

BARWICK in ELMET & SCHOLES PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15th December 2020 at 7pm using remote access

PRESENT:	Councillor	Glyn Davies (Chair)		
	Councillors	Claire Hassell	Howard Bedford	Phil Maude
		Graham Slater	Jacqueline Ward	Stella Walsh

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

The Chair played a recording of a statement outlining the procedures to be undertaken to hold a lawful and effective remote meeting.

1 **APOLOGIES.** None.

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 10th November 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.**

Three quotes had been obtained, one of which was below the insurance excess of £400 and the Clerk had therefore used his delegated authority and instructed the contactor to replace the missing stones, to secure those stones not fixed down and to take action to discourage further thefts. The contractor was asked if whilst on-site, he could give a quote for the work on the adjoining land (see next agenda item) and was notified that there is a large hole near the end which needs repointing.

- **Scholes Lodge Lane land update.**

The Clerk had sought quotes from four contractors, one had given a price, one declined the opportunity to quote, one reply was awaited (see above) and one had requested more information. It was agreed to meet contractors on-site to discuss options and to continue to pursue other options to achieve the required three quotes and to consider progress as an agenda item at the next meeting. An invoice had been received for the levelling work already carried out (£250 + VAT). There was discussion whether the specification was sufficiently rigorous and the need to have walling round the roots of the trees.

- **Hedge cutting requirements in the Parish.**

The Clerk had contacted all Sports Clubs to see if they would be interested in being part of an agreement to use a single contractor for all tree cutting requirements in the Parish. Both cricket clubs, Scouts, Village Hall and Scholes Bowling Club would be willing to be considered if the price was acceptable. Some needed to seek approval of their committees. The Clerk had contacted three potential contractors, all three had replied but none had yet given a formal quote and it was suggested that a formal deadline might encourage a prompt response. If necessary, arrangements could be made to meet them for a walk round of the parish due to the limitations of quoting based purely on diagrams. Hedges under consideration were those on the allotments, Scholes Lodge Farm and Scholes Football pitch.

- **Fencing alongside the Verity Strip.**

It was noted that the Parish Council had agreed at its last meeting to replacement of the fencing and gate alongside the Verity Strip and that this has been delegated to the Committee to agree a specification, seek tenders, appoint a contractor and complete the work within the agreed budget of £10,000 plus VAT. After discussion of the type and extent of fencing required it was **resolved** that Cllr. Bedford draw up a specification and bring back to the next meeting for consideration.

5. **ASSETS**

- **Inspection of Trees on Parish Council land**

A quote had been obtained for tree inspection work across the Parish. The quote was for £350 a day with two options, one which would take a day and a half and one which would take two days. The Committee agreed which option it preferred however the Clerk would contact the inspector for more detail.

- **Playground Inspections report and to consider training for those who carry them out.**
Copies of Leeds City Council (LCC) playground inspection reports had been circulated showing an annual inspection in August. There was no charge to the Parish Council (PC) for these but LCC were not pro-actively sending these reports to the PC. Concern was expressed that a couple of identified issues in the 2019 report were still unresolved in the 2020 report. It was noted that Cllr. Ward was regularly carrying out visual checks but hadn't yet attended any formal training. It was **resolved** that approval be given for her to attend such training and to formalise her inspections in line with recommendations and that the Clerk would investigate the agreement between LCC and the PC and this would be reviewed at the next meeting and a meeting with LCC would be considered if this was felt necessary.
- **Defibrillator**
A new battery had been bought for the defibrillator in Barwick. Due to the urgent nature of this, delegated authority had been sought from the Clerk to place the order.

6. SPORTS PAVILION AND FIELD IN SCHOLES

There had been no real hiring in November due to lockdown. Cllr. Slater was in the process of putting together an application for planning permission for the "Vision for the Future" project. There would be an agenda item at the next PC meeting to formally approve the cost of this. There had been a volunteer to do the Site & Location plans. Confirmation from Ward Councillor Stephenson had been received that the Emmerdale Fund grant application would be considered their January meeting.

7. FINANCE

- **Reserves Policy - to consider and approve a draft policy to recommend to the Parish Council and to consider current levels of reserves.**
Following the resignation of Councillor Austin, it was agreed that consideration of this agenda item be deferred to the January meeting.
- **To agree a budget for 2021/2022.**
The RFO had circulated a draft budget with the agenda paperwork and the Chair had circulated a consolidated version that afternoon. Concern was expressed that the budget was based on forecasts based on the previous year's expenditure and expenditure in the year to date. It was suggested that there be engagement with the subcommittee Chairs (Allotments, Pavilion and Scholes Lodge Farm) so that their comments would result in a more informed budget. It was agreed to defer this agenda item to the January meeting to allow time for such consultations to take place.
- **Lloyds Account**
It was noted that £50,000 had been transferred from Barclays and that most automatic payments had been switched and that Cllr. Ward is now an authorised signatory. Income since then had taken the overall level of reserves held with Barclays Bank back over £85,000. It was agreed that the be an agenda item at the next full PC meeting to note that the RFO had appropriate powers to move PC monies between accounts in order to minimise risk.
- **Gifts for members of the newsletter delivery team**
It was **resolved** to purchase a small token of appreciation for those who are not Councillors who do deliveries of newsletters for the PC.
- **Quotations from contractors.**
It was agreed that a written quotation is obtained when agreeing works with contractors in line with Financial Regulations.

8. SUBCOMMITTEES

The minutes and decisions of the subcommittees who report to the F&GP Committee (Allotments and Scholes Lodge Farm) were noted. Concern had been expressed at the full PC regarding one invoice for a tree limb which had been cut which the PC was unaware of, all payments had been agreed with the caveat that investigations into the circumstances relating to this work being done were carried out. The Chair of

the Allotments subcommittee had spoken to the contractor and was satisfied that he had acted under instruction believing this to have the support of the PC, it was therefore **resolved** that he be paid.

9. ACTION TRACKER

The Action Tracker had been circulated with the agenda papers listing all previously agreed actions and reports on progress. The Clerk was asked to try to condense the tracker to a single sheet by removal of completed items and removal of one of the date columns.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting dates would be on Tuesday 12th January (specifically to discuss the budget) and 19th January 2021, both at 7pm using remote access technology unless advised otherwise.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm