|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Subject** | Fountain Refurbishment, Hinton Martell |
| **Meeting** | 7 October 2025 |
| **Author** | Tim Read and Ian Hanstead |

**Background**

The fountain (in the centre of the village) was built around 1876 by Henry Burt, the owner of Witchampton Paper Mill and surrounding farm, who lived in the village of Hinton Martell (60 houses). The fountain is believed to be an overspill from the water springs in the area.

From records, it appears that the ownership of the land was an issue for more than 10 years in the 1960s, with the then Hinton Martell Parish Council (HMPC) unable to establish the landowner the fountain sits on. This continued, on and off, for almost 50 years. In the meantime, HMPC maintained the fountain. After extensive searches, in June 2007, the fountain was legally registered with the Land Registry to Vale of Allen Parish Council. It has been a focal attraction for both villagers and tourists alike. The fountain receives regular annual maintenance mainly to the water, electricity and spray jets.

However, the masonry on and in the fountain is cracked, areas broken and generally in very poor condition (last full refurbishment 1953, several minor refurbishments since). Over the last few years, a provision has been made within the annual precept to raise funds to enable this work to proceed.

**Power supply** – currently supplied by The Rectory through a check-meter, with the house reimbursed twice yearly, but Salisbury Parochial Council who owns the house, very slow in adopting a suggestion to formalise the situation and enter into an agreement for an easement or similar – just in case the house is sold in the future.

An alternative would be an independent supply. A quote by SSEN to provide a cable from the sub-station across the road at around £24,000 making this option unviable. However, another option aided by a local electrician has arisen taking a power supply from a telegraph pole only metres from the fountain at a greatly reduced cost.

**Options:**

1. Do not replace but remove – not favoured as a local community feature, and odd piece of land would need works to be suitable to apply for road adoption.
2. Replace with a large flower bed – not favoured as on-going grounds maintenance
3. Refurbish to existing design, put it back to original state, rendering it durable and virtually maintenance free and long lasting.

**Finance**

It has been difficult to obtain quotations due to the uniqueness of the asset. Several companies refused to provide a quote after seeing the fountain and complexity. There are relatively few companies undertaking this work. The Parish Council’s Financial Regulations (paragraph 10.3) requires three quotations for work of this size. However, as this is specialised work, the committee would need to agree to waive Financial Regulations (paragraph 11.1d) for this to proceed.

The quotations/comments:

* Castle Maurward College (previous refurbish company) – no longer undertake stonework
* Kevin Rigler – too complicated.
* Matrod – Frampton – declined to quote.
* Bernard Franklin – declined to quote.
* DH Watergardens – marble bowl - £32,750 + VAT
* }Hunter Masonry £15,150 (no VAT applicable), Plus

}RAD Electrical £5,066 (including SSEN works) (includes VAT)

} totalling £20,216

The current council budget in Earmarked Funds for Hinton is:

Fountain Project **£10,051**

Fountain Private donations **£ 813**

Subtotal **£10,864**

At a previous meeting members indicated utilising some of its Community Infrastructure Levy income **£ 6,000**. Dorset Council has approved the use of CIL for this project.

There will be a shortfall of approximately **£5,000** (when allowing for professional project management).

A meeting took place on 12 September to consult residents to seek views on the proposed refurbishment and private donations. At that meeting, residents unanimously agreed to the Hunter Masonry & RAD project. However, a shortfall still exists, Private donations are being sought following the meeting. However, a shortfall could be achieved by internal ‘loans’ to be made from other Parish budgets, to be repaid by Hinton Parish as soon as possible. Hinton’s Precept to remain at its current level or higher to repay internal loans and to start to build up reserves for future refurbishment.

**Recommendation**

That the Committee approve the:

* The waiving of Financial Regulations on this occasion to accept one quotation.
* Hunter Masonry and RAD Electrical be appointed to refurbish the fountain and supply the necessary electrical works..
* Agreed to the use of £6,000 from its CIL budget
* Agree for temporary loans to be made from other Parish project budgets within the Vale of Allen Parish Council if a shortfall exists.
* Apply to Dorset Council for temporary road closure.