

Hemyock Parish Council
Finance Committee Meeting
held at the Healthy Living & Activities Centre, Hemyock at 7.30pm on 28 February 2024

1. Welcome by Chairman, apologies for absence and introductions

Councillor Lawrence (Chairman) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Present:

Councillors Lawrence, Moon, Summers and Talbot together with Mrs McGeever (Parish Clerk).

Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest/Dispensations

None.

3. To note and approve the minutes of the meeting on 15 November 2023

It was RESOLVED that the minutes were a true record of the meeting on 15 November 2023.

Proposer: Councillor Moon, Seconder Councillor Talbot and unanimously agreed.

4. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

5. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

6. Financial Review

6.1 Update from Chairman on latest financial information

The financial information prepared for the Parish Council meeting on 6 March 2024 under Item 6. was noted by the Finance Committee. Information from several deposit accounts which did not have internet banking would be received over the coming months.

6.2 Review income and expenditure budgets

Councillor Summers advised that he was in the process of inputting all the current year's financial information into Scribe. (See item 6.6 below).

Action: The Clerk handed Councillor Summers the invoice file for 2023/24 to input VAT amounts etc.

The 2023/24 budget information needed to be input and then this would give monthly budget reports and could provide three, six and nine month budgets together with forecasting to the year end. These budget reports would allow the Parish Council to monitor expenditure within the various cost codes and give percentage variations on the agreed budget figure.

Action: Councillor Lawrence/Clerk to provide budget figures.

It was noted that the updated budget should be available prior to the year end for publication on the website.

Action: Set a date of a meeting in March

An internal auditor had not been appointed at the May 2023 meeting. The role was currently undertaken by the accountant. The Clerk advised that an internal auditor for a Parish Council normally considered more than just the accounts.

Action: Clerk to provide internal audit checklist

6.3 Consider any necessary virements

Item 6.3 would be actioned at the March meeting.

6.4 Discuss future known expenditure, potential expenditure and allocate budgets

See Item 8 below.

6.5 Insurance policy – updated figures

The updated figures would be conveyed to the insurance company.

Action: Clerk

6.6 Update on putting the accounts on Scribe

See Item 6.1. above.

6.7 S106 monies

There was £5357.60 available for landscaping and benches at Higher and Lower Millhayes.

6.8 Updating signatories for all bank accounts

Councillor Lawrence had discussed the possibility of using the BHLAC as the correspondence address for the Parish Council on bank accounts, utility bills etc. This would allow for continuity in the Clerk's absence.

Action 1: A decision should be taken at the Parish Council meeting on 6 March 2024.

Action 2 (Clerk): If approved by the Parish Council, a letter should be written the Trustees of the BHLAC for consideration at their meeting on 18 March 2024.

Action 3 (Clerk): If approved by the Trustees of the BHLAC, the work to change addresses could commence.

Signatories would need to be updated on several bank accounts and could form part of the same correspondence as the request to change the address.

Action: Clerk

The Clerk had printed off the paperwork to obtain debit cards as agreed in the Parish Council meeting.

Decisions would need to be made on the transaction limit and procedures for use.

The Finance Committee would put forward the recommendation to the Parish Council that:

a) the financial limit be set at £1500

b) approval for such transactions would be

i) authorisation at a Full Council meeting – payment could be made automatically

ii) if the requested payment has not been pre-authorised then two of the Chairman of the Parish Council or members of the Finance Committee must authorise by email, but neither can be the card user.

This would allow for purchases directly by the Parish Council rather than through a third party.

6.9 Cemetery charges

Councillor Clist had advised that Hemyock Cemetery charges were approximately 15% lower than other local cemeteries. A revised table of fees would be produced to the Parish Council meeting on 6 March 2024.

Action: Parish Council to take a decision on the increased fees

Councillor Clist had recommended that an additional fee of £150 was levied at the time of internment to cover the lowering of the grave after the statutory six-month period.

Action: Parish Council to take a decision on this additional fee

The Clerk advised that Halberton Cemetery had introduced wording to cover parishioners who had had to go into care outside the parish given that the parish had now care homes within its boundaries.

Action: Clerk to provide wording for consideration by the Parish Council

Councillor Clist had advised that an extension of the cemetery was not thought to be necessary by several undertakers and that their preference would also be to use the front entrance.

Members of the Finance Committee felt that it would be prudent to fence of cemetery land given there was no fence separating it from grazing belonging to a resident.

Action: Consider the types of fencing available and the possibility of also planting a beech hedge alongside

7. Donations/Grants

The Finance Committee considered the request from the BHLAC for a grant of £2000. It was RESOLVED to recommend that the grant be approved by the Parish Council.

Proposer: Councillor Moon, Seconder: Councillor Summers, unanimously agreed.

The Finance Committee considered the request from the newly formed youth club for financial assistance.

It was RESOLVED to recommend that a grant of £1000 be approved by the Parish Council.

Proposer: Councillor Lawrence, Seconder: Councillor Talbot, unanimously agreed.

It was noted that the Food Larder/Food Save was working extremely well and that the funding of £1500 was to be considered on an annual basis by the Parish Council. Providing transport for the elderly to visit could be considered by the Peter Holway Trust.

The volunteer's costs for travel etc were covered by the charity for the first year of operation. The cost of the operation would be helpful in making future decisions.

The option to allow users to donate using a sum-up machine could be considered.

8. Asset Management, Risk Assessments and Safety Checks

The cost of replacing assets had been considered and updated by the Chartered Surveyor.

The Finance Committee would recommend that reports on the current state of all the PC's assets are supplied for the April Parish Council meeting, together with any recommendations for works required and that any risk assessments were brought up to date.

The Clerk advised that a form of regular (monthly) safety checks would be advisable and in some cases training may be necessary i.e. the play park.

Action: Bring to the Parish Council meeting.

9. Items raised by Clerk

None.

10. Items raised by Chairman

Councillor Lawrence advised that the task of photographing all the cemetery records that had been obtained from the previous Clerk was large. The Clerk had indicated that there was a firm in South Molton that scanned documentation into pdf files and this might be a route to go so that there was a permanent record.

Action: Clerk to identify cost

Councillor Lawrence would ask Councillor Povah for a budget for the proposed work at the War Memorial so that it could be input into budget figures for 2024/25.

Action: Councillor Lawrence

11. Items raised by Councillors

Councillor Mood advised that the gun club benches needed repair and the damage done at the entrance to Turbary was being rectified.

An update on the Skatepark and the potential need for finance should be sought.

Action: Clerk

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday, 20 March 2024 at the BHLAC.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chairman
