

## **BARROW UPON SOAR PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held on  
10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 2pm in the Parish Council Office, 12 High Street

### **PRESENT**

Cllrs R Billson, E Ellingworth, C Forrest, S Forrest, L Kingham, P Ranson, EJ Rodgers and J Rodgers

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Alice Gardam – Clerk and RFO

### **47. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES**

Cllr A Beckett

### **48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Councillors to declare interests relevant to agenda items

Cllr J Rodgers – BUSCA library committee – \$137 funding.

### **49. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

The minutes were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meetings.

### **50. TO DISCUSS HIRE OF PARISH COUNCIL VENUES**

An enquiry to hire the Roundhouse for a full day on a Saturday has been received. One business currently uses the Roundhouse for approximately one hour once a week but does not use the electricity. They have also painted the inside of the building in the past. There is currently no charge. Community groups also use the Parish Office meeting room very occasionally for meetings and there is no charge.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that community not for profit groups can continue to use the parish office meeting room FOC.

It is further **RECOMMENDED** that commercial groups may use the Roundhouse on signing a 6 month agreement that any electricity usage will be paid at the end of the 6 month period. After 6 months the agreement will be revisited.

### **51. TO DISCUSS 2022 - 23 BUDGET AND PRECEPT PROPOSALS**

Cllr S Forrest and the Clerk updated on the recent correspondence with CBC regarding the \$106 application for the cemetery extension and the request for an extension to the deadline for the precept submission.

Despite receiving our \$106 funding application in October and constant reminders, CBC Heads of Service will not be in a position to confirm the £100,000 needed for the cemetery extension before the precept application deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> January. A request for an extension to the deadline has been refused. This has created a difficult situation for the committee in confirming the precept as if the funding for the cemetery extension is not agreed the precept would need to be adjusted to fund the extension. The agreement is subject to the approval of the developer, Jelson, as the funding source. CBC has written to Jelson to seek approval, this was only done at the beginning of January.

Simon Jackson, CBC Strategic Director of Environmental & Corporate Services, has confirmed the following in writing. The correspondence is attached and will be filed with the minutes.

- 'The £100k can be regarded as 'agreed' by the Borough Council; I have discussed this matter with both the Chief Executive and relevant Head of Service and we have

concluded that it is appropriate to authorise this sum – this is now purely an administrative process from the Borough point of view

- We think it is highly unlikely that Jelsons would object to the proposed use of the fund; additionally we note that the legal agreement states that they must not 'unreasonably withhold approval' – so essentially we believe that approval from Jelsons is principally a matter of administration from their side also
- We have written to Jelson seeking approval for the proposed use of the s106 funding; if we do not hear anything in the next few days we will follow the matter up with them'

Mr Jackson continued with the following advice:

'I do not believe that the above should be any barrier to setting the precept. I strongly suggest that given the high likelihood that the £100k s106 monies will be received, that the precept be set on this basis. It is fair to say that this is an assumption, or estimate, but it is one where a key partner to the Parish Council (the Borough) is advising you that it is highly likely to materialise. I believe that in making such an assumption the Parish would be acting reasonably and in good faith. I cannot see any ethical problems in adopting such an approach.

In terms of risk management, and what would happen in the unlikely event that s106 monies are not received, I note that the lower tier councils - Towns and Parishes – are not currently subject to council tax capping rules, so if additional funds were required these could be raised by increasing the 2023/24 precept. If this created a cash flow issue over 2022/23 arising from the need to pay contractors in this financial year then, given the circumstances, the Borough Council would be prepared to offer a short term bridging loan to cover the funding gap.'

On the basis of the advice received from Mr Jackson, the committee **RECOMMENDS** to Full Council that we proceed to set the precept on the presumption that the funding will be received.

The Clerk presented the recommended 2022 - 23 budget and supporting precept.

A further £20,000 has been included as a contingency for the cemetery extension.

A further £2,000 has been included to refurbish the scattering of ashes area at the cemetery.

Following discussion, it is **RESOLVED** to recommend Barrow upon Soar Parish Council confirms its budget for the 2022-23 financial year showing estimated payments of £415,945, estimated income of £7700 and a £175,650 contribution from reserves, resulting in a net cost to Barrow Parish Council of £232,595 and that a precept be made on Charnwood Borough Council for the sum of £232,595 to be paid in two equal instalments by 30<sup>th</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> September.

The committee further **RECOMMENDED** that a formal complaint is made to CBC on their handling of the S106 application and the process involved is investigated.

## **52. TO DISCUSS CLIMATE CHANGE**

Cllr J Rodgers led the discussion suggesting a number of ideas.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to begin by investigating an environmental assessment of the Parish Office and to consult LCC to see if they have a service to assist Parish Councils to mitigate climate change.

**The meeting may move to closed session for the following items, discussion relates to staffing matters**

**53. TO UPDATE ON PERSONNEL MATTERS**

A new cleaning contractor has been appointed.

**Open session will resume subject to conclusion of matters discussed at closed session**

**54. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TBC**

The next meeting will be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February at 2pm.

**55. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 15:40

**SIGNED**..... **DATE**.....  
Chairman