

**BARTON-ON-THE-HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**  
**HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at 7pm**

Present: Councillors: Brigadier J F Rickett (Chairman), Lt Col J B Henderson (Vice-Chairman), Mrs G Cathie, Mrs L Hayman-Joyce  
Clerk: Mrs H Seymour-Smith  
Hon. Treasurer: Mr J Castle  
Mr J Shipton (Internal Auditor)  
District Councillor S Gray, County Councillor C Saint  
Public: Mr J Hayman-Joyce, Mr C Fance, Mr D Poulson

1. Apologies: Councillor Graham
2. The Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2014 were approved, and the Chairman signed them. Matters arising:
  - a. Councillor Cathie reported that Mrs Jayne Hanks had been cutting the grass in the churchyard every week. The Vice-Chairman proposed paying her £150, and it was agreed. The Hon. Treasurer to write her a cheque. Councillor Cathie asked it to be noted what a good job Mrs Hanks had done.
3. Parish Council Constitution. This had been drafted by the Vice-Chairman, and approved by the Chairman and Councillor Hayman-Joyce.

Councillor Cathie said she was not happy with item 8, which stated that planning applications would be considered by the Council sitting *alone* in advance of the OGM at which the applications would be considered publicly and voted upon. She pointed out that all Parish Council meetings, and their committees, should be held in public. The Vice-Chairman disagreed, saying it was more efficient for Councillors to discuss applications outside meetings.

A vote was held, and the new Constitution (appended to these minutes) was approved by 3 votes to 1.

*The Honorary Treasurer asked if Agenda Items 9 and 10 could be taken next, as they would have a bearing on the Precept Calculation.*

4. (Agenda item 9) Grass Cutting

The Hon. Treasurer reported that there had been some interest over the summer in the frequency and standard of the verge grass cutting by the Stratford District Council (SDC) contractor. He reminded the Council that for the financial year 2014/15 SDC were responsible for verge grass cutting as a charge to the Council Tax.

He stated that there were 4 options for 2015/16

1. Continue with the SDC contractor. Quantity rather than quality – the contractor covers the whole village cutting verges to just 1 metre from the roadside. *No cost to the village.*
2. Continue with the SDC contractor but supplement cutting of some important visual areas by employing our own contractor – say £100. *Increase precept by £100.*
3. Withdraw from the SDC scheme and revert to the previous method of using our own contractor for selected areas and sending the invoices to SDC. Quality rather than quantity with SDC usually refunding about £75 less than we spend. *Increase precept by £75.*
4. Seek an answer from SDC to the question of being given a grant to employ a “lengthsman”. If this is about £300 or more then it would be worth accepting. If less then we should stick to one of the 3 alternatives above. *Accept if grant is over £300, otherwise no.*

The Vice Chairman said he had asked about Option 4 which he had discovered was not available to Barton. Councillors discussed the other three options and decided on Option 2 to have the benefit of all the verges being cut with the option to further tidy up some areas if the need arose.

The Chairman asked the Hon. Treasurer to increase the precept calculation to cover the extra £100.

5. (Agenda Item 10) Tree Planting

The Hon. Treasurer reported on the work undertaken by Severn Trent Water and, very kindly by Eddie Hicks, to landscape the corner by the two new houses on the Long Compton road. The final step was to plant some trees to soften the rather stark outlook from the road. The Hon Treasurer had consulted Hamish Cathie who had very kindly offered to buy three suitable trees, and to have them planted, if the Council could cover the purchase cost of about £100. The Council agreed with the Chairman that the cost should not be covered by the precept but rather come from the Savings Account. This was agreed.

(Post Meeting note: The trees will cost £140 with the VAT reclaimable. The Hon Treasurer will make the payment when the trees arrive and have been planted).

Councillor Cathie suggested that the trees might be marked in memory of Vic and Bubbles Charles, the late village blacksmith, who had each contributed so much to the inventory of memorials and artefacts in the village. This was unanimously agreed.

6. (Agenda Item 4) Finances

The Hon. Treasurer reported that the Annual Report 2014/15 had been approved by the External Auditor. As usual the method of valuing the Fixed Assets had been challenged (i.e. at replacement cost to match the insured value) as the Auditor was fixated on Fixed Assets *not* increasing in value by inflation each year. He felt this observation was becoming tedious and he would see if, next year, a different valuation method could be used. In all other respects the Annual Report had been accepted without qualification.

The Hon. Treasurer then presented the 2<sup>nd</sup> Interim Statement for the financial year. There were no exceptional items and the Statement was approved.

7. (Agenda item 5) Precept

Turning to the Precept calculation the Hon. Treasurer explained that the £500 required to pay for a contested Parish Council election in May 2015 was available in the Current Account. He would include the first £100 to be collected over the next 5 years required to restore the charge, in the Precept calculation for 2015/16. This was approved by the Council.

He continued saying that he could recalculate the other assumptions (as approved above) to take into account the payment approved for Mrs Hanks for £150 for cutting the churchyard grass during the current year and for a similar payment to be made in 2015/16 and adding the £100 now required for grass cutting, adjusting the end of year balance for the Savings account for the new trees, and re-adjusting the transfer budgeted for the savings account. However he felt that the Precept, which had not been increased since 2012/13 due to the national economic difficulties, should now be increased slightly to £1000 (from £980). Although the Chairman was not keen to increase the Precept without good reason the other Councillors felt that a small increase should be made.

The Hon. Treasurer was asked to revise his calculations to give a lower figure for savings to give a Precept for 2015/16 of £1000. The Chairman approved using £1000 for the Precept in the New Year for the submission to SDC provided that there were no unexpected financial events which might require the Council to re-convene before the end of the financial year. (Post Meeting; The Revised Precept calculation is attached)

8. (Agenda item 6) Parish Plan. The Vice-Chairman thought it was necessary for Barton to have a Parish Plan, and said he would co-ordinate it. The Chairman agreed.

9. (Agenda item 7) Planning applications. The Vice-Chairman reported that Councillors had met and agreed to support recent applications at The Old Rectory (alterations and extensions), 1 New Cottages (new car port and workshop) and Bakers Farm House (replacement conservatory).

Councillor Cathie asked if a meeting would have been called if the applications hadn't been supported by Councillors. The Vice-Chairman replied that a meeting would have been called if any Councillors had not been in agreement.

Comments were also required on an application for extensions to 1 New Cottages. The drawings were on display, and all Councillors agreed that the application should be supported. Mrs Seymour-Smith to communicate this to SDC.

10. (Agenda item 8) Annual village tidy-up. This hadn't happened during 2014. The Chairman suggested that a date for this be agreed at the meeting in February.
11. New minute book. The Chairman didn't think this a necessary expenditure, and the Vice-Chairman agreed to withdraw his suggestion.

12. Any Other Business

- a. The Vice-Chairman thanked Mr Poulson for his work on the upkeep of the bus shelter.
- b. Councillor Gray reported that the District Council had been working on the Local Plan, which was now with the Planning Inspectorate; and that the number of councillors would reduce from 53 down to 36 at next May's elections.
- c. Councillor Saint mentioned the boundary review (Barton's not proposed to change), and the threat to the Shipston Young Firefighters Association.
- d. The Hon. Treasurer reported that Barton is still shown as white (i.e. not scheduled for the provision of superfast broadband) on the scheme map, and that for this to change, the whole telephone exchange, owned by BT, would need to be altered.
- e. Councillor Gray confirmed that the appeal for the gypsy site had been refused.
- f. Mr Poulson mentioned that the leak in front of Camden Farm House would be repaired on the 17<sup>th</sup> November, necessitating the closure of that part of the road.

13. Date of next meeting:  
Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at 7pm.

## PRECEPT CALCULATION FOR 2015/2016

### REVISED

#### FORECAST OF END OF YEAR BALANCE AT 1 APRIL 2015

DATE	ITEM	AMOUNT	TOTALS	RECLAIM-ABLE VAT
24 October 2014	Balance in hand (See 2nd Interim Statement)		£1,377.92	£70.59
	add RECEIPTS to 1 April 2014			
	Wayleave	£2.40		
	TOTAL RECEIPTS		£2.40	
	less PAYMENTS to 1 April 2012			
27 October 2014	Officers Expenses	£15.51		
27 October 2014	Insurance	£179.13		
27 October 2014	Mrs J Hanks (Churchyard grass cutting)	£150.00		
	Trees for Stop Valve Corner	£140.00		£36.66
	Transfer to Savings Account (£357 - £140)	£217.00		
	TOTAL PAYMENTS		-£701.64	
01 April 2015	BALANCE OF FUNDS IN HAND		£678.68	£107.25
	Less £500 Election Reserve		-£500.00	
	Less unrepresented cheque (SWNW)		-£25.00	
01 April 2015	AVAILABLE TO THE PARISH	(A)	<b>£153.68</b>	£107.25

#### ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR 2015-16

ESTIMATED RECEIPTS (LESS PRECEPT)		
	Bank interest	£1.00
	Wayleave	£2.40
	Grass Cutting	£0.00
	VAT Refund	£107.25
	Sub Total	£109.65
FORECAST PAYMENTS		
	Link subscription L Graham	£7.00
	Village Hall Hire	£130.00
	Officers Expenses	£30.00
	Insurance	£180.00
	Website	£120.00
	Election reserve (restore over 5 years)(transfer to Savings Account)	£100.00
	First Response Contribution	£50.00
	Grass Cutting	£100.00
	Mrs J Hanks (Churchyard grass cutting)	£150.00
	Sub Total	-£867.00
MAINTENANCE ACCOUNT		
	Transfer 2% of £17,140 to Savings Account	£87.00
		-£87.00
	ESTIMATED EXCESS OF PAYMENTS OVER INCOME IN 2015/16	(B) <b>-£954.00</b>

2013-14	
Was	Estimate
£1	£0
£0	£3
£0	£0
£0	£0
£0	£3

£14	£0
£120	£130
£0	£20
£180	£180
£110	£120
£25	£25
£50	£50
£120	£0
£0	£0
£605	£525
£503	£357
<b>£1,108</b>	<b>£879</b>

#### PRECEPT CALCULATION

Estimated balance at 1 April 2015 (A)	£153.68
Less estimated Excess of Expenditure over Receipts to 1 April 2016 (B)	-£954.00
Forecast end of year balance at 1 April 2016 without precept (A - B)	-£800.32
Restore Safety margin (£200)	-£200.00
<b>PRECEPT</b>	<b>£1,000.32</b>

**NOTE: AT 1 APRIL 2015 SAVINGS ACCOUNT WILL HAVE A CREDIT BALANCE OF £1611  
IF THERE IS A CONTESTED ELECTION IT WILL BE £1298 AT 1 APRIL 2016**

## **BARTON-ON-THE- HEATH PARISH COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

1. The Council consists of five elected councillors. These are to be residents of the village. The public election of councillors takes place every five years - i.e. 2005, 2010, 2015 et seq.
2. There will be one Annual General Meeting of the Council each May. Ordinary General Meetings will be held in October, February and in May preceding the AGM. A quorum at any meeting will be no less than three councillors.
3. The Councillors will elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among themselves at each AGM. These posts will be held for the year following.
4. There will be appointed at each AGM a treasurer, parish clerk and an internal auditor. These appointments will be made by the elected councillors. They may be paid appointments if the Council so desire at a rate stipulated by the Council.
5. A financial statement of parish accounts will be made at the October and February meetings. Full accounts will be produced for the AGM. Statements will be attached to agendas (see para 7b)
6. Details for the annual precept will be published at the October OGM for the year following.
7. The clerk will be responsible for:-
  - a. Internal and external correspondence and communication to councillors generally.
  - b. The production and issue of meeting agendas no later than 15 working days before each meeting. Agendas will be issued to each councillor with copies being placed on both village notice boards.
  - c. The production and circulation of meeting minutes reasonably quickly after each meeting.
  - d. Maintaining the Minute Book.
8. Planning applications within the village will be carefully considered by the Council sitting alone in advance of the OGM at which the applications will be considered publically and subsequently voted upon.
9. The Council will sit at a table so that councillors can see and hear each other. The clerk will sit at the same table. The treasurer will sit at a table nearby.
10. A council member with a personal or prejudicial interest in any subject matter under discussion must declare that interest. That person will not be entitled to vote on the subject and will be asked to leave the council table and room in which the meeting is

taking place.

11. The public will be welcomed to all OGMs, AGMs and any extraordinary general meetings which may be necessary. The public are permitted to speak at Council meetings if it is the wish of the Council (not the chairman) that they should do so.
12. The County Councillor and District Councillor will always be invited to Council meetings. They will have no special rights above those of an ordinary member of the public.

Chairman  
September 2014