

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE PAVILION, LUTON ROAD SPORTS FIELD
ON MONDAY 24th MARCH 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.51PM**

Present: Councillors J Paxton (Chair), J Mikkelson (Vice-chair), A Fletcher, J Selley and A Vale
In attendance: C Callen (Clerk) and Councillors W Rudd, G Gardner and B Thomas
Minutes: C Callen

24/503 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – These were received from Councillor S Laycock.

24/504 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were none.

24/505 MATTERS ARISING

Central Beds Council have provided the Business Rates details for 2025/26. The Parish Office rates went up in 2023, with a Small Business Rate Relief multiplier of 49.9p. A transitional discount was applied for the last two years of £928.14 2023/24 and £676.64 2024/25. This year there is no transitional discount and so the full charge of £3443.10 has been applied. This is £543.10 over the amount budgeted for 2025/26. The Sports Pavilion Rates remain unchanged. In view of these increased costs, it was suggested that a Working Party be established to consider cost-saving measures for the Parish Office. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

(Councillor A Vale arrived at 7.58pm)

Re: Minute no. 24/476.10 - The Hampshire Trust Bank have advised that their 1 Year SME Fixed Saver Bond issue 56 is no longer available. Therefore, as requested by the Clerk, they have reinvested the maturing Bond funds into their 1 Year SME Fixed Saver Bond issue 57 instead. This will result in a drop in the interest rate from 4.36% to 4.22% - a difference of £118.71 over the 12 months. Members acknowledged the change.

Barton Helping Hands are still considering the need for financial assistance from the Parish Council if they have to move into the main hall for their Community Café, due to increased numbers of attendees. In the meantime, they have asked for help in setting up the café on a Monday afternoon at 1.30pm. Councillor Rudd agreed to assist on 31st March. Councillor Selley will also be attending the café in the afternoon.

24/506 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3rd MARCH 2025

A copy of the minutes was provided to members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** the approval of the minutes of 3rd March, **SECONDED** by Councillor Fletcher and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

24/507 UPDATE REPORT FROM THE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE MEETING

Councillor Rudd attended the monthly Village Hall Committee meeting on Thursday 13th March, in his role as representative of the Parish Council on the Committee. Unfortunately, it was a difficult meeting, resulting in the Chairman and Councillor Rudd walking out. The Secretary of the Village Hall Committee has subsequently spoken at length with the Parish Office regarding the best way to continue. A meeting has been arranged at the Parish Office on Friday 4th April with BRCC - the Parish Clerk and Councillor Rudd will be in attendance as support. It has also been suggested that site contractors should submit written reports for the meeting in future rather than attend, as they are not voting members of the Committee. The Village Hall AGM is planned for 15th May, when members/trustees and roles will be appointed. If no one wishes to continue to stand, the Parish Council may be required to step in as a trustee, to ensure the Village Hall continues to operate for the Community. In the meantime, the Clerk was requested to obtain a copy of their constitution to get a better understanding of the charity's structure. Any changes to the

constitution should be put on hold pending the election in May when a new Chairman will be appointed.

(Councillor Rudd left at 8.37pm)

24/508 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

The Clerk has reviewed the current policy, and a copy was provided to members ahead of the meeting, with proposed minor amendments highlighted in yellow. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** to approve the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy version 3.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Fletcher and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

24/509 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE CREDIT CONTROL AND BAD DEBTS POLICY

The Clerk has reviewed the current policy, and a copy was provided to members ahead of the meeting, with proposed amendments highlighted in yellow. These mainly reflect the changes in the Financial Regulations. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** to approve the Credit Control and Bad Debts Policy version 4.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Vale and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

24/510 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE STANDING ORDERS 2025/26

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 Paxton **PROPOSED** to approve the Standing Orders for 2025/26 version 7.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Fletcher and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

24/511 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2025/26

The Clerk has reviewed the current Regulations, and a copy was provided to members ahead of the meeting, with proposed amendments highlighted in yellow. These mainly reflect the revised procurement legislation, in accordance with guidelines provided by NALC. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** to approve the Financial Regulations for 2025/26 version 9.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Fletcher and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

24/512 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE CODE OF CONDUCT 2025/26

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 Paxton **PROPOSED** to approve the Code of Conduct 2025/26 version 7.0, **SECONDED** by Councillor Fletcher and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

24/513 TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE THE COST TO PURCHASE A PRESSURE WASHER

A replacement pressure washer was required as the current one was over 8 years old and no longer working. Screwfix had a 15% off deal for Karcher pressure washers up until 23rd March and so the Clerk purchased a Karcher K4 Pressure washer at a cost of £197.86 plus VAT, under delegated powers. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** retrospective approval of the cost of £197.86 plus VAT to purchase the pressure washer from Screwfix, **SECONDED** by Councillor Vale and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

24/514 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF A REPLACEMENT BACKPACK BLOWER

The current backpack blower has recently been serviced and several issues highlighted. It is recommended that the Parish Council replace it. Stuart Brown Ltd have provided a quote for a suitable replacement. This is in line with other online suppliers and the machinery would be built and tested with warranty activated by Stuart Brown Ltd. Therefore, Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** approval to purchase a Stihl backpack blower BR430, at a cost of £485 plus VAT, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

24/515 TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY POLICING PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

Councillor Selley has agreed to attend the Priority Setting Meeting on Wednesday 2nd April at Police Headquarters, Kempston 6-9pm. Ahead of attendance, members discussed what areas are considered the priority for the Village for the coming quarter. Historically, an increase in anti-social behaviour has been seen at Easter and moving into the Summer when there are more youths around when they finish school. Other areas of concern are the continued motor bikes and quad bikes seen on Old Road and Lovers Walk, nuisance motor bikes heard racing on the A6 at

weekends and repeated shoplifting at the Co-op. Members agreed that better visibility of the Police around the Village is helping, with regular drop-in sessions now being held. However, the withdrawal of Central Beds Council Safer Neighbourhood officers due to cost savings is concerning, as they have been very influential in preventing anti-social behaviour. Councillor Selley will provide the Clerk with an update following the Police meeting, for sharing at the next Full Council meeting.

- 24/516 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE COST FOR REPAIRS TO THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**
Lamps and Tubes Illuminations Ltd have now assessed the Christmas Lights following their return to storage after the December 2024 display. They have provided a breakdown of the repairs required. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** approval of the cost of £423.60 plus VAT for Lamps & Tubes Illuminations Ltd to repair the lights, **SECONDED** by Councillor Vale and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.
- 24/517 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**
There were none.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm