

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023 COMMENCING AT 8.33PM**

Present: Councillors Mrs B Thomas (Chairman), Miss G Widdowfield (Vice-chair), Mr J Selley, Mr J Paxton, Mrs G Gardner and Mr S Laycock

In attendance: Mrs C Callen (Clerk)

Minutes: Mrs C Callen

**22/559 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – There were none.

**22/560 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were none.

**22/561 MATTERS ARISING**

The use of the Heritage Garden to create a Community Garden is being progressed. The project group are looking to call it the 'Coronation Community Garden' and will launch it to residents at the Community Volunteering event on 8<sup>th</sup> May. A Memorandum of Understanding agreement will be required for all parties to sign. This will be approved at the next Full Council meeting.

Central Bedfordshire Council have provided the Business Rates details for 2023/24. Whilst the Valuation Office Agency have made no change with the Sports Pavilion, the Parish Office rates are set to rise £2,100. A transitional discount has been applied for the coming year of £928.14. Members agreed for the Clerk to explore if a challenge to the increase is appropriate. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

The survey for the Village Hall closed on 17<sup>th</sup> March. There were 197 responses. These have been shared with the Village Hall Committee for them to take forward.

The Clerk attended a webinar on 20<sup>th</sup> March with Parkinson Partnership/BATPC to discuss the HMRC changes for Local Authorities charging VAT on Sport Facilities. As a result, a claim for £498.75 will be sent to HMRC to claim back VAT for the last 4 years. Some of this will be passed on to the hirers, when reimbursed. The cost of the webinar was £10, to be funded from the training budget, and will be included in the April payment schedule.

The Clerk reported that the replacement carpets have been installed in the Parish Office kitchen area, following the water damage from the flat above.

**22/562 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

A copy of the minutes was provided to members ahead of the meeting. There was one minor typo identified. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** the approval of the amended minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> February, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley **with 4 in favour and 2 abstentions**.

**22/563 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY**

The Clerk has reviewed the policy and a copy was provided to members ahead of the meeting, with proposed amendments highlighted in yellow. Following review, Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** the approval of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, version 2.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Widdowfield and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**22/564 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE STANDING ORDERS 2023/24**

NALC issued revised Model Standing Orders in 2022. The Clerk has reviewed them in line with the Parish Council's previous Standing Orders and presented them for consideration, having provided a copy ahead of the meeting. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** to approve the revised Standing Orders for 2023/24, **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**22/565 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2023/24**

The Clerk has reviewed the current Regulations and a copy was provided to members ahead of the meeting, with proposed amendments highlighted in yellow, mainly to reflect the revised

procurement thresholds. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** to approve the Financial Regulations for 2023/24 version 6.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**22/566 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CIVILITY & RESPECT PROJECT FOR LOCAL COUNCILS AND AGREE WAY FORWARD**

NALC/SLCC are encouraging all Parish Councils to take the Civility & Respect Pledge. A Flyer detailing the aims of the project was provided ahead of the meeting, together with details for the Council to consider. Members agreed that this was something the Council should look to support and it will be taken to the next Full Council meeting in April for a suitable resolution to be passed, if all Councillors are in favour.

**22/567 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE CODE OF CONDUCT 2023/24**

The Local Government Association produced a revised Code of Conduct in 2021. This has now been endorsed by the NALC Civility & Respect Project and a template has been put forward for Councils to adopt.

The Clerk has reviewed the document against the Council's previous Code of Conduct and presented it for consideration, having provided a copy ahead of the meeting. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** to approve the revised Code of Conduct 2023/24, **SECONDED** by Councillor Widdowfield and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**22/568 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE PURCHASE OF SIGNS TO MARK THE KING'S CORONATION**

The Royal British Legion are offering signs to go on lamp posts to mark the King's Coronation. A Budget of £500 was agreed to mark the event. After discussion, Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** to approve the purchase of a pack of 25 signs for the centre of the Village at a cost of £112.28, **SECONDED** by Councillor Widdowfield and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**22/569 TO CONSIDER ATTENDANCE AT THE 'BIG HELP OUT' EVENT ON 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY**

The Rotary Club/Blooming Barton/Xmas Lights Groups are organising an event on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May at the Village Hall/Garden 10am-1pm. They hope community groups will have stalls to encourage residents to volunteer and join them. They have arranged for May Blossom to perform and will provide refreshments. They hope to use the event to launch the Coronation Community Garden Project on the Heritage Garden site. The Neighbourhood Plan Group will have a stall with the Greensand Trust. This is an ideal opportunity for the Parish Council to engage with the community. Members agreed that the Parish Council should have a stall and Councillors Gardner, Selley and Thomas agreed to attend. In addition, Councillor Widdowfield **PROPOSED** that the Parish Council cover the cost for May Blossom to perform at the event from their Coronation budget, **SECONDED** by Councillor Paxton and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

Councillor Thomas agreed to join a planning online meeting for the event with the Clerk on 28<sup>th</sup> March at 10.30am.

**22/570 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRICE INCREASE FOR CAWLEY'S WASTE COLLECTIONS**

Cawleys have advised that their prices will increase by 11.5% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, with an additional 1p per kg on excess weight. The Council are currently contracted to Cawleys for waste collection. The increase was acknowledged.

**22/571 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRICE INCREASE FROM BT FOR TELEPHONE AND BROADBAND SERVICE AND AGREE WAY FORWARD**

BT have advised that their prices are increasing by 14.4% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

The Parish Council BT Cloud phone service will be out of contract in October (60month Contract). The current BT Broadband contract expired 16<sup>th</sup> March (2year contract). In addition, the Council took out a mobile Hub deal at £5pm 2yrs ago to support the phone system as part of the deal, but this has never been utilised and has also expired.

The Clerk has spoken to BT to discuss options. The minimum term for a contract is 24months and the cheapest Broadband deal is £45.95pm (£11 increase). With the price increase, the current Broadband charge will go up to £39.84pm. The mobile deal will increase to £15pm. The Clerk has made the decision to cancel the mobile element with immediate effect.

The Clerk proposed that no new contract is agreed until the Cloud phone expires in October. The VirginMedia Fibre Broadband contract is due for review in November (currently supporting the

Office IT). The Council should then review its full phone and broadband requirements in the Autumn to try and agree the best deal. Puzzle Technology can assist with this. Members agreed to the proposed way forward.

**22/572 TO CONSIDER RISK ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN**

Following acknowledgement at the last Full Council meeting, a copy of the Action Plans in respect of GDPR were provided to members ahead of the meeting. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk should look to set aside time to complete the action plan of the GDPR requirements, subject to a review on progress in 3months time.

**22/573 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**

Councillor Selley advised that a meeting was being held on 29<sup>th</sup> March with Barton Rovers Youth FC to discuss their ongoing usage and requirements of the Luton Road Sports Field pitches.

The meeting closed at 9.34pm