

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ONLINE
ON MONDAY 7th DECEMBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 8.10PM**

Present: Councillors Mrs B Thomas (Vice-chair), Mrs G Gardner and Mr J Selley

In attendance: Mrs C Callen (Clerk)

Minutes: Mrs C Callen

20/414 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Councillors Mr J Paxton, Mr A Channon and Mr L Davison-Williams

20/415 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were none.

20/416 MATTERS ARISING

Confirmation has been received that the Licence to Underlet between Barton Rovers FC and the Royal Mail has now been completed.

Councillor Roberts has provided details of the Amazon-Smile charity fund-raising that the Village Hall have signed up to. He has requested that the Parish Council publish this on the website/social media. Following discussion, it was felt that as several other local charities are also signed up for this and similar sites, the Parish Council should remain impartial and it would be inappropriate to favour just one organisation. It was agreed that any advertising should be left for the individual organisations to undertake on their own websites/social media pages.

20/417 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 2nd NOVEMBER 2020

A copy of the minutes was provided to members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** the approval of the minutes of 2nd November 2020, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

It was noted that several Matters Arising were still outstanding and these would be carried forward to the next Committee meeting.

20/418 TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE THE COST OF WEBCAMS FOR THE OFFICE PC'S

Earlier in the year, the Office had new IT equipment installed. At the time, webcams were also suggested to assist with online meetings, etc. but they were then out of stock due to high demand caused by the Pandemic Lockdown. The Office staff have since been using their own laptops for all Zoom/online meetings, either in the office or from home. Following discussion between the Vice-Chair, Chairman and Clerk, it was agreed to now purchase two webcams to attach to the office PC's. A quote was provided by the IT Support company (Antechs) at a cost of £45 plus VAT each plus £10 shipping. The Webcams have now been purchased and installed. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** the retrospective approval of the total cost of £100 plus VAT to purchase 2 webcams, funded from the Equipment Replacement EMR 324, **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

20/419 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE QUOTE FOR LAPTOPS FOR OFFICE STAFF

During the Pandemic, the Office staff have been working from home on a regular basis. They have been using their own laptops/PC's. Due to GDPR legislation and confidentiality, Parish Council files should not be accessed/held/stored on personal IT equipment.

Therefore, it has been recommended that the Parish Council should purchase 2x laptops for the Office Staff to use for all Parish Council work. Antechs Managed IT Support have provided a quote to supply 2x 15.6inch screen laptops with carrying cases at a cost of c.£770 plus VAT each. Exact costs will depend on demand at the time of ordering (they are currently in short supply due to changes to working patterns as a result of the Pandemic and also high Christmas demand). Following a discussion on the options, Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** to approve the purchase of two 15.6inch laptops with carrying cases at a maximum cost of £1550 plus VAT funded from the Equipment Replacement EMR 324, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

ACTION – Clerk to investigate insurance cover for the equipment to be taken off site and whilst in transit.

20/420 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE QUOTE FOR REMOTE WORKING IT SUPPORT FOR OFFICE STAFF

As stated above, the office staff are currently working from home on a more regular basis. With the current IT, there are certain files and programmes that cannot be accessed from a remote location due to the limited ability within the current licences (Clerk's folders, Burials, Payments,

Payroll, etc.). The Clerk has discussed options with Antechs Managed IT Support and they have suggested an upgrade for the staff to Microsoft 365 Business Premium at an additional cost of £5.70pm+VAT each – due to the machine set up, the Assistant Clerk would probably not need this. In addition, the purchase of two Teamviewer Remote Worker licences would allow all programmes to be accessed from home for the staff – cost c.£15.10pm+VAT each. Following discussion, Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** approval of a cost of £5.70 plus VAT pm for the upgrade to the Clerks licence plus two Teamviewer Remote Worker licences at a cost of £30.20 plus VAT pm, **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

20/421 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE COSTS FOR BROADBAND TELEPHONY SERVICE FOR THE PARISH OFFICE

The Broadband that supports the Office BT Cloud Phone is now out of contract. The phone contract runs for a further 3 years. The Clerk has spoken to BT and obtained a quote for £30.95+VAT pm to provide a new Broadband on another two-year contract. This would provide a saving of £171 per annum. Alternatively, the Broadband could be cancelled and the phones linked to the Virginmedia fibre broadband that supports the rest of the office IT. However, this would mean that BT would not provide any support for the Cloud Phone going forward, but would be a saving of £371pa. Members discussed the best way forward, favouring the continued support and back up of BT. Therefore, Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** to approve the quote to continue with BT Broadband at a cost of £30.95 plus VAT, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

The BT Cloud phone now offers a mobile app which allows calls to be made from a personal mobile but uses the Parish Council Cloud Phone number/account. This negates the need for the Office staff to have a separate work mobile phone. At the start of the Pandemic Lockdown, the Parish Council purchased two mobile phones but have been unable to set up Parish Council SIM only accounts with a mobile network provider to activate these. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** to approve the sale of the obsolete mobiles by the Clerk at the best price achievable in the second-hand market, **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

20/422 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE COSTS FOR ADDITIONAL SCREENS FOR THE PARISH OFFICE

Following the end of the latest Pandemic Lockdown, the Parish Office is now able to re-open. It has been suggested that there should be more 'sneeze-screens' on the reception desk to protect staff and visitors. These could be purchased for up to £200, depending on what is required and to still allow access to the door. Members reviewed options provided from two online suppliers. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** approval of the purchase of the 1500mm x 950mm screen with small cut out from Rhino Premium Counter Series at a cost of £121.47 plus VAT, funded from the Health & Safety EMR 328. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

20/423 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE EXPENDITURE FOR 2020/21 AND TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE DRAFT BUDGETS FOR 2021/22

Details of the expenditure to date and draft budget for 2021/22 were discussed by members. Income has decreased due to fall in interest rates for savings accounts and the waiving of the Village Hall contribution for the access road due to the Pandemic in 2020. The cost of telephony and broadband in the budget allows for the new agreement as per agenda item 20/421. Meeting room fees budget has been based on a mix of online and face to face meetings being held in 2021. The IT Support/backup includes the costs for the additional licences as approved under agenda item 20/420. No additional funds are proposed for the Ear-marked Reserves for recruitment and training costs or equipment replacement costs for 2021. A small increase for the Health & Safety fund is included given the ongoing Pandemic impact.

Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** the approval of the draft 2021/22 Policies & Resources budget, with a £39,474 committee precept. This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

The committee reviewed the overall Draft Council Precept position. The final approval will be taken to the Full Council meeting on 14th December before submission to Central Beds Council.

20/424 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA

There was none.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.