- Back up and data protection

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

2 January 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman

Date