HORNDEAN PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD AT JUBILEE HALL ON MONDAY 02 NOVEMBER 2015 AT 7:00 PM.

PRESENT: Cllr D Evans (Chairman),
Cllr D Alexander, Cllr Mrs. L Evans, Cllr A Forbes, Cllr Mrs D. Denston, Cllr M Burridge

IN ATTENDANCE: Carla Baverstock-Jones, Executive Officer and Clerk to the Council, Sarah Guy, Senior Administrator (Minute Taker), Simon Ritson, Responsible Financial Officer.

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE: Mr N. Steward, Mr J. Mach and Cllr Mrs E. Tickell were all in attendance.

F&GP 070 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

F&GP 071 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

F&GP 072 **TO OPEN THE MEETING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ENABLE THEM TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS TO PARISH COUNCILLORS**

The Chairman opened the meeting to members of the public and apologised for the draft budget 2016/2017 not being available on the Horndean Parish Council web-site.

Mr J Mach, queried whether or not the additional staff member had been included in the draft budget and also queried what the technical difficulties were with Groundorg. Cllr D Evans responded by saying that the draft budget included the additional staff member.

Cllr Mrs L Evans explained that the Groundorg difficulties were due to problems within the live system. She explained that Groundorg is not a system that can be made right so it is right forevermore, but that the difficulties are being ironed out and information is being checked to insure it is correct against what currently happens within the team.

Mr N Steward expressed his disappointment in not seeing the draft budget on the HPC web-site, but thanked the Finance & General Purposes Committee for the effort in the reduction of the precept again this year.

The Chairman stated that the draft budget 2016/2017 will have to go before Council before being finalised. Cllr Mrs L Evans stated that Council may opt for the precept being kept the same and not being reduced.

F&GP 073 **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 JULY 2015**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 27th July 2015 be duly signed as a true record of the meeting.

The Chairman explained that the draft budget 2016/2017 includes information in item 6 so suggested that the Committee take item 6 before item 5. It was **RESOLVED** that Item 6 be taken before item 5.

F&GP 074 **TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND APPROVE THE RECRUITMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL MEMBER OF STAFF ON A FIXED TERM CONTRACT COMMENCING 2016**

A report by the Clerk and Grounds Manager was circulated.

Cllr Mrs L Evans stated that she thought there were two ways to deal with it- one being to employ an additional member of staff and the second to reduce tasks completed by the Countryside Team. Cllr Mrs L Evans suggested that Council would need to understand the resource implications regarding the work that isn't currently being completed and that Groundorg would need to be up to date before Council could consider any additional staff members.

Cllr Mrs L Evans said that Groundorg is currently being worked on and until accurate information is available, she didn't feel there was sufficient information to justify the extra resource in the budget and said she felt the information available was rather emotive and not number based.

The Chairman explained that Groundorg had been put in place in order to quantify work to be done and the length of time each task takes. He explained that Groundorg works whereby all tasks and times are to be listed.

A short discussion took place and it was suggested by Cllr Mrs Denston for the item to be deferred until more information was made available. Cllr Burridge expressed that he thought an additional staff member was required but agreed that the information on Groundorg needed to be corrected before any decisions could be made.

The Chairman explained that there are tasks that should have been completed but haven't been, due to there not being enough time resulting in the backlog of work, but suggested that a temporary member of staff could be employed to clear the backlog of work, rather than necessarily employing a permanent member of staff. The Chairman stated that this would need to be looked at in more detail.

Cllr Mrs L Evans suggested that an additional member of staff be put in the draft budget until Groundorg had been updated and corrected as it currently suggests that the Countryside Team are overstaffed.

The Clerk suggested that not everything can be put into numbers and said that she manages the staff and can see we have a hardworking Countryside Team, and with the large amount of land owned and managed by HPC, when the team are down to two staff members, how it can be deemed sufficient. The Clerk stated that she accepts that some quantitative analysis is required but highlighted that this has not always been required for other positions within the Council. The Clerk suggested that perhaps HPC need to step back from quantitative analysis and take a common sense approach and look at the staff doing the job.

The Chairman said that Groundorg is a tool and is there to assist and not to rule and agreed with the Clerk in that he said HPC could not base work purely on Groundorg, but said the better the information provided, the better the decision made can be.

It was **RESOLVED** that the additional member of staff be left in the draft budget until Groundorg is updated and corrected.

F&GP 075 **TO RECEIVE AND AGREE THE DRAFT BUDGET 2016/2017**

The Draft budget 2016/2017 was circulated.

The RFO explained that a budget workshop had taken place a few weeks ago and all agreed adjustments had been made. He explained that the tree budget had now been reduced back down from £25,000 to £8,000, and the draft budget shortfall is showing as £22,000.

The RFO explained that the two items highlighted in red in the report – "Additional 1 day for admin and installation of CCTV at Tyfield House" were not covered in the budget workshop and stated that the draft budget had been amended to show the fixed term contract as being reviewed next year. He stated that if the draft budget was to be adopted as it stands, the general reserve would fall from £180,00 - £190,000 to somewhere around the £160,00 - £170,000 mark as at the 1st April 2016.

The Chairman stated that the general reserve to keep is not less than 3 months expenditure and mentioned that the fixed term member of staff does not present a problem, stating that once the backlog of work had been dealt with, HPC will have a much clearer idea going forward. He said that HPC need to be aware that if they go forward with an additional member of staff there is a tendency for that member of staff to become permanent.

The Clerk explained that the additional 1 day for admin resources had been put in the draft budget in light of getting on top of the asset register and the admin resource would come from a member of staff already working for HPC 1 day per week, who would be available to work an additional day in times of staff sickness or when needed for specific projects etc. The Clerk stated that data input in Groundorg could be done by the Admin Team to free up the Countryside Manager.

Cllr D Alexander mentioned that he had not previously heard anything about the installation of CCTV at Tyfield House, to which the Clerk responded by explaining that there had been a couple of incidences whereby a member of the public had been into the office and had been verbally abusive and aggressive towards office staff. The Clerk stated that the CCTV would be a safety measure for the protection of staff.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft budget 2016/2017 be recommended to Council for approval and the draft budget paperwork be made available on the web-site for public viewing.

This was proposed by The Chairman and seconded by Cllr Forbes.

F&GP 076 **TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND CONSIDER THE AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDERS**

A report by the Clerk was circulated.

A short discussion took place and the Chairman suggested to amend the Standing Orders as attached and highlighted, to reflect at the Annual Meeting all policies need not be reviewed but to be adopted and then subsequently reviewed at Council meetings throughout the year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the changes to the Standing Orders be recommended to Council for approval and the Standing Orders be amended in accordance with the new Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

F&GP 077 **TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE ARANGEMENTS**

A report by the Administrative Team was circulated.

A discussion took place and the Clerk informed Committee Members that due to the Christmas festivities having decreased the previous year that the intention was to improve the general atmosphere with an appearance of Father Christmas in a grotto handing out sweets to the children.

A discussion took place and various suggestions were made such as for the advertisement of a "Father Christmas" or children's entertainer.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk look into a children's entertainer and for sweets to be purchased for the children.

F&GP 078 **TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE GRANT AWARDING POLICY**

The Grant Awarding Policy was circulated.

Cllr Mrs L Evans suggested that the second bullet point under the heading "Conditions" be removed as felt that it wasn't needed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the second bullet point under the heading "Conditions" reading "The Parish Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant not being used for the purpose specified on the application form. The Executive Officer will therefore, be allowed to verify that the monies have been spent accordingly" be removed.

F&GP 079 **TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE USE IN RESPECT OF THE SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE (SID) EQUIPMENT**

The Chairman stated that no one had come forward regarding the future use of the Speed Indicator Device equipment, and suggested to defer the agenda item on this basis.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer this agenda item to a later meeting date.

F&GP 080 **TO RECEIVE AND REVIEW THE UPDATED FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRESS AND MEDIA POLICIES – ADOPTED 18 MAY 2015**

The Freedom of Information and Press and Media Policies were circulated. A short discussion took place and it was **RESOLVED** that both be adopted.

F&GP 081 **TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER AN ADDENDUM TO THE VEHICLE POLICY**

An addendum to the Vehicle Policy was circulated. The Clerk stated that having taken delivery of the two new Countryside Team vehicles, it had become necessary to take the Vehicle Policy to this level in order to protect the property of HPC.

A discussion took place and it was **RESOLVED** that the Finance & General Purposes Committee support option 2 of the recommendation for "the existing process of verbal and written warnings currently in place for disciplinary matters to remain" and for this recommendation to be put before Council at the next Council meeting.

F&GP 082 **TO RECEIVE AND AGREE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES IN RESPECT OF:**

- **ASBESTOS**
- **HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**
- **FIRST AID**
- **MANUAL HANDLING**

The Health and Safety Policies in respect of Asbestos, Hazardous Substances, First Aid and Manual Handling were circulated.

It was **RESOLVED** that all Policies be agreed and recommended to Council at the next Council meeting with the following amendment being made to the Asbestos Policy

- To amend paragraph "v." by removing "Type 3 Asbestos Survey" and replacing with "Refurbishment and Demolition Survey".

The meeting closed at 9:15pm

……
Chairman

……
Dated