

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE PARISH OFFICE  
ON MONDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER 2024 COMMENCING AT 7.52PM**

Present: Councillors J Paxton (Chair), J Mikkelson (Vice-chair), J Selley and A Vale

In attendance: C Callen (Clerk)

Minutes: C Callen

**24/318 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – These were received from Councillor A Fletcher and S Laycock

**24/319 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were none.

**24/320 MATTERS ARISING**

Electrical Safety First are running a webinar session on 11<sup>th</sup> December at 9.30am regarding the Lithium-ion Battery campaign and the Governments draft safety Bill. If anyone is interested in attending, please let the Clerk know.

On 30<sup>th</sup> November-1<sup>st</sup> December the Parish Council had a tree at St Nicholas Church for their annual Christmas Tree Festival – the title was ‘Gardening for Health’ and featured the allotments and Community Garden. The Clerk reported that the tree came 1<sup>st</sup> in the Business Category. Congratulations and thanks were expressed to the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for their efforts.

**24/321 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

A copy of the minutes was provided to members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** the approval of the minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> October, **SECONDED** by Councillor Vale **with 3 in favour and 1 abstention**.

**24/322 TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE THE WATER SUPPLY CONTRACT**

The water supply contract with Everflow expires on 7th January and 30days notice is required for any changes. Love Energy Savings have reviewed the current contract and recommended staying with Everflow for a further 3years. Wholesale Rates are the same for all suppliers (same rates as currently billed – reviewed by Anglia Water in April each year). Everflow quoted an increase in the Retail rate to £644.63pa for the next 12months. However, using Love Energy has decreased the Retail fee to £550.08 fixed for the next 3yrs. This will see an increase of £358pa from the Retail rate agreed three years ago. Given the timescales, the Clerk has agreed to the new 3year Contract. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** retrospective approval of the new contract with Everflow for a further 3 years, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**24/323 TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM UNITY HALL REGARDING POTENTIAL INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS ON THEIR BUILDING**

An email has been received from one of the members of the Unity Hall Committee, requesting permission to potentially add Solar Panels to their building. As landlords, they are seeking approval from the Parish Council. After discussion, it was agreed that more information would be required, including funding, timescales, ownership and maintenance details, before any decision could be made.

**ACTION – Clerk to contact the Chair of the Committee at Unity Hall and request a formal business plan application be provided so that the Parish Council can fully consider the request and decide if any changes will be required to the legal lease currently in place.**

**24/324 TO APPROVE THE DRAFT BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PAY & PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Clerk provided a summary of the rationale used to arrive at the draft Budget that has been recommended by the Pay & Personal Sub-Committee. This represents a 5.6% increase, incorporating the impact of the changes to National Insurance contributions and National Living Wage from April 2025. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** the approval of the draft 2025/26 Pay &

Personnel budget, with a £155,329 committee precept. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

**24/325 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE EXPENDITURE FOR 2024/25 AND TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE DRAFT BUDGETS FOR 2025/26**

Details of the expenditure to date and draft budgets for 2025/26 were discussed by members. Income has increased due to the level of interest rates for savings accounts seen over the past year and the additional Grant funds received and held. The Clerk has applied a 5% increase to expenditure lines, where appropriate, and also allowed for an increase in handyman sundry expenditure and skip costs to reflect the in-house maintenance work the Groundsmen are undertaking. Funds have been budgeted for the storage and maintenance of the Christmas Lights. Savings have been made on telephony costs, meeting room hire and newsletter distribution. Insurance costs have increased due to two claims in the past year and Office rent has been increased following the latest rent review for the next 3 years. Overall budget increase for 2025/26 is 5.9%.

After discussion, Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** the approval of the draft 2025/26 Policies & Resources budget, with a £46,250 committee precept. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Mikkelson and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

Members reviewed the overall Precept figures to be discussed at the December Full Council meeting, including possible adjustments required to keep the overall increase to an acceptable level but ensure all commitments are covered.

**24/326 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**

There were none.

The meeting closed at 8.41pm