

Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held at 7pm on Monday, 25th June 2018 in the Committee Room

Present:

Cllr. Terry O’Neill – Chairman Cllr. Stuart Hulse – Vice-Chairman Cllr. Chris Ellams
 Cllr. George Randles

1. Election of Chairman. It was proposed by Cllr. Ellams, seconded by Cllr. Randles and **RESOLVED – that Cllr. Terry O’Neill be elected as Chairman of the Finance Committee – F19/18.**
2. Election of Vice-Chairman. It was proposed by Cllr. O’Neill, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED – that Cllr. Stuart Hulse be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee – F20/18.**
3. Public Air Time. Proposed by Cllr. Ellams, seconded by Cllr. Hulse and **RESOLVED – that the meeting be suspended for public participation – F21/18.** There being no matters brought to the committee’s attention it was proposed by Cllr. Hulse, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED – that Public Air Time be closed and the meeting reconvened – F22/18.**
4. Apologies for absence. Received and accepted from Cllrs. Duffy, Gardner and Temple. Cllr. Gardner had asked Cllr. Randles to substitute for him in his absence.
5. Declarations of interest – none reported.
6. Minutes of the previous meeting. Proposed by Cllr. Hulse, seconded by Cllr. Randles and **RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 3rd April 2018 be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – F23/18.**
7. Matters arising from the previous meeting – none reported.
8. Review of grants / earmarked reserves c/f from 2017/18 and also provided for, received and spent in the current fiscal year. The committee discussed the following: -

| Particulars | Balance 01/04/18 £ | Provided 2018-19 £ | Planned usage 2018-19 | Expected balance 31.03.19 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Specified earmarked reserves | | | | |
| Community Sports Club support grant | 80,000 | 8,000 | 0 | 88,000 |
| Future burial provision | 18,000 | 925 | 0 | 18,925 ^(c) |
| CWaC – new homes bonus c/f 2015/16 | 11,132 | 0 | 8,000 ^(a) | 3,132 ^(b) |
| Bud Head 226R – soft safety surface | 0 | 8,000 | 0 | 8,000 |

(a) The Parish council agreed to take £8,000 out of the New Homes Bonus Reserve and to place said amount into a new specified reserve Budget Heading 226R entitled ‘Soft Safety Surface’ to start building up its reserves to replace the whole of the safety surface in the Children’s Play Area – duly noted.

- (b) The Environment Committee was investigating funding to pay for the removal of 3x conical planters and purchase of 2x metre squared planters (cost in the region of £1,000 plus delivery and installation) for the Honeywell land opposite Land of Beds. It has been suggested that, if funding was not forthcoming, the project could be paid for out of the New Homes Bonus Reserve – duly noted.
- (c) Cllr. Randles gave an update on the land search. He had contacted local landowner who could be willing to sell for the right price. The Parks Committee were open to suggestions and were now considering land purchase for allotment use so that the existing cemetery allotments could be transferred locally and the old allotment area could be used for the purpose it was purchased for in 1902 which was burial ground. It all sounded very straightforward but, in planning terms, the existing allotments in the village were untouchable due to them being designated in the Local Plan Part II. The Clerk estimated that the existing burial ground had 25-30 years usage. The committee was mindful that land prices could escalate and therefore it could be justified to build up a reserve so that, when the time came, successive council could be in a position to buy land. Cllr. O'Neill was concerned that this 'pot' of money would just build up with no identified plan for its use.

9. Review of Investment Programme

Very few financial institutions were offering 'interest bearing' accounts for multiple signature incorporated bodies. However, the Parish Council was mindful that its funds must be protected and placed in low-risk accounts therefore, the funds were split amongst the following accounts – duly noted:

- a) Co-Operative Bank – Business Select Account - £75,846.57 as at 11th Jan 2018
- b) Monmouthshire Building Society Corporate Bonus 90 (interest calculated on 31st March) £76,096.06 as at 31st March 2018.
- c) Nat West Business Reserve £95,974.66
- d) Rights under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme - £85,000 per banking group.

10. Annual Audit – Internal Auditors recommendations Year ending 31st March 2018: -

- a) The Audit Report had 3 recommendations as follows:
 - (i) ISSUE - The Financial Regulations FR state that for contracts over £1,000 tenders are invited from at least three contractors or supplied. They could not find evidence that the following contracts were procured as per FR – LITE £1868+VAT & Tele-Traffic UK £5999+VAT. RECOMMENDATION – *Contracts should be awarded as per the FRs. When the RFO is unable to obtain three tenders, it is good practice to record within the Council minutes to aid transparency. Council should ensure when they periodically review the FR that procurement levels remain appropriate.*

The Internal Auditor advised that most councils *de-minimus* was at least £3,000. Much discussion ensued that it was difficult (for small jobs) to get companies to put in formal bids for small amounts and this limited the market and effectively precluded small local firms that weren't equipped to do formal bidding. Being mindful of the aforementioned it was proposed by Cllr. Hulse, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be RECOMMENDED 1) to increase *de-minimus* from £1,000 to £5,000; 2) to amend Item 11.1 (b), (c) and (g) of the existing Financial Regulations to reflect the changes to £5,000 – F24/18.**

(ii) ISSUE – The Council now make most of their payments via online banking. We note that the bank payment schedule attached to the invoices does not show details of the account number and sort code that the payment has been made to. It only shows the account name which is not used by the bank to allocate payments. From a sample of payments, we found no receipt for a grant payment of £1,000 to ‘Ho Ho Helsby’. RECOMMENDATION – *Documentation should be obtained from online banking showing the payment details and this should be attached to the invoices. Receipts should be obtained for all grants and donations. This is particularly important when payments have been made via internet banking. **The Parish Council was compliant with the recommendation – duly noted.***

(iii) GUIDANCE NOTE 2018 – Data Protection Law will change significantly on May 25th 2018 due to the 2016 EU Directive General Data Protections Regulation (GDPR) taking effect. GDPR replaces the 1998 Data Protection Act and it will impose new obligations on Data Controllers and Data Processors and provides enhanced rights for individuals. Compliance with GDPR could have resource implications for local councils. RECOMMENDATION – *The impact of GDPR on the council should be identified through review of ICO and NALC guidance and the Data Protection policy, risk assessment and internal controls should be updated accordingly. **The Parish Council was compliant with the recommendation – duly noted.***

b) External Audit – the Clerk had sent in the Annual Audit to BHIB. Confirmation of the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights alongside Sections 1 & 2 of Part 3 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18 were being displayed on www.helsbyorg.co.uk and Library Notice Board in accordance with the external auditor’s instructions – duly noted.

11. Budget Analysis as at 25th June 2018. Cllr. Ellams reiterated the importance of maintaining the many defibrillators throughout the village to ensure they were effective when required. The Clerk had completed an application applying for £2,000 funding from the Marshes Community Benefit Fund to be put towards the purchase of 2 x defibs plus associated work for them to be installed into the 2x decommissioned phone boxes that the Parish Council now owned.

Proposed by Cllr. Hulse, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be RECOMMENDED – to accept the Budget analysis dated 25th June 2018 as now attached to these minuted – F25/18.**

12. Financial Statement – not available. The Clerk apologised that the statement was not prepared. She simply ran out of time.

13. The National Joint Council for Local Government Services had reached agreement on the following: -

- New pay scales for 2018-2019 to be implemented from 1 April 2018
- New pay scales for 2019-2020 to be implemented from 1 April 2019 (further information on these will be issued by NALC later this year)

Parish Clerk

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| LC2 Scale Point 29 – 25 hours | £17,885.13 | 1 April 2018 |
| Burial Clerk £981.96 | <u>£981.96</u> | |
| | £18,867.09 | |

Proposed by Cllr. Hulse, seconded by Cllr. Ellams and **RESOLVED – that the Parish Council be RECOMMENDED 1) to increase the Parish Clerk’s salary in line with the agreement between the National Joint Council for Local Government Services and that the salary increase be backdated to 1st April 2018: 2) that the payment for Burial Clerk remain the same at £981.96 per annum – F26/18.**

- 14. 5-Year Capital Plan – Cllr. O’Neill would update the Plan based on last year’s outturns – duly noted.
- 15. Urgent matters – none reported.
- 16. Date of the next meeting – 24th September 2018

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

Chairman’s signature..... Dated.....

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