

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 13 November 2014 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Councillors present: MM Oldfield, in the chair, and CM Frankland, GF Frankland, CE Hall, RS Martin, BGF Smith, GH Taylor and KO Winters. **Clerk:** Mrs J Wardle

Other attendees: None.

- 93/14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, LEA Joel, and BL Taylor, Dist. Cllrs A Bailey and T Goodge and County Cllr P Read.
- 94/14 **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - None
- 95/14 **PUBLIC FORUM** – No comments
- 96/14 **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS** (Dist. Cllrs A Bailey & A Goodge) – No reports
- 97/14 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT** (County Cllr P Read) - No report
- 98/14 **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**
1. **Resolved** that the minutes of 09 October 2014 were correct and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
- 99/14 **MATTERS TO REPORT**
1. **(Min.87/14.1) Little Downham War Memorial** – Cllr Joel reported that the French drain would be installed imminently. It was not started before Remembrance Day in case it could not be finished.
 2. **(Min.87/14.2) Pavilion Working Group update** – The Big Lottery Stage One Application form has been approved. Two points were recommended to be reviewed for Stage Two, which must be submitted by 21/01/15.
 3. **(Min.87/14.3) Little Downham Recreation Area Ditch** – Mr Freeman has repaired the seat plinth and work is now complete.
 4. **(Min.87/14.5) New Oak Seats** – The seats for Lt Downham Recreation Field and Church Green have been ordered. Delivery will be before 19/12/14. No response was received from ALS Lock.
 5. **(Min.170/13.4) Dog Waste Bins** – The websites for Keep Britain Tidy, Dog Trust and RSPCA had no advice about dog bins. ECDC has confirmed a point of installation for the bin on Eagles Lane and will install the bins when received.
 6. **(Min.87/14.4) Lt Downham Recreation Area Goal Posts** – Michael Hampshire (Little Downham United Manager) was unable to remove the whole goal post because it is solid in the ground. He removed the damaged side post to try and release the elbow joint so it can be fitted to the crossbar and a new side post. Michael has said he will remove the obsolete posts.
 7. **(Min.75/14.3) Rural Payments Agency – Single Payment Scheme (SPS) 2014** - DEFRA wrote to inform that the Parish Council would not be eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), that has replaced the SPS, because on the basis of its current claim, the Council does not have 5 hectares or more of eligible land. The Clerk was instructed to enquire about the eligibility of claiming for grazing land at Myles Meadow and Holts Meadows.
- 100/14 **PLANNING MATTERS**
1. **Planning correspondence -**
 - 1.1 **14/01062/FUL** Mr & Mrs C Nye, Hollyoaks, The Hythe, Lt Downham – To erect a single storey sun room attached to rear extension of listed building – **Resolved** - **Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns.**
 - 1.2 **14/01063/LBC** Mr & Mrs C Nye, Hollyoaks, The Hythe, Lt Downham – To erect a single storey sun room attached to rear extension of listed building – **Resolved** - **Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns.**

- 1.3 **14/01184/PDR** Mr Daniel Eaton, 20 Oak Farm Drive, Lt Downham – Erection of rear conservatory – **Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns.**

For information only:

- 1.4 **ECDC: Applications approved: 14/00485/FUL, 14/00647/FUL, 14/00868/FUL, 14/00958/LBC**

- 1.5 **ECDC: Applications refused: 14/00780/FUL**

101/14 **FINANCE**

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs CE Hall and RS Martin.
2. **To review current financial status 2014/15 & budget proposals 2015/16 –**
- 2.1 A Copy of the 2014/15 budget update and 2015/16 proposals that was issued to members with their agenda was reviewed. The Cemetery Committee's allocated budget for 2015/16 was deferred for consideration at the next meeting in order for the Clerk to request a latest copy of the Cemetery Committee Accounts and annual expenditure.
- 2.2 For the purpose of Government controls, parish precepts count as part of the District Council's figures. ECDC requested an estimate of the Council's Precept by 05/12/14 in preparation of setting its own budget for 2015/16. It was proposed by Cllr GF Frankland and seconded by Cllr CE Hall that the estimated Precept should be an increase of 1.5% on the 2014/15 Precept. **A vote result was as follows: 7 In favour, 1 Against.**
Resolved to approve an estimated Precept of £76,414.00.
It was noted that the Parish Council will formally set its Precept at the meeting in January.
3. **To approve CCC Street Light Energy Contract for 10/2014 – 09/2015 –** CCC issued a new energy contract based on the previous contract. It was noted that the Council's annual energy charges were less than £200 per annum and if the Council did not renew the contract, it would be required to seek a new supplier and negotiate new arrangements with Balfour Beatty regarding the maintenance of the Parish Council's six street lights.
Resolved unanimously to approve the CCC Street Light Energy Contract for 10/2014 – 09/2015.
4. **To approve BT Telephone Business Plan –** The Clerk reported that she was still waiting for BT to provide tariff details of a new plan. The existing plan was for 24 months.
Resolved unanimously for the Clerk to negotiate a new contract with BT based on an equal or better tariff to the existing BT Telephone Business Plan.
5. **To approve bills and other items for payment -** Items presented for payment were proposed by Cllr CE Hall and seconded by Cllr RS Martin.
Resolved unanimously to approve list of payments for Direct Debits and BACS payments 243 to 254 for the total sum of £5651.81.

102/14 **PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS**

1. **To review grass specifications for 2015 season –** The Council reviewed the specifications.
Resolved unanimously to approve 2015 Grass Cutting Specifications and invite tenders for the 2015 season.

103/14 **PARISH MATTERS**

1. **Consultation on Electoral Review of Cambridgeshire County Divisions & presentation meeting invitations –** The Clerk reported that when sending her apologies for this meeting, Cllr LEA Joel had expressed an interest to attend the presentation on 24/11/14 at Cambourne. Cllr KO Winters expressed an interest to attend the presentation on 19/11/14 at March. It was agreed that both could attend and report back to the Council.

104/14 **HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS**

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings -** None
2. **To report current matters of concern:**
- 2.1 **Ely Road new speed restriction –** New 30 mph signs had replaced the old 40 mph signs at the entrance of the village but road markings were half removed and the interactive speed sign was still flashing at 40 mph. Motorists were confused and still travelling at 40 mph. It was requested that better road markings and repeaters signs are required.
- 2.2 **Ely Road Trees –** Some tree branches are hanging low. The Clerk will add them to her list when she meets with Cathy White (ECDC Trees Officer) on 14/11/14.

- 2.3 **Pond Lane, Lt Downham** – Request that the Council’s handyman trims round the base of the tree to tidy it up.
- 2.4 **Various Street Lights were reported as being out** – Tower Road, Matthew Wren Close, Lawn Lane, Lt Downham.
- 2.5 **Various street/direction signs** – Request the Council’s handyman to clean some of the signs around Church Green.
- 2.6 **Royal Mail King George VI post box, outside The Rectory, Main Street, Lt Downham** – It was noted that the ‘redundant’ post box is unsightly in the village conservation area and could do with painting. The Clerk was asked to write to Royal Mail to request that it be painted or request permission for the Council to paint it, ensuring that the metal plate across the opening is not removed. The current post box is outside the village hall.

3. Parish Paths & Byways:

- 3.1 **Clayway Lane (Byway 49) to consider proposed work under CCC Village Maintenance Project** – Following a parishioner’s request to level the Byway, Karen Champion (CCC Rights of Way Officer, East Cambs & Fenland) suggested combining the levelling work with some Parish Council work and applying for funds from Kate Day (CCC Project Manager, Local Infrastructure & Street Management) as a Community Maintenance Project. The project would be community led and the Parish Council would only pay for the work relating to Myles Meadow Hedge trimming, as other costs would be funded by CCC Project Funding. Cllr CM Frankland proposed, and Cllr CE Hall seconded, that the Parish Council should support the opportunity to have the Byway restored. There was some uncertainty about the work proposed, the condition and work required on other hedges that are other landowners’ responsibilities and the ditch that the Internal Drainage Board maintains. No vote was taken on the proposal. The matter was deferred for the Clerk to obtain answers from CCC regarding the concerns.
- 3.2 **Marshalls Drove update** - Karen Champion informed that, weather permitting, work will soon commence on the worst areas around Marshalls Drove area. Kate Day is in receipt of the local parishioners’ petition requesting gates to be installed on the droves. She will review applications for gates on droves and Traffic Regulations Orders (TROs) in December.

105/14 CORRESPONDENCE

- 1. **CAPALC AGM 20/11/14 7.30pm Histon & Impington Recreation Ground Pavilion CB24 9LU** – The Chairman and the Clerk expressed interests to attend.

106/14 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

9.16pm

It is hereby resolved in accordance with Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted at Agenda Item 107/14 & 108/14, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded from this meeting and they are herewith instructed to withdraw.

107/14 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS

- 1. **Quotes for All Weather Court maintenance** – Four quotes were considered from contractors offering maintenance of different methods. All mentioned Algae as a problem in restricting drainage of the court. The Clerk was asked to instruct the handyman to check that the drainage pipes are all clear in the ditch.
Resolved unanimously to approve the initial works and the maintenance quotes from Artificial Grass (Cambridge) Ltd @ £560 + VAT and £1190 + VAT respectively, plus use of 4-6 tonnes of infill sand @ £160 per tonne.

108/14 HUMAN RESOURCES

- 1. **To consider Handyman’s annual staff appraisal** – Mr Mitchell’s appraisal was carried out on 09/10/14. The Appraisal Officer, Cllr M Oldfield, read her report to the Council. There was no change recommended to Mr Mitchell’s conditions of employment, hours of work, job description, annual leave entitlement, salary and pension provision. He requested a new ladder, overalls and gloves, which the Clerk purchased in October, and to attend a play area inspection refresher session when one becomes available. It was noted that as part of his PPE, he was bought new boots earlier in the year. Cllr Oldfield concluded that Mr Mitchell continues to work hard and always upholds the good reputation of the Parish Council. His request for a mower to cut the grass more often in Lt Downham play area was rejected because the grass contractor will do it. It was proposed by Cllr GF Frankland, seconded by Cllr GH Taylor and agreed to approve the handyman’s staff appraisal.
Resolved unanimously to approve Mr Mitchell’s Staff Appraisal.

2. **To consider Book Café Manager’s annual staff appraisal** - Mrs Hayter-Smith’s appraisal was carried out on 10/10/14. The Appraisal Officer, Cllr M Oldfield, read her report to the Council. There was no change recommended to Mrs Hayter-Smith’s conditions of employment, hours of work, job description, annual leave entitlement, salary and pension provision. She has had some training and will advise when other relevant training opportunities arise. She is currently working on the Book Café Business Plan, in accordance with CCC Service Level Agreement. She reported that books are continually renewed and stock has improved. Cllr Oldfield concluded that Mrs Hayter-Smith has worked really hard to bring together all of the volunteers and at the same time is improving and developing what the Book Café has to offer the community. It was proposed by Cllr GH Taylor, seconded by Cllr GF Frankland and agreed to approve the handyman’s staff appraisal.

Resolved unanimously to approve Mrs Hayter-Smith’s Staff Appraisal.

9.38pm The Clerk left the meeting prior to her staff appraisal being discussed.

3. **To consider Clerk’s annual staff appraisal** - Mrs Wardle’s appraisal was carried out on 10/10/14. The Appraisal Officer, Cllr M Oldfield, read her report to the Council. There was no change recommended to Mrs Wardle’s conditions of employment, hours of work, job description, annual leave entitlement and pension provision. It was noted that there is still the possibility of new responsibilities with the Pavilion Extension/Refurbishment and the acquisition of burial land. In her conclusion, the Chairman stated that Mrs Wardle has maintained her high standards of work this year and is very supportive of all the Parish Councillors. Mrs Wardle had no matters of concern. It was proposed by Cllr CM Frankland and seconded by Cllr CE Hall and agreed to approve the Clerk’s staff appraisal.

Resolved to approve the Clerk’s Staff Appraisal.

9.43pm The Clerk was invited back to the meeting.

109/14 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION - None

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.45 pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date