

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting of the **Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee**
held on **Tuesday 15th December 2020** at **7:00 pm** via Zoom Conferencing.

Present: Cllrs E Goodyear (Chairman), M Eastwood, A Donoghue, N Stevens, J Jones and G Perry.

In attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk), Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager) and Mr P Crowe (Chairman of Henfield Community Partnership - HCP).

MINUTES

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllr N Stevens declared a personal interest in item 12e, as he is on the Henfield Club Committee.

2. APOLOGIES

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20th OCTOBER 2020

Approved, to be signed at a later date by the Chairman in the Parish Office.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a) Consider Existing Staff for Cleaning Job in the Parish Office

The Clerk reported that there has been little progress on this as the office staff are currently working from home and we are keen to keep visitors to a minimum. This will be reviewed again in February or March.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

None

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements, but introduced Paul Crowe, Chairman of the Henfield Community Partnership (HCP), who had been invited to the meeting to introduce his suggestion for a Digital Strategy for Henfield.

6. HENFIELD DIGITAL STRATEGY

a) Report from Paul Crowe

Mr Crowe explained that he has been concerned for the economic activity in the village, particularly since the end of the first COVID 19 lockdown. Several businesses have now come together to form a traders' group and they have generally questioned why people would come to Henfield. Mr Crowe has been looking into the potential use of digital technology, factoring in the demise of Henfield Hub. He suggested that there is already enough websites and social media accounts in the village, but that an overall strategy would be helpful in order to increase footfall in the village from economically active residents.

He has discussed this with PMW Ltd who already have knowledge of Henfield, having worked with HCP and Henfield Parish Council (HPC) as well as on the trails project. They agreed that there are enough websites, but that the village could benefit from stimulating traffic to these sites as well as creation of a Henfield brand. They have suggested a neutral Facebook account to create an image with short animations once a month to link into other websites and promote events. They suggested a targeted campaign to include people in a 25 mile radius of Henfield. Initial set up costs could be

around £800 with a £600 per month fee for an animation. Mr Crowe acknowledged that there would be a need to measure success.

Cllr Eastwood confirmed that the idea would fit with HPC's current strategy, as supporting the High Street is one of our seven objectives. He then asked who would provide content and also commented that there would need to be a strong commitment from local businesses, perhaps financial, as well as an effective way to measure progress and success. Mr Crowe replied that content is usually best supplied by customers, but that otherwise it would in the main be supplied by HCP or HPC as well as other interested parties.

The Chairman suggested that Mr Crowe speaks to the traders group at their next meeting in late January, and then come back to the committee with a more detailed proposal. Mr Crowe agreed and replied that he will also speak again to PMW to ask for a taster example.

Cllr Stevens also mentioned that it may be possible to take over Henfield Hub, Mr Crowe also agreed to consider this option further.

7. APPROVAL OF 2021/22 BUDGETS FOR SUBMISSION TO FULL COUNCIL

a) Consider Increase In Wildlife Planting Budget from £500 to £1,000

Cllr Perry confirmed that this had been discussed by the Recreation and Open Spaces committee (ROS). It was felt that a survey is needed of the Sand Pit Field which could cost £300 to £400 and that a lot of planned wildlife planting hadn't been carried out this year due to COVID 19.

The Chairman confirmed that it was now looking likely that S106 funds could be used for the Speed Indicator device project, and as such some of the funding allocated for that could be moved across without the need to affect the intended precept.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Eastwood, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to increase the Wildlife Planting Budget from £500 to £1,000.

Action Point: The Clerk to make the necessary changes to reflect this increase in the Wildlife Planting budget.

The Chairman commented that Cllrs Morgan and Kendall had expressed some concern regarding the provision into reserves for specific projects. She explained to the committee that provisions cannot be set aside for general reserves without a specific project. The Clerk confirmed that this is correct and that the advice is that general reserves should not generally be more than 50% of the annual precept. The Chairman then confirmed that funding allocated to a specific reserve, can be moved to a different reserve, with the agreement of Council. She also pointed out that this is a forward plan document, rather than an absolute commitment. HPC will still make the final decision and any project will need to meet many requirements. Cllr Eastwood confirmed that any funding available will also be dependent on housing being built and CIL being paid. This will also be impacted by government housing targets. He suggested that there ought to be an application process with appropriate evidence to be supplied.

Cllr Donoghue suggested that a footnote is added to the document in order to clarify this.

Action Point: Cllr Eastwood to include a footnote reflecting that there will be caveats to provisions.

Cllr Jones asked whether there will be room to add new projects. The Chairman replied that organisations could apply for their projects to be included on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). Cllr Eastwood confirmed that the plan will be reviewed annually.

Cllr Donoghue requested that the budget is clarified to identify that the Parish Council pay the rent and insurance for the Museum, as this is not currently clear.

Action Point; The Clerk to clarify the wording in the budget to reflect that HPC pay the rent and insurance for the Museum

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Perry and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to accept the budget and recommend it to Full Council, subject to the amendments agreed above.

8. APPROVAL OF 2021/22 PRECEPT FOR SUBMISSION TO FULL COUNCIL

Following brief discussion it was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Donoghue and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve the precept of £264,056 for submission to Full Council.

Cllr Eastwood then asked the committee to consider putting forward a proposal to Full Council to agree in principle a contribution of £10,000 from general reserves to the Scout Building appeal, given that the BP Guild have been unable to carry out their usual fundraising activities. There would be various conditions to be met and evidence supplied. **This was all agreed.**

Action Point: The Clerk to include this proposal on the agenda for the next Full Council meeting.

9. AGREE DRAFT OF RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

The Chairman confirmed that existing personnel documents have been sent to the HR consultant for checking

She also suggested attaching a draft application form to the Recruitment document.

Cllr Jones explained that there were items highlighted in red in the Appendix of Procedures that she would like to discuss in order to finalise wording. There will also be a second appendix of forms used.

Following brief discussion

it was all agreed to always advertise externally the Clerk and Operations Manager positions, as well as internally and that any others would be at the discretion of the Personnel Committee.

It was all agreed not to include a Equality and Diversity monitoring form but to always send a copy of the relevant policy as suggested by the Chairman.

It was all agreed to include that there are no specifications for qualifications.

It was all agreed to leave the requirement for a possible healthcheck in case it is needed in future.

With reference to 6.1 she asked whether post interview arrangements should be left to the Clerk, or if the new employee is the Clerk then it should be the responsibility of the Chairman and Vice Chairman. **This was all agreed.**

Action Point: Cllr Jones to make the necessary amendments as stated above.

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr Jones, **SECONDED** by Cllr Donoghue and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to agree the Recruitment and Selection policy subject to the above amendments.

Action Point: The Clerk to circulate all of the policies to Councillors once finalised and checked by the HR consultant, and to include on the agenda for discussion at the February meeting of Full Council.

10. COUNCIL COMMITTEES – KEY ISSUES

Cllr Jones reported that Village Amenities are progressing with action points, that the cemetery extension is progressing well and progress is being made with the CCTV for the bus shelter and Speed Indicator Device devices. She also commented that planting in the cemetery extension may be delayed as the contractors had used some spoil to fill in areas that in fact was contaminated with bind weed. This will need to be dealt with before any planting takes place.

Cllr Stevens confirmed there was nothing to report from the Plans Advisory Committee.

Cllr Perry reported that the Youth Shelter issue is ongoing and will be considered further following a thorough consultation process in the new year, but some money may need to be put aside.

The Chairman reported that it is intended that a small working group to be formed to consider the Adur Restoration Project and recent biodiversity paper from Sam Buckland. This will be formed

under this committee in order to discuss whether to become more involved with the Adur Restoration Project and whether implementation of any of Sam Buckland recommendations are feasible.

Action Point: Cllr Perry to send Sam Buckland's report to Cllr Jones.

Action Point: Cllr Perry to send the Carbon Footprint document that was compiled four years ago to Sam Buckland.

Cllr Eastwood then reported on the COVID 19 situation in the village, in particular that Dr Crawford-Clarke at Henfield Medical Centre has still not received much information. He is working with her to put out a communication for the residents of the village in order to manage expectations and potentially request volunteers

Cllr Donoghue confirmed there was nothing to report from the Museum.

11. **HEALTH AND SAFETY AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY RISK REGISTERS – REVIEW OF ANY CURRENT ISSUES**

The Chairman confirmed that there were no current issues to discuss, but that the risk registers are due for review in February 2021.

12. **FINANCE**

a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts (October and November)

These and the internal controls are still outstanding. The Clerk asked if several members of the committee could attend the Parish Office to sign the necessary paperwork.

b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure) – ATS Machinery Ltd (£921.28) and Tracmaster Ltd (£16.00)

Please see above.

b) Progress Report 2020/21

The Clerk confirmed that the Council is on track for income and expenditure. Expenditure is at 61.8% of budget, two thirds of the way through the year. It is slightly reduced due to the halted payments to the Community Bus Service while it wasn't running due to Covid as well as reduced costs of running the public conveniences as they were closed during lockdown. Cemetery income is slightly irregular but is pretty much on target.

c) Bowls Club – S106 Request

An email request from the Bowls Club was circulated prior to the meeting, prompted by the recent Community Facilities Review. They are hoping to raise £30,000 to refurbish their kitchen and provide disabled toilets and would like their project to be include on the IDP. Cllr Eastwood confirmed it is a well used and busy club that attracts all ages. **It was all agreed** to recommend this to Full Council.

Action Point: The Clerk to include the Bowls Club request on the agenda for Full Council.

d) Switch £2,500 from Kingsfield Account

The Clerk confirmed that this transfer occurs every year to cover the costs of maintenance on the Kingsfield. It covers mowing, litter picking and dog waste removal. There is £9,439 in the Kingsfield Trust account. He also confirmed that this money can only be used for ongoing maintenance and not capital expenditure and that it is good practise to leave a substantial sum in the account in case of unexpected larger costs.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Eastwood and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to switch £2,500 from the Kingsfield account to the current account.

e) Consider Payments to the Henfield Church and the Henfield Club

The Clerk explained that it is usual to contribute £500 to St Peter's Church and £200 to the Henfield Club and that these sums are budgeted for. The contribution to the church is to help pay for the upkeep of the church cemetery and the contribution to the Henfield Club is to assist with the upkeep of the War Memorial.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED FOUR IN FAVOUR WITH ONE ABSTENTION** to make the usual payments as described above.

The Clerk and Operations Manager left the meeting at 8.27pm.

f) Staff Salaries

The committee agreed to retain the staff salaries 2% increase in the 2021/22 budget. To be discussed further in March 2020 in light of the potential capping of public sector pay rates.

13. **ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS TO BE RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**

There were no other urgent matters raised by Councillors.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** - Tuesday 19th January 2021.

Meeting Closed 8.32pm.