

Harrietsham Parish Council
Finance and General Purposes Committee
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 13th January 2022 at 7:30pm

The meeting was held using Zoom. As a consequence, councillors could discuss items, and make recommendations to Council, but are unable to make decisions.

1. **Present:** Cllrs Dean (chairman), Foster, Roots, T Sams, Stanley, and M Cuerden (RFO/Amenity Manager)
Apologies: None Members of the public: None
 2. **Disclosures:** None
 3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (11th November 2021) were approved at the subsequent Council meeting. A further copy will be signed by the Chairman in due course for F&GP records.
 4. **Review of Accounts.** The RFO had previously circulated the latest spreadsheets showing income, expenditure and the bank reconciliation. He summarised the current position and then answered questions as they arose. It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that the spreadsheets be approved by Council. It was also agreed that the Chairman would check the bank statements against the bank reconciliation at some point before the next Council meeting.
 5. **Budget for 2022/23:** The RFO had previously circulated a draft budget for consideration. He now went through the options and reasoning behind the proposal, including explaining MBC's letter concerning the impact of retaining the Band D precept or retaining the same precept request. He noted that whilst it was true that we had significant reserves in the bank, it was also true that we are talking about some quite "high-ticket" items that might be done in the parish – such as play areas etc. It was therefore agreed to **Recommend to Council** that the precept be held at the current level of £95.47 per Band D property – so no change; a 0% increase.
 6. **Open Spaces contracts:** The RFO / Amenity Manager had gone out to tender for the new contracts due to start in April 2022. In response to adverts placed in the KM and on our own website, we had a total of 5 responses, a summary of which had been circulated before the meeting. He explained that one contractor had offered the lowest price on 3 contracts and almost the lowest price, (missing out by £9), on a 4th. However, this contractor was new to the council, and both the Clerk and he felt uncomfortable giving so much work to an un-known supplier. (References for them had been requested but were not, as yet, forthcoming.) He had therefore proposed that the work be split as follows;
 - let A have the Medical Centre & Church Road plus Woodlands Walk (cheapest),
 - let B have the A20 verges and the benches - both on grounds of being substantially cheaper,
 - let D have the New Burial Ground & G of R (cheapest) and the Glebe Field (at +£3k over the cheapest)
 - let E do the war memorial (cheapest) and Saxon Place (at +£1.5k over the cheapest)
- Unfortunately, on this basis, C doesn't get anything at all. All this will also go to Environmental next week, prior to a recommendation to council, but F&GP were generally in agreement with this approach..
8. **Date of next meeting** –Thursday 21st April 2022 at 7:30pm.

Meeting closed at 8pm.