

Signed:

Chairman:

HORAM PARISH COUNCIL

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Jackie Cottrell – Clerk to the Council

Horam Parish Council Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 27th MAY 2025 from 9.30am until 10.45am at the Horam Centre

In Attendance: Cllrs Andy Billings, Graham Knight, Sue Lane, Ann Sadler and Virginia Roberts

Also in attendance: 1 member of the public
The Clerk

PUBLIC SESSION

The member of the public spoke in support of the pump track grant application stating young people would benefit from tailored facilities for bikes.

F/392/05/25 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED Cllr Ann Sadler for the Finance Committee Chairman.

F393/05/25 APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

None.

F394/05/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None.

F395/05/25 MINUTES OF FINANCE MEETING held on 24th February 2025 (previously distributed) to be confirmed and signed as a true record

RESOLVED the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 24th February 2025.

F396/05/25 COUNCILLORS INSPECTION OF FINANCIAL RECORDS UPDATE

It was **AGREED** to recommend Cllr Dan Johnston to complete the internal audits.

F397/05/25 BANK SIGNATORY UPDATE

Members noted that Cllrs Sadler, Howells, Roberts and Lane were on the bank mandate to authorise payments.

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F398/05/25 ASSET REGISTER AMENDMENT

The Clerk confirmed that the Asset Register had been adopted at March 2025 Full Council. However, the internal auditor instructed that the new office hard drives and screens should be added.

Members noted that the total assets figure had increased by £650.00 and that the total asset figure of £267,271.00 matched line 9 on the annual return.

RESOLVED the amended Asset Register.

F399/05/25 TO REVIEW AND AGREE THE COMMUNITY GRANT GUIDANCE DOCUMENTATION AND APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION FOR 2025/26

Members reviewed the documentation which was projected at the meeting for all to view.

Members noted that the Grant Awarding Policy Statement had now become part of the Grant Application Form to ensure that all applicants would be aware of the conditions attached to any grant award.

Members noted the amendments to the conditions of the grant awarding policy. Further small adjustments were made.

The Clerk to put all the conditions in a table format so the applicant would be required to initial each separate condition. The Clerk to then circulate the amended form to all Members.

Members agreed with the changes to the Grant Monitoring Form.

RESOLVED the amended grant guidance documentation and application documentation for 2025/26.

F400/05/25 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Members noted the council had received a clean internal audit.

Members noted that the Clerk had now had training for the reserves movements which had been his recommendation the previous year.

There were no further comments.

Noted.

F401/05/25 TO RESOLVE TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL APPROVAL OF SECTION 1 OF THE AGAR – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25

The internal auditor had not highlighted any issues regarding Section 1. The Clerk recommended approval.

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council Section 1 of the AGAR – Annual Governance Statement.

F402/05/25 TO RESOLVE TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL APPROVAL OF SECTION 2 OF THE AGAR – ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2024/25

The Clerk stated that the internal auditor had checked all the figures.

The accounting system Rialtas had automatically produced a draft Section 2 as a result of the annual input of accounting data, and the Clerk recommended approval.

Members held a detailed discussion regarding the explanations of variances between the two accounting years on Section 2 which the Clerk needed to provide to the external auditor.

Members **AGREED** that explanation for the differences to Box 4 Staff Costs needed the following amendment:

After taking advice from ESALC the pay grade of the Clerk was reviewed, and a new grade was resolved and back-dated to 1.12.2023 when the remaining Clerk became CiLCA trained. All members had copies of the most recent 5 job adverts for Clerk positions for similar size parishes.

Members **AGREED** that the explanation for the differences to Box 2 Precept or Rates and Levies needed to clarify that the increase in staff costs was the budgetary figure which had been resolved at Full Council whereas the differences for Box 4 was the actual staff spend. To also breakdown the figure further into staff costs and the associated increase in pension costs and HMRC costs.

One Member highlighted a grammatical error with a figure on the Explanation for High Reserves. The Clerk to investigate and report to Full Council at the next meeting where the AGAR would be signed off.

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council Section 2 of the AGAR – Accounting Statements 2024/25

F403/05/25 HPC INTERNAL AUDITOR UPDATE

Members noted that the current internal auditor was retiring, and the Clerk would be providing the Committee with 3 options for a new auditor at the next Finance Meeting in October.

F404/05/25 TO CONSIDER VIREMENTS BETWEEN EAR MARKED RESERVES

Members **AGREED** to closely monitor EMR 350 Youth Activities which had a balance of £7,996.00. There were 2 Skate Jams to fund at a cost of £2000. Investigations were underway regarding a new youth facility but costs for this were unknown. Members noted that the 36 detached youth sessions which were an hour each had cost £5,400.00 the year before. Members reviewed EMR 357 Cuckoo Trail which had a balance of £15,000. The Committee expressed disappointment at the two options which had been put forward by WDC. It was **AGREED** that the council should discuss the viability of this EMR at the next Full Council meeting.

The Clerk to contact WDC and request an update on the construction of the kiosk as the site was abandoned and ask for a financial update regarding payment of the grant which WDC had been awarded for enhancing the Cuckoo Trail with a time deadline which appeared to have passed. Lastly to mention there had been a lot of public complaints regarding the work that had taken place thus far.

Members noted that the balance in EMR 397 (106 monies) was only £629.00 but the annual maintenance costs for the Play Park/Skate Park and 3rd Age equipment was approximately £3,400.00 a year. Members **AGREED** to recommend to Full Council that a new EMR should be created: Play Park/Skate Park/3rd Age and a virement of £2000.00 should be debited from EMR 393 CIL 20/21 to be used for the maintenance of the Play Park, Skate Park and 3rd Age equipment.

Members **AGREED** that the balance in EMR 395 Neighbourhood Plan £2,872.00 would be still be required to cover amendments to the NP as a result of changes to the NPPF.

F405/05/25 TO CONSIDER EXTERNAL FINANCE TRAINING FOR ALL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Clerk clarified that the councils newly retired internal auditor was able to offer face-to-face finance training at a cost of £200 plus travel for a 2-hour session.

The training course could be tweaked to accommodate any areas which Members wanted to focus on.

It was **AGREED** to recommend to Full Council that the Finance Committee complete the training course.

F406/05/25 EUROPLANTS UPDATE

The Clerk confirmed that the oversized Hebbes had been removed from the high street planters and would be replanted in the Memorial Garden. She would also ensure that the council did not pay for the Cherry Tree to be watered the following year.

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F407/05/25 TO CONSIDER THE RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM THE HORAM VILLAGE HALL REGARDING OUTSTANDING INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE PC IN ORDER TO CONSIDER THE HVH PUMP TRACK GRANT REQUEST AND TO RESOLVE THE OUTCOME OF THE GRANT APPLICATION

Members noted the correspondence between the parish council and village hall regarding the village hall grant application for the pump track.

Members expressed disappointment that the information that had been requested had not been provided.

A detailed discussion had ensued.

The Finance Committee **RESOLVED** to refuse the grant application for the Pump Track. However, the Village Hall would have the opportunity to apply for a grant again in the 2025/26 year using the **new** grant application documents and policies. The unanswered questions could be discussed in detail at the Village Hall / Parish Council liaison committee meetings before the new grant window opened

F408/05/25 NEXT MEETING

October 2025 – date to be confirmed.

F409/05/25 INFORMATION TO/FROM COUNCILLORS (for noting or inclusion on future agendas)

To: - Members of the Finance Committee – Councillors Virginia Roberts, Ann Sadler, Graham Knight, Andy Billings and Sue Lane