

## **Hemyock Parish Council**

### **Finance Committee Meeting**

**held at the Healthy Living & Activities Centre, Hemyock at 7.30pm on 20 November 2024**

#### **1. Welcome by Chairman, apologies for absence and introductions**

Councillor Lawrence (Chair) welcomed those present to the meeting.

#### Present:

Councillors Lawrence, A Doble and Summers.

Mrs S McGeever, Clerk.

#### Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors Talbot and Moon.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest/Dispensations**

None.

#### **3. To note and approve the minutes of the meeting on 11 July 2024**

It was RESOLVED that the minutes were a true record of the meeting on 11 July 2024.

Proposer: Councillor Summers, Seconder: Councillor Doble and unanimously agreed.

#### **4. Public Participation**

Members of the Longmead Committee were present to provide information on the request for monies for the refurbishment and the potential increases to revenue as a result of those refurbishments.

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#### Improvements to Longmead

The Finance Committee recommends that the improvements to Longmead be approved and paid for by the Parish Council.

The Longmead Committee had advised that income did not cover the basic expenditure for running the pavilion and there would be a loss this year. Maintenance of the building and all the grounds were covered by the Parish Council. The constitution of the Longmead Committee did need to be amended to correctly reflect the financial distribution of costs relating to Longmead.

The Finance Committee felt the improvements offered the Longmead Committee the ability to break even and, possibly, start contributing to the overall costs of Longmead. It also maintained what was a valuable Parish Council and community asset.

The Finance Committee was recommending that £10,000 be set aside for the improvements with additional sums to cover insurance, prior planning advice, planning permission, possible structural survey and the potential need to meet building regulations together with all Health & Safety/Food Hygiene issues. The sum represents £2k per year over 5 years.

#### Improvements to the MUGA

The MUGA was a key component in improving the revenue at Longmead and again was a Parish Council asset. The current surface was not fit for purpose and could be deemed a health and safety issue.

The Longmead Committee were organising quotes for the MUGA to be re-surfaced and it was hoped that this would be covered by grants.

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## 5 Matters Arising

Councillor Lawrence raised the matter of Connecting the Culm looking at the riverbank at the BHLAC.

**Action:** Clerk

## 6 Financial Review

### 6.1 Update from Chairman on latest financial information

The reports from Scribe had been circulated to all councillors and indicated a deficit in expenditure over income.

### 6.2 Review income and expenditure budgets

It was noted that there were some idiosyncrasies in the cost codings in the information produced in Scribe and these needed to be addressed before a new budget could be written.

**Action:** Councillor Summers/Clerk

### 6.3 Consider any necessary virements

The Finance Committee agreed that no virements should be made at this point in time. The need to accurately put budget codes against income and expenditure was a necessary first stop.

### 6.4 Discuss future known expenditure, potential expenditure and allocate budgets

See individual items listed below together with

MDDC Grass Cutting Charges

Contribution for 2025-2026 at £1284.24 ex. VAT

Proposer: Councillor Lawrence/Seconder: Councillor Summers and unanimously approved.

Devon Communities Together

Membership fee by Direct Debit £50.00

And the future projects below:

Longmead Carpark

The addition of further parking at Longmead was needed with a Junior Football tournament being held in May and should be undertaken in early 2025.

It was hoped that Councillors Moon and Povah would lead on this project.

Station Road Pavement

Additional monies would be required to be spent on planning for the Station Road pavement.

Public Convenience

Quotes were awaited for refurbishing the public conveniences.

War Memorial

This work would be carried out in the current financial year.

Car Park

MDDC had undertaken to resurface the car park in the current financial year.

**Action:** Clerk to contact MDDC

### 6.5 S106 monies

Discussion was ongoing with S106 over further funding for the trim trail.

- 6.6 Update on changing signatories for all bank accounts  
The Clerk advised that work was ongoing to add and remove signatories in line with current Parish Council membership for all bank accounts.
- 6.7 Update on debit card  
The Clerk was awaiting a further update on the application for the debit card.
- 6.8 Inventory of filing cabinets etc – temporary assistance  
The Finance Committee felt it was important that the Parish Council had a clear understanding of the documentation held. A person had been identified who could do this for £13/hour and recommended a budget of £1000 be set to identify all documentation handed over. If more expenditure is required, the Committee will return to the council with details. An inventory of the paperwork would assist in registering land etc. If any further expenditure was required, a further mandate would be sought from the Parish Council.  
Proposer: Councillor Summers/Seconder: Councillor Lawrence and unanimously approved.
- 6.9 Christmas lights competition  
The sum of £100 should be set aside for prizes.  
The competition terms should be amended to say that a resident could only win the competition once in every four years.  
Proposer: Councillor A Doble/Seconder: Councillor Summers and unanimously approved.
- 6.10 Skatepark  
The Finance Committee recommends that the Parish Council increase the amount from £25,000 to £30,000 representing 10% of the known cost. It was felt this would assist in the Skatepark Committee obtaining grants etc.  
Proposer: Councillor Lawrence/Seconder: Councillor A Doble and unanimously approved.
- The Finance Committee felt that the amount should not be increased further unless public budgetary participation was in favour of further investment.
- It was noted that the Skatepark had approximately £3700 in Parish Council funds and some £5000 had already been provided by the Parish Council for planning and the environmental assessment plans.
- 6.11 NALC pay increase award  
The Finance Committee recommends that with effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of £1,290 (pro rata for part-time employees) will be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive, should be applied to the Clerk's salary.  
Proposer: Councillor A Doble/Seconder: Councillor Summers and unanimously approved.
- 6.12 Cemetery quotes  
The cemetery budget was in place to allow for incorporating the extension to the cemetery. Bearing in mind the aesthetics, strong feelings about the cemetery sustainability and longevity, the Finance Committee recommended removing the back fence and using it to continue the side fence, extra side fencing will need to be made. The Finance Committee believed that interested councillors and residents should review the fencing options before a final decision was made. (First Sunday in December)
- 6.13 Ground maintenance  
The Finance Committee would consider the 2020 tender of ground maintenance requirements and the possibility of robot mowers and form a view on its cost and delivery.

Three quotes would be required for both purchase and lease of robotic mower(s) in order to make an informed decision, to be considered at the December meeting. Overall the use of robotic mowing at Longmead could be beneficial. The Clerk is looking to obtain the three quotes prior to the meeting on 4 December 2024.

6.14 Village maintenance

The Clerk had identified a document that went out to tender for all village maintenance (grass cutting, repairs etc) and that this should be reviewed and costed under the current regime and a future plan agreed.

6.15 Building maintenance

A building maintenance plan had been started in 2020 but not followed. In principle having a budgeted, maintenance plan for all Parish Council assets would be beneficial and funding may be required to achieve this.

The Finance Committee believed that having building maintenance plans in place and associated budgets would be beneficial. The Clerk was exploring the costs of providing such plans.

**7. Donations/Grants – consider any donation requests**

The Lights Brigade - £750

The Finance Committee recommends the Parish Council approves a grant of £750 but would like to see more fund raising in future by the Lights Brigade as the Parish Council could not continue at such levels.

Proposer: Councillor Summers/Seconder: Councillor Lawrence and unanimously approved.

CHAT – Clerk to contact re number of residents using the service

The Grant Application policy and form, currently on the website, will be reviewed by the Finance Committee. All requests for grants should use the published form.

**8. Asset Management & Risk Assessment**

See items 6.13-6.15 above.

**9. Precept 2025**

Scribe is now providing in-year comparisons with the previous year's full figures, which is very helpful. A few issues have been identified, mainly involving the detailing of already agreed project expenditure. The Committee will return to the PC with updated details for confirmation.

However, given the Government budget and the increases in the minimum wage, lower of National Insurance thresholds and the need to pay contributions together with other ongoing costs, the Finance Committee is recommending an increase in the precept. The precept had been held at its current level for 6 years and this was not sustainable, however, the total amount has increased due to more properties.

Normal expenditure is taking us over the amount we received for the precept in this financial year. To be prudent, we need to be sure that we are not using reserves for general expenditure which are earmarked for specific projects.

The proposed increase was 11% to £98,000, taking band D from £97.31 to £107.5, just under 20p more per week.

**10. Items raised by Clerk**

None

**11. Items raised by Chairman**

None

**12. Items raised by Councillors**

Non

**13. Date of the Next Finance Meetings**

12 February 2025

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

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