

Hurworth Parish Council

Finance Committee meeting

held at Hurworth Grange

at 6:00 pm on 15th November 2013

1. Those present:- Tony Winnett, Tony Needham, Ken Pattison, John Howard, Jean Peacock, Val Hughes, Peter Foster, Margaret Williams, Chris Pratt

2. Apologies for absence:-, Ian Holme, Norma Kyle, Jeff Kemp,

Also present: Peter Allan, Parish Clerk

3. Declarations of Interest:

- a. Val Hughes (Allotments & HCA)
- b. Jean Peacock (HCA)
- c. Tony Winnett (HCA)
- d. Ken Pattison (HCA)

4. The Minutes of the Finance Committee dated 6TH June 2013, were accepted; proposed by Jean Peacock and Seconded by John Howard.

5. The 2013-14 Projects were reviewed, as follows:-

Project Name	Proposer	Details	Cost element	Comment/ conclusion, 15th November 2013
Exercise equipment for installation at Hurworth Grange	Val Hughes	4 items, including installation and 'matting.	5000	Project Completed, within budget
Traffic Monitors	Ken Pattison	3 units, 4 posts, with remote data collection	7,000	Project in progress.

feature.

Lychgate area clean up and tree trimming.	Resident request	Requires planning permission for TPO trees.	750	Awaiting planning permission. Will go ahead this year.
Strait Lane Parking	Norma Kyle	Constructing a parking zone at the bottom of Strait Lane.	4000	DBC has refused to allow the solution recommended by HPC. Project aborted.
Village Green interior road works	Tony Needham	Resurfacing several areas of the road.	3500	Project Completed, within budget
Monument on the Green	Tony Winnett	Monument to remember those who died in the 17 th century plague	550	Project Completed, within budget
Tree survey:-		A survey of all trees which are HPC property should, ideally, be made every year.	1200	DBC has not fulfilled this contract, so it will be placed elsewhere. Quotations being sought.
1. Hurworth Grange	Ken Pattison & Peter Foster			
2. Rest of the trees on HPC property			800	
War memorial	Jeff Kemp	Total clean up of the cenotaph monument. Will require a stone mason.	1000	Completed, cost was under £200.
Youth Club:	Ken Pattison & Val Hughes	Equipment for the youth club drop in.	1000	Accepted, Cheques sent.
1. New equipment as				

requested 2. Assistance with the Youth Leader salary	Ken Pattison	Shared costs of supporting DACYM	1250 for each of 3 years	First year £1000 contribution has been sent; further years confirmed.
Allotment facilities	Allotment holder request. Norma Kyle and Ian Holme to manage.	Earth toilet and fencing	1000	It was agreed that HPC will make a contribution of a lesser amount, towards this cost, subject to Allotment Committee agreement to the conditions.
Flood problems	Ken Pattison	Contingency	3000	Accepted for this year and the next two years.
Local Authority Pack	Ken Pattison	Planting of shrubs, etc to encourage bee pollination.	2250	Ongoing; carry forward into next year.
Hurworth Grange road	Jeff Kemp	Resurfacing of the entrance road		Postponed until April 2014. See outcome in 2014-15 recommendations.
Friends of Rockcliffe Court	Request from association	Financial support under Section 137	150	Cheque sent.

6. Financial Review

The updated Financial Report had been circulated to all councillors, and was accepted. This included the budget forecasts up to 31st March 2016. These will be updated once the future Projects have been identified.

7. Future Projects for the year 2014-15

1. All Saints Church has written to the council requesting financial assistance to help to pay for essential repairs, redecoration and a new heating system. It was agreed that further details are required, particularly as the church is considering a new Biomass heating system, which will require capital expenditure, but will become cost self-sufficient. A loan may be more appropriate. Peter Foster emphasised the importance of the church as a central pivot of the parish.

The Chairman invited all councillors to put forward their suggestions for projects.

1. Allotments.

- a. The Clerk presented the allotment expenses for the current year. The meeting, after discussion agreed that the current rent of £15 will remain for next year.
- b. The request for a toilet at Strait Lane was discussed at length. Quotations have been received suggesting that the cost will be circa £1750. It was agreed that this should be discussed at the Allotment AGM to qualify the need, and a vote invited.
- c. The council decided that if the Allotment Committee voted in favour of a toilet, then HPC will make a contribution, and the allotment holders will need to pay the balance, and take responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance. Allocate £500.

2. Hurworth Grange road resurfacing

HCA has applied for a grant for £9500, and a decision should be received by the end of this year. It is currently being evaluated.

It was agreed that a full specification is required.

Ken Pattison proposed, and Chris Pratt seconded the motion that £15000 should be allocated for the project in 2014. Votes were 8 in favour, and 1 against. The rider was that Irrespective of whether a grant was received or not there would be an open book financial discussion with HCA to clearly ascertain the contribution HCA could sensibly make. Only then would any final contribution by HPC be decided.

3. Hurworth Youth Programme.

It was reconfirmed that £1000 will be allocated in years 2014, and 2015 as a contribution to this facility.

4. Legal Consultation and Action

One person in the parish has caused and is continuing to cause vexation, stress and additional work through Freedom of Information enquires, now amounting to over 215 in the recent term. This has already resulted in two previous Parish Clerks resigning, and to no apparent avail except this person's continued detailed interest in the council's affairs. The council agreed to appoint a specialist lawyer to address this festering issue, and John Howard proposed and Jean Peacock seconded the motion to allocate £5000 to the matter. The council agreed unanimously. All agreed that this is a sad situation for which the residents will have to pick up the costs.

5. Election Costs

The council was forced into an election in 2013, at a cost to the residents of £3,200. A provision is deemed necessary in case a similar situation arises in 2014. An allocation of £3,200 has been agreed for 2014.

6. Trees

- a. A joint meeting will be convened between HPC and HCA to discuss the future responsibility for the trees on the Hurworth Grange property, which is owned by the council and leased to HCA. John Howard and Ken Pattison will represent the council, and the Clerk will attend to take the Minutes.
- b. It was agreed that the budget for trees will be increased from £3000 in 2013-14 to £6000 in 2014-15.

7. Hogweed

The growing incidence of hogweed within the parish is a concern, however this is the responsibility of DBC and HPC should not take on this responsibility.

8. Bollards on Strait Lane next to the Otter and Fish Restaurant.

DBC has already refused to consider the council's suggestion of meshing to preserve the grass area. The meeting agreed that it should not consider bollards, and leave it to DBC to take whatever action they feel appropriate.

9. Joint venture with Priory Hurworth House School.

The council's overtures to Priory Group for the development of allotments on their playing field have been well received and the project is to be better defined by the Chairman and Clerk. EPICH also wish to establish a wild flower meadow on the playing fields and has requested to become part of future discussions.

EPICH has also discussed the project with Rob George of DBC Countryside, who has recommended that we get a survey and report carried out by Groundwork This was agreed and £300 allocated to this project.

10. **Roundhill Road** Prior to cables being laid at the start of the green belt on Roundhill Road, there used to be a substantial daffodil display. This should have been reinstated by the contractors, and it was agreed that the council will take steps to have this re-instated.

11. **Power of Governance.**

NALC has not yet completed the new specification for councils becoming Quality Parish Councils (QPC). They have now suggested that Hurworth who fully qualify for this status, should take the resolution to take upon itself the Power of Governance. This will be discussed at the next PC Meeting in December.

12. **Road gritting and salt supplies**

John Howard recommended that the council should allocate further funds to allow it to provide a larger area of gritting support within the non-supported DBC areas, such as Grange Estate. He also undertook to make suitable arrangements for an emergency service. An additional £1000 was allocated for 2014-15. Chris Pratt insisted that the insurance liability must be checked.

13. **Flooding Contingency**

The meeting agreed that a further £3000 should be allocated to the Flooding Contingency Fund, in the 2014-15 budget.

14. **Tree planting**

The meeting agreed that it should proceed immediately with the planting of replacement trees on the Green. Peter Foster is to arrange this while the season is appropriate. The funds are already in the budget. No additional trees should be planted without consultation with the residents. **Clerk to**

check Minutes to establish if the planting action on the Green was specifically agreed.

15. Speed Monitors

Jean Peacock proposed that an additional monitor should be placed at Hurworth Place near Oxford Garage. After discussion it was decided that it is unlikely that DBC will endorse this as the parking congestion in this area acts as a traffic calmer.

16. Highways

Tony Needham expressed concern about DBC ability to address all emergency road and pathway situations. He recommended that a fund be allocated for contingencies. The meeting agreed to allocate £3000.

17. Anniversary of the start of the Great War in 1914.

- a. It was agreed that HPC should seek a grant to assist funding an event.
- b. An amount of £200 was allocated towards [an](#) event, which will probably be organised under the auspices of the Hurworth Village Hall.

8. The Precept for 2014

It had been hoped that the council could recommend no increase in the precept for next year.

However, due to the necessary expense forced upon the council to allocate Legal Costs to defend itself against the unwarranted harassment from a single resident in the parish, the council unanimously agreed to increase the Precept for 2014 by £5000, which equates to £3 per household, to meet the these legal costs. In the event all or part of the money is not spent, next years Precept would be reduced accordingly.

The meeting ended at 8:15pm