

Hurworth Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council Finance Committee held at Hurworth Grange, Hurworth –on-Tees, on Wednesday, 17th June 2015 starting at 7.00pm.

Those present, Peter Foster, Andy Coakes, Jean Peacock, Andrew Robinson, Elaine Hedley and Paul Walters

Also attending: Peter Allan (Parish Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

Margaret Williams, Tony Winnett, Michelle Edwards, Wilma Campbell,

2. Declarations of Interest

The clerk advised the councillors to declare their interests if and when a specific topic is introduced.

3. Minutes of the Finance Meeting dated 26th November 2014.

The Minutes, having been distributed prior to the meeting were adopted. Proposed by Peter Foster and Seconded by Jean Peacock.

4. Presentation of the Budget for 2015-16

The Clerk talked through the budget for the current year, outlining the logic behind each allocation, and the content which is debited to the various headings.

After an open dialogue, the councillors all agreed that they understood the financial management of the council and the budgetary control procedure.

5. Section 137

The Clerk drew attention to the Council's Procedure HP4 which defines the council's policy with regard to making awards and donations, under the NALC Section 137 regulations. Several of the new councillors, having just attended a training course, were already conversant with the principles of Section 137.

6. Project Proposals for 2015-16

The amount in the budget specifically for 'projects' this year is £12,000.

The Chair put before the meeting the following list of suggestions, which had been brought to her attention.

- a. The circular walk with disabled facilities, which has already been agreed in principle, subject to overall cost and grant availability. Andy Coakes reported

that a study was in progress, with the involvement of Malcolm Thompson, DBC Countryside. An initial estimate had been made of a cost of £50,000, which was considerably higher than anybody had thought.

The committee agreed to wait until a more precise cost was calculated.

- b. Elaine Hedley requested more litter bins, particularly around Hurworth Grange. DBC can be approached.
- c. A letter has been received from the Friends of Rockcliffe Court, for a donation. The committee agree to **award £300**, this being the maximum for this type of donation.
- d. Andy Coakes requested another speed monitor, which is needed on the section of road near Croft House. A discussion ensued as to whether another post with power would suffice, and one of the existing monitors moved there randomly. Andy Robinson emphasised the need for an additional monitor, and Jean Peacock stressed the speed of traffic near Rockcliffe Hall entrance. An amount **of £3000** was allocated for an additional monitor.
- e. The Chair read out a letter from Hugh Jackson praising the success of the Annual Assembly this year, but expressing concern that some of the speakers could not be heard. He suggested that a microphone be used at future events. Similar remarks having been made about Parish Council meetings, it was agreed that a microphone system should be purchased. **Estimated cost £300.**
- f. Following this discussion, Andy Robinson stressed the value of the Annual Assembly and urged the council to repeat this next year, but also to make a greater effort to draw more residents to attend. All agreed, and a figure of **£600 was allocated.**
- g. It was felt that the council is not getting sufficient data from the speed monitors, and that regular monthly reports would enhance the value of the operations. This had been brought to the council's attention by the Police Head Quarters and local police. It was agreed that we should accept John Hedley's offer to take over the data collection, and make regular reports for each PACT Meeting. To enable this to happen he will need a laptop computer. It was proposed that the council purchase a laptop, for about £350. However, Andy Coakes offered to donate one, as he is about to purchase a new one. In the meantime the Clerk offered to lend his own laptop for this purpose.
- h. It was agreed that the office purchase a new colour printer to replace the existing faulty printer. Cost £85. This will come under the Admin budget.
- i. Several residents have requested that the monument opposite the Spar shop should be re-instated as a water outlet, as it was originally. Val Hughes raised serious concerns about the safety aspects, as people and particularly children may cross the road to get water or play in the water.

Peter foster stated that the original lead piping and tap is still there, and it may be not too difficult to re-install. It would also not be a fountain, and never was.

Paul Walters raised the cost of the running water, which could be considerable,

as the water came from the mains, and went down the drain; it would not be self-circulating.

It was agreed that this would involve further discussion at council level.

- j. Tony Winnett has requested an amount be allocated to assist the structuring of the Village Contingency Plan. An amount of **£1000 was allocated**.
- k. It was suggested that brochures should be produced detailing the various parish walks, highlighting features of the walk and giving guidance as to the severity, obstacles and whether dogs could be taken.
- l. The council had previously agreed that it would purchase lights for the village Christmas tree. **An amount of £300 was allocated, and Paul Walters undertook to make the purchase, in conjunction with Dr Bagshaw.**
- m. A letter had been received from EPICH requested an **allocation of £2000** for 2015, for new projects which they are contemplating. After discussion, it was agreed in principle, subject to full council approval and details of a specific project. This amount is already in the budget under 'EPICH'.
- n. Peter Foster recommended that the council allocate an amount to cover the possible entertaining of HMS Hurworth, in accordance with the council's practice. **An amount of £1000 was allocated.**
- o. Andy Robinson requested that the area at the opening of Avon Roar be tidied up and the fences repaired and painted. **The Clerk agreed to arrange this;** the cost would be charged against the Open Spaces budget.
- p. Andy Coakes asked if the grass area next to the Comet Inn could be fenced. Peter Foster informed the meeting that some tree work is necessary in this area, and it must be done first. The meeting were not in agreement with constructing a fence, as there used to be one, and it has an improved appearance without a fence. No decision was taken.
- q. Andy Robinson put forward a proposition to the committee, that a 'Community Information centre' should be established, incorporating Neasham, Dalton and Croft. This would be used to promote the village facilities and attract many more visitors. The Centre should have its own web site and Facebook identity. A location will be required and brochures printed to promote the many excellent amenities in the villages. Volunteers will be needed to man the Centre, and a proper manning roster established for the opening hours.

This is a large and excellent project, and it was agreed that **Andy will make a formal presentation** of his proposal at the next full PC Meeting in July.

- r. Peter Foster raised the question of a second playground which would service the east quarter of Hurworth. This subject has been raised before but was shelved due to opposition from the residents of Westfield drive. It was agreed that this will be put on the Agenda for the next PC Meeting.
- s. Andy Robinson applauded the council's village walks programme and the idea of producing a 'Walks' brochure. He suggested that notice boards be erected to

indicate the walk routes, with the parish. No decision was made, but he will include it in his presentation.

The Chair thanked the councillors for attending and closed the meeting at 8:30pm