BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Report from: Clerk

Date: 12 September 2019

**Clerk’s report to Council (agenda item 19.136)**

1. A new 25-litre microwave has been bought and will be in use in the hall kitchen from this week. A new set of steps has been identified to replace the old ones at the hall, at a cost of £60. Permission is sought to go ahead with this purchase.
2. As last year, I will shortly advertise the availability of winter salt on a self-collection basis from the shed behind the hall. We now have a quote for 5 extra hours work by the grounds maintenance contractor for a one-off checking and refilling of the salt bins in the parish and for cutting back undergrowth to reveal the Church Road one once again. I recommend that we accept this. At the same time, Mr Pavelin would clear ‘spent’ salt and replace the laminated leaflet in each bin, advising anyone finding a depleted bin to contact the clerk. Are you content to go ahead?
3. Following concerns about LED lighting, a meeting is being arranged with both our lighting contractor and a LED supplier to review options that might mitigate the brightness and spread of the new lighting.
4. Acting on authority given me at a recent meeting, I have now completed and submitted the 3-yearly renewal of the Council's declaration of compliance with the Pension Regulator.
5. I have renegotiated the current fixed gas and electricity supply deals for the parish hall with E.on.  The current one-year contracts were coming to an end very soon and we would have moved to their variable rate and seen an immediate and sharp price rise.  Assuming the Council accepts the deal negotiated, we will see a £20pa total increase in standing charge (inclusive of both gas and electricity) but a fall from 24.09 pence per kWh to 21.85 pence for electricity and a fall from 4.62 pence per kWh to 4.49 pence.  The Council has a 14-day grace period in which to change its mind.
6. I have also arranged with WAVE (Anglian Water + Essex & Suffolk) to combine our water and sewerage bills for the Parish Hall and to have those, plus the new Wildlife Reserve water bills, paid from our existing variable Co-op Bank Direct Debit. As well as being more efficient and less admin, we need to do this to begin to be ready to close the Council's HSBC bank account by the end of the year. Until recently, the Council paid a standard £10 per month for water at the hall but this did not reflect meter readings and we had built up a credit which I felt did not work in our favour.
7. The electrician will return this week to replace the sparking RCD socket outlet in the kitchen so we can plug in the new fridge. He will then see if this will resolve the porch light issue.  The RCD unit is thought to govern external lighting and is particularly sensitive.
8. We now have a quote for £396 for the replacement of the 4 'blown' double-glazed windows in the kitchen, which I think is very reasonable. Is this satisfactory?
9. Councillor Bright has kindly volunteered remove the redundant lobby heater this week and Richard Edmunds will come on site on a date to be agreed in early October to construct the new lobby cupboard.
10. The Village Stores should by now be displaying the Quiz Night and Photographic Competition posters. He would initially be content to take 10 Barling calendars on a sale or return basis, retaining £1 per calendar sold at the agreed sale price of £7.99. The calendars are being printed this week.
11. I will be on leave from 13 – 21 September and Gillian will be on leave from 20 September to 5 October. I will cover evening lettings during her absence and she is approaching others to unlock/lock-up for daytime events.

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