

BARWICK in ELMET & SCHOLES PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9th March 2021 at 7pm using remote access

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

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. There were no apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST. Cllr. Bedford reminded the Committee of his connection to a fencing contractor.

3 TO SIGN AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Committee meeting of 9th February 2021 be approved and that the Chair sign the minutes when able to do so, all in favour.

4. WORK REQUESTS

• Scholes Cricket Pitch and Dog Fouling issues

Cllr. Brunt had met on-site with representatives of Scholes Cricket Club regarding their concerns about casual football on their outfield and dogs being exercised on the pitch. His report had been presented to the Parish Council (PC) who referred this to the Committee for consideration and recommendation back to the PC. Cllr. Brunt had circulated another report with recommendations.

- Dog-fouling signs. The report had four suggestions regarding the wording of the signs. Option 4 was given partial support by the Committee but the majority felt that the signs were too wordy and one Councillor had already suggested alternative wording. The locations of the signs was supported. Ways to engage passers-by was considered with a suggestion that the signs be considered as consumables and that they be changed frequently or that the sign emits a click sound. Care was needed with the wording to ensure the lawful basis of the signs (e.g. keeping dogs on a lead). Leeds City Council (LCC) dog wardens had visited the site previously and put up signage and engaged with dog-walkers and the benefits of another visit were noted. It was **resolved** that the Committee recommends to the PC that three signs be purchased and that meanwhile Cllr. Brunt meets with the cricket club to agree wording.
- Use of outfield and dogs being exercised on the pitch. It was noted that the cricket has a lease on the pitch but this doesn't give them any rights regarding the football pitch except where the two overlap (it was noted however that as the football pitch is not designated as public open space there is no automatic right for its casual use). Parts of the pitch were very wet which was a possible reason why one of the goalposts had been moved to the cricket outfield (options for drainage had been previously considered). This was not Shadwell United Football Club who use the pitch in an east-west direction. At Barwick, the cricket club use orange plastic temporary fencing during the winter months to protect the wicket, there may be fencing of this sort in the PC garage which cricket club could loan. It was **resolved** that a proposal that the goalposts be locked together be declined, all in favour.
- Goalposts. It was noted that the goalposts needed repair and this should be a priority if they presented a risk. The Clerk would order spare parts (e.g. nets) once the nature of the problem had been established. It was also noted that the goalposts in Barwick needed new wheels which could be ordered at the same time.

- Purchase of gazebos and two heaters for local business and community use.**
 A local business had approached the PC at the public participation session at the March meeting and suggested that the PC buys two gazebos and two heaters for loan to local business and community groups. This had been delegated to the Committee to consider and make a recommendation subject to a costed and justified proposal being received from the applicant. No such proposal had been received by the Committee and it was noted that the business had made enquires with the Maypole Committee. It was **resolved** to recommend to the PC that this proposal be declined. The applicant would be made aware of the decision to prevent them spending unnecessary time justifying their proposal.
- Repair of Scholes Lodge Lane boundary wall and work on adjacent land.**
 Following the resolution at the February meeting, the Clerk had contacted the agreed builder to instruct him to repair the wall and replace the missing coping stones within the agreed budget. The builder had produced a revised quotation of £3553.50 + VAT. This included the agreed repair work but his quotation also included provision of membrane and gravel on the adjoining land. However, his quotation did not cover many aspects of the specification issued and therefore could not be considered as a fair comparison with quotations supplied by others. It was agreed that the Clerk asks him to provide a revised quotation purely for the work on the wall. It was **resolved** that this be deferred to the next meeting. The Clerk would check with the contractors that they would still honour the prices quoted.
- Replacement of the fencing and gate alongside the Verity Strip**
 Cllr. Remmer had considered the three most competitive quotations and done background checks on each contractor including checks with Companies House to ensure that these were reputable businesses. There was uncertainty regarding the contractor who gave the cheapest quotation as there was no contact information other than a mobile telephone number and the quotation itself suggested a casual approach. The specification had given options to quote for a wooden gate or a metal one, it was **resolved** that the successful bidder be asked to provide a wooden gate. It was **resolved** to accept the quotation from Richard Best of £1986 for fencing between points A and B and £292 for fencing between points C and D plus £490 for the wooden gate noting the reasons given above for not accepting the cheapest. Although no order had been placed, Cllr. Remmer had asked them for a start date in the event that their quotation was accepted and was still waiting to hear from them. Cllr. Bedford did not vote on the above two resolutions (see item 2 above). All those involved were thanked for their work in taking this forward.
- Grants policy**
 There had been a recent grant application for £85. The current grants policy sets no limits so applicants need to fill in the form even for modest applications and, there is no maximum limit stated in the policy. The merits of setting lower and upper limits were discussed including the need to show due diligence, to be flexible and how grants awarded would be reported in the budget. As the grants policy had been agreed less than six months previously, it was agreed that a review of the policy at this time was premature and that considering each case on its merits avoided inflexibility. Cllr. Walsh thanked everyone for their response to this agenda item. The PC retains discretion in the administration, agreement and allocation of all grant applications. It was also noted that the grants policy needs run for at least a year to be monitored, The Community Fund should be available in the near future.
- Tree inspections**
 It was noted that on Tuesday 2nd March, the trees had been inspected as agreed in previous meetings. The report was awaited and would be an agenda item next time.
- Request for permission to attach a geocache container in the circular seat at the Coronation Tree and to place one in Scholes Lodge Farm.**
 The PC had been approached by an event organiser asking permission to place a small geocache container on the circular seat at the Coronation Tree, at the Community Orchard towards Leeds Road and on Bog Lane. There were no objections to him placing such a container within Scholes Lodge Farm (if that was the location he was referring to) but there were concerns regarding the seat at the Coronation Tree noting that the seat was PC property but the land on which it stands belongs to LCC, the main concern was that the junction had a history of traffic accidents and that the PC

should not encourage unnecessary activity such as increased pedestrian road crossings and possible parked vehicles associated with those trying to find the container. It was **resolved** to agree that consent be given to the placing of containers in Scholes Lodge Farm field but that no such consent be given to the placing of a container on the circular seat. An alternative suggestion was to propose that he puts a container near the kissing gate.

5. FINANCE

It was noted that following the resignation of Joanne Austin, the PC no longer had an internal controls officer. It was noted that the person doing this does not have to be a Councillor and it was suggested that an appropriate appeal be put in the newsletter.

6. ACTION TRACKER

Actions as shown on the Action Tracker were reviewed. Several of those outstanding had been discussed as part of the meeting (above). The Clerk also reported on progress on lanyards . He also advised that there was no progress on getting someone to quote for cutting all PC boundary hedges and was considering approaches to non-local contractors.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The recently agreed second Tuesday of the month pattern means that the Committee meetings in the next twelve months would be the day after the PC meeting in April, May and June 2021 (and again in January, February and March 2022). It was therefore agreed that the meetings be put back a week and shown accordingly on the PC calendar of meetings. The next meeting would therefore be **Tuesday 20th April 2021 at 7pm**. This would be held using remote access technology.

Cllr. Davies advised that he wished to hand over the role of Chair and asked Councillors to consider if they would be willing to take this on. In the event that no one volunteered, he would chair the April meeting and the Annual Parish Council meeting in May would then consider Committee membership. He was praised for his understanding of the budget and knowledge in producing meaningful reports and was encouraged to continue as a member of the Committee.

The meeting closed at 8:49pm