

# **Minutes of the Meeting of Bowes Parish Council**

## **held at Bowes Hutchinson's School on 18 March 2025 7.30p.m.**

### **Present**

Cllr Carlisle, Cllr White, Cllr Tipping, Mr Ross Woodley (Clerk and RFO)

#### **1. Apologies and declarations of interest**

Cllr Hughes and Cllr Redfern sent their apologies. There were no declarations of interest.

#### **2. Minutes of the Meeting**

Minutes of the meeting held Tuesday 18 February 2025 (circulated as Appendix A of the agenda) were discussed. It was **resolved to accept the circulated minutes as a true record.** Proposed by Cllr Tipping seconded by Cllr White.

#### **3. Matters arising (unless dealt with later in the agenda)**

The Clerk confirmed that he had clarified that responsibility rested with DCC for the street lighting fault at the junction of the A66 and A67 as the lights were on the latter and he had re-reported it accordingly using their on-line reporting tool. He had received a response from HMP Deerbolt requesting a call for more information. Cllr White explained that there was a large herbaceous border at the play area that was once a rose garden but was now overgrown and needed re-planting with perennials. There were also two tubs by the bus shelter to fill with perennials. The Clerk agreed to convey this information and report back to the next meeting. In Cllr Hughes absence it was also agreed to receive his update on the affordable housing presentation at the next meeting. All other matters arising from the February meeting are considered as separate agenda items below.

#### **4. Finance & Accounts – See summary below.**

(a) Receipts since last meeting £38.26 Bank Interest

(b) Expenses since last meeting £85.00 SLCC Annual Subscription

(c) It was **resolved to approve the following payments** – Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Tipping seconded:

- £543.00 Clerk salary Q4 (payable 31/3/25)
- £135.60 HMRC PAYE Q4 (payable 31/3/25)

(d) Retrospective approval of urgent payments – all the expenses at (b) above were approved at the February 2025 meeting.

(e) Budget Monitoring to 28 February 2025 (month 11)

The Clerk presented Appendix B for receipts and payments to date compared with the annual and profiled budget, confirming that the forecast outturn at month eleven of the 2024/25 financial year remains close to budget with a 2% favourable variance due to expected invoices not yet received. Members confirmed that there was an increasing chance that overdue invoices were not received by year-end meaning reserves might remain at 2023/24 levels or even increase slightly.

However, this was likely to be a timing issue with spending deferred to 2025/2026 and the financial position of the Council across the two years unchanged.

It was **resolved to accept the budget monitoring report** – Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Tipping seconded.

(f) Bank reconciliation at 28 February 2025.

The Clerk presented Appendix C, which showed that the bank statements at 28 February 2025 agreed with the cash book balance without any reconciling items. A balance of **£39,705.94** was held. It was **resolved to accept the budget monitoring report – Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Tipping seconded.**

## 5 Planning

There have been no planning applications within the parish council boundaries since the February 2025 meeting.

## 6 Correspondence

(a) Cllr White declared that he had received the 2025/26 P3 Footpath Grant Application form and identified two repairs to claim grant for. However, he wanted time to inspect other footpaths and accordingly he would call the DCC Rights of Way Team to establish when the application deadline was.

(b) The Council noted receipt of the signed grass-cutting contract.

(c) The Council did not wish to participate in the National Highways Stakeholder survey.

(d) None of the councillors present wished to apply to sit on Teesdale Local Network.

## 7 Cemetery & Village maintenance

(a) Cllr Carlisle explained that the cemetery wall had not yet been repaired. It was the allotment wall that had been repaired. This was an error in the agenda.

(b) The Clerk confirmed that he was still chasing payment of an invoice for the memorial application approved at the February 2025 meeting.

(c) Cllr Carlisle updated members on a disputed invoice that had been received since the agenda was published. In January 2025, the Council had agreed to contribute up to £100 plus VAT to the cost of the snow clearance the day before a scheduled funeral. An invoice had been received for £360 plus VAT and the Clerk had queried this with the funeral director. **It was resolved to reject the invoice and ask the funeral director to liaise with the contractor to ensure that the Council received a new invoice for the agreed contribution. Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr Tipping seconded.**

## 8 Allotments

Cllr Carlisle confirmed that the allotment wall repairs were now complete and he had asked the contractor to send an invoice to the Clerk.

## 9 Play Park

Cllr Redfern had sent the latest playground inspection reports and confirmed that there were still only minor, non-urgent repairs as discussed at the December 2024 meeting that he would address before leaving the Council on 1 May 2025

## 10 Risk Register

Councillors considered the risk register at Appendix D and did not identify any omitted risks. They were comfortable with the draft scores and the conclusion that no further action is required as the residual risks are amber or green and thus within the Council's risk appetite. **It was resolved to approve the risk register. Cllr Tipping proposed, and Cllr Carlisle seconded.**

## 11 Internal Audit

The Clerk stated that the Council have appointed Butler and Gee to undertake the annual internal audit for several years. In 2023/24 the fee was £204, which is competitive. The clerk asked the Council to consider re-appointing Butler and Gee for 2024/25 subject to a similarly

competitive quote and an adequate internal audit plan. Cllr Carlisle said that providing Butler and Gee were able to deliver the required work on time for a similar fee he did not think it was necessary to seek alternative quotes. The Clerk added that he would like to see how Butler and Gee delivered the 2024/25 audit before seeking quotations for a five-year internal audit contract from 2025/26. **It was resolved to provisionally appoint Butler and Gee as internal auditors for 2024/25 but to confirm their appointment at the next meeting once the fee and timing of work were confirmed. Cllr Carlisle proposed, and Cllr White seconded.**

## **12 Elections**

The Clerk handed out nomination papers for completion. Members discussed guidance and confirmed arrangements for handing in completed papers, publishing election notices and ensuring that election rules (e.g. Purdah) were complied with. Cllr Carlisle confirmed that he would take the papers to Cllr Hughes but Cllr Redfern had decided not to stand for re-election. If no new candidates stood this would result in an uncontested election but only four of the seven seats on the Council filled. In these circumstances the Council would need to consider co-option as the risk of inquorate (fewer than three members attending) meetings would be significantly increased. The three councillors present completed their forms immediately the meeting closed.

## **13 AOB**

Cllr White said that the issue that the Clerk had reported to DCC regarding overgrown bushes had been resolved.

## **14 Date, time, and venue of the Annual Meeting of Electors, next two parish council meetings and the Annual General meeting.**

The next meeting was confirmed as to take place on Wednesday 16 April 2025 at Bowes Hutchinson's School with a 7.00 start. This would be the Annual Meeting of Electors and would be called by the Chair at the least one week previously. An ordinary meeting of the Council would follow at 7.30. The Clerk would ensure that the agenda for both meetings was selected and worded carefully to comply with Purdah.

The Annual General Meeting would take place on Tuesday 13 May 2025 at Bowes Hutchinson's School at 7.30 and would start as required with the election of the Chair and Vice Chair for 2025/26. This meeting would also agree the timetable of meetings for 2025/26.

Meeting closed at 8.15 p.m. In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) the impact of resolutions on crime and disorder in the parish was considered but no significant impact was identified.