

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE PARISH OFFICE
ON MONDAY 1st DECEMBER 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.42PM**

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

In attendance: C Callen (Clerk)

Minutes: C Callen

25/329 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – These were received from Councillor A Vale

25/330 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were none.

25/331 MATTERS ARISING

Following receipt of the H&S Reports from Peninsula, the Clerk is currently addressing the findings, which include records on PPE issued, DSE Risk Assessments regular review and ladder inspections. Councillor Fletcher is also to complete the Fire Risk Assessment.

Re: **Minute ref 25/247** – The Clerk is currently obtaining quotes for alternative Skip providers, as discussed at the last meeting. Biffa have provided a quote for general waste and recycling waste, however, this does not include green waste or dog waste. Additional quotes have been requested from other suppliers. In the meantime, Cawley's have refunded the missed collections in June/July.

25/332 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20th OCTOBER 2025

A copy of the minutes was provided to members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** the approval of the minutes of 20th October, **SECONDED** by Councillor Fletcher **with 4 in favour and 1 abstention**.

25/333 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE COST TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL GROUNDS MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT FOR THE GROUNDS STAFF

The Grounds staff have requested additional equipment to assist them with their maintenance work around the Village. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** retrospective approval for the purchase of a pruning saw, reciprocating saw and battery, total cost £169.14 plus VAT, **SECONDED** by Councillor Fletcher and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**. A quote was also provided to purchase an additional brushcutter from Stuart Brown Landscape & Arborist Supplies. Following consideration, Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** approval to purchase the brushcutter at a cost of £850 plus VAT, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOSLY CARRIED**.

25/334 TO CONSIDER SWITCH TO RIALTAS WEB FOR ACCESSING THE COUNCIL'S FINANCE SOFTWARE AND APPROVE ANY ADDITIONAL COSTS

Rialtas Software is currently loaded onto individual machines and backed up regularly by the Clerk. Rialtas now offer a web-based option stored in the Cloud, which would enable access via any web-browser with internet access. Puzzle Technology have confirmed that this would improve cyber security.

Cost for Rialtas Web would be an additional £205 for one user. The existing software allows for up to 5 users but is only actually loaded onto one machine at the moment and only the Clerk has access. The current support and maintenance costs could be reduced from £1103 to £749 for just a single user. The Parish Council could have the web version and support for a single user for £954, saving £149 for the coming year. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** approval to switch to the Rialtas Web version for a single user at a cost of £205 plus VAT, with a reduction to the current support for a single user. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Fletcher and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

25/335 TO CONSIDER COST FOR OFFICE 365 BACKUP SERVICE

Following discussion with Puzzle Technology regarding the Rialtas Web offering, the Clerk also discussed the Council's current backup and storage solutions. It would appear that although the majority of data is securely stored in the Cloud, there is no separate independent backup process. Whilst the risk is small, it is recommended that separate backups are taken. Puzzle have quoted for Office 365 Backup at £2.50 per user per month. After discussion, Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** approval for Office 365 Backup for the two office-based staff only. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Fletcher and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

25/336 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE IT POLICY

Following discussion at the last meeting, Councillor Qureshi has put together a draft Policy for consideration. Members discussed various amendments required.

ACTION – Clerk to go back to Councillor Qureshi with the proposed amendments so that a revised final version can be approved at the next Full Council meeting.

25/337 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 an overall 11% increase, incorporating the impact of the additional staff, 'cost of living' pay rise assumption of 3.5% and National Living Wage increase from April 2026. Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** the approval of the draft 2026/27 Pay & Personnel budget, with a £173,016 committee precept. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Mikkelson **with 4 in favour and 1 abstention**.

25/338 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE EXPENDITURE FOR 2025/26 AND TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE DRAFT BUDGETS FOR 2026/27

Details of the expenditure to date and draft budgets for 2026/27 were discussed by members. Underspend predicted for 2025/26 due to higher interest income received and savings on telephony and meeting room hire/Zoom. This will allow for additional transfers to Reserves for legal costs, equipment updates and health & safety costs. Budgets for 2026/27 have been proposed with a 5% increase applied to expenditure lines, where appropriate. Further savings have been made on telephony costs, postage and meeting room hire. With the increased investment income anticipated, no increase in Budget is recommended overall.

After discussion, Councillor Paxton **PROPOSED** the approval of the draft 2026/27 Policies & Resources budget, with a £46,292 committee precept. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Laycock 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 at an acceptable level but ensure all commitments are covered.

25/339 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA

Councillors Selley, Fletcher and Paxton provided feedback from the Councillor Surgery held on 22nd November at the Library. Alternative locations were suggested for future engagement events. This will be discussed further in the New Year.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm