

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY 28th FEBRUARY 2022 COMMENCING AT 8.00pm**

Present: Councillors Mr J Paxton (Chairman), Mr N Day (Vice-Chair), Mr J Selley, Miss G Widdowfield and Mrs B Thomas (ex-officio)

In Attendance: Mrs C Callen (Clerk)

Minutes: Mrs C Callen

21/524 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Councillors Mr J Roberts and Mrs A Miller.

Councillor Paxton welcomed Councillor Widdowfield to the Committee.

21/525 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (*Cllrs may make declarations pertaining to the agenda at this point or at any point during the meeting*) – There were none.

21/526 MATTERS ARISING –

The 36 Trees from the Treescape Fund have been planted over the last couple of weeks around the Village (some delayed due to the storms). Overall feedback from the Community is favourable. The Clerk advised that the two dead trees in front of the War Memorial are due to be felled as soon as possible and their stumps will be ground out at a later date.

As a result of Storm Eunice, there were several trees/branches down at Lovers Walk/top Old Road. The Groundsman has managed to clear the footpaths from most of the smaller ones. The local farmer has been contacted to see if they are able to move the remaining large Beech tree to save contracting a tree surgeon. There was also some residents fence damage behind Simpkins Drive. Councillor Paxton expressed thanks on behalf of the Council for the work undertaken by the Groundsman.

A request for volunteers to help with SpeedWatch was put out on the latest Parish Newsletter. There are already 2 Councillors and 2 residents interested in joining – no additional volunteers have come forward as yet. This will be discussed further at the next Committee meeting, once any further responses are received. Councillor Widdowfield volunteered to also be involved with this activity.

21/527 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE HIGHWAYS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31st JANUARY 2022

A copy of the minutes was provided to all members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** approval of the minutes of 31st January 2022, **SECONDED** by Councillor Day **with 4 in favour and 1 abstention**.

21/528 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE BUS SHELTERS INSPECTION

The inspection undertaken on 17th February was acknowledged. Everything was in order.

21/529 UPDATE REGARDING THE BEDS PCC ROAD SAFETY FUND APPLICATION

As reported at the February Full Council, the OPCC have awarded the Council a Grant of £5k to fund a portable speed sign for the Village. The Grant agreement is being reviewed at present and more information will be received by the end of March. This will be considered in line with the next item on the agenda.

21/530 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE SUITABLE SCHEMES FOR THE RURAL MATCH FUNDING INTEGRATED PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23 AND 2023/24

Central Beds Council have provided details of the Rural Match Funding Scheme being launched this year. At the last Committee meeting, members agreed to review the scheme and come up with suggested ideas to be approved and then ratified at the March Full Council meeting. Deadline for submission of schemes to CBC is 8th April 2022.

The Clerk went back with several questions to CBC following the last meeting – no response has yet been received.

Members discussed possible options during the meeting and after consideration in line with the parameters of the scheme, agreed to put forward the following two areas:

- Bedford Road between the Grange Road Roundabout and Manor Road junction where the road is wide and traffic often exceeds the speed limit. A combination of dragon's teeth

road markings to give the effect of road narrowing and Speed Indicator Devices was suggested.

- Sharpenhoe Road between the bridge and the footpath next to no. 42 to warn traffic entering the Village that the road ahead is narrow – dragon’s teeth to slow the traffic down.

ACTION – Clerk to complete the draft application form for these two areas for approval at Full Council.

Clerk to contact CBC regarding exploring a possible zebra crossing on Bedford Road and also the purchase of the portable speed sign using the OPCC grant funding.

21/531 TO CONSIDER OPTIONS FOR THE AREA OPPOSITE 27 OLD ROAD

A resident from Old Road has contacted the Parish Council regarding the barriers at the far end of the road (opposite No. 27). These were put in place to prevent anti-social parking during the Pandemic. The resident has asked that a more permanent solution be now considered in this area to improve the look of the road. The barriers were blown over in the recent storm but the Groundsman has now put them straight. It would appear that some hawthorn samplings have been planted in the area recently (close to the roadside). Members agreed that since the land is in Central Beds Council Highways jurisdiction, they were limited in what they could do to improve the area – requests for planting have previously been declined. It was suggested that maybe a large tree-trunk could be moved there by the local farmer to block cars from parking.

ACTION – Clerk to investigate possible options and report back at the next meeting.

21/532 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE REQUEST TO PURCHASE COMMUNITY LITTER PICKING EQUIPMENT

The Clerk has met with a representative from the Rotary Club to discuss litter-picking around the Village. They will be organising an event for the Great British Spring Clean and are happy to co-ordinate that and other regular litter-picking activities. They would appreciate a donation of equipment, if the Parish Council would consider this.

The Clerk has also contacted the Admin for the ‘Barton Springs Clean’ WhatsApp group. They have provided the background for when they formed in March 2021. There are currently c.26 residents in the group. They usually undertake individual picks at a time to suit themselves and report it to the group, so that the same areas are not repeated on the same day – group collections were not encouraged during the Covid Pandemic restrictions. They generally have their own equipment.

Both the Rotary representative and Barton Springs Clean Admin are happy for their contact details to be given to anyone interested in joining them for litter picking.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange for Rotary representative to make contact with the WhatsApp Group Admin.

With regards to litter picking equipment, the Rotary Representative has requested an extra-long litter picker (cost £48.33+VAT) that could be used by the Groundsman and himself for reaching into hedges/ditches to retrieve rubbish. In addition, it was suggested that regular litter-pickers/hoops/hi-viz jackets/gloves could be purchased for volunteers to use – the Rotary Representative is happy to be the custodian of these. It was suggested 6 of each item would be ideal. After consideration, Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** approval of a maximum £250 plus VAT be spent on equipment to be donated for litter-picking activities, **SECONDED** by Councillor Widdowfield and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

21/533 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN EVENT 2022

The next Great British Spring Clean event is planned for 25th March – 10th April 2022.

After discussion, it was agreed for the Parish Council to publicise the event on social media and website to encourage volunteers to come forward. The Rotary Club have confirmed that they are happy to organise an event, with the Parish Council providing support, as appropriate.

CBC have confirmed that they will arrange collection of any waste from a pre-agreed location, following the event.

The Clerk has registered on the Keep Britain Tidy website, which has lots of useful information, posters, logos, etc. and bags and equipment can also be ordered from their site.

21/534 TO CONSIDER SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL TRUST’S ‘NO MOW MAY’ CHALLENGE

The National Trust is asking local councils and others to support plant life by taking part in their campaign by not mowing grass in May. Changing mowing routines and allowing plants to flower can create enough nectar for 10x more bees and other pollinators.

Obviously, the Sports pitches, parks, allotments and Burial Ground areas must be regularly mown for H&S/usage. The extension field at the top of Arnold Rec is usually left anyway due to Bee Orchids/flowers during May-July.

Members were keen to support biodiversity within the Village, if possible. Following discussion, Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** to leave Simpkins Drive open space and the Heritage Garden unmown during May and to promote the campaign on local Social Media to residents. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Day **with 4 in favour and 1 against**.

21/535

ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE

The Clerk advised that a resident has requested 'No parking at Anytime' signage be put up along Church Road, to reinforce the double yellow line areas. This would need to be considered and agreed by Central Beds Council Highways department as the Parish Council do not have the power to provide these. The Church railings are protected and no signage will be allowed on them, within the Conservation Area. After discussion, it was agreed that signage would not be appropriate. The Parish Council will continue to encourage CBC to provide regular Enforcement Officers to patrol the area, particularly at weekends.

Meeting closed at 9.04pm