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**MINUTES OF THE HILTON PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE MEETING HELD  
ON WEDNESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2015 AT HILTON VILLAGE HALL  
COMMENCING AT 6.30PM**

**Present:**

Cllr Cooper (in the Chair)  
Cllr Smith, Cllr Nield, Cllr McDonald, Cllr Shackleton, and Cllr Darlington.

**AGENDA**

**PART 1 - NON EXEMPT INFORMATION**

**1. Minute Number 1630/15 - To Receive Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Hudson and Cllr Davies.

**2. Minute Number 1631/15 - Variation of the Order of Business.**

There were no Variations to the Order of Business.

**3. Minute Number 1632/15 - Declaration of Members Interests.**

***Resolved: Cllr Nield declared a Pecuniary Interest in any item on the agenda relating to Hilton Village Hall. Cllr Nield did not leave the meeting when the Village Hall was discussed.***

**4. Minute Number 1633/15 - Public Speaking.**

**Minute Number 1633/15/A – Public Speaking**

Cllr Shackleton gave his report as follows:

You may all be aware that I sent an email on 02.11.2015 to all Councillors about budgeting for Financial Assistance for Hilton Village Hall. Thank you to the ones that sent back thoughtful replies, but the email was misunderstood by others.

I was not aiming to push forward in the email or suggest any decision on whether the Parish Council should give a grant to the Village Hall, this would be a ridiculous point if I tried to make it. I was trying to prompt a conversation on the ways the Parish Council might consider, if it would be appropriate or sensible for us to provide a budget for Hilton Village Hall for the year ahead.

In the event that we did receive an obligation from the Village Hall, to which we would be sympathetic, because we all know that, or I think we all know anyway, but I am not going to break confidentiality by exposing numbers here. That the Village Hall does not cover its costs. The Village Hall will require fees that it has to pay out to exist and I think we all know that.

Therefore I wondered as the Parish Council has given grants to the Village Hall in the past, they may want to budget for a possible application. This is a Parish Council budgeting matter and nothing else.

The Chair replied alright Cllr Shackleton, thank you very much for clarifying that. I guess we will talk about this later on in the agenda.

The Clerk asked Cllr Shackleton to give her a copy of his report in writing so that she could add his report to the minutes exactly how he wanted it as she had missed the first part of his report.

Cllr Shackleton replied that he would see how much time he had as he was extremely busy at the moment.

Cllr Smith replied that she had asked a couple of questions in the response email to Cllr Shackleton and asked Cllr Shackleton if he had seen this as she had not received a reply. Cllr Shackleton replied that he had seen Cllr Smith's reply and thanked her. Cllr Smith explained that when the budget for the financial year 2015/2016 was prepared the income exceeded the expenditure. Cllr Shackleton replied that he loosely remembered a copy of that budget too. Cllr Smith replied that she could not remember the actual figures but could remember that it was recommended that there should be no increase this year in the hire fees at the Village Hall as there was actually enough money in the income to cover the expenditure for this financial year. Cllr Smith asked what had changed, so that the income no longer covered the expenditure, what's happened between the budget being completed and now. Cllr Shackleton replied that he was unsure if he could speak on this matter. The Clerk replied that as per her email reply to the original email on 02.11.2015, the Parish Council should not be speaking about this matter at all as it was not on the agenda. Cllr Smith apologised to the Clerk for asking Cllr Shackleton the question.

For the clarity of the minutes, the Clerk had given the following advice in her email on 02.11.2015 to the Councillors of Hilton Parish Council and to the Councillors who were also Directors of Hilton Village Hall. (This is an extract only of the email advice sent). The above discussion went against the advice given by the Clerk/Proper Officer to Hilton Parish Council.

With the funds that Hilton Village Hall currently hold and without being able to prove their predicted spend against income with a budget for the next 12 months, Hilton Parish Council would not be able to consider any Financial support within their budget setting for 2016/2017. Hilton Parish Council is responsible for the public purse and would be required to demonstrate that Hilton Village Hall require Financial Support under Section 137 and depending

on the request, it may require a public consultation like before for obvious reasons.

Without the information that the Parish Council would require to have such a discussion or to take such a vote, it would be like a kin to giving the Village Hall Committee a blank signed cheque, without having any clue of what Hilton Village Hall may or may not require.

It would also be inappropriate and completely against Parish Council protocol for the Hilton Parish Councillors who happen to be Hilton Village Hall Directors to take any part in such a discussion or vote on Financial Support to Hilton Village Hall at a Hilton Parish Council Meeting. As Parish Councillors first and foremost all Councillors must abide by the rules that apply to the disclosure of some business or financial interest where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. It has already been resolved at a Parish Council Meeting on 24.06.2015, minute number 1573/15 – Clerk Report, item d) that any Councillor who is a Village Hall Director will declare their interest at a meeting and will leave the room when any matter concerning the Village Hall is discussed or voted on, however as Directors to Hilton Village Hall you can give representation in public speaking if you wish something to be taken into account.

There are a number of potential criminal offences associated with:

- The failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest.
- Discussion and/or voting on a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Successful prosecutions can result in a fine of £5,000.00 and disqualification for five years from your local council and from other local authorities. (see page 24 of the Good Councillor Guide 4th edition).

Cllr Shackleton replied that he had tried to phrase carefully what he had said above.

The Chair replied to Cllr Shackleton and said that he understood why Cllr Shackleton had sent the original email and why he had clarified the position tonight, however it is not really for the Parish Council to discuss Village Hall matters at a Parish Council Meeting tonight. It's for the Parish Council to discuss whether they want to put something in the budget or if the Parish Council should consider this as part of the budget setting process.

Cllr Shackleton replied that as Councillors the Parish Council have to accept what they know regardless.

Cllr Nield replied that there were certain things at the Village Hall that kept coming up, that's the issue. There are things that have not been thought about as the Village Hall and Parish Council separate out, that's what the Village Hall Directors were looking at here.

The Chair thanked Cllr Nield for clarifying this point.

### **Minute Number 1633/15/B – Police Representatives Report**

There were no Police present at the meeting and there was nothing to report.

### **Minute Number 1633/15/C – District Council Representatives Report**

There was no District Council Representative present at the meeting and there was nothing to report.

Cllr Billings sent his apologies.

### **Minute Number 1633/15/D – County Council Representatives Report**

There was no County Council Representative Present at the meeting and there was nothing to report.

***Resolved: In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded and were instructed to withdraw from the meeting.***

## **AGENDA**

### **PART 2- EXEMPT INFORMATION**

#### **Minute Number 1634/15 – Exempt Information.**

##### **a) Budget and Precept Setting 2016/2017**

Cllr Shackleton reported that on balance there was a lot of disquiet as a result of a 25% increase in the precept in the last year. He therefore thought that the Parish Council should be looking for ways to reduce the precept.

The Clerk replied that she would never advise the Parish Council to reduce their Precept, especially as the Government are considering capping Parish Councils increases in the future.

Cllr Shackleton replied to the Clerk that she gives her advice and he can give his too.

The members of Hilton Parish Council in attendance at the Finance Committee Meeting went through the draft budget prepared by the Clerk and Cllr Smith line by line as follows:

**Resolved: The Finance Committee, to recommend to full Council at their meeting to be held on 25.11.2015, that there should be an increase of 1% for all Staff including the Clerk, Groundsman and Lengthsman.**

**Resolved: The Finance Committee, to recommend to full Council that the draft budget should be agreed with only one amendment to increase the draft budget of £10,000.00 for the upgrade of the CCTV system to £15,000.00.**

**Resolved: The Finance Committee, to recommend to full Council at their meeting to be held on 25.11.2015, that the draft budget should be accepted with the above amendment.**

The Clerk recommended that Hilton Parish Council should not increase the precept for 2016/2017 considering the increase of 25% for the year 2015/2016. She explained that the Parish Council could consider a small increase of 1% but recommended that they did not go any higher than this.

**Resolved: The Finance Committee to recommend to full Council that the Precept be frozen for 2016/2017 and should remain at £165,000.00.**

Signed.....Dated.....