

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE**  
**OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE PAVILION, LUTON ROAD SPORTS FIELD**  
**ON MONDAY 28<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2025 COMMENCING AT 8.26pm**

**Present:** Councillors S Laycock (Chair), W Rudd (Vice-chair), G Gardner, K Qureshi, B Thomas

**Attending:** S Cowie (Assistant Clerk)

**Minutes Taken by:** S Cowie

**24/555 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors J Paxton, J Mikkelsen and A Vale

**24/556 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - None declared.

**24/557 MATTERS ARISING**

The full-time groundsman has sourced summer bedding plants for the 2 planters at the war memorial. The cost will be retrospectively approved, once finalised.

**24/558 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 17<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025**

There were no queries. Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** approval of the minutes of the Burial Grounds Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**. The minutes were approved.

**24/559 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE INSPECTIONS OF THE BURIAL GROUND, CHURCHYARD AND WAR MEMORIAL**

The inspections, undertaken by the Groundsmen on 24<sup>th</sup> April were acknowledged. Everything was in order at the War Memorial and Burial Ground. In the Churchyard, the warning signs on the unstable memorials were checked.

**24/560 TO REVIEW/APPROVE THE BENCH POLICY AND BENCH PACKAGE FOR THE BURIAL GROUND**

A review of the Policy, Application Form and Bench Package took place. There were no proposed changes to the Policy or Application. Up-to-date costs for the approved bench for the Burial Ground was provided and reviewed. Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** approval of the Bench Policy and Package, **SECONDED** by Councillor Qureshi and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**. The policy will be reviewed by the Leisure Committee at their next meeting, ready for adoption by the Full Council.

**24/561 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE MEETING AT ST NICHOLAS CHURCH TO DISCUSS STRUCTURAL ISSUES WITH THE SOUTH AISLE**

The Assistant Clerk attended an onsite meeting with the Structural Engineer, Church Architect, and Church Wardens on 17<sup>th</sup> April. As previously reported the south aisle of the church is experiencing serious structural issues and there is evidence of cracking and falling masonry. Following investigation, it was agreed that the yew tree closest to the aisle must be reduced in size urgently to alleviate further deterioration of the church. The remaining trees which surround the church must also be cut back to protect the church from damage.

The Assistant Clerk reported that she is liaising with St Albans Diocese regarding permission and that the planning application has been submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council. As mentioned, work to the tree closest to the south aisle is urgent and permission is therefore being sought to action this as a priority. Other tree work, identified within the tree survey will be actioned after bird nesting, subject to planning approval.

Advice regarding future maintenance of the trees is being sought so that sufficient budgets can be set each year.

**24/562 TO CONSIDER/APPROVE QUOTATION FOR ESSENTIAL TREE WORKS WITHIN THE CHURCHYARD**

The quotations were considered and following discussion, Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** that the quotation from Jempson Tree Service at a cost of £2,000 + VAT should be accepted. It was noted that

the cost could change, dependent on the planning decision from Central Bedfordshire Council. Councillor Thomas **SECONDED** the proposal, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**24/563 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE MEMORIAL STABILITY FINDINGS IN THE CHURCHYARD**

Following the inspection, signs have been displayed on each of the failed memorials, and the article seeking relatives has been included in the latest Parish Newsletter which has been shared on the website, notice boards and social media. The library has agreed to display the information in the hope that relatives or grave owners can be located. The ICCM have advised that the Parish Council has a duty to make safe only, and laying down a memorial could be an option if relatives cannot be found. It was noted that it is good practice to have a policy on memorial stability testing and clear guidance on the actions to be taken for any failed memorials. A suitable policy will be progressed and an update on the search for grave owners/relatives, who are responsible for the memorials, will be provided at the next meeting.

**24/564 TO CONSIDER/APPROVE QUOTAITON FOR MEMORIAL WORK WITHIN ST NICHOLAS CHURCHYARD**

Following discussion Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** the quotation from G&R Lee Memorials should be accepted at a maximum cost of £1,956.60 to include labour and materials. Councillor Rudd **SECONDED** the proposal, and it was **UNAIMOUSLY CARRIED**. Costs will be recovered wherever possible.

**25/565 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE VE DAY 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY BEACON LIGHTING EVENT ON 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2025 AND AGREE ANY ACTIONS AND COSTS**

The Assistant Clerk provided an update on the events to celebrate VE Day. Arrangements are progressing well and on track ready for the big day. A new gas cylinder will be purchased, and a fire extinguisher has been ordered. Details of the volunteer marshals is outstanding, and Councillors Qureshi and Rudd volunteered to help if needed. The VE day flag, Tommy statue and bunting were due to be displayed at the War Memorial the following day. The library has decorated the inside and outside of the building in readiness. The judge for the baking competition is confirmed and judging will take place prior to the coffee and cake morning at 10.30am on 8<sup>th</sup> May.

**24/566 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**

There was none and the meeting closed at 9.29pm