

Hurworth Parish Council
Finance Working Party Meeting
held at Hurworth Grange
at 7:00 pm on 19th May 2016

Those present- Margaret Williams, Wilma Campbell, Elaine Hedley, Paul Walters, David Wood, Simon Coultas, Richard Lawley, Jean Peacock, Graham Wylie.

Also present: Peter Allan, Parish Clerk

1. Apologies for absence: - Carol Paylor, Janine Forster

2. Declarations of Interest:

Declarations will be made by councillors in the event of a particular subject arising where they may have a personal interest.

3. Chairman's Address

The Chairman welcomed the council members and informed them that is the council's practice to have two meetings each year, the second will be in November to calculate the Precept for next year.

The Chair was pleased to announce that DBC appear to have re-instated the Parish Council grant and hence we have received an extra £3500.

4. Minutes of the Finance Meeting dated 24th November 2015.

The Minutes were formally adopted, proposed by Wilma Campbell, and Seconded by Jean Peacock.

5. Presentation by the Parish Clerk

a. A short history of Hurworth Grange and the other assets owned by HPC, specifically emphasising the council's responsibilities, and the structure incorporating Hurworth Community Association. This included land owned by HPC and areas which HPC has undertaken a duty of care.

b. The Clerk showed a table showing the current financial status of the council, which included earmarked funds and the 'termination' reserve. Simon Coultas commented on the termination amount, expressing the view that this could be lower and still remain in the NALC guidelines. He exemplified this as follows:-

HPC's current liquidity levels. referenced that HPC as at 31 March 2016 has a "basic" liquidity ratio (funds in hand as at 31/3/16 ÷ total disbursements 2015/16 as shown in the table below), of 1.44.

High level liquidity ratio:	
	£
Funds in hand at 31/3/16	66,249
Expenditure 2015/16	45,888
Ratio	1.44

Simon explained to the councillors how he had arrived at this number. and also explained that with a ratio of 1.44, if for example HPC was to cease, it could discharge a full years operating expenses and still have residual funds in hand of £20,361.

At this point he said that in his opinion, the cash funds were too high. It was then decided that should additional funds be required then this could be reviewed.

Simon also brought up again the point he made in the first HPC meeting that the carried forward funds in hand balance of £66,249 as at 31/3/16 did not reconcile to the brought forward balance of £66,279 as at 01/04/16. the clerk offered the explanation for this discrepancy. The Management Report, which is prepared in advance of each Council Meeting Included an amount of £30 in August 2015 and £10 in September 2015, total £40 whereas the amount banked was £70, which included an allotment refundable bond of £30 which was recorded after the Management Report was circulated. The cash book was of course correct and the correct balance was carried forward. Simon then asked if the correction had been actioned so the balances agree. The clerk answered this saying yes it had and that the balances now agree.

Simon also asked about uninsured risk and to what extent HPC is exposed. he also asked about when the last full risk assessment from a financial perspective had been carried out, regarding reserves held. He challenged why the accounts issued state a need for "Statuary recommended **Minimum** cash in hand is 6 months of essential operating expenses". He then stated that he had read the local government Finance Act 1992 and could find no reference to this 6 month minimum. he asked where this came from. The clerk explained that this followed the NALC guidelines and that whereas the specific period is not specified, HPC took a decision to use six months expense budget as the calculated reserve.

c. The Clerk then talked the meeting through the Calendarised Budget for 2016-17, and answered questions relating thereto. The budgets for 2017-18 and 2018-19

were presented, showing that there is an adequate surplus at 31st March 2019. However, these budgets are dependent upon what Projects are undertaken, and what grants can be obtained to finance the projects.

d. The Business Plan had already been circulated to all councillors, as had the 2015-16 Action Plan. The 2016-17 Action Plan will need to be developed as soon as the new council has decided upon its objectives.

‘Sustainability’ was discussed with some examples of the way in which the past councils have approached this. Examples discussed included Hurworth Community Association, Hurworth Village Hall and EPICH.

6. Projects for the years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20

The council reviewed the Project Schedule from the last Finance Meeting, and updated the schedule with the status and their re-evaluation. The updated schedule is attached herewith.

The new Working Party (yet to be named) who will be addressing building development issues was discussed, and it agreed to define the objectives, decide what funding is required over the next three years for the budget, and to draft some Procedures. It was agreed, in principle, that the Working Party would include the Banks development (if it goes ahead), latest Calvert scrapyard situation at Burma Road, the ongoing Gypsy planning applications, and the Croft House development.

Elaine Hedley proposed a new project which addresses the research into the needs and opportunities for the younger residents, and to explore possible events and facilities to broaden the facilities for the youth in the village. All agreed to add this project to the schedule. Davis Wood recommended that Carol Paylor joins Elaine with this project, all agreed.

7. Annual Assembly

The meeting discussed the final arrangements for the Annual Assembly which will be held on 27th May in the Fletcher Hall. The agenda and format of the meeting was

finalised. The refreshments were discussed and the Clerk will make the arrangements, the ladies agreed to organise the buffet etc on the evening of the event.

The Chair closed the meeting at 9:30pm

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