

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
OF BARTON-LE-CLAY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ONLINE
ON MONDAY 22nd FEBRUARY 2021 COMMENCING AT 8.45PM**

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

In attendance: Mrs C Callen (Clerk)

Minutes: Mrs C Callen

20/573 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Councillor Mr L Davison-Williams

20/574 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were none.

20/575 MATTERS ARISING

Following discussions at the last Extra-Ordinary Meeting, Councillor Roberts has provided details of the Community Toilet Scheme. This item will be discussed further once the current Lockdown restrictions are lifted and local businesses are able to return to normal trading.

The Christmas Lights group have contacted the Parish Council to confirm that they are planning to hold their ‘switch-on’ event on Sunday 28th November. They have asked that a road closure authority is sought as in previous years, which the Clerk will action in the Summer. They have also enquired regarding the possibility of putting a concrete base permanently on Lime Close to support a real Christmas Tree – similar to that used in Maulden. **ACTION – Councillor Channon volunteered to look at the site in Maulden and liaise with the Clerk to investigate what this entails and will report back at the next Full Council meeting for consideration.**

Central Beds Council have set up three Rapid Covid-19 Testing sites for anyone who lives or works in Central Bedfordshire and is unable to work from home and is in a customer facing role. The nearest to Barton is at Flitwick Leisure Centre. Roll out is on a phased basis, with higher priority workers being encouraged to attend in the first instance. Testing is recommended twice a week, 3/4 days apart. Further details are on the CBC website. This could apply to Parish Staff in due course.

At the last Full Council meeting it was agreed to hold the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual meeting of the Parish Council on Monday 26th April. Whilst this date is fine for the Annual Parish Meeting, which should be held between 1st March and 1st June, the Clerk has sought clarification and has been advised that the Annual meeting of the Parish Council must be held in May. This item will be referred back to the next Full Council meeting.

Minute number 20/529.4 The Clerk has written to the Regional Director of TSB and the local MP regarding the closure of the local branch. A response has been received on behalf of Nadine Dorries, MP confirming that she will contact the TSB to see what can be achieved and an update will be provided in due course.

20/576 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE POLICIES & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 7th DECEMBER 2020

A copy of the minutes was provided to members ahead of the meeting. Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** the approval of the minutes of 7th December 2020, **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

20/577 TO CONSIDER INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL INVESTMENT POLICY

A copy of the latest version of the Policy to review was provided to members ahead of the meeting. The Clerk has made amendments to reflect the latest guidance from MHCLG. It was suggested that clause 2.2 should state the order of priority. Following review, Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** the approval of the amended Annual Investment Policy, **SECONDED** by Councillor Channon and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

20/578 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF SYSTEMS OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Clerk has completed a draft review, which was provided to members ahead of the meeting for discussion. After making a few minor amendments, Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** to approve the amended Annual Review of Effectiveness of Systems of Internal Control, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.

ACTION – Clerk to contact Peninsula H&S Consultant to arrange an online review. Online H&S Training to be extended to the part-time groundsman for completion.

- 20/579 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN, INTERNAL AUDIT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME**
 Details were provided to members ahead of the meeting. The Internal Auditor was appointed last year based on a three-year term costing £130pa. An interim Audit was completed in January. The Year End Closure has been arranged for 30th April and then the Internal Auditor will complete their review in May.
 Councillor Thomas **PROPOSED** approval of the Annual Audit Plan, Internal Audit Terms of Reference and Internal Audit Programme, **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.
- 20/580 TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE A DEBIT CARD TO BE HELD BY THE CLERK FOR PETTY CASH**
 With the planned closure of the local TSB Branch, to enable petty cash or small online purchases to be made, the Clerk has recommended that a debit card is held and used by the Clerk/RFO, in line with the Council's Financial Regulations, limited to £200 for a single transaction. To mitigate any risk exposure in approving a debit card, the councillors who are signatories on the Bank Account would be able to undertake spot checks of the Bank Statements via internet banking to ensure all transactions are legitimate. On this basis, Councillor Channon **PROPOSED** to approve the issue of a debit card for the Clerk, **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.
- 20/581 TO CONSIDER APPROACH FROM CELLNEX UK LTD TO PURCHASE THE TELECOM MAST LAND AT LUTON ROAD SPORTS FIELD AND AGREE WAY FORWARD**
 The Parish Council have been approached by Cellnex UK Ltd to purchase the land that one of the telecom masts currently stands on, with payment of a lump sum. An annual rent of £3250 is currently paid, split 50/50 with BRFC. Concerns were raised on how this would impact the use of the land in the future. Councillor Channon **PROPOSED** to seek further details from Cellnex UK Ltd before any decision were made, **SECONDED** by Councillor Gardner and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.
- 20/582 TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM DOCTORS PARTNERSHIP REGARDING THE PURCHASE OF THE FREEHOLD FOR THE SURGERY AND AGREE WAY FORWARD**
 Following an initial discussion last September, the Partners have confirmed that they are still looking to progress the purchase of the freehold to the surgery. The Clerk has contacted the Valuation Office Agency to request details of the process and costs for obtaining a valuation of the site in the first instance. They are considering any potential conflict in acting on behalf of the Council, given the work they do with the NHS. An update will be provided at the next meeting.
 The Doctors Partnership have also confirmed that they would require more building space and staffing to accommodate the increase in healthcare need from any development expanding the population of the Village. There is a possibility of utilising the poor area of the allotments land that borders the surgery, which could be considered in the freehold purchase.
 Councillor Davison-Williams prepared a paper and map last September highlighting items to consider. **ACTION – Members requested that the paper be re-issued and that the item discussed again at the next meeting, ahead of any discussion with the Doctors Partnership.**
- 20/583 TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE MHCLG CONSULTATION ON THE 'RIGHT TO REGENERATE' PROPOSAL AND AGREE ANY RESPONSE**
 BATPC have advised that MHCLG are consulting on the 'Right to Regenerate'. NALC have provided a summary on what is being proposed and also questions for consideration. A response is required by 26th February. Following discussion, Councillor Channon **PROPOSED** responses to the 11 questions, with additional bullet points to be provided for question 8. Response to be overviewed by members ahead of submission by 26th February deadline; **SECONDED** by Councillor Selley and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**.
ACTION – Councillor Channon to provide additional information required for the response.
- 20/584 ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE OR FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**
 Councillor Channon requested that Committee Strategies, including Terms of Reference, be included on the next agenda.
 Councillor Selley requested that each Committee meet outside on their appropriate site during the Summer, to help members understand the priorities and issues of each committee.

The meeting closed at 10.11pm