

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT THE VILLAGE HALL
ON MONDAY 4th OCTOBER 2021 COMMENCING AT 8.30PM**

Present: Councillors Mrs B Thomas (Chairman), Mr J Paxton (Vice-chair), Mrs G Gardner and Mr J Selley
In attendance: Mrs C Callen (Clerk)
Minutes: Mrs C Callen

21/232 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – There were none received.

21/233 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were none.

21/234 MATTERS ARISING

The owners of the old TSB Bank building have contacted the Parish Office. They are a family property business, based in Watford. The current lease to the Bank expires in 2022, hence the short-term lease currently being marketed. They have asked the Council what sort of facilities the Village may need to help them decide on the future of the building. This item will be discussed at the next Full Council meeting.

Nationwide Building Society are launching digital banking in the coming months. The Clerk has been requested to provide details of our authorised signatories so that they can register. This will enable the Clerk to check balances, access statements and request transfer from our 45 Day Notice savings account.

ACTION – Clerk to investigate what the authorisation process will be for the digital banking.

Minute no. 21/119 – It was noted that no further contact from residents had been received in respect of the Barton Rocks potential memorial project and so this will not be progressed. Members were disappointed but acknowledged that the moment had been missed once Lockdown was over and people moved on with their lives.

21/235 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28th JUNE 2021

A copy of the minutes was provided to members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** the approval of the minutes of 28th June 2021, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

21/236 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE COST TO PURCHASE A FIRE-PROOF FILING CABINET FOR THE PARISH OFFICE

Under GDPR, the Clerk needs to ensure that the personnel records and important documents are safely stored in a fire-proof filing cabinet. Details of possible cabinets were provided. After considering the options, Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** approval to purchase a 4-draw Phoenix Vertical Fire File 2254 from Safelincs at a cost of £1042 plus VAT, **SECONDED** by Councillor Paxton and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

21/237 TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE THE RENEGOTIATION OF THE WATER CONTRACT

The Water contract with Everflow is due for renewal as at 6/1/2022. Love Energy Savings have undertaken a comparison on behalf of the Council and recommended remaining with Everflow. A breakdown of the costs was provided. The wholesale pricing is set by Anglian Water every April and will stay the same. An increase in respect of the Retail fee is the only change, which has gone up by £5.20 per month. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** retrospective approval to the extension of the contract with Everflow for a further 3years, with a retail fee of £191.44pa, **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

21/238 TO CONSIDER THE FORMATION OF A COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM FOR THE VILLAGE AND AGREE WAY FORWARD

Central Beds Council have invited Town/Parish Councils to consider the formation of a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to work alongside the Bedfordshire emergency volunteers partnership (BLEVEC). Initial details have been provided. It was agreed that this is something the Parish Council should consider and the Clerk was requested to seek further clarification on what is involved and collate a list of individuals and organisations to be approached as possible volunteers.

ACTION – Clerk to take forward, with further discussion at the next Committee meeting.

- 21/239 TO CONSIDER USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY THE PARISH COUNCIL**
Following discussion at the last Full Council meeting, after the mini-health check undertaken on the Council's Social Media usage, it was agreed to consider this item in more detail. Recommendations were to make better use of videos, graphics, pictures, polls & questions to grow engagement. One suggestion made at Full Council was to look at using a school student to assist with ensuring better engagement. This would need careful management and overview. The Council could also consider having an Instagram page to post photos of the Village to maybe engage younger members of the community. Certain posts could be 'boosted' (at a small cost) to target key messages at a specific audience. Events could be live-streamed or filmed to improve communication of what is going on in the community. Members acknowledged that a Social Media Policy still needs to be established. It was agreed to continue with the current operation at present but to consider these options in the future when certain opportunities arise.
ACTION – Clerk to investigate and draw up a suitable draft Social Media Policy for the Council to review and adopt.
- 21/240 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE LEISURE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**
The Leisure Management Strategy has now been updated following the initial document provided at Full Council. This has been completed in accordance with the briefing provided to the Consultant and to assist with securing funding for the facilities suggested by the Parish Council earlier in the year. After discussion, it was agreed that Councillors Thomas, Selley and Gardner plus the Assistant Clerk would meet with the consultant to review the document in detail, addressing any inaccuracies, and then report back to Full Council before adopting the strategy.
ACTION – Councillors to feedback any issues to the Assistant Clerk and meeting to be arranged with the consultant.
- 21/241 TO UNDERTAKE A MID-YEAR REVIEW OF BUDGETS AND EAR MARKED RESERVES**
As requested, the Clerk provided a summary of Expenditure v. Budget at the mid-year point and a breakdown of the current Ear Marked Reserves. These will be updated with expected year-end predictions ahead of the budget meetings planned for November as part of the Precept process.
- 21/242 TO CONSIDER WAY FORWARD WITH REGARDS TO THE VILLAGE HALL FACILITY**
As discussed at the last Full Council meeting, a feasibility study is really needed to progress any strategy for improving the current Village Hall facility. This will be a key item when looking at S106 funds from developers. It was agreed that Councillor Roberts should address this with the Village Hall committee at their meeting on 14th October.
- 21/243 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**
The Clerk advised that the electricity contract for the Parish Office is now able to be renegotiated. Given the current climate with energy suppliers and increasing costs being seen, it was agreed for the Clerk to seek quotes now and liaise with Committee members via email to progress the renewal. An update will be provided at the Full Council meeting on 11th October.

The meeting closed at 10.04pm