

**EMERGENCY MEETING TO AGREE PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLAN FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL
DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
HELD AT THE PARISH OFFICE, MONDAY 23RD MARCH 2020, 10.00 AM**

Present: Councillors Mr L Davison-Williams (Chair), Mrs B Thomas (Vice-Chair), Mrs C Callen (Parish Clerk), Mrs S Cowie (Assistant Clerk)

Minutes: Mrs C Callen (Clerk) & Mrs S Cowie (Assistant Clerk)

DECISION MAKING

Urgent decisions must be made by a 2 people - Clerk or Assistant Clerk plus Chair or Vice-Chair

Closing parks/open space

In the event that HM Government order that parks should be closed, Norman Road play area gate to be locked. With Arnold Rec there is little we can do to restrict access. Suitable signage, etc. should be arranged in this event. It may be necessary to close the allotments, this will be difficult as there is no gate in place.

UPDATE: ON 24/3/2020 all play areas, fitness equipment were closed. Signage has been displayed on Arnold Rec notice board, at the entrances to Arnold rec play area, tape has been wrapped around the fitness equipment and signage displayed. Norman Road play area gate is locked and signage displayed. In addition signage has been displayed on the allotment and burial ground notice board giving recommendations as per Government advice.

COMMITTEE PRIORITIES:

Leisure

- **Grant application and installation of cable way in Arnold Rec**
The Grant application has been submitted to CBC, awaiting the decision.
Approval from Barton Educational Trust is needed before the equipment can be installed as they are the land-owners. The Trust were due to meet last week, this was called off due to Coronavirus and no new date has been set as yet. **ACTION - Assistant Clerk to email the Clerk to the Trust asking if members would consider our request via email.**
- **Securing the allotment wild area boundaries** – meeting held with Barton Countryside Conservation, awaiting suggestions and quotes for this.
- **Enquiries for allotments** have been coming in. Councillor Thomas was, at the time of the meeting, happy to meet with potential plot-holders to show them around. Following the meeting it was agreed that a map and details of available plots should be sent to those on the waiting list, plot-holders to advise which plot they would like to work.
- **Refuse Bins** – there is a possibility that CBC will halt bin collections in our parks. In this case the PC will empty the bin and leave on the kerbside for collection.

Horticultural Show

- Continue to plan for the show at this point. Show schedules are being delivered to all allotment plotters. A copy of the schedule also sent to show judges. **ACTION - Councillor Davison-Williams to check size for banner by the Co-op, Assistant Clerk to seek quote for banner.**

Burials

- **St Nicholas Churchyard unsafe headstones/memorials.** Assistant Clerk to check which of the unsafe memorials have been laid down and report back to Councillor Davison-Williams.
UPDATE 24/3/2020 : the headstones needing urgent attention are crosses on plinths. All 5 are upright and have been cordoned off with warning tape. Quotations for works required are awaited.
- **Re-planting of roses in the Garden of Rest** – 2 roses have not been planted by the contractor. Agreed the contractor should bill the PC for the work he has done, missing roses to be planted when available in the Autumn.
- **Request for a Boulder style memorial in the Burial Ground** – the width of the boulder does not meet our regulations as it is too wide. Memorial Mason to be advised the request has been refused. They should either re-apply with a memorial which falls within our regulations or can appeal the

decision if they wish. **UPDATE: Mason advised of the decision, they are relaying this to the family.**

Sports Field

- Dog waste bin has been installed.
- **Use of the Pitches** – Beds FA have suspended all play. ACTION- Assistant Clerk to contact Beds FA to ask what plan they have to finish the season. If no games are to be played the PC may wish to bring forward it's annual maintenance – drill seeding, etc.
UPDATE 23/03/2020: Beds FA do not have firm details but feel it is unlikely that games will take place over the summer months. They will update as soon as they know more.
- **Chiltern League Tournament** is due to take place on 3rd May 2020. Action: check with organisers whether this is going ahead.

Grass Cutting

Grass cutting is due to start. Agreed Reynolds should begin this week (burial ground and churchyard), Grangers next week (sport field, Arnold Rec, Norman Road play area, allotments, Grange Road estate). Contractors have been advised.

Policies and Resources – Tenants/Local Facilities

- **Tennis Club** - agreed that due to coronavirus, the PC will pay the tennis clubs fees for this year which amounts to £1,650.00. Monies are set aside for maintenance to the facility when needed. The renewal of the three year tenancy agreement should be issued.
- **Barton Rovers** – agreed that the annual rent should be waived this year given the current circumstances. The PC strongly urges that Barton Rovers do not charge the Bowls Club either.
- **Village Hall** – the hall closed on Sunday 23rd March. The annual fee for road maintenance to be paid by the PC, this amounts to £500.00.
- **Doctors** – continue to pay their portion of the road maintenance as they are operational and not affected in the same way. Councillor Davison-Williams has asked the Doctors to compile a list of vulnerable patients, to be held by the PC. Not clear whether this will be possible due to GDPR. One problem they are experiencing is the large number of non-residents collecting medication from the surgery. They currently have one volunteer who is able to deliver prescriptions however Councillor Davison-Williams suggested the PC may be able to help with this by asking our groundsmen whether they would be willing to step in whilst they are not required at the sports field. Areas to be covered include Silsoe/Barton Hills. UPDATE: part-time groundsman is happy to help with this, doctors to provide training as soon as possible.
- **Barton Helping Hands** – the PC already pay their insurance premium. Clerk to make contact with the Chair of Helping Hands to ascertain what resource they may need from the Parish Council during this period.
- **Unity Hall** – Quarterly water Bill due April to be reviewed with a view of not charging.

Planning

- **Planning applications** - No new plans at present. Any plans received will be emailed to committee members who can view the plans on-line. A hard copy can be provided for Councillors, if needed. Deadlines for comments to be included in the information.
- **Capacity analysis** – Councillor Davison-Williams has asked CBC for information. Due to the high level of information requested CBC have advised they will provide this by 4th April.
- **Turleys** – Request for information on village facilities on behalf of Taylor Wimpey has been received. **ACTION – Clerk to acknowledge and advise that once Council able to meet and review the information required, this will be provided.**

Highways

- **Bus Shelters** – confirmation received from CBC regarding the use of the billboards. Suggested response “the parish council is happy to trial the billboards for a 12 month period however reserves the right to withdraw our consent if inappropriate material is placed in the billboards”. Any vandalism damage costs as a result of the displays to be covered by CBC. **ACTION - Clerk to respond.**

Policies and Resources

- **IT Support & Hardware** – This has been instructed and ordered, awaiting delivery and installation. Revised policies will be required in due course. **ACTION – Clerk to investigate purchase of 2x laptops for staff and VPN access, with associated costs.**
UPDATE: new IT to be installed 31st March. Clerk/Chairman discussing way forward with possible laptops for remote working.

- **Ward Boundaries** –Further to discussion at Full Council, response received from the Boundaries Commission to be circulated to members. **ACTION – Clerk to write to CBC to clarify their proposals regarding residents and councillors for each area.**
- **CCTV Update** – CBC have approved use of street lights, subject to costs for power being met. Councillor Davison-Williams to liaise with the Action Against Crime committee and Council to consider use-based policies.
- **Annual Policies Review** – The Financial Regulations were reviewed during the meeting, given their relevance to the delegated working being proposed. Further Policies are due for annual review in April. **ACTION – Clerk to send copies of the policies, with any proposed changes highlighted, to all members to confirm that they are happy to adopt.**
- **Payments** – Clerk to continue to process payments and arrange for cheques/invoices to be overviewed by 2x councillors/cheque signatories via delivery/collection from their homes. Chairman to check access to accounts and payroll software in case of need.

Pay & Personnel

- **Coronavirus/Corvid-19 Staff policy** template provided by Peninsula HR. The Clerk has reviewed and amended to fit the Council requirements. **ACTION – Chairman and Chair of P&R to review and agree if ok to adopt and issue.** If any staff become unwell, they are to follow the usual sickness procedures and advise Clerk/Chairman.
- **Playground Keyholder** – agreed to suspend monthly cleaning of Parish Office with staff to ensure it is kept clean on a daily basis. Park to be kept open unless advised otherwise. If ill or self-isolating, staff or councillors to action opening. **UPDATE: following latest Government announcement, both playgrounds have been shut and the Playground Keyholder advised to stay at home on full pay until advised otherwise.**
- **Groundsman** – Advised to concentrate on key/urgent tasks, e.g. Legionella testing, inspections, bin emptying and litter picking, maintaining white-lining on football pitches. **UPDATE: Following latest advice, Full Time Groundsman working reduced hours as required to concentrate on key tasks. Part-time Groundsman continuing with white-lining pitches and assisting Doctors surgery with delivery of prescriptions. Both retained on full pay.**
- **Office Staff** – exploring option for remote working from home. Parish Office already closed to public. **UPDATE: Following latest advice, office staff working with only one person in office at any one time. Pending changes in IT availability, work to be taken home and emailed back as necessary. No personal information to be stored on staff personal computers.**

Meeting closed.

Cheque Payments

- Following the meeting, The Clerk has now been notified by a couple of suppliers that due to the closure of their offices and/or remote working and reduced staff, they require payment electronically rather than via cheque to ensure funds can be banked. Other contractors may follow suit. In these circumstances, it may be necessary to instruct a faster payment via the Bank, rather than issue a cheque. The payment authority would still be authorised in accordance with the Bank mandate.