



Helsby Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held virtually at 7.40pm on Monday 28th September 2020 via Zoom

Present:

Cllr. Terry O'Neill – Chairman
Cllr. Sarah Temple – Vice Chairman
Cllr. Mags Porter
Cllr. George Randles
Cllr. Peter Duffy

Also present:

Claire Jones Parish Clerk

1. Public Air Time. Proposed by Cllr. Randles, seconded by Cllr. Duffy and **RESOLVED – that the meeting be suspended for public participation – F13/20**. There being no matters brought to the committee's attention it was proposed by Cllr. Duffy, seconded by Cllr. Porter and **RESOLVED – that Public Air Time be closed and the meeting reconvened – F14/20**.
2. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr. Alan Gardner.
3. Declarations of interest. None were received/reported.
4. Minutes of the previous meeting. Proposed by Cllr. Randles, seconded by Cllr. Temple and **RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 29th June 2020 be accepted as accurate and duly signed by the Chairman – F15/20**.
5. Matters arising from the previous meeting. The clerk confirmed that the £10,000 COVID cheque had been received by Helsby Community Association (HCA). She outlined that some contractual work had been organised by CW&C at Helsby Community Centre (including asbestos removal and fire door installation) without the knowledge of the Parish Council or HCA. It was reported that representatives of the HCA had made a complaint to the Parish Council about this lack of communication and the clerk was currently in discussions with the Library Service at CW&C to find out more about the work. The clerk outlined that she had made a request to meet with CW&C to discuss any planned future maintenance work at the centre so the Council could better prepare for any ongoing expenditure. The clerk also agreed to send Committee members a copy of the lease agreement between HPC and CW&C in relation to the building to see if CW&C was in breach of the lease.
6. It was proposed by Cllr. Duffy, seconded by Cllr. Randles and **RESOLVED to approve the monthly bank reconciliations from April 2020 to August 2020 – F16/20**. The Chair agreed to sign them at the earliest opportunity. The clerk was asked to check the standing

orders/financial regulations to see if the Finance Committee were required to approve these documents in addition to the Full Council.

7. Review of grants and earmarked reserves c/f from 2019/20 and also provided for, received and spent in the current fiscal year. It was noted that future burial provision at 31/3/20 had been incorrectly recorded as £21,768 in the 2019/20 final year accounts. The figure should have been £22,491. The clerk presented an adjusted table (as below) to include the shortfall in the 'Provided 2020-21' column. It was also reported that the grants provided in 2020/21 would be added to the table in due course to show the two £10,000 COVID-19 grants received from CW&C and potentially the S106 path project retention fee if received from CW&C for £738.

Particulars	Balance 31.03.20 £	Provided 2020-21 £	Planned Usage 2020-21 £	Expected Balance 31.03.21 £
Specified Earmarked Reserves				
Future burial provision (260R)	21,768	2,903	0	24,671
Soft Safety Surface (226R)	8,000	8,000	0	16,000
Total	£29,768	£10,903	£0	£40,671

8. The clerk presented a review of the Council's investment programme which was noted as follows:
- Co-Operative Bank – Business Select Account - £76,383.87 as at 22nd September 2020;
 - Monmouthshire Building Society – Corporate Bonus 90 (Annual) £77,238.09 as at 22nd September 2020; and
 - Nat West Business Reserve £25,221.62 as at 22nd September 2020.

It was also noted that the clerk was now a signatory for the Monmouthshire and Co-op accounts and the Council's rights under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme remained at £85,000 per banking group. It was agreed that the clerk would progress an online banking application with the Co-op.

9. It was noted that the deadline for the completion of external audits had been set at 30 November, rather than 30 September as in previous years. The clerk had made contact with auditor, PKF Littlejohn, who had confirmed that the Council's paperwork was currently with their reviewing team.
10. It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. Duffy and **RESOLVED to sign the engagement letter from JDH Business Services Limited – F17/20**. It was requested by Cllr. Temple that the clerk asks for the costs of next year's audit for consideration before returning the letter and to confirm the fees each year.
11. The clerk presented the latest budget analysis as at 28th September 2020. Cllr. Temple suggested moving the subscription for Zoom from Budget Code 243 (Admin subscriptions) to Budget Code 239 (Hire charges for meetings). The clerk agreed to amend a typo in the

table headings. It was noted that the electricity charges for the community centre have all been based on estimated readings this year and it was felt important for the clerk to obtain actual meter readings so accurate payments could be made.

12. It was noted that the draft lease agreement for the new office at Helsby Community Sports Club was currently with the Council's solicitors for comment. The Parish Council had also sent some comments back separately to the club for their consideration.
13. It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. O'Neill and **RESOLVED for the clerk to write to RSK in relation to resuming rent payments, following a deferral of payments for the six months from April to September – F18/20.**
14. The clerk raised a few queries in relation to the Council's Financial Risk Assessment and suggested that some changes might be made to the document. It was agreed that she would circulate some proposed tracked changes for consideration and approval by the next meeting. It was agreed that the clerk would take some advice for ChALC in relation to recording expenditure powers in the minutes.
15. It was proposed by Cllr. Duffy, seconded by Cllr. Temple and **RESOLVED to approve the Council's Financial Regulations with the following amendments - Clause 11.1(g) the lower limit for requiring three quotes for any contracts to be increased from £250 to £500 and a correction to the final sentence in Clause 7.2 – should be paragraph 5.2 and not 6.2 – F19/20.**
16. The clerk presented a draft fixed asset policy for the Council as well as an amended 'working' version of the Council's asset register. It was proposed by Cllr. Temple, seconded by Cllr. O'Neill and **RESOLVED to adopt the fixed asset policy – F20/20.** The clerk outlined that further work was required to the asset register and proposed a number of site visits to check assets 'on the ground' against written records. Cllr. Temple suggested adding a further column to the register to outline any expenditure which would increase the life of the asset in line with the wording in the policy document (e.g. recent repairs to the cableway). It was also agreed that the register would be included on the next agenda for the Park, Cemetery and Allotments Committee for discussion.
17. A review of S106 monies available was circulated. Cllr. Temple asked the clerk to check the availability of funds from the Cable Drive development (planning ref: 12/05370/FUL) with S106 Officer, Daniel Lockwood, at CW&C.
18. 5-Year Capital Plan. Cllr. Temple agreed to send some suggested amendments to Cllr. O'Neill including: reflecting any new contracts in the budget (i.e. increase cemetery maintenance to reflect we now have a contract), increase training and admin subs. Comments on short-medium term action plan – under 'improve communication' decision not to pursue a HPC Facebook page – perhaps needs to be reworded to say social media policy being drafted. Training review – reword to 'annually' rather than 'completed'.
19. It was proposed by Cllr. Randles, seconded by Cllr. Porter and **RESOLVED to approve the continuation of the following direct debits and standing orders – F21/20:**

Standing Orders			
Arndale Transport Ltd	Office rent	£320.00	monthly
Direct Debits			
NEST	Clerk pension - HPC contribution 3%	£47.77	monthly
ICO	Data protection fee	£35.00	yearly
Water Plus	Community centre water	£30.48	monthly
Scottish Power	Community centre electricity	£166.00	monthly
Siemens	Photocopier (rental)	£147.81	quarterly
	Photocopier (service fee)	£60.00	yearly

Following a request by the clerk, it was proposed by Cllr. Randles, seconded by Cllr. Porter and **RESOLVED to approve a new direct debit payment to British Telecom PLC for the Council's telephone bill - F22/20.**

20. Urgent matters – Cllr. O'Neill encouraged Councillors to attend ChALC's virtual meeting with the Leader and the Chief Executive of CW&C on 5th October. Cllr. Duffy outlined that Cllr. Bowers was looking to host a meeting between HPC and CW&C's Bridge Manager to discuss the closure of Old Chester Road. Cllr. Duffy encouraged Councillors to attend once a date had been set.

21. Date of the next meeting – 9th December 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Chairman's signature Dated