Barkway Parish Council

Appendix B - To the Parish Council Meeting

held on Tuesday 16th June 2026

Notes from the meeting of the Finance Working Group

Held in the Community Room on Tuesday 2nd June at 7pm

1. Attendance:

Cllr. Bill Dennis

Cllr. Peter Baker

Cllr. Nick Stuart

Clerk/RFO Catharine Toms

2. Apologies:

None

3. To check and agree bank balances as at 31st March 2026 – Sage Accounts reconciliation to bank statements and sign as verified

The Clerk/RFO provided members of the Group present with copies of the Sage reports for the Parish Council accounts and bank account statements. These were crossed checked and verified by Cllrs. as correct.

4. To verify closing bank balance on Annual Accounting Statements for 2025/26

The Clerk/RFO provided members of the Group present with copies of the completed Annual Accounting Statements for 2025/26 and Sage reports for the Parish Council accounts and bank account statements. These were crossed checked and verified by Cllrs. as correct.

5. To examine actual finances to 31st March 2026 and variance against budget 2025/26

Overall, there was an underspend during the year of £29,000 against budget. This was mainly accounted for by an underspend on the Carriage Wash against budget of £10,000 due to a delay in the project through lack of additional funding. In addition, 2 years of VAT reclaimed of £11,200, £1,500 received in grants, £2,500 yet to be spent on tree maintenance, £1,200 unspent on maintenance of the War Memorial, £1,500 unspent Contingency fund and £1,500 unspent on Village Events.

The Pavilion was overspent by £1,000 and play area equipment repairs and maintenance was overspent by £3,000 due to essential work needed to maintain the play equipment. In addition, there was an overspend of £2,750 on the Open Space behind Windmill Close, which required a lot of deep clearance once ownership had been transferred to the Parish Council.

There was £4,100 spend on VAT - which will be reclaimed in 2026/27.

It was agreed that finances needed to be carefully monitored in 2026/27 to avoid any overspent which would erode a necessary adequate level of reserves. Currently Parish Council reserves carried forward were in deficit by £3,300 to the Push Energy Community Contribution Fund.

6. To examine 2025/26 costs for the Pavilion and Recreation Ground and variance against budget 2025/26

The net cost of the Pavilion to 31st March 2027 was £9,520 against a budget of £8,500. This overspend of £1,020 was mainly attributed to by an overspend on cleaning of £550 and £100 on waste collection, whilst hire income was £830 under budget and football pitch hire was £1,300 under budget.

Cleaning costs would be monitored closely against bookings going forward, and the Clerk would speak to the cleaning company about a reduction in cost option.

In addition, the Clerk to talk to Buntingford Cougars to ascertain likely hirings of pitches for 2026/27 as it might be possible to cut costs of line marking with careful planning.

Hiring of the community room was at a similar level to last year. Further thought to be given to means of increasing bookings by promoting the venue with photos on the website now provided with the consent of previous hirers of the venue when set up for their events.

7. To check and agree bank balances as at 31st March 2026 – Reading Room Accounts

The Clerk/RFO provided members of the Group present with copies of the Excel spreadsheet reports for the Reading Room accounts and bank account statements. These were crossed checked and verified by Cllrs. as correct.

8. Any other business

None

9. Date of next meeting

TBA

The meeting closed at 7.35pm