

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 30 June 2016 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Councillors present: JL Waters, in the chair, and JW Barker, RS Martin, MM Oldfield, G Ord, MAC Seidler, BL Taylor, GH Taylor and KO Winters. **Clerk:** Mrs J Wardle

Other attendees: County Cllr L Dupre.

38/16 **TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllrs CE Hall and LEA Joel and Dist. Cllrs A Bailey and M Bradley.

7.02pm Cllrs BL & GH Taylor arrived.

39/16 **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. **Cllr JW Barker** declared a prejudicial interest in item 44/16.2.5 (Application 16/00786/FUL) because he is father to the applicant. (Declaration 021-2016).
2. **Cllr BL Taylor** declared the following interests (Declaration 022-2016):
 - 2.1 Pecuniary interest in item 44/16 (East Cambridgeshire Local Plan – suggested sites) because he is a landowner of suggested sites;
 - 2.2 Personal interest in item 44/16.2.3 (Application 16/00675/FUL) because he hires the applicant's services;
 - 2.3 Personal interest in item 44/16.2.4 (Application 16/00709/OUT) because the applicant is a friend.
3. **Cllr GH Taylor** declared the following interests (Declaration 023-2016):
 - 2.1 Pecuniary interest in item 44/16 (East Cambridgeshire Local Plan – suggested sites) because she is a landowner of suggested sites;
 - 2.2 Personal interest in item 44/16.2.3 (Application 16/00675/FUL) because she hires the applicant's services;
 - 2.3 Personal interest in item 44/16.2.4 (Application 16/00709/OUT) because the applicant is a friend.
4. **Cllr KO Winters** declared a prejudicial interest in item 44/16.2.5 (Application 16/00786/FUL) because he is an uncle to the applicant. (Declaration 024-2016).

40/16 **PUBLIC FORUM**

Cllr Winters spoke in support of application 16/00786/FUL stating that it is regarded as infill under the policy of East Cambs District Council and the building is a change of use from agricultural. Cllr Barker spoken in support of application 16/00786/FUL stating that it was his father's barn and now his son's wants to convert it.

41/16 **COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

1. County Cllr Lorna Dupre reported on several issues. ECDC and Cambs County Council have both agreed to a devolution deal for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. A public consultation will take place soon. If the deal goes ahead, a Mayor election might be held with the County elections in May 2017. CCC Total Transport has delayed removing the 50% subsidy on community transport fares. The parish 125 bus service is being retained, but the Thursday journeys to Wardy Hill, Coveney and Pymoor have been stopped. Cllr Dupre expressed support in the Boundary Commission County Division Public Consultation for eight single member Divisions, but was against Sutton being split between Divisions. The Boundary Commission decisions are due later in the year, which might cause problems with the Electoral Register publications that are due out on 01/12/16. ECDC has issued maps of the East Cambs Local Plan Suggested Sites and informed that responses must be returned by 11/07/16. CCC Education Officers are also consulted on the suggested sites in order to determine the requirement of future additional school places and accommodation. Cllr Dupre reported that she had attended the Network Rail Level Crossing Closures event in Littleport on 08/06/16 and that consultation responses relating to the closure of Coffue Drove and A Furlong are required by 06/07/16. Superfast Broadband third phase is to start 2018 and should ensure cover for 97% of households by 2020. As mobile data needs to improve and many of the remaining areas will be remote, it would be helpful if interested parties reported back on data of connection and low spot areas to keep the attention focused. CCC has decided not to employ a company of lawyers, Baker Small, following unprofessional comments and gloating on Twitter relating to their success in winning court cases against parents losing potential places in schools. Following strong protests from councillors and parents of

special needs children affected by the comments, no new cases will be referred to Baker Small, who have accepted that they acted inappropriately and have apologised.
Cllr Dupre informed that she continues to hold regular monthly surgeries in Sutton on the second Tuesday of each month, 6 - 7.30pm. She will be arranging surgeries in the Book Café too.

7.25pm County Cllr Dupre was thanked for her report and left the meeting.

2. In her absence, District Cllr Anna Bailey provided a report informing that she was very excited that the District Council had approved the finance package, build contract and management contract of the new Leisure Centre on Downham Road Ely at the Full Council meeting on 28/06/16. The management of the Centre will be by a not-for-profit organisation and further details about this will be issued in due course. The schedule is for the Leisure Centre to open in December 2017/January 2018. She was also pleased to say that the Council had now purchased land at Angel Drove in Ely to increase commuter car parking facilities. The new car park will see the addition of approximately 140 spaces and improved pedestrian access to the railway station.

42/16 **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

1. **Resolved unanimously that the minutes of 26 May 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.**
2. **Resolved unanimously that the minutes of 16 June 2016 Extraordinary General Meeting be signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

43/16 **MATTERS TO REPORT**

1. **(Min.36/16.1) Zipwire Project - Update** – Sovereign contractors returned to the site on 27/06/16. The Chairman met with them and agreed that it was not worth disturbing the grass that had since grown through the matting. A small area under the mats was filled in with soil to level the surface. The soil on the old concrete path area had hardened, which meant that the play grade mulch (Min.36/16.1.2) was not required and the order had been cancelled. Instead, grass seed was purchased to fill in some bare areas of soil. In order to give the grass time to germinate, the Heras Fencing needed to remain for a further two weeks. It was agreed that the Parish Council would take over the cost of hire with effect from 27/06/16, but the Clerk would arrange the hire direct with TP Cambridge in order to avoid paying extra VAT when invoiced by Sovereign. A deposit of £90 was paid, which was the cost of the fencing hire for the two weeks. Delivery and collection charges were covered by the previous arrangement with Sovereign. In addition, a strimmer was purchased for the handyman to have at the Pavilion and to strim around the play area to keep it tidy. The Council agreed the actions of the Chairman and the Clerk.
2. **(Min.21/16.2) Clean for the Queen** – ECDC are happy to lend litter picking equipment whenever it's needed. They just need to know dates and arrangements to collect and return.
3. **(Min.21/16.5) ECDC Parish Conference 15/06/16 re Emergency Planning** - Cllrs MM Oldfield, KO Winters and the Clerk attended the conference. Councillors will give reports at the next meeting.
4. **(Min.23/16.2) Cambridgeshire Lowland Search and Rescue** - Grateful thanks were expressed by CamSAR for the £200 donation.
5. **(Min.26/16.1) Concern regarding Downham Feoffees School current status and future provisions** – County Cllr Dupre provided some answer from Keith Grimwade at CCC informing that Downham Feoffees School is full because it is popular and is attracting out of catchment families. It was full (Published Admission Number of 30) in Round 1 of the admissions process this year. Unfortunately, CCC cannot hold places for catchment children who have not applied on time, as it would be in breach of the Admissions Code (= very heavy fines). No places became available between Rounds 1 and 2 and the school remains oversubscribed. A place was offered on 19 May, as a legitimate Infant Class Size breach under paragraph 2.15(b) of the Code. The birth cohorts going forward have numbers in the low to mid 20s in the Downham Feoffees catchment area, so there is no demographic pressure to increase the PAN at the school or any plans for expansion of capacity based on catchment demand. There are currently no major housing allocations in the local plan, although ECDC is reviewing the Plan because it needs to find more housing sites. CCC will need to re-assess its plans across the district depending on final allocations of suggested development sites and where they are.

6. **(Non-agenda item: 1, 26/05/16) Witchford Colts FC – request to use new larger goals at Lt Downham Recreation Field** – WCFC thanked the Council for approval, but informed that it does not need to install larger goal posts, as its teams are still eligible use the existing size.
7. **(Non-agenda item: 2, 26/05/16) Mr Ison - Email expressing concerns regarding cattle grazing in Myles Meadow** – The Clerk reported meeting with the cattle owner about Mr Ison's concerns and was shown some new large signs that he had purchased to indicate cattle in the field. The Council instructed the Clerk to review what signs are in place around Myles Meadow and to request a copy of the cattle owner's annual insurance.

7.45pm Cllr BL & GH Taylor left the meeting.

44/16 **PLANNING MATTERS**

1. **East Cambs Local Plan representations and suggested development sites** – Seven sites were suggested for development in Little Downham and Pymoor. The Council reviewed each one separately and made relative comments and decisions; a summary of which is below:

- **Site 16/01 – Land west of Ely Road (south of Cannon Street), Little Downham CB6 2SL** - This site was previously approved for development in the Little Downham Village Vision February 2013 and allocated for residential housing of approximately 25 dwellings. It was resolved unanimously to support this suggested site.
- **Site 16/02 - Land off Ely Road (GA Hobbs & Sons Deport), Little Downham CB6 2SL** - This site had previously been put forward for consideration in the Little Downham Village Vision February 2013 for residential development. It was not supported then by the Parish Council because there was a preference for the adjacent land North West of this site. In response to the recent need for suggested sites, the Parish Council now supports this site for a mix of housing and new burial land, which is needed in the near future. Approximately two acres is required for a new cemetery. It was resolved unanimously to support this suggested site.
- **Site 16/03 - Land adjacent to School Lane, Pymoor** - The Parish Council was recently consulted on an outline application for three dwellings on this land (16/00709/OUT). It had no objection to the application and no objections to five dwellings on the site. It was resolved unanimously to support this suggested site.
- **Site 16/04 - Land off Eagles Lane, adjacent to Recreation field, Little Downham** - The Parish Council did not support this site for development as proposed due to the large density and lack of access. It considered access via Eagles Lane to be unsuitable for the proposed density of housing. It was resolved unanimously not to support this suggested site.
- **Site 16/05 - Land south-west of Main Street, Pymoor** - The Parish Council was aware that this area of land already had planning permission for four dwellings and considered that a proposed density of 34 dwellings was too much for this rural location. It was resolved unanimously not to support this suggested site.
- **Site 16/06 - Land south-east of cemetery, Little Downham** - This site was not supported because the density of 82 dwellings is considered too much and will result in an over development of the village. There are two supported sites nearby and the access for this proposed development would be off Cowbridge Hall Road, which is a single track road with no footpath and has an unrestricted speed limit of 60 mph. Planning permission for four dwellings on this site was recently refused and the site was identified as potential industrial land in the Little Downham Village Vision February 2013. It was resolved unanimously not to support this suggested site.
- **Site 16/07 - Frithhead, off Main Street, Pymoor** – This site was not supported for development because it was considered to be well outside the development envelope, would result in an isolated development in the open countryside, it is not needed because the Parish Council supports other suggested sites in Pymoor that are more sustainable and suitably located for services and utilities, it is considered as agricultural land and is in Flood Zone 3 of the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea). It was resolved unanimously not to support this suggested site.

In addition, the Council commented on a suggested site that is in Ely Parish but is adjacent to the boundary of Lt Downham Parish.

- **Ely Site 10/05 – Orwell Pit Farm, Downham Road, Ely** – Little Downham Parish Council does not support the whole suggested site for development because the site area situated

north/west of the A10 is considered too dense and too close to Lt Downham. The northern boundary of the site sits adjacent to the Lt Downham parish boundary. The Council proposes that development should be no further than The Mill, Downham Road, which is opposite Ely Tool Hire. Development of any kind in this area of open countryside would have a visual and detrimental effect on the rural location and approach to Lt Downham.

8.40pm Cllr BL & GH Taylor returned to the meeting.

2. Planning correspondence -

2.1 16/00576/FUL Paragon Land & Estates Ltd, Paragon Container Site, Black Bank Business Centre, Black Bank Road, Lt Downham – Construction of x2 No. blocks of new B1 business units and associated bin store, cycle and car parking provision. Demolition of disused storage sheds relation of main access gate and improvements to car parking.

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

2.2 16/00610/FUL Mr S Revett, Site south west of 20 Third Drove, Lt Downham – detached 4 bed dwelling and garage.

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

2.3 16/00675/FUL Mr A Freeman, Land north west of Springfields, Straight Furlong, Pymoor – Construction of portal framed extension to existing building to house drainage equipment –

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

2.4 16/00709/OUT Mr D Parsons, Land south west of 1 Straight Furlong, Pymoor – Outline permission for 3 detached two storey dwellings

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

8.55pm Cllrs JW Barker and KO Winters left the meeting.

2.5 16/00786/FUL Mr Tom Barker, Outbuilding adjacent to 3 Third Drove, Lt Downham – Conversion of agricultural building to a three bed dwelling

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

9.02pm Cllrs JW Barker and KO Winters returned to the meeting.

2.6 16/00795/FUL Mr & Mrs A Youngman Land adjacent 24 Kiln Close Little Downham - Erection of new 4 bedroom dwelling and double garage - The Clerk apologised that she had not brought the planning papers to the meeting. It was agreed to defer this application to the next meeting.

For information only:

2.7 ECDC: Applications approved: 16/00133/OUT, 16/00259/FUL, 16/00332/FUL, 16/00394/FUL, 16/00413/FUL, 16/00573/HEN

Addendum item:

2.8 11600792/PDR Mr A Saby & Ms M Stevenson, 10 Martins Lane, Lt Downham – Garage conversion - The Clerk apologised that she had not brought the planning papers to the meeting. It was agreed to defer this application to the next meeting.

45/16 FINANCE

1. Monthly Internal Audit was carried out by Cllrs MAC Seidler and JL Waters.

2. To approve draft Annual Report 2015-16 – The draft report was considered and approved. **Resolved that the Annual Report 2015-16 be approved and copies be made available on the website, in the Book Café, School, Pre School and some local outlets.**

3. To approve bills and other items for payment – It was proposed by Cllr MAC Seidler and seconded by Cllr JL Waters.

Resolved unanimously to approve cheque no. 001075 and the BACS payments 466, 467, 469 - 471 for the total sum of £492.25.

3.1 It was proposed to defer payment to the next meeting of BACS 468 to Little Downham Cemetery Committee for more information about the expenses breakdown and a summary of accounts. A vote result was: **In favour – 6, Against – 2, Abstentions – 1.**

46/16 COUNCIL MATTERS

1. Parish Council Insurance:

1.1 To review revised insurance values (Min.24/16.1) – Revised insurance values were agreed.

1.2 To review Fidelity Guarantee – It was agreed to increase the Fidelity cover to £216,000.

Resolved unanimously to accept the revised insurance values, increase the Fidelity Guarantee to £216,000 and approve the increased pro rata insurance premium of £64.25 to Came & Co.

2. Whole Council Code of Conduct and New Councillor Training (Min.24/16.5) – CAPALC New Councillor Training sessions were already booked at Sutton on 14, 21, and 28 Sept at 7.00pm @ £35 per person, per session. An alternative option was a Local Council Public Advisory Service (LCPAS) Code of Conduct training session @ £100 + £20 maximum travelling costs and the cost of Lt Downham Village Hall hire.

Resolved to book the Code of Conduct Training Session with Local Council Public Advisory Service @ £100 + £20 maximum travelling costs on 15/09/16 to be held in Lt Downham Village Hall from 7.00 pm.

47/16 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS

1. To approve a 5-year contract with Chubb Fire & Security Ltd for service of Pavilion Extinguishers (Min.25/16.1) – It was noted on the service paperwork that the Chubb service engineer had ticked to indicate a 5-year contract term when he recently provided the new extinguishers. The Council instructed the Clerk to contact Chubb and amend the term to 3 years.

2. Parish Council Grass Cutting - Truelink Ltd apologised for the result of the wet verge cutting on 14/06/16 and agreed that it was not to their usual standard. Wet and warm weather conditions had increased grass growth and delayed the cut. Truelink plan to cut the verges at the beginning and end of July in order to keep them neat and tidy. Mr Hall suggested that the large open space grass areas be separated from the general verge cutting and cut more frequently to reduce the messy appearance of cuttings on top. The Council agreed to review the grass cutting specifications for the 2017 season (Truelink's 2nd year of a two-year contract).

Resolved unanimously that the Clerk monitors the verge cuts during the remainder of the season and arranges extra cuts if needed.

3. Discover Your Mojo – to consider use of Lt Downham Pavilion – Discover your Mojo (DYM) provides bouncy castles and outdoor activities for various age groups. It has insurance cover and all staff are DBS checked. It was proposed by Cllr JL Waters and seconded by Cllr KO Winters that the Council agree to allow Discover your Mojo to use the field and pavilion free of charge for a few all-day events during the summer school holidays at an agreed rate or capped fee for children (i.e. £5). The All Weather Court could be used too if it is not formally booked out via the booking clerk. DYM would advertise all events and Cllr Waters would be a pavilion key holder to unlock and lock the pavilion on each occasion.

Resolved unanimously to allow Discover your Mojo to use the field and pavilion free of charge for pre-arranged all-day events during the summer school holidays at an agreed rate for children and to have use of the All Weather Court if it is not previously booked out by the AWC Booking Clerk.

4. To consider replacing Pymoor Play Area Picnic Table – It was noticed that the picnic table was not looking in a good condition and suggested it should be replaced. The Clerk presented some table quotes in the region of £150 + VAT. It was suggested that the table is sourced locally.

Resolved unanimously that the Clerk be authorised to purchase a new picnic table with a budget of £150 excluding VAT.

48/16 PARISH MATTERS

1. CAMRA National Campaign to Register Pubs as Assets of Community Value (ACV) – Due to the lateness of the meeting, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

2. Lt Downham Organs & Bygones Event 25/03/17 (Min.26/16.3) - request use of the recreation area car park – The Clerk was informed that no 'Bygone' vehicles will be in the recreation area and only cars will be parked in the car park. The Council had no objections.

49/16 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

1. Replies re matters reported from previous meetings:

- 1.1 Lawn Lane, Lt Downham** – The handyman has cut back around the post box.
- 1.2 Holme Lane, Lt Downham** – ECDC contacted Veolia about the damaged street nameplate.

2. To report current matters of concern:

- 2.1 Third Drove, Lt Downham** – Conifers overhanging the carriageway are causing problems for large farm vehicles. The Clerk was instructed to write to the occupants of No. 16 to request that they cut back their trees and hedges to the verge.
- 2.2 One Hundred Foot Bank, Lt Downham** – The Clerk was instructed to report to CCC Highways about trees overhanging the carriageway between Straight Furlong and One Hundred Foot Bank and to request that the trees be removed.
- 2.3 Footpath No. 23** - Parishioners have reported that the footpath grass needs cutting. The Clerk will email the landowner.

- 3. Network Rail - Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy – Proposed closure of crossings at Furlong Drove and Coffue Drove – to consider comments relating to the proposed closures (Min.27/16 & 37/16)** – Cllr Winters gave a verbal report of his attendance at the Network Rail Exhibition event in Littleport on 08/06/16. He informed that a local farmer of Coffue Drove had concerns about the closure and would be contacting the clerk. The clerk reported receiving no further emails since 08/06/16, but had given the farmer contact details of Christian Green (Hamer Associates Ltd), who was the Network Rail Representative for Little Downham Parish. Cllr Martin informed that he attended the event later in the day and spoke to the Rights of Way officer who confirmed that A Furlong Drove was a Byway and is open to all traffic. The Council made no further comments.

50/16 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

10.20pm **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 51/16, 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.**

51/16 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS

- 1. Cemetery Working Group Report (Min.29/16)** – The Chairman read out an offer from the owner of the land adjacent to the western boundary of the recreation ground. The offer, which was very similar to a previous one that the Council rejected in 2013, still expected the Council to pay the full costs to upgrade the single concrete track and install a road and parking area to serve both a Parish Council cemetery and a proposed woodland burial ground. The costs quoted had doubled since 2013. Members thought the costs were excessive and some still had concerns that traffic and parking could cause issues on Eagles Lane and Park Lane. It was proposed by Cllr GH Taylor and seconded by Cllr KO Winters that the Parish Council should not pursue negotiations relating to the land adjacent to the recreation area. It was suggested that the Cemetery Working Group look into two other potential areas of land.
Resolved unanimously that the Parish Council does not pursue the land adjacent to the western boundary of the recreation ground and formally reject the landowner’s offer.
The Clerk will respond to the landowner’s email.

52/16 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

- 1. To consider free use of the All Weather Court during the summer school holidays.**

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 10.30 pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date