

**MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee**

held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024 immediately following an extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council (PC), at 7:30pm, in Scholes Sports Pavilion.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Kinga Ragg (Chair)  
John Hayton Paul Remmer

**In attendance:** Cllr. Dales and the Clerk.

**1 APOLOGIES.** Cllrs. P. Walsh, S. Walsh and Williamson.

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

**3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING.**

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Committee meeting 8/2023 held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (104-107) having been circulated, be approved and the Chair be authorised to sign.

**4. ACTION TRACKER.**

**a. Actions completed.**

Since the circulation on 9<sup>th</sup> January of the action tracker for the January 2024 meeting, the following actions had been completed;

- i. Legionella checks.
- ii. Notification to the third-party payroll provider that from April 2024, they would no longer be needed (reminder sent in March as requested by them).
- iii. The hatch to the roof space in the Pavilion was now closed.
- iv. Christmas lights competition.
- v. The Clerk to use the invoice for £4,000 for the 2023 Christmas Lights as evidence of expenditure in claiming the Well-Being fund grant.
- vi. Renewal of Norton anti-virus software.
- vii. Removal of self-seeded sycamore in Barwick in Elmet Village Hall car park (invoice awaited).
- viii. The flagstones for the standing for the bench on Belle Vue Avenue made level (invoice awaited).
- ix. Cllr. S. Walsh to speak to the person who had collected the redundant goal posts from Scholes football field about doing something similar at Barwick (these did not fit on the van).
- x. Filing Cabinet in the cellar of Barwick in Elmet Methodist Church. Offered to All Saints' Church but found to have been damaged when moved into the cellar.
- xi. Cllr. S. Walsh to relocate the display boards in the Pavilion changing rooms. Done.
- xii. Barwick and Scholes football club. They had been given a full set of keys (31<sup>st</sup> January) and the goal posts were up (1<sup>st</sup> February) and as such, there was now no reason for them to continue to have to rely on using the pitch at Barwick in Elmet.

**b. Ongoing Actions**

The following actions were still ongoing.

- i. **Allotment Association** – the Clerk had contacted all plot holders by letter, email and the WhatsApp group (for those who were on it) and received several replies from which a small group willing to be part of a working party had been identified.
- ii. **Spoil on Scholes Football pitch.**  
No progress has been made due to the wet weather.
- iii. **Precept percentage increase other Parish and Town Councils had levied in 2023 and 2024.**

The figures for 2023 had been circulated to all, the 2024 figures had not been published at the time of the meeting.

- iv. **Cllrs. Remmer and P. Walsh to meet to consider Pavilion heating.**  
Ongoing.
- v. **Cllr. Hayton keep a spreadsheet to track of both the costs and the benefits of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.**  
This action had been completed but there was now another FOI request. The Clerk would notify Cllr. Hayton of the time spent in due course.
- vi. **The wooden gates at the Leeds Road entrance to Scholes Lodge Field needed replacing, metal ones were suggested.**  
Estimates to be obtained.
- vii. **Quotes to be obtained for grass cutting** (this item was taken towards the end of the meeting after Cllr. Dales had left due to her pecuniary interest).  
The Clerk had received a quotation for cutting the mound of Hall Tower Field. He had been trying to get quotations for cutting the flat at Hall Tower Field and Scholes Lodge Field. It was suggested he gives a deadline by which responses should be received. There was sufficient left in the 2023/24 Scholes Lodge Farm budget for one further cut before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- viii. **Village gateway entrance signs.**  
The Clerk had tried to get quotations for cleaning the six stone village gateway entrance signs and had tried two companies including the one who had previously done the signs. Neither company had replied. It was suggested that an approach be made to Scholes in Bloom, possibly with a donation towards their work.
- ix. **Adding self-serve software to the PC website to allow people to make their own bookings and be invoiced.**  
The Clerk had emailed and spoken by telephone to the resident who developed the site regarding sharing the cost of venue booking software with Scholes Village Hall. The resident had advised against this software as it was clunky and required registration of the person making the booking before they could proceed. He had suggested alternatives including one where a one-off lifetime fee is paid which would pay for itself within a couple of years compared to those where an annual fee is paid. The Clerk was asked to investigate whether the savings on his time would cover the cost of this investment.
- x. **Lighting for the defibrillator at Scholes and electrical work at the Pavilion.**  
This work had been carried out on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and was largely completed. However, the electrician had found that the defibrillator had been incorrectly connected to the power supply of the Pavilion as it needed an RCD (residual current device), a safety component installed into a fuse box as a type of breaker. He was coming back on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to make good this connection.
- xi. **Village Hall Car park.**  
**a. Disabled car parking bay spaces.**  
The Clerk had contacted the firm who did Cllr. Ragg's drive (they don't do white lining). On 16<sup>th</sup> January, he had emailed Leeds City Council (LCC) Highways (N. Borrás) and three other companies which he found by doing an Internet search. Two came back with quotations of £495 + VAT and £620 + VAT. On 14<sup>th</sup> February, N. Borrás had replied offering to do the work. As this job was not urgent, it was felt that waiting for LCC Highways to do the job was a better option than accepting one of the above quotations.  
**b. Faulty Lighting.**  
The Clerk had emailed the person at LCC who does the Christmas Lights and asked if he could recommend someone to take a look at the faulty lights. He replied to say he would take a look but the Clerk heard nothing further. Meanwhile the Clerk tried a firm he found by doing an Internet search. They replied to say that they were based in Essex and any quotation would not be competitive but directed the Clerk to a website from which the Clerk was able to request quotations from firms based in Yorkshire. One never replied, one did so to advise of issues with staff availability and the other quoted £223.69 for lamps only and £720.32 for new light emitting diode (LED) lanterns. The Clerk was asked to request a method statement from this contractor to ensure he was compliant with health and safety legislation. It was also suggested that a local tree

surgeon might have a cherry picker and the Clerk was asked to find out what he would charge for hire of this equipment. This option would still require a suitably qualified electrician to carry out the work. It was noted that Barwick in Elmet Village Hall had reported an accident where an elderly lady who had finished a line dancing class had been run over by another member of the class in the car park as both made their way home after the class.

## 5. WORK REQUESTS

### a. Insurance claim for the cost of taking down the trees in the Village Hall car park.

The PC insurance covered liability to third parties arising from successful claims against the PC. It was felt unlikely that this cover would extend to the cost of the tree removal but whilst this seemed unlikely, it was felt that there was nothing to lose from pursuing this and therefore the Clerk would make appropriate enquires.

### b. Repair of the overhead lights in Barwick Village Hall car park.

See paragraph 4b xi b above.

### c. To consider a review of Financial Regulations.

Cllrs. Hayton and Ragg had looked at the Financial Regulations. The following were discussed.

- i. Paragraph 2.2. The checks required by paragraph 2.2 were being done by Cllr. Ragg who explained her methodology to the meeting (checking samples of transactions rather than a 100% check of everything and this had resulted in errors being corrected). It was suggested that the wording of 2.2. be changed from “*verify bank reconciliations*” to “*check bank reconciliations to source documents*”.
- ii. Paragraph 4.1. Change the order to lowest to highest and change £500 to £5,000.
- iii. Paragraph 4.5. Change “£500” to “£5,000”.
- iv. Paragraph 5.12. Remove all references to payments by cheque, only electronic payments to be accepted.
- v. Paragraph 6.18 change “*Debit Card*” to “*Credit Card*” (the dual-authorisation requirement of the account prohibited use of a debit card directly linked to the PC bank account).
- vi. Paragraph 10.3. Change “*quotations or estimates*” to “*estimates*”.
- vii. Paragraph 11.1h change “£25,000” to “£30,000” and change “*quotations*” to “*estimates*”.
- viii. Paragraph 11.1a and 11.1b change “*quote or estimate*” to “*estimate*”.
- ix. There were currently three Councillors who level of access to the bank account allowed them to authorise payments. It was felt that there was a risk to business continuity should two of them be unavailable to do this, the Clerk would ask Cllr. S. Walsh if she would agree to being authorised in similar manner. It was noted that three former Councillors had once had this level of access. The bank had been instructed to revoke their access so they should therefore be unable to authorise any transactions but the Clerk would nevertheless write to them to ask them to return their card readers in they had not already done so.

There was discussion regarding other paragraphs (e.g. paragraph 6.21 regarding petty cash) which did not result in changes being made to the wording. The three-year forecast (paragraph 3.1) was being created by Cllr. Ragg. Regarding paragraph 6.13, the Clerk had two solid state hard drives for backing up data which were stored in a fireproof box and most of the contents of the laptop were automatically saved by Microsoft’s One-Drive. The Clerk would diary back ups of data to be done once every eight weeks.

### d. To consider insurance renewal.

Two quotations had been received and circulated to members of the Committee ahead of the meeting. The Clerk had completed a pre renewal questionnaire for the existing insurance provider the previous Tuesday but a formal renewal quotation was still awaited. The two quotations were similarly priced but one offered Officials Indemnity cover of £500,000 and the other was for £12,000,000. The Clerk was asked to contact this insurer to see what their

quotation would be if the Officials Indemnity cover was reduced to £500,000 to ensure a like-for-like comparison. One also provided cover for Business Interruption.

**e. Review of allotment agreements.**

An example of an allotment agreement had been circulated to members of the Committee who having considered this, agreed that no changes were necessary.

**f. Asset register.**

There were no changes to the PC assets since the last Committee meeting.

**g. Risk assessments.**

The Clerk would confirm that these were up to date, in particular regarding Scholes. Cllr. Remmer felt that these had been done, Cllr. Dales offered to do these checks if necessary.

**6. PAVILION MATTERS**

See agenda item 4b x above (lighting). It was noted that no one had yet taken up the offer publicised in the latest newsletter of a 50% discount on hire charges.

**7. DRAFT MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEES WHO REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE**

It was noted that the Peace Flame subcommittee had met on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024. The Clerk would check on the rules regarding minutes of subcommittee meetings.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

20<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7pm in the Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 8:42pm.

Signed

Chair