

## HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the meeting of the **Finance Committee** held at **6.30 pm** on  
**Wednesday 10 March 2021**

The meeting was held via Zoom video link in accordance with the Coronavirus Act 2020

**Present:** Mr Bonner (Chairman), Mrs Bramley, Mrs Gaterell, Mr Johnson Hill, Mr Miller, Mr Palmer and Mr Shaxson.

In attendance: Trish Walker, Parish Clerk

**1. Apologies for Absence:** None.

**2. Declarations of Interest:** None.

**3. Minutes from Meeting held on 4 November 2020:** The minutes were agreed by the members and will be signed in due course.

### **4. Budget Monitoring 2020/21**

The anticipated spend for the year ending 31 March 2021 was considered against the budget. The chair confirmed that it had been an unusual year due to the Covid-19 restrictions which had culminated in a potential underspend of about £15,000.

The members agreed that no adjustments were required to the budget headings.

*The following proposals were agreed:*

- i. *To report to the Council that the budget had been reviewed for the financial year ending 31 March 2021 and no budget adjustments are necessary*
- ii. *To recommend to that the Council considers projects for the estimated underspend of £15,000.*

### **5. Asset Register**

The Asset Register is agreed on an annual basis to satisfy the purposes of the annual audit as well as ensuring the Council has sufficient insurance cover. The members considered the register and agreed that a full audit of the assets should be undertaken. This audit will consider:

- identify the location and state of each asset and detail any necessary maintenance
- the valuation of the asset for insurance purposes
- review the Governance of the trustee led assets and assess if the Council can help to promote or improve facilities

It was noted that the War Memorial, situated in the church grounds, would normally be listed as a parish council responsibility. However, the church had taken responsibility for this. The clerk will ask for written confirmation from the church.

*The following proposals were agreed:*

- i. *that the Committee recommend that an Asset Review Working Group should be established to carry out a review of all the Council's assets, to feed into insurance renewal in June 2021.*
- ii. *that the Committee recommend that Mr Bonner, Mrs Gaterell, Mr Palmer and the clerk will form the membership of the Asset Review Working Group .*

## **6. Internal Control Review**

The members reviewed the Internal Control for the year ending 31 March 2021 and agreed to recommend the document to the Council.

*The following proposal was agreed:*

*that the committee agree to confirm to the Council that the Finance Committee have reviewed the Internal Control Review*

## **7. Online banking**

Mr Miller had carried out some research for options for both online banking and a deposit account, and the paper was presented to the committee.

It was agreed that online banking would be beneficial, and the restrictions of the pandemic had highlighted the difficulties of a cheque only system.

There was some discussion about various other banking options that were available and used by other councils. However, the members agreed that the current bank account held with HSBC should be extended to include online banking and an associated deposit account.

It was noted that the HSBC will not allow for the two signatory authorisation currently favoured with the cheque system. The online banking would allow the clerk to set up payments, and then once agreed by the Council meeting, they would be authorised by a nominated signatory logging on to authorise the payments. A robust system will need to be put in place to ensure a second signatory is able to confirm that the payments are correctly set up before they are finalised.

*The following proposals were agreed:*

- i. *That the Council agree to online banking being set up on the HSBC current account providing the necessary process can be put in place to satisfy the Financial Regulations*
- ii. *That the Council agree that Mr A Shaxson will be authorised as the Primary user for the purposes of setting up the online banking.*
- iii. *That the Responsible Finance Officer will be authorised as the Secondary user for the online banking.*
- iv. *That subject to (i) above the Council agree to open a Business Money Manager deposit account*
- v. *that the operation of these accounts would be reviewed after 6 months by the Finance Committee, and appropriate changes made in light of the experience prevailing competitive opportunities to earn a higher rate of deposit interest.*

#### **8. Grant request – Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air ambulance**

A request for a grant of up to £500 had been received from the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air ambulance. This would be used to help fund 2 new Oxylog 3000+ ventilators for the rapid response vehicles which attend to the missions that cannot be attended by the helicopters, in 2020 this was about 34% of the calls.

The members noted that other requests in recent years had been awarded a grant of £100, and given there are likely to be further requests from charities, it felt this would be a fair standard amount.

*The following proposal was agreed:*

*That the committee recommend the Council should award the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air ambulance a grant of £100*

#### **9. New Parish Council laptop**

The current council laptop was purchased at the end of 2015. In recent years it has had two new batteries, but despite this there is no stored power and the laptop can only be used whilst connected to the mains. The audio no longer functions which means an alternative laptop has been used for all virtual meetings. One of the USB ports is also not working.

The members agreed that, to ensure the Council work can be carried out effectively, that a new laptop should be purchased through the Council's IT suppliers, JnR Computers who will be able to arrange a discount. They will also set up the laptop. Initial enquiries show the cost to be in the region of £600.

*The following proposal was agreed:*

*That the committee recommend the Council agree to purchase a new Council laptop via JnR Computers for a sum in the region of £600.*

#### **10. Date of next meeting**

To be agreed in early June 2021

The meeting closed at 7.20pm