HORNDEAN PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT JUBILEE HALL ON 23 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J Lay (Chair), T Attlee, D Prosser, A Redding

IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Guy, Deputy Clerk; Becky White, Clerk/Interim RFO [dialled in]

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE: No members of the public.

FGP 41/25/26 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr J Tyler.

FGP 42/25/26 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

FGP 43/25/26 TO OPEN THE MEETING TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No members of the public were in attendance.

FGP 44/25/26 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8TH DECEMBER 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 8th December be signed as a true record of the meeting.

FGP 45/25/26 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING POLICY DOCUMENTS:

- **Internal Control Policy**
- **Annual Governance & Accountability Plan**
- **Internal Auditor Terms of Reference**
- **Scope of Internal Audit**
- **Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit**

The Deputy Clerk read out an advice note from the Clerk/Interim RFO describing how the suite of policy documents put forward for review relate to HPC's approach to audit (both internal and external), internal control, financial risk and governance. It was noted that to support the Council's completion of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (the external audit process), the policies must be in place before the end of the financial year. The Financial Regulations and the Internal Scrutiny report, both referenced in the policies, were due for approval and/or noting at the forthcoming Council meeting of 9th March 2026. In a response to a query raised by the Chair, it was confirmed that an explanation to the Committee's minute number FGP/3/25/26, regarding the interim IA report's comments, would be included within the report to Council. Committee members contributed notes on typos and minor corrections and amendment which were recorded by the Clerk/Interim RFO for inclusion before the policies were put forward to Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk/Interim RFO be directed to action the amendments of the Committee and that subject to these, the policies, as noted separately above, met with the Committee's approval and would be recommended to Council for adoption.

FGP 46/25/26 TO NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT FOR THE 2025/26
The Letter of Engagement, including Agreement of Terms, sent by Auditing Solutions Ltd had been previously circulated. It was noted that Auditing Solutions Ltd were independent of the Council, with details of experience, qualification and methodology being publicly available via their website: https://auditingsolutions.co.uk/

It was **RESOLVED** that the appointment of Auditing Solutions Ltd and the letter of engagement be noted for the financial year 2025/26.

FGP 47/25/26 TO REVIEW THE HALL HIRE CHARGES FOR 2026/27
A report prepared by the Deputy Clerk, covering charges for facilities and pitches, had been previously circulated and included modelling of differing levels of increase in line with the Committee's recommendations for the 2026/27 budget which had been approved by Council at its meeting of 15th December 2025. The charges, as **RESOLVED**, would come into effect from 1st April 2026.

It was **RESOLVED** that Option 2 of the facilities charges review, as outlined within the Deputy Clerk's report contained within the meeting documents, met with the Committee's approval.

It was **RESOLVED** that pitch fees for 2026/27 would increase to £120 per annum.

FGP 48/25/26 TO REVIEW A QUOTATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF BROADBAND SERVICES AT JUBILEE HALL

Feedback from hirers and the Council's own experience in holding meetings at the Jubilee Hall facilities had indicated that the broadband service, in terms of both speed and capacity, was not adequately meeting demand. The Deputy Clerk had contacted the Council's contracted IT provider and their quotation had been previously circulated. The Clerk/Interim RFO advised that approximately £500 remained in the Jubilee Hall maintenance budget for 2025/26 with a £2500 Jubilee Hall Improvements Earmarked Reserve. The Committee were asked to consider, should it support the upgrade, whether to allow a budget overspend, with the excess coming from the overall revenue budget or the use of reserves, with the latter then being subject to a recommendation to the forthcoming Council meeting. This was noted.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation for the Jubilee Hall broadband improvement.

It was further **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that the Jubilee Hall Improvements Earmarked Reserve be used, to a maximum limit of £2,000, to support the overspend.

FGP 49/25/26 TO REVIEW THE ACQUISITION OF A PEDESTRIAN TRACTOR
Council had previously supported the submission of a grant application to EHDC regarding the acquisition of a pedestrian flail tractor to improve countryside management at several key sites including Catherington Down and Catherington Lith. Although the grant application had been unsuccessful, the strength of the business case had been acknowledged by Council and discussions had taken place with the Grounds Team regarding the benefits of the equipment and an advice note regarding the opportunities for internal funding had been prepared by the Clerk/Interim RFO. This covered the potential use of either the Neighbourhood CIL or Future Developments Earmarked Reserves. Updated quotations for the tractor, including a collecting deck and coupling accessories, indicated that an allocation of £10k (excl. VAT) would be sufficient. The Clerk/Interim RFO confirmed that a full report, with updated quotations, would be put forward to Council to support decision making.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council to make a provision of £10k from the Future Developments EMR for the acquisition of a pedestrian flail tractor.

FGP 50/25/26 TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED MEETING CALENDAR FOR 2026/27 AND NOTE THE NEXT MEETING OF THE F&GP COMMITTEE AS 22ND JUNE 2026.
The proposed meeting calendar had been prepared by the Clerk with the input of the Council's Chair, Cllr A Redding, and the administration team. Members were asked for feedback and to raise any concerns or amendments before the proposed calendar was circulated to the forthcoming Council meeting of 9th March 2026.

The calendar was noted with no amendments.

The next meeting of the Committee was noted as 22nd June 2026.

The meeting concluded at 7.30pm

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Signed - The Chairman

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Dated