

Harrietsham Parish Council
Finance and General Purposes Committee
Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 8th September 2015 at 4pm

1. **Present:** Cllrs Trussler (chairman), Allwood, Dean, Kay and M Cuerden (RFO)

Apologies: None

Members of the public: None

2. **Disclosures:** None

3. **Minutes of the last meeting** (9th July 2015) were approved at July's council meeting without amendment, and a copy signed by the chairman for F&GP records.

4. **Review of Accounts year-to-date.**

The RFO circulated a copy of the income, expenditure and bank reconciliation spreadsheets to the current date – so as far into the year as possible. These were reviewed, and several questions asked. Cllr Trussler asked that a new column be created on both income and expenditure to allow separation of the Remix grant money. The RFO confirmed that this would be possible, although it might make the spreadsheets a little cramped for subsequent perusal. Nevertheless, he would see what he could do. Cllr Dean enquired if it would be possible to save any money by combining the BT line rental and the AOL (now TalkTalk) broadband costs. The RFO explained that this had been considered before, but he was happy to have another look at it.

It was agreed that so far, all seems to be progressing satisfactorily. The chairman then confirmed that the totals on the bank statements tallied with the totals used in the bank reconciliation.

5. **Village Hall Trust, and invoices**

Cllr Trussler reported back on the meeting held recently with the Trust to look at the invoices received from them. During the discussions, tentative agreement had been reached on most of them, subject to approval on both sides. The main area not addressed were those invoices relating to the Film Club and Remix activities, for which feedback from the responsible councillors, Tom and Janetta Sams, was awaited. This has now been received, and indicates that there are several items therein that we have been unable to reconcile. The RFO undertook to feed these back to the Trust, with a request that the invoices be re-evaluated. As a result of the meeting, the basis of an agreement appears to be that :

The invoices for office rent, playscheme, the Big Gig, and the Big Lunch all seemed acceptable to us
Invoices for the Friday Coffee Morning would be reassessed in accordance with the rate previously in force
Invoices relating to hall hire for council meetings should have been covered in the office rent and not raised at all
The Ground Rent, Remix and Film Club are still under consideration.

It was agreed to **Recommend to Council** ::

* That the Council consider the VHT invoices, once confirmation of the Trust's position is received, with a view to paying the following historical invoices:

Office rent	Friday Coffee Morning	Playscheme
Big Lunch	Big Gig	

* That F&GP and the Youth Provision Committee be given delegated authority to settle final terms with the VHT with regard to:

Remix	Film Club	Ground Rent
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together with any of the others above not approved.

* That the Council acknowledges the impact if the VHT wish to charge increased fees for the Coffee Morning, and to charge hall hire fees for Parish Council meetings, both from September onwards.

It was also agreed that any shortfall in funding would be made up from reserves. Proposed Cllr Allwood, seconded Cllr Kay, all in favour.

6. Level of Reserves

Our internal auditor had suggested that, in line with CIPFA recommendations, an appropriate level of reserves would be between £22,000 and £44,000 in the General Fund. (This is based on 25% - 50% of a rolling 3-year average of the revenue expenditure.) This range was discussed, and it was agreed that the council should aim for a minimum reserve at the end of the year of £33,000. Proposed Cllr Kay, seconded Cllr Dean, all in favour.

7. Reassessment of Budgets

The current budgets were discussed, and the known items of income and expenditure for the rest of the year considered. Attention focussed on Open Spaces, as this represents the largest single amount of unallocated budget, and it was agreed that this should be looked at closely to see if a reduction can be achieved to help address the anticipated overspend.

It was also agreed that the allowance put in for the VHT invoices should reflect the full amount requested by them, not the hoped for settlement.

As part of the budget discussions, Cllr Trussler gave a brief summary of the meeting recently held with the Len Valley Practice. This had centred primarily on the future expansion of the medical centre to cater for the growing demand from the village. It seemed that although there were plans afoot to use S106 funds to pay for the centre's extension, it seemed likely that there would be a shortfall of about £50K, which the council may need to fund; a call upon our resources which may arise within the next two-three years. This led to a brief discussion on assets held, and it was agreed to **Recommend to Council** that a valuation be obtained for Tears Meadow. This is being done with a view to possibly selling the field, and may incur a small cost. Proposed Cllr Allwood, seconded Cllr Trussler, all in favour

Next Meeting: The date of the next meeting is Thursday 12th November 2015 at 7:30pm, Parish Office.

Meeting closed at 5:45pm