

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEISURE COMMITTEE**  
**OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL**  
**HELD AT THE PARISH OFFICE, 1 WINDSOR PARADE**  
**ON 7<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2024 COMMENCING AT 7.30 pm**

**Present:** Councillors A Vale (Chair), B Thomas (Vice-Chair), G Gardner, K Qureshi, J Mikkelson and J Paxton  
**Attending:** C Callen (Clerk)  
**Minutes Taken by:** C Calen

**24/203 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – These were received from Councillor A Tebb.

**24/204 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Members were reminded of the procedures. There were none.

**24/205 MATTERS ARISING**  
There were none.

**24/206 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 15<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024**  
A copy of the minutes was provided to all members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Vale **PROPOSED** approval of the minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024, **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas **with 5 in favour and 1 abstention**.

**24/207 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 9<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October were acknowledged. Everything was in order. Flooding in the play area and basketball area was reported following the recent heavy rain.

**24/208 TO REVIEW THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING ANNUAL MAINTENANCE OF THE ZIP WIRE**

Details of findings, recommendations and repairs undertaken by the contractor (Kettering Playsafe Ltd) were provided to members ahead of the meeting and were reviewed.

Whilst on site, the handles on the aeroskate were replaced (as per the Rospa recommendation) and new chains, which had been sent in error by the manufacturer, were also replaced. Quotes for the replacement parts recommended to be replaced will be sought, for budgeting purposes, including clarification on timings for the repairs.

**24/209 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING FENCE REPAIR IN THE RECREATION GROUND AND AGREE WAY FORWARD**

The Groundmen have been working to repair the chain link fence which was damaged when the tree fell into a garden in Church Road. They have encountered difficulties due to a tree branch which is overhanging the residents garden and has stopped them tightening the chain link to complete the work. The overhanging branch needs to be cut back from the resident's garden side and so access permission is required. Permission may also be needed from Central Beds Council as the tree is within the Conservation Area.

Councillor Paxton has received an email from the resident asking for an update on the fence works.

**ACTION – Clerk to write to the resident with an update on the partially completed work and to request permission to access their garden to complete the task. Central Beds Council to be contacted to clarify if further planning permission is required.**

**24/210 TO ACKNOWLEDGE COMPLAINT REGARDING DOG FOULING IN THE RECREATION GROUND AND AGREE WAY FORWARD**

A resident has raised concerns regarding the levels of dog fouling on the Recreation Ground. The Assistant Clerk has asked Central Beds Council (CBC) whether they can supply signs to advise dog owners of their responsibilities and is awaiting a response.

If signs are not available via CBC, they can be purchased online. Councillor Vale **PROPOSED** a maximum budget of £100 plus VAT to purchase 6 signs for the 3 entrances, if necessary. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Mikkelson and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

In addition, the Clerk is in the process of agreeing with CBC the installation of an additional dog waste bin at the Washbrook Close entrance, which may help the situation.

**24/211 TO CONSIDER DAMAGE TO THE LOCK ON THE ENTRANCE GATE INTO THE RECREATION GROUND AND AGREE THE WAY FORWARD**

On 21<sup>st</sup> September, it was reported that the new latch on the gate into the Recreation Ground at Washbrook Close entrance was broken. The latch appeared to have been forced and sheared off. The latch was only recently installed by Project Metalcraft and they were asked to take a look and whether there is any warranty. As the latch has been vandalised, the warranty is void. Project Metalcraft have attended site and fitted a new latch to the mechanism. Councillor Vale **PROPOSED** retrospective approval of the cost for the repair of £40 plus VAT, **SECONDED** by Councillor Paxton and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**ACTION – Members requested that the cost to install a slam plate, as recommended by the contractor, be obtained for further discussion at Full Council.**

**24/212 TO CONSIDER/APPROVE THE COST TO CUT THE PERIMETER HEDGE AT THE RECREATION GROUND**

The Assistant Clerk has met with a local farmer to review the hedgeworks required around the perimeter of the Recreation Ground and top field. Only part of the hedge along Old Road is currently included in the annual maintenance contract.

Recommendations were discussed, including flailing the internal hedge around the top field and the external hedge on Old Road where it is obscuring the road signs, but leaving the area where the bollards were installed to tackle parking issues.

In the Recreation Ground, the internal hedgerow on the Church Road and Hexton Road boundaries has not been cut back for many years. The most cost-effective action is to flail as much as possible, noting that there will be areas which are not accessible, and some hand cutting will be necessary. This can be reviewed and tackled after the flail has taken place.

Councillor Vale **PROPOSED** that the local farmer flails the hedgerow, as recommended, subject to suitable weather conditions, with a total maximum budget of £400 allowed. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Qureshi and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**24/213 TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM AN ALLOTMENT TENANT TO REVERSE THE DECISION TO END THEIR TENANCY**

Councillor Vale declared a non-pecuniary interest as an allotment tenant.

The tenant of an Allotment Plot has appealed the decision to terminate their tenancy agreement based on health grounds. A letter regarding the condition of the plot was sent to the tenant on 5<sup>th</sup> July but no response was received. Following a further site visit on 20<sup>th</sup> September, it was noted that no progress or improvements had been made since July and the tenant was therefore given notice to leave.

In 2023, several letters were sent to the tenant regarding their non-cultivation of the plot. Following an appeal by the tenant, leniency was granted, and the tenant was allowed to renew their tenancy for a further year.

The Parish Council sympathise with the tenant's health issues and agree that the current plot is too large for them to handle at the present time. After consideration, Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** that the termination of the tenancy should stand but that once the tenant recovers, they are welcome to re-apply again for a smaller plot, subject to availability at that time. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Mikkelson **with 5 in favour and 1 abstention**.

**24/214 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PLAY EQUIPMENT PROJECT**

Councillor Mikkelson provided an update regarding the current plans to improve the play equipment offering for the Village. It was also reported that there has been extensive flooding in the play areas and basketball area following the heavy rainfall. Specific items 24/215 and 24/216 cover further expenditure to improve the areas.

Councillor Gardner requested an update regarding the proposed street signage for Norman Road Play Area.

**ACTION – Assistant Clerk to chase Central Beds Council in this regard and also to investigate the cost to purchase a sign, subject to CBC approval.**

**24/215 TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE THE COST FOR MATERIALS TO REFURBISH THE PLAY EQUIPMENT AT THE RECREATION GROUND AND NORMAN ROAD PLAY AREA**

Further to previous discussions to refurbish the current play equipment, paint and brushes have now been purchased to undertake this work. Councillor Vale **PROPOSED** retrospective approval of the total cost of £513 plus VAT for the equipment from Fenland Leisure Products Ltd, **SECONDED** by Councillor Mikkelson and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**. In addition, Councillor Vale **PROPOSED** an additional maximum £75 budget to purchase the remaining items of rollers and varnish, **SECONDED** by Councillor Paxton and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**24/216 TO CONSIDER/APPROVE QUOTE FOR REPAIR TO SAFETY SURFACING IN THE NORMAN ROAD PLAY AREA**

As previously requested, Kettering Playsafe Ltd have now provided a quote to repair the safety surfacing in Norman Road Play Area. After consideration, Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** to accept the quote of £552 plus VAT from Kettering Playsafe Ltd to undertake the repair work, **SECONDED** by Councillor Paxton and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**24/217 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA – for information only**

Outstanding items for future meetings to discuss include: hedge planting in Norman Road play area; signage for the fitness equipment; actions from Rospa for cost approval; agree a plan to refurbish/replace the Recreation Ground gates and plot markers for the allotments.

The meeting closed at 8.26pm