

MINUTES OF AN EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL,
HELD ON MONDAY 28th JULY 2025
AT THE VILLAGE HALL, HEXTON ROAD, BARTON-LE-CLAY AT 7.31PM

Present: Councillors J Mikkelson (Vice-Chairman), G Gardner, B Thomas, S Laycock, W Rudd, K Qureshi and A Tebb

In attendance: C Callen (Clerk) and Central Bedfordshire Ward Councillors E Childs and A French

Minutes: C Callen

The Parish Council were saddened by the news that former Councillor, and member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, Sue Waller had passed away. Councillor Gardner and the Clerk will attend her funeral in August on behalf of the Parish Council.

25/132 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

These were received from Councillors J Paxton, A Vale, A Fletcher and J Selley.

25/133 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the procedures regarding declaration of interests. There were none.

25/134 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were none present.

25/135 PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE

135.1 Matters arising from previous Planning Committee not included within agenda – information only

The Planning Application re 69 Manor Road is expected to be decided at the Central Beds Council Development Management Committee meeting on 27th August.

Re: **minute no. 25/120.5** – It was reported that Blake Stephenson MP had acknowledged the Parish Council's request to challenge the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to include guarantees that local planning committees have a say in local planning issues. He supports these views.

A further Planning Application was received following publishing of the meeting Agenda – **CB/25/02308/SECM, Land East of Barton-le-Clay**: Discharge of S106 Agreement attached to Planning Permission CB/21/02409/OUT affecting the following: in accordance with The First Schedule, Part 10, clause 1.1 of the S106 Agreement associated with outline consent CB/21/02409/OUT which states the following: The Owner covenants with the Council that prior to the Commencement of Development the Owner shall: submit for approval by the Council (such approval not being unreasonably withheld) an Approved Scheme for the marketing of the Extra Care Site for the provision of the Extra Care Facility. Members discussed and agreed no comments would be submitted for this application.

135.2 Update on planning applications refused/granted

A list of application decisions was circulated to members prior to the meeting. This was noted.

Ward Councillor French arrived at 7.37pm

135.3 To consider new planning applications or delegate authority to respond to committee:

CB/25/01725/FULL, 1 Brazier Close: Erection of a single storey rear extension, with new landing window

- No comments

CB/25/02224/FULL, 42 Manor Road: Demolition of existing conservatory, porch and garage.

Erection of single storey rear extension and new front canopy, with roof lights, and new windows and doors

- No comments

CB/02267/FULL, 4 Brookend Drive: Erection of a single storey rear extension, with new windows and doors, and associated internal and external alteration works

- No comments

135.4 **To consider the Central Beds Council consultation on their Licencing Policy and agree any response**

Central Beds Council have launched a consultation on their updated Licencing Policy – deadline for completion is 31st August 2025. Following discussion, it was agreed that members would review the proposals and provide comments to the Clerk by 14th August, to allow for a suitable response to be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council before the deadline.

25/136 POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT/UPDATE

136.1 **Matters arising from previous Policies & Resources Committee not included within agenda - information only**

Notification has been received that the Local Government Services Pay Agreement 2025 has been concluded. An increase of 3.2% has been agreed to each pay scale rate. The Clerk will calculate the adjustments for all staff back dated to 1st April 2025, for inclusion in the August salaries.

Re: **minute no. 25/093** – The upgrade to the Employee Assistance Programme has been completed. Details will be shared with all staff and Councillors. Training for the Clerk will be arranged in due course.

The Part-time Groundsman, is leaving the Council on 31st August, due to a change in his main employment. He has worked for the Council part-time for the last 10years, mainly at the Sports Pitches. He will be retained on a casual contract going forward, in case of any cover requirements in the future. After discussion, Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** a budget of £50 from the Chair's allowance towards a suitable leaving gift from the Parish Council. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

The Vacancy for the new Parish Ranger position is live on the website, social media and noticeboards with a closing date of 1st August.

136.2 **To review and adopt the Councillor Feedback on Staff Performance pro-forma for 2025**

The proposed pro-forma was reviewed by members. This will be sent out to all Councillors to seek feedback on staff, ahead of the annual appraisals undertaken in August/September. Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** the adoption of the pro-forma version 7, **SECONDED** by Councillor Tebb and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

136.3 **To approve delegated authority to the Clerk regarding negotiating the renewal of Insurance for the Parish Council**

The policy with Clear Councils (Aviva) ends on 30th September. The Clerk will obtain quotes and will need to discuss requirements with the Insurance Companies. Given the tight timescale in putting the insurance in place by 30th September, the Clerk has suggested delegated authority be granted for the negotiations during August, with a final proposal to be approved at the September Full Council Meeting. Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** approval of delegated authority to the Clerk for negotiating the Council's insurance renewal, **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

136.4 **To retrospectively approve the Community Grant Application for the Coronation Community Garden**

As agreed via email, the Parish Council have submitted an application for the latest UKSPF Community Grant Fund. This is to further enhance the wellbeing provision at the Coronation Community Garden by offering:

- Therapeutic Forest School sessions for neurodivergent and neurotypical children and their families (in conjunction with the SEND TA at Arnold Academy)

- Nordic walking sessions for dementia sufferers and their family supporters (in conjunction with Tibbs Dementia Foundation who run meetings monthly in the Village)
- Purchase an arbour, bench and planting for a more private seating area to support contemplation and conversations (area already prepared as part of the initial groundworks undertaken).

The application has sought the minimum £3000 Grant. Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** retrospective approval for the Grant application to be submitted as detailed above, **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

- 136.5 **To consider and approve cost to purchase a battery-operated hand angle grinder**
The groundsmen have requested a Dewalt battery 18V angle grinder be purchased to help them with general maintenance work, including updating street furniture (benches/bins, etc). The cost of a new tool from Screwfix is £249.99 plus VAT, including 2 batteries and a charger and case. Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** approval of the cost of £249.99 plus VAT to purchase the Dewalt angle grinder from Screwfix, **SECONDED** by Councillor Tebb and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.
- 136.6 **Update regarding the management of the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund**
As raised at the last meeting, the CCLA has made some changes to its operation. It has also been acquired by Jupiter Investment Management Group Ltd.
Details of the changes, FAQ's on the acquisition and details of how the Public Sector Deposit Fund will continue to be run and its structure and performance to date were provided for further information for members. This was acknowledged and no further action was agreed.
- 25/137** **BURIAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT/UPDATE**
- 137.1 **Matters arising from previous Burial Grounds committee not included within agenda - information only**
The plans for the VJ Day 80th commemoration are in progress. The Library are holding a coffee morning and children's activity session on Thursday 14th August from 10.30am – 12.30am. Councillor Rudd kindly donated packs of biscuits for the event. The Parish Council wreath will be laid on Friday 15th August, to coincide with the 2-minute silence. The War Memorial area will be decorated with bunting, tommy figure, flag etc. in the week leading up to the anniversary. Councillors Tebb and Gardner agreed to support at the Library and Councillors Tebb, Gardner and Mikkelson will also attend the 2-minute silence at the War Memorial for the wreath laying.
- 137.2 **To acknowledge the Burial Ground, Churchyard and War Memorial inspections**
The inspections undertaken on 14th July were acknowledged. Everything was in order in the Burial Ground, with the moth infestation of the box hedge being treated. In the Churchyard, the warning signs on the failed memorials were noted as having been removed – these will be replaced over the coming week. Everything was in order at the War Memorial.
- 137.3 **To consider complaint regarding a tree in the Burial Ground and agree any action**
A complaint has been received regarding the laurel tree near the new Garden of Rest. The tree is large and has very low hanging branches. Photographs of the tree were provided for reference. Jempson Tree Services have provided a quote and advice for consideration – following their visit on 22nd July, they recommend 7/8ft lift and cut back the branch over the grave. Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** approval of the quote from Jempson Tree Services Ltd at a cost of £160 plus VAT to undertake the necessary works, **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.
- 25/138** **HIGHWAYS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT/UPDATE**
- 138.1 **Matters arising from previous Highways & Environment committee not included within agenda - information only**
Re: **minute no. 25/125.4** – Jempson Tree Services have now inspected the tree adjacent to 7 Simpkins Drive. It is a self-seeded Ash tree that has grown too large. They have recommended it is reduced level with the hedge line. They have also found that the Cherry tree in the middle of the green space has died. Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** approval of the quote to reduce the Ash tree

at a cost of £200 plus VAT and remove the dead Cherry tree and stump grind at a cost of £210 plus VAT. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Mikkelson and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**. Work to be completed after 1st September.

Notification has been received that the Tour of Britain cycling event is due to pass through Central Beds on 4th September. Road closures have been requested along the route. The Stage will start in Central Milton Keynes and finish in Ampthill. It is planned to come through the Village from Sharpenhoe Road, Bedford Road and Hexton Road during the Stage. Ward Councillor Childs is speaking to Central Beds Council Highways Department regarding the surface repairs planned in September on Sharpenhoe Road to see if these can be brought forward to improve the road conditions for the event.

138.2 **To acknowledge the Bus Shelters inspections**

The bus shelter inspections of 17th July were acknowledged. Everything was in order and the shelters were washed.

138.3 **To consider Central Beds Council Highways consultation regarding proposed changes to the speed limit on Higham Gobion Road**

Central Beds Council have proposed to introduce a 40mph speed limit on Higham Gobion Road as part of the changes for the new development. Full details and a map were provided to members ahead of the meeting, for consideration. After discussion, Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** a response requesting the limit be reduced to 30mph along this section, from Westhey Manor to the A6, given the residential properties, schools and children's home situated on this section of road. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Tebb and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**. In addition, Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** that the speed limit leading into the new development estate should be set at 20mph given the school and extra care home planned for the estate, **SECONDED** by Councillor Mikkelson and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

138.4 **Update regarding fencing the entrance to Lovers Walk, Old Road**

Councillor Paxton and the Clerk met with Central Beds Council (CBC) Rights of Way Officer and the neighbouring resident, on site on 17th July, to consider the options to replace the badly damaged gates and fencing at the entrance to the Bridleway and Lovers Walk woodland. It has been suggested that CBC will replace the horse gate and side pedestrian gate. The horse gate is currently positioned too high. The Parish Council could then fence off access at the side to prevent vehicle access (either wooden or metal fencing or concrete blocks). The Rights of Way Officer has agreed to investigate the cost of the replacement gates and also liaise with the stables regarding suitable horse access. A further update will be provided once costings have been agreed.

138.5 **To acknowledge invite to attend Central Beds Council Tree & Hedge planting grant workshop and agree attendance**

Central Beds Council have invited members to attend a Tree and Hedge Planting workshop on Wednesday 24th September 4.15-5.45pm at Ickwell Nature Reserve. Councillor Paxton and Councillor Tebb expressed an interest in attending and will check their availability so that the Clerk can reserve a space at the workshop.

138.6 **To acknowledge Central Beds Council consultation on their Local Nature Recovery Strategy and agree any response**

Central Beds Council are consulting on their Local Nature Recovery Strategy – deadline 7th September. Councillor Tebb attended a webinar on 28th July to find out more information and provided an update at the meeting. It was agreed that Councillor Tebb and the Clerk review the information on the website to clarify the strategy affecting Barton-le-Clay and then draft a suitable response.

25/139 LEISURE COMMITTEE REPORT/UPDATE

139.1 **Matters arising from previous Leisure Committee not included within agenda – information only**

PPM carried out the routine pest control inspection of the allotments on 18th July. There was evidence of mouse activity and bait was refreshed as necessary. PPM will continue to monitor the situation during their next scheduled visit – there were no recommendations.

Re: **minute no. 25/126.1** – The resident who wishes to have a memorial bench in the Recreation Ground has given the go ahead for the order. An invoice has been raised and paid and the bench is on order. Delivery is expected in September.

The Police are planning to hold a drop-in session on the Recreation Ground on 18th August from 2-4pm. They hope that this will become a regular session which will catch a wider audience engagement. Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** approval for the Police and Fire vehicles to be parked on the Recreation Ground field, weather permitting, **SECONDED** by Councillor Rudd and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**. The groundsman will open/close the gates on the day.

An allotment tenant has requested permission to erect a small shed on their plot. The shed meets the criteria. Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** approval for the shed to be erected, as per the application, **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

139.2 **To acknowledge weekly Playground and Fitness Equipment Inspections – Arnold Rec play area, Fitness Equipment and Norman Road play area**

The Arnold Recreation Ground playground, Fitness Equipment and Norman Road play area inspections for the 14th and 22nd July were acknowledged.

Fitness equipment – On 14th the bolts on the body twist were noted as needed tightening. Everything else was in order.

Arnold Recreation Ground – on 14th July graffiti was noted inside the tunnel of the large multi-play. Everything else was in order.

Norman Road Play Area – on 14th July brambles growing through the fence were noted – actioned the following day. Everything else was in order.

139.3 **To approve cost to purchase gift vouchers for the annual Allotment Competition winners and judge**

Following the judging that took place on 15th July, Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** approval of the cost to purchase gardening gift vouchers for the allotment competition winners and judge, totalling £100, **SECONDED** by Councillor Rudd and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

139.4 **To consider and approve the cost of engraving the Allotment Winner's Cup**

Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** approval of a total budget of £25 plus VAT to cover the cost of engraving the cup, **SECONDED** by Councillor Rudd and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

139.5 **To acknowledge receipt of the annual safety inspection report for the play and fitness equipment at Arnold Recreation Ground and the Norman Road Play area and agree any actions**

The 6 monthly inspection of the Recreation Ground was carried out by Sovereign Play on 2nd July. A copy of the report and a summary action plan was provided to members ahead of the meeting and acknowledged.

The Assistant Clerk has raised queries regarding the document as the gates are not individually included in the report, and the zip wire has not been inspected. Sovereign Play have advised that zip wire inspections are not included in the Compliance Package and that zip wires are charged separately.

The Norman Road Play Area was also due to be inspected at the same time, but Sovereign failed to add this to the contract. They have advised that the inspector will need to return to carry out the inspection at a future date, to be advised.

139.6 **To consider the surfacing in the Norman Road Play area**

In October 2024, Kettering Play Safe successfully repaired various sections of the safety surfacing in the Norman Road Play Area. The large section by the hopscotch, which was repaired and tree roots

taken out, has now risen again but it is unclear why. Kettering Play Safe business is now closed so they are unable to come back and assess the issue. It was agreed that an alternative wetpour supplier be asked to investigate and quote for any works required.

139.7 **To consider and approve cost to carry out annual maintenance of the zip wire**

As advised in agenda point 25/139.5, Sovereign Play have advised that the zip wire inspections are not included in their compliance package and are charged separately.

In past years, the RoSPA check has included the zip wire and the Council has then paid separately for annual maintenance to be carried out, including replacing parts. Kettering PlaySafe were the contractor used, but they are no longer trading. Quotes for the inspection and maintenance have been sought from 3 contractors. Following consideration of the quotes and any additional costs, Councillor Mikkelson **PROPOSED** approval of the quote from Proludic (manufacturer of the equipment) for 2025 at a cost of £975 plus VAT, including the inspection, maintenance and any labour costs to fit any parts required. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

25/140 SPORTS FIELD COMMITTEE REPORT/UPDATE

140.1 **Matters arising from previous Sports Field committee not included within agenda - information only**

Barton Rovers Youth FC have added 2 more teams to play on Sundays.

140.2 **To consider and approve cost to flail the Sports Field hedge**

Councillor Tebb **PROPOSED** approval of a budget of £250 for Farmer Horner to flail the hedge, **SECONDED** by Councillor Rudd and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

140.3 **To approve the cost of the annual contract for fire alarm and emergency lighting testing in the Pavilion**

Knights Shield Fire & Security Systems have provided their quote for the renewal of their annual maintenance contract at the Sports Pavilion. The Fire Alarm cost is unchanged at £135 plus VAT. However, the Emergency Lighting contract has increased to £135 plus VAT (60% increase). After consideration, Councillor Tebb **PROPOSED** approval for the 2025/26 contract with Knights Shield Fire & Security Systems to be renewed at a total cost of £270 plus VAT, **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

140.4 **To consider and approve the cost to purchase a liner for dog bin at the Sports Field**

A new metal liner for the dog waste bin at the Sports Field is required. Councillor Tebb **PROPOSED** approval to purchase a replacement from the bin supplier, Glasdon, at a total cost of £43.37 plus VAT including delivery, **SECONDED** by Councillor Rudd and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

25/141 ITEMS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA

Due to Summer recess, the next Full Council meeting is on 8th September. Any urgent planning applications will be emailed to members of the Planning committee for consideration during August, responses to be agreed under delegated authority. August salaries and payments will be processed by the Clerk and verified by two councillors prior to payment – they will be retrospectively approved at the September meeting.

Ward Councillor French enquired regarding progress establishing the Community Emergency Plan (CERT) for the Village. The WhatsApp Group was set up at the end of last year. Letters need to be sent to all the Community Groups to invite them to get involved. The Clerk will action this over the coming weeks.

Ward Councillor Childs gave a brief update on progress between Central Beds Council and the Police regarding the car racing on the A6. She is also attending the Traffic Management Meeting on 29th July with Councillor Paxton to present the petition requesting 20mph on Manor Road, near the school entrances. Further updates will be provided at the next meeting.

Councillor Mikkelson wished everyone a happy Summer break.

The meeting closed at 9.21 pm

I certify these minutes are a true and correct record of the Parish Council Extra-Ordinary meeting held on 28th July 2025

Dated this the 8th September 2025

**COUNCILLOR J PAXTON
CHAIRMAN**