

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEISURE COMMITTEE  
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE PARISH OFFICE  
ON 4<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024 COMMENCING AT 7.31pm**

**Present:** Councillors B Thomas (Chair), G Gardner, S Laycock, K Qureshi, J Mikkelson,  
J Paxton (ex-officio)

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

**Minutes Taken by:** S Cowie

**23/503 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - were received from Councillors A Vale & N Day

**23/504 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Members were reminded of the procedures, there were no declarations of interest made.

**23/505 MATTERS ARISING**

The contractor has been asked for an update on the hedgerow planting in the allotments. No response had been received.

Following the announcement that Central Bedfordshire Council will be charging for green waste collections from April 2024, Ward Councillor Childs has asked whether a communal compost area would be feasible at the allotment site. Members were disappointed to hear of Central Bedfordshire Councils decision to make the additional charge and agreed that the item should be discussed at the Full Council meeting.

**23/506 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 29<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2024**

There were no queries on the minutes. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** approval of the minutes of the Leisure Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 **SECONDED** by Councillor Mikkelson with **4 in favour and 2 abstentions**. The minutes were approved.

**23/507 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WEEKLY INSPECTIONS OF THE PLAYGROUND AND FITNESS EQUIPMENT**

The inspections of the Norman Road and Arnold Recreation Ground Play Areas and Fitness Equipment undertaken by the Groundsmen on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February were acknowledged.

On 13<sup>th</sup> January, in the Arnold Recreation Ground, the closing mechanism on the Play Area gate was noted as needing repair and there was flooding. Everything was in order on 20<sup>th</sup> and on 27<sup>th</sup> the play area was noted as flooded.

Everything was in order in the Norman Road Play Area and with the Fitness Equipment.

**23/508 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PLAY EQUIPMENT WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBURARY AND APPROVE ANY ACTIONS**

A copy of the minutes was circulated prior to the meeting, there were no queries. Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** the receipt and ratification of the minutes and recommendations made at the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024. Councillor Gardner **SECONDED** the proposal, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/509 TO CONSIDER/APPROVE THE ANNUAL CONTRACT COST FOR FIELD TOPPING**

The quotation for the annual topping of the field contract was considered. In 2023 a total of 3 cuts had taken place, avoiding No Mow May and the orchid growing season.

The contractor advised that during the non-cutting months, there had been a lot of growth which had caused issues when cutting resumed. Due to the length of the growth, another contractor had to be called in, at additional cost, to ensure that the field was left in good condition.

Members agreed that cutting during the orchid growing season should be avoided wherever possible, but that the growth should be regularly monitored, and cuts undertaken as necessary. It was noted that the height of the cutting blades can be heightened to avoid the orchids, should cutting be necessary.

Councillor Thomas then **PROPOSED** approval of the quotation from Mr Horner, for the annual field topping contractor at a cost of £180.00 + VAT. The first cut to take place before No Mow May and the orchid growing season, subsequent cuts to be undertaken as necessary. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Qureshi and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/510 TO CONSIDER/APPROVE THE COST FOR THE ANNUAL RoSPA INSPECTION OF ARNOLD RECREATION GROUND, NORMAN ROAD PLAY AREA AND THE FITNESS EQUIPMENT**

Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** approval of the cost for RoSPA Play Safety to carry out the annual inspections of the Arnold Recreation Ground Play Area, Norman Road Play Area, Fitness Equipment, Zip Wire and Table Tennis Table at a cost of £270.00 + VAT. Councillor Laycock **SECONDED** the proposal, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/511 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON FLOODING IN ARNOLD RECREATION GROUND AND AGREE THE WAY FORWARD**

There has been extensive flooding in the Play Area over recent months, which has extended into the Recreation Ground as far as the basketball net. A meeting has been arranged with Central Bedfordshire Councils Senior Drainage Engineer and Ward Councillor Childs to look at the problem and options to help the play area and the neighbouring roadway which is prone to flooding. An update will be provided once the meeting has taken place.

**23/512 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PEDESTRIAN GATE, ARNOLD RECREATION GROUND PLAY AREA AND CONSIDER/APPROVE REPAIR COSTS**

Following investigation of the closing mechanism, the contractor confirms that it will need replacing as no further adjustments can be made and the mechanism is no longer under any warranty.

Councillor Qureshi **PROPOSED** approval of the quotation from Gilks Fencing to remove existing part, supply and fit new part at a cost of £250.87 + VAT. Councillor Gardner **SECONDED** the proposal, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/513 TO CONSIDER/APPROVE COST FOR HEDGEROW PLANTING IN ARNOLD RECREATION GROUND**

The groundsmen have been able to realign the post and chain link to close off the gap in the fence, opposite Orchard Close. No additional materials were needed. Members considered the proposal and cost to plant new hedge along this section to form a hedge along the whole length of the perimeter.

Following discussion, Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** approval of the cost of £70.00 + VAT to purchase hedge plants from Chris Green. Councillor Thomas **SECONDED** the proposal, and it was **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/514 TO CONSIDER/APPROVE COST FOR TREE WORK IN THE NORMAN ROAD PLAY AREA AND CONSIDER REPLANTING**

The quote to fell the dead willow tree in the Play Area was unavailable at the time of the meeting. Members discussed replanting and agreed to revisit this in the autumn. **ACTION: quotes to be sought and discussed at the Full Council meeting.**

**23/515 TO REVIEW THE FENCING AND SECURITY IN THE ALLOTMENTS AND AGREE THE WAY FORWARD**

Three locations within the site were discussed.

Following a Police foot chase and concerns of safety, two residents have erected a wooden fence on their boundary. A second area was reviewed, and it was agreed that when materials and budget are available, fencing should be erected on the allotment boundary.

The boundary with the new community garden was reviewed. The current fence is damaged and will need to be replaced. It was also agreed that the area should be planted to form a hedge along the whole length.

**ACTION: Assistant Clerk to seek quotes for materials and hedge plants.**

**23/516 TO CONSIDER IDEAS FOR A COLLECTION POINT FOR EXCESS PRODUCE AT THE ALLOTMENT SITE**

There were various ideas put forward and a mix of views on how the system could work. Following discussion, it was agreed that boxes/crates should be used as a trial. A base or table would be needed, and the Assistant clerk was asked to liaise with the groundsmen to agree a suitable location at the front of the site.

**23/517 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA  
– for information only**  
There was no further business.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm