

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL  
ON MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024 COMMENCING AT 8.02PM**

Present: Councillors J Selley, B Thomas, and S Laycock

In attendance: C Callen (Clerk)

Minutes: C Callen

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-chairman, Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** Councillor Selley to chair the meeting, **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/543 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – These were received from Councillors J Paxton, N Day and A Fletcher.

**23/544 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were none.

**23/545 MATTERS ARISING**

Central Beds Council have provided the Business Rates details for 2024/25. The Parish Office rates went up £2100 in 2023, with a Small Business Rate Relief multiplier of 49.9p. A transitional discount has again been applied for the coming year of £676.64 (£928.14 was applied last year).

As reported at Full Council, the Annual Health & Safety Review has been completed by the Clerk with no changes highlighted. Councillor Fletcher has also visited the Pavilion to review the Fire Procedures in light of the changes to the Building Safety Act 2022. She has confirmed there is no additional paperwork required and we should continue to conduct our usual Fire Risk Assessments. Several observations were made regarding the safety in the building, and these are now being addressed.

Cornerstone Communications have advised that they will be undertaking some maintenance and upgrading works to their telemast over the coming weeks. Barton Rovers have been advised.

The Clerk met with the gas engineers from Cadent on 19<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the repair works being undertaken at O'Dells Pocket, Manor Road. Further discussions will be held with the site manager regarding the reinstatement of the boundary.

Ward Councillor Childs has received an enquiry from the Post Office regarding whether there might be funding available to set up a counter service within a shop in the Village. She has contacted the Parish Council to see if funding up to £17k might be made available. Members were concerned that there was no guarantee that the service would be continued within commercial premises, even after potentially spending such a large sum of public funds. They would also need to evidence that the Village would support such a venture. This item will be discussed further at the next meeting.

**23/546 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

A copy of the minutes was provided to members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Selley **PROPOSED** the approval of the minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> February, **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/547 TO APPROVE THE RENEWAL OF THE MICROSOFT 365 LICENCES**

As agreed last year (22/532.10), the Parish Council is paying annually for the 2 Office Staff and 10 Councillor Licences, to save costs with an annual commitment. In line with the costs quoted in 2023, year two pricing has increased to £834.60 plus VAT (£765.60 paid last year). Councillor Selley **PROPOSED** the renewal of the Microsoft 365 Licences at a total cost of £834.60 plus VAT, **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/548 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE STANDING ORDERS 2024/25**

The Clerk has reviewed the current Standing Orders in line with the guidelines provided by NALC. No changes are proposed. A copy was provided to members ahead of the meeting. Councillor

Selley **PROPOSED** to approve the Standing Orders for 2024/25 version 6.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/549 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2024/25**

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 2024/25 version 7.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/550 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE CODE OF CONDUCT 2024/25**

The Clerk has reviewed the current document in line with the guidelines provided by NALC. No changes are proposed. A copy was provided to members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Laycock **PROPOSED** to approve the revised Code of Conduct 2024/25 version 6.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/551 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRICE INCREASE FOR CAWLEY'S WASTE COLLECTIONS**

Cawleys have advised that their prices will increase by 7% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, with an additional 1p per kg on excess weight. Budgeted figure allowed for 5% increase (£40 over budgeted figure). The Council are currently contracted to Cawleys for waste collection. The increase was acknowledged.

**23/552 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PRICE INCREASE FOR THE PENINSULA HEALTH & SAFETY SUPPORT**

Peninsula have advised that their prices will increase by 7% from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024. (£80 over budgeted figure). The Council are currently contracted to Peninsula for their Health & Safety support, including staff training modules, risk assessments, fire assessments and hazardous substances inventory. The increase was acknowledged.

**23/553 TO CONSIDER A DONATION TO BLOOMING BARTON TO REPLENISH THE PLANTS IN THE WELCOME BACK VILLAGE PLANTERS**

Blooming Barton have contacted the Parish Council to request a donation towards the replanting of the planters in the Village. The Planters were purchased by the Parish Council with a Grant from the Government Welcome Back fund after the Pandemic, and Blooming Barton volunteered to maintain them on behalf of the Village. After consideration, Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** the approval of a donation of £300 to Blooming Barton towards the replanting of the planters, **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**23/554 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**

Councillor Selley requested that the Council consider the purchase of wet weather clothes for the Office Staff for when they have site meetings. The Clerk was requested to investigate costs for approval at the next Full Council meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm