

DUE TO THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY, HORSPATH PARISH COUNCIL CANCELLED THE OCTOBER MEETING AND HELD THE PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING REMOTELY.

HORSPATH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee Meeting held on 20th December 2021 at 7.30pm.

Present: Mr P Dobson, Mr J Dobson, Mr R Burgess, Mrs J Dobson, Mrs H Kogel

Apologies
Absent:

14/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE. – There were no apologies to be made.

15/21 MINUTES FOR APPROVAL.

Minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee Meeting held on 25th October 2021. The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

16/21 TO AGREE DRAFT PRECEPT PRIOR TO JANUARY 2022 HPC MEETING.

The Clerk circulated a draft Precept to all Councillors for discussion.

Mr Burgess stated that he met with a representative from OCC in November with regards to traffic calming at Oxford Road, and it was agreed that when the repairs to the bridge have been completed, traffic surveys will need to be carried out. Mr James Dobson suggested that £500.00 should be allocated to cover the cost of the surveys.

The Clerk informed Councillors that she has recently been made aware of the error that has been made in not paying holiday pay to the Clerk since being employed by HPC for the past 11 years. The Clerk has spoken with OALC, who have agreed that HPC can seek guidance free of charge from OALC's HR Specialist on the amount that is due. The Clerk will forward the information on to OALC. Mr James Dobson stated that this is a historical claim that needs to be put right this year, and use money allocated to the contingency fund to pay this. Mr Burgess stated that this amount is estimated to be around £6,000.00. Mr James Dobson stated that the holiday pay allowance should also be added to the Clerks salary for 2022/2023, which will equate to 13 months' salary being paid to the Clerk over 12 months.

Mr Peter Dobson reported that HPC has a case worker for land registry but there is no confirmation as to when this will be completed, so we have not received a final invoice. Mr Burgess reported that Knights Solicitors will include the £200-£300 bill for emergency legal advice on to the final land registry invoice, so recommended that Administration costs be increased to £5000.00.

Mr James Dobson stated that the introduction of M365 to HPC is an Agenda item for HPC in January 2022. Mr Burgess stated that he would like to avoid M365 if possible as it is not compatible with his computer. Mr Peter Dobson stated that we need to look into M365 and how we share information, but suggested that it is the way to go. Mr Peter Dobson stated that HPC needs to look at financial risks, and having M365 will help.

Mr Peter Dobson stated that the cost of grass cutting the Recreation Ground is £2184. This is one of the contracts that we will be looking at as he is not sure exactly what areas are included, so the cost may increase or decrease. Mr Burgess has a map of the areas that Rob Gray covers, so he will forward a copy to Mr Peter Dobson. Mr James Dobson asked about the mower costs, and asked if when HPC are re-tendering for grass cutting contracts, does HPC want to provide the equipment or go for an all in cost? Mr James Dobson asked if the cost of the mower has depreciated? The Clerk will check with the insurance.

Mr Peter Dobson asked about the cost of emptying the dog hygiene bins. It was agreed that the cost will be left at £2200.00 in line with the current suppliers cost, but the Clerk will obtain more information from an alternative company who has recently contacted HPC.

Mr Peter Dobson stated that the sum allocated for the maintenance of the bus shelter needs to be reviewed to confirm what maintenance is being carried out. Mr James Dobson asked if this is classed as a sub-contractor or an employee position.

Mr James Dobson stated that £6000.00 has been allocated to the contingency fund, which would be sufficient if any of the contracts increased in cost. Mr James Dobson stated that he is concerned if we add another £3000.00 to this amount which will increase the contingency fund to £9000.00 to cover the part of the cost of the historical claim submitted by the Clerk. Mr James Dobson stated that HPC could take a risk management approach and draw back funds from other areas.

Mr Peter Dobson stated that money allocated to the beautification of the village committee for next year should be covered by a grant from HSPC. The Clerk reported that in the current financial year there is £1,000 allocated to the Conservation Area and £2,000 to the Beautification of the village that are both unspent. Mr James Dobson stated that he comfortable with the Contingency Fund being set at £6000 which will include £3000 towards the holiday pay entitlement. Mr James Dobson agreed that the money allocated to Beautification should be covered by HSPC.

Mr Burgess asked if SODC will question the increase in the Precept. The Clerk stated that the Precept has never been questioned before when there has been an increase.

Mr Peter Dobson stated that the hedges around the recreation ground will need to be cut next year as it affects the visibility on Oxford Road.

Mr James Dobson stated that there will be a cost for professional support, as HPC needs someone with the expertise to help set up all of the contracts. Mr Burgess asked if staff training costs could be covered by HSPC. Mr Peter Dobson stated that it would depend on what the training was for. Mr Peter Dobson stated that the cost of M365 could be shared between HSPC and HPC. Mr James Dobson stated that there is a need for clear separation of the two organisation, but HPC Councillors are also Trustees for HSPC so agreed that this could be a shared cost, but HPC will need to cover the cost for training and professional costs.

Mr Burgess suggested that the Precept be set at £42,500.00. Mr Peter Dobson suggested that in the next financial year, there should be a monthly review of finances.

Mrs Dobson stated that she would support moving more projects to HSPC.

Mr Peter Dobson proposed that the Precept is set at £45,000.00, Seconded by Mrs Dobson, In Favour – Unanimous.

17. AOB. – None.

Signed.....

Date.....