

# BARWICK in ELMET & SCHOLES PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 7pm using remote access

**PRESENT:** Councillor Glyn Davies (Chair)  
Councillors Claire Hassell Howard Bedford  
Graham Slater Joanne Austin

**In attendance:** The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

1 **APOLOGIES.** Cllr. Stella Walsh.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST.** None.

### 3 **TO SIGN AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Committee meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020 be approved and that the Chair sign the minutes when able to do so, all in favour.

### 4. **ADDITIONAL WORK REQUESTS, COSTINGS AND ACTION**

- **Scholes Lodge Lane wall work**

It was noted that this has been completed since the Committee last met. There had been concerns that the full extent of the wall had not been repaired, Cllr. Slater advised that the contractor had used spare cement for repointing the far end of the wall.

- **Barwick cess pool**

It was noted that the preferred contractor has been given instructions to proceed and that he has liaised with the Parish Council (in particular Cllr. Remmer) and had been looking to make a start the first week in September but nothing had happened. The Clerk would pursue. It was noted that Planning Permission was required.

- **To consider a quote from Leeds Lights**

A quote from Leeds City Council (LCC) of £4,660 + VAT had been received which assumed no changes to the 2019 layout. Cllr. Hassell indicated that there had been disappointment that the floodlights on the tree opposite the Gascoigne public house had been insufficiently lit in 2019 and suggested requesting an increase in lighting. Cllr. Austin suggested that a change be made in Scholes provision in order to maintain parity between the two villages in terms of costs. The budgeted amount was £4,750, in addition there was an unused Community Fund Grant of £1,000. Cllr. Hassell agreed to contact the Leeds Lights Manager to discuss and for a revised quote to be submitted for consideration at the next meeting. It was agreed that an application be made to the Well-Being fund for further funding for 2021.

- **Change to the entrance to Barwick Sports Field and replacement of the damaged fence and planting the wooden containers**

A quote of £2,151 had been received for creating access just past the last of the planters. Cllr. Bedford proposed an alternative access and agreed to produce a plan for the next meeting. Cllrs. Hassell and Maude were meeting two representatives of Barwick in Bloom the following morning (on-site). Investigation of land registry records by Cllr. Maude was ongoing (due to inconsistencies with the adopted Highway records of LCC and to clarify the terms of the 125-year lease of LCC land by the PC). It had been hoped that the school maintain the planters in order to engage the interest of the children but the closure of the school due to the restrictions associated with the pandemic had meant that nothing had been done and the planters were full of weeds. Cllr. Hassell had liaised with the head teacher about this and she had agreed that the PC look after them in the immediate future, three shrubs would be planted in each paid for by the £500 approved at the October 2018 PC meeting. Cllr. Hassell and the Clerk would visit the Arium accordingly. It was suggested use of anti-vandal paint would address resident's concerns about children climbing onto the container. The container might release more space in the Parish Council (PC) garage.

### 5. ASSETS

- **Trees inspections**

Cllr. Slater had spoken to the Chair of Scholes in Bloom (and former PC Chair) regarding trees in Scholes. The only two trees the PC was responsible for in Scholes were the two beech trees on Scholes Lodge Lane (plus those in Scholes Lodge Farm field). The Clerk would contact the LCC tree officer for a definitive list of trees and also a local tree surgeon regarding inspection.

- **Land at Scholes Lodge Lane**

There had been two volunteers for the working party agreed at the last meeting tasked with producing proposals for this land (Cllrs. Slater and Walsh). It was agreed that the land needed to be levelled, tree roots removed, topsoil laid and a membrane put down and then gravel put on top. The estimated cost of this being £3,000. A local farmer had agreed to level the land, Cllr. Slater was due to speak to the farmer about the sports field hedge and offered to use the opportunity to ask him about this. Cllr. Davies was concerned that this would duplicate a conversation with Cllr. Walsh and agreed to email Cllr. Walsh accordingly. One dwarf cherry tree and two acer trees would be planted, one of the residents of Scholes Lodge Lane had obtained an acer. There was a suggestion that benches could be considered at a later stage paid for by those wishing to have the bench dedicated to a family member.

- **Asset register**

The Clerk had obtained a solid state external hard drive for backing up data. Cllr. Slater reported on Pavilion items such as a curtain fan heater and a water heater. These would be added to the asset register as non-itemised Pavilion contents as recommended by the auditor. The revised asset register was on the F&GP Committee shared drive.

## **6. SPORTS PAVILION AND FIELD IN SCHOLES**

- **Report of last sub-committee meeting and updates on the consultation.**

Cllr. Slater reported on the "Vision for the Future" consultation. This was a questionnaire and a consultation event at the Pavilion on 22<sup>nd</sup> August. The later had been well attended with members of the Pavilion subcommittee in attendance (Cllrs. Maude & Slater and Mr. Moreland). Feedback was favourable but there were concerns regarding access. Cllr. Slater had researched a system of electronic access control using key fobs costing just under £2,000. There had been about 140 replies to the questionnaire including two from Councillors. Cllr. Slater would circulate a breakdown of responses once the Pavilion subcommittee had had chance to consider them. Research had suggested that the biggest issue where other parishes have done something similar is litter. The contractor building the East Leeds Orbital Road had declined to donate and lay tarmac. An application for a £20,000 grant had been made to the Emmerdale fund. Other funding sources had been considered but applications to most of these are not being considered due to the economic effect of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Planning approval would be needed for the car park lighting.

- **Drainage issues on Scholes football pitch.**

No progress since the last meeting.

## **7. PROGRAMME OF WORKS SCHEDULE.**

**The minutes of the various subcommittees who report to the F&GP Committee were considered.**

- **Allotments subcommittee**

It was reported that there were two people on the waiting list. One half plot is available. Cllr. Ward will be contacting the plot holders.

- **Pavilion subcommittee**

Revised terms of reference were agreed at the last PC meeting to allow the subcommittee to consider enquiries for the football pitch. Shadwell junior football club started on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> and there is an additional booking for a youth group (The Tribe). The pitch has been marked out and is smaller removing the overlap with the cricket pitch (the club have been informed). The Pavilion has had its first children's party and the Wendell Singers had a meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that all three subcommittees are empowered to take decisions about hedge cutting and that it might be cost effective to employ a single contractor to do the Allotments, Scholes Lodge Farm and Scholes football pitch hedges. Various contractors were suggested and Cllr. Davies agreed to draw up a plan to be presented to the PC with a recommendation that the F&GP Committee implement the plan.

- **Scholes Lodge Farm**

No report.

- **Peace Flame**

It was noted that the light had gone out for the first time since it was first lit, this was due to oil contamination.

### **Risk Assessments**

It was noted that Cllr. Ward has volunteered to carry out annual safety checks of items on PC asset register in Barwick. Cllr. Austin offered to assist with this and a copy of the asset register had been supplied. Cllr. Slater had carried out checks on half the assets in Scholes and was expecting to complete the rest the following week.

## **8. Finance**

- **Setting up an account with Lloyds bank**

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) had circulated a report. All signatures had been obtained immediately following the last Committee meeting and the forms posted. Throughout August, there had been telephone calls and emails with limited response. The RFO had made further enquiries in September and at the time of the meeting, was awaiting responses to a voicemail message and an email. Automated messages indicated that the bank were operating a reduced service due to new working practices caused by Government social distancing guidelines due to the pandemic.

- **External Auditor's comments**

The external auditor had raised some queries which the Clerk had responded to, these included lack of bank reconciliation information for August (the RFO advised that the PC doesn't meet in August) and a £400 discrepancy on the total value of the assets stated on the Variances form and the Accounting Statement (there had been a correction to the value assets which had been applied to one of these documents but not the other due to an oversight).

- **Reserves Policy**

Cllr. Austin was investigating a reserves policy following comments by the internal auditor. Although the bank balances appear healthy, current reporting doesn't clearly show "free cash", i.e. monies not earmarked for specific purposes. She cited examples such as £400 unused monies from the grant for allotment fencing, the £500 approved at the October 2018 PC meeting (see item 4 above), the £200 for the Hall Tower boundary and the £10,000 from LCC for the Pavilion. There was no allowance for contingencies. Once all these earmarked funds are accounted for, there should be enough funds left to cover all expenditure for a period of time set by the Reserves Policy (e.g. 12 months). She advised that a policy should be set once all grants have been identified and undertook to produce a paper for consideration at the next Committee meeting.

- **Review of direct debits**

A list of all direct debit payments was considered. It was agreed that it was appropriate to continue these payments by this method. There was one payment which was no longer required (Scholes playground rent). The RFO would make sure this was cancelled.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT FUTURE MEETING**

The next meeting date would be on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm using remote access technology unless advised otherwise. The Clerk would see if the same access code could be repeated for all future Committee meetings.

The meeting closed at 9:03pm