

HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL - FINANCE RISK & CHANGE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting of the **Finance Risk & Change Governance Committee** held on
Tuesday 15th November 2022 at 7:00pm in the Committee Room at The Henfield Hall.

Present: Cllrs E Goodyear (Chairman), G Perry, A Donoghue, N Farrell, J Jones and R Shaw.

In attendance: Mr K Wright (Clerk) and Mrs R Grantham (Operations Manager).

MINUTES

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None.

2. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Eastwood.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27th SEPTEMBER 2022

Approved, signed and dated by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

a) **Business Case Summary for Earmarked Reserves**

This has now been approved by Full Council and is now on the website.

b) **Update on the Economic Crisis Meeting Held on 2nd November.**

The Chairman and Cllr Perry attended, along with around fifty other local residents and interested parties. Cllr Perry has arranged a lead person for each potential project. The room hire charge for the meeting will be paid by the Parish Council as agreed previously, and there may be further requests for funds as projects progress. It was noted that donations of the winter fuel allowance cannot be administered easily by either the Parish Council, Henfield Community Partnership or the Haven, but that advice will be given to donate either one of the relevant organisations directly such as Horsham Matters, or to a national charity. Cllr Perry also confirmed that the Parish Council can assist with promotion of existing schemes, such as the warm spaces provided by all WSCC libraries.

c) **Agreed Pay Scales for 1st April 2022.**

These pay scales will be backdated to April 2022 as previously agreed, to be paid in November. The increase is a flat £1,925 per annum across all pay scales, pro rata for part time employees. A 3% increase was budgeted for, but this will exceed that.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

6. MOTION: TO APPROVE THE FUNDING OF A YOUTH CO ORDINATOR

The Chairman clarified that, if approved, funding would be used either to employ a Parish Council member of staff directly, or alternatively to contract a Youth Coordinator via Sussex Clubs for Young People. Although potentially more expensive, this would give the advantage of the Youth Coordinator already being fully trained, up to date with legislation and already working within a network of other local youth coordinators. Individual selection would still be by the Parish Council and the contractor would work to the Council. A draft job description was circulated to the Committee but this has not yet been finalised. The Chairman gave a quick overview of potential Children & Young People projects

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Farrell and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve funding of a Youth Coordinator.

7. **MOTION: TO APPROVE THE FUNDING OF UP TO £5K FOR THE EARLY RECRUITMENT OF A YOUTH CO ORDINATOR**

The Chairman explained that approving a spend of up to £5,000 from General Reserves would allow for a potential Youth Coordinator to be recruited potentially by March, rather than having to wait until the new financial year in April.

It was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Farrell and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to approve funding of up to £5,000 for the early recruitment of a youth coordinator.

8. **TO APPROVE THE DRAFT 2023/24 BUDGETS, PRECEPT, PROVISIONS & RESERVES FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE DECEMBER FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

A draft budget was circulated prior to the meeting, representing an 8.4% increase in precept. The Chairman explained that the proposed budget takes all provisions from general reserves, totalling £29,300. There has been a reduction in funding in other areas and a recommendation that no further funds are added where the earmarked reserves are at or nearly at their cap. The Clerk confirmed that funds can be switched between reserves if necessary but that it won't be possible to take this approach every year.

Cllr Donoghue asked that expenditure equals income for the museum budget and confirmed that the Friends of Henfield Museum would make a donation to account for any shortfall. She also commented that it ought to be highlighted that 25% of the Village Amenities budget is taken up with utility costs which is out of their control. It is not known yet what financial support may be available and it is difficult to predict how much energy prices will rise. The Village Amenities committee also intend to review their cemetery fees with the aim of making it cost neutral, which may result in increased income.

It was also noted that the Recreational Equipment and Skate Park budget has moved to the Children and Young People (CYP) committee. There is also a budget line for £10,000 for Sussex Clubs for Young People which represents consultancy fees, but this may be incorporated into the funding for a youth coordinator if contracted by them. The Clerk confirmed that the tax base information has not yet been received from Horsham District Council but that, based on last year's figure, the proposed increase would result in an increase of £8.60 per annum per band D property. It was all agreed that, given the recognised need to do more for young people in the village, and despite inflationary pressures with RPI currently at 12%, that this increase seemed reasonable and realistic. FRC agreed that the aim should be to keep any increase to the Precept within single figures.

Therefore it was **PROPOSED** by the Chairman, **SECONDED** by Cllr Jones and **VOTED ALL IN FAVOUR** to recommend provisional approval of this draft budget to Full Council in December.

Action Point: The Clerk to make the amendments mentioned above, along with putting headings at the top of each section rather than the bottom, and to circulate the new draft to all councillors ahead of the December meeting of Full Council.

9. **TO AGREE AMENDMENTS TO THE CAPS OF THE EARMARKED RESERVES**

The Chairman explained that the following amendments had been made to the caps on earmarked reserves. A draft was circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk reminded all that these can be changed any time.

- Increase cap for cemetery from £15,000 to £20,000
- Reduction for traffic control from £5,000 to £2,500
- Increase cap for Community Events from £2,000 to £5,000
- Increase cap for Community Buildings to £180,000
- Increase cap for Youth Reserves to £15,000
- Remove reserve for Neighbourhood Plan review
- Remove reserve for retirement payments.

It was all agreed by show of hands to agree the above amendments to the earmarked reserves.

10. **FINANCE**

- a) Confirmation of Reconciliation of Bank Accounts (September & October).
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.
- b) Internal Controls (To Include Audit Check of Expenditure) – September & October.
Each signed and dated by two Councillors.
- c) To Approve the Insurance Premium of £390.41 for the Council Van & Trailer.

The Clerk explained that last year's premium was £260. He has contacted the broker who confirmed that there has been a 20% increase across the board for this type of insurance, and that the premium had been affected by the recent claim.

It was all agreed by show of hands to approve the insurance premium of £390.41 for the Council van and trailer.

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

The Chairman confirmed that there will need to be a review of HPC Recruitment policy at the next meeting. She will check whether this applies to all of the HR policies.

She also commented that the Interim Internal Audit will take place on Friday 18 November 2022, and that the Council may be asked to consider a further £10,000 in funding for the Scout Community Building.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 20th December 2022.

Meeting Closed at 8.17pm.