

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 12 December 2013 commencing at 7.00pm.**

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

Other attendees: Dist. Cllr T Goodge and Cllr County Cllr P Read.

105/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Dist. Cllr A Bailey.

106/13 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. **Cllr CM Frankland** declared a personal interest in item 112/13.1.1 (Application 13/00910/FUL) because she lives on Martins Lane (Declaration 025-2013).
2. **Cllr GF Frankland** declared a personal interest in item 112/13.1.1 (Application 13/00910/FUL) because he lives on Martins Lane (Declaration 026-2013).

107/13 PUBLIC FORUM – No comments

108/13 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS (Dist. Cllrs A Bailey & A Goodge)

1. Cllr Goodge briefly spoke about the changes of the Neighbourhood Panel Meetings to Parish Conferences, although a decision has yet to be made. He wished members a Merry Christmas.

109/13 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT (County Cllr P Read)

1. Cllr Read informed that CCC is working hard to make a saving of £30 Million in the next financial year and is to try holding 'middle' level meetings. The saving is around 6% of the current budget. The government has now passed on flood defences and Social Care Packages to County Councils. He wished the Council a Merry Christmas.

7.23pm Merry Christmases were wished to Cllr Goodge and Cllr Read as they left.

110/13 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. **Resolved unanimously that the minutes of 14 November 2013 were correct and be signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

111/13 MATTERS TO REPORT

1. **(Min.97/13.2) Downham Parish Conservation Group – proposal to plant 30 free trees in the parish** – The trees were planted on 07/12/13 in Pingle Wood. A couple will be planted in Holts Meadow when the hedges have been cut back. Two will be planted down Pymoor Main Street.
2. **(Min.103/12.3) Girl Guides bulb planting** – Following the Council's approval last year to plant bulbs on Church Green and Cub Green, the Girl Guides sent the Council a plan showing that the bulbs that were planted around the trees and seats on 16/11/13. Thanks have been expressed to the Girl Guides for their community activity work.
3. **BMX Track** - Following a request from some youths, Trevor Scott has agreed to meet with them during the Christmas holidays to look at a proposal to remodel the BMX track.

112/13 PLANNING MATTERS

1. **Planning correspondence -**

- 1.1 **13/00910/FUL** Mr Tarquin Cook, 1A Martins Lane, Lt Downham – Brick/timber clad garage and integrated carport with slate roof. Driveway material change from gravel to block paving/resin bonded gravel. Reduction of front boundary wall height, to comply with highway regulations to Number 1 and 1a - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**
- 1.2 **13/00951/FUL** Mr & Mrs S Bradley, Hythe Barn, The Hythe, Lt Downham – Triple garage and store - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**
- 1.3 **13/00973/FUL** Mr M F Lynch, Toll Farm Cottage, Hundred Foot Bank, Pymoor – Proposed detached 5 bed dwelling - **A recorded vote result to recommend refusal for the reasons below was as follows: In favour (10) – Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, CM Frankland, GF Frankland, CE Hall, LEA Joel, RS Martin, MM Oldfield, BGF Smith, GH Taylor, BL Taylor. Against (1) – Cllr KO Winters.**

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council has concerns about this application and recommends outright refusal of permission for the following reasons:

1. It is outside of Pymoor development envelope and considered as development in the open countryside.
2. It is in the Environment Agency's flood risk zone level 3.

7.50pm Cllr Winters left the meeting. 7.52pm Cllr Winters returned.

- 1.4 **13/00976/FUL** Arkrights, Land adjacent 14 Pymoor Lane, Pymoor – Construction of three dwellings and new access to the paddock - **A recorded vote result to recommend refusal for the reason below was as follows: In favour (7)** – Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, CM Frankland, GF Frankland, CE Hall, LEA Joel, RS Martin, MM Oldfield. **Against (2)** – Cllrs BL Taylor, KO Winters. **Abstentions (2)** - Cllrs BGF Smith, GH Taylor.

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council has concerns about this application and recommends outright refusal of permission for the following reason:

1. It is outside of Pymoor development envelope.

- 1.5 **13/01036/FUL** Mr & Mrs C Hills, 13 Main Street, Lt Downham – Two storey extension to side and single storey extension to rear - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**

- 1.6 **13/01049/FUL** Mr & Mrs P King, 18 Kiln Close, Lt Downham – Two storey side extension - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**

For information only:

- 1.7 ECDC: Applications approved: 13/00651/FUM, 13/00897/AGN

113/13 FINANCE

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs M Oldfield and RS Martin.
2. **To approve 2014/15 funding for Lt Downham Youth Group Senior session youth workers** – It was noted that the hourly rate for the youth worker had increased by 3% and the total cost, including travelling expenses, will be £2349.65, which is within the Council's allocated budget. **Resolved unanimously to approve funding of two youth workers from Community CARTS for the Little Downham Youth Group Senior Sessions during 2014/15.**
3. **Downham Conservation Group – To approve mower service** – Quotes to service the mower were obtained from Thurlow Nunn Standen, G & J Peck and Ernest Doe. **Resolved to approve the mower service to be done by Thurlow Nunn Standen.**
The Clerk will notify Mike England, Chairman of the Conservation Group.
4. **To consider cost of seats for Lt Downham recreation field** – Four bench seat quotes were obtained and various locations around the recreation ground were discussed. **Resolved unanimously to purchase three Roslin bench seats from Broxap @ £299 each plus delivery, fixings and VAT.**
5. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - Items for payment were proposed by Cllr MM Oldfield and seconded by Cllr RS Martin. **Resolved unanimously to approve list of payments for cheque numbers 001041, direct debits and BACS payments 136 to 143 for the total sum of £7350.06.**

114/13 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS

1. **To approve grass cutting specifications for tender** – The specifications were reviewed. **Resolved unanimously to approve the grass cutting specifications and for the Clerk to send out to tender.**
2. **Lt Downham Fete Committee – permission to hold Fete on 07/06/14** – No objection. **Resolved unanimously to approve use of Lt Downham Recreation Area on 7th June 2014 for the Little Downham Fete.**
3. **To review Summary of Annual Play Area Inspection Findings** – The Clerk and Handyman had reviewed the reports and taken action to rectify the majority of risks. All but two were of low and very low risks and no high priority matters to consider. The Council reviewed the results and summary of actions. A medium priority risk identified at Little Downham was the removal of a Basketball post that had a crack on the side and another medium priority risk was the boards of the carousel at Pymoor. A new basketball backboard and net is required at Lt Downham.

Resolved unanimously to accept the annual inspection reports and approve the summary of actions, authorise the replacement of the basketball post, backboard and net at Little Downham and to consider replacing the carousel at Pymoor.

4. **Little Downham Recreation Area trees and hedges** (Min.100/13.3) – Confirmation was received from Mrs Runciman that work would be carried out when the conditions were good so as not to damage the grass. The Council accepted this and requested that work is done by March 2014.

115/13 PARISH MATTERS

1. **Paul Quant – Suggestion of a flag for Little Downham Parish** – Mr Quant suggested a Downham in the Isle flag. The Council felt that this request was outside the Council's remit to endorse, as it does not have any authority regarding where it could be flown i.e. school, church etc. The Council considered it to be a personal matter rather than a Parish Council one and had no objection to Mr Quant pursuing his idea.
2. **Parish Welcome Booklet** – It was noted that information is available on the parish website but new residents are not given a parish welcome booklet. It was suggested that the Parish Council produce something. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr Adams-Payne will look into this.

116/13 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings –**
 - 1.1 **(Min.102/13.3) CCC: Local Highway Improvement Scheme – Bids for 2014/15** – Scheme to reduce the speed limits on Ely Road, California and Cowbridge Hall Road has been submitted. Brick Kiln Lane has been excluded because there are no residents recorded as living on Brick Kiln Lane and ECDC is to remove the street name plate.
 - 1.2 **(Min.102/13.1.3) Black Bank Road, Lt Downham** – Some work has been done to the dip but it is still a big dip. It is requested that the adjacent tree is cut down.
2. **To report current matters of concern:**
 - 2.1 **Ely Road, Lt Downham** – The handyman is asked to replant a small tree that's been uprooted.
 - 2.2 **North Fen Drove, Lt Downham** – Potholes and ruts need looking at.
3. **Parish Paths Patch Meeting – Cllr KO Winters Report** – Cllr Winters did not attend. The Chairman reminded members to inform the Clerk if they are unable to attend a meeting so an alternative representative can attend and the Council will be represented.

117/13 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS – see Motion below

9.05pm **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 118/13, 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.**

118/13 HUMAN RESOURCES

1. **To approve appointment of Little Downham Book Café Manager and contract** – The Interview Panel reported that one applicant had applied and been interviewed. Following a majority decision of the applicant's ability to do the work, the Panel had offered the position. The Council reviewed the contract and terms of employment including start date and salary.
Resolved unanimously to approve the Interview Panel's offer of the Book Café Manager's post to Mrs Avril Hayter-Smith, to approve her contract of employment and appointment date as 02/12/13 with the first three months being a probation period and the position subject to suitable references.
2. **To consider Handyman's annual staff appraisal** – Mr Mitchell's appraisal was carried out on 02/12/13 by the Appraisal Officer, Cllr M Oldfield. The report was read to the Council. Mr Mitchell requested signs to display when he's working, a new shovel and a combination tool for hedge trimming. He suggested metal grids be placed over some pavilion windows to reduce breakages from youths kicking footballs against the walls. Cllr Oldfield recommended increasing Mr Mitchell's mileage rate to 45p per mile, which is in line with HMRC approved rates, and concluded that Mr Mitchell is a very able worker and willing to be very flexible in his work area. He would really appreciate any extra hours the Council is able to give him. It was agreed to consider additional hours for project in the spring and summer i.e. painting play area equipment.

Resolved unanimously to increase Mr Mitchell's mileage rate to 45p per mile with immediate effect and for the Clerk to look into obtaining some work signs, a shovel and quotes for Pavilion window grids.

It was decided not to purchase the combination hedge trimming tool.

9.25pm Cllr BGF Smith gave apologies and left the meeting to collect his son from Ely.

9.28pm 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 02/12/13 by the Appraisal Officer, Cllr M Oldfield. The report was read to the Council. It was noted that the Clerk will line manage the new Book Café Manager and 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 remains an asset to the Parish Council and continues to work to very high standards. Mrs Wardle had no matters of concern. It was proposed by Cllr CE Hall and seconded by Cllr CM Frankland to approve the Clerk's incremental salary increase. A vote result was: In favour – 10, Against - 1.

Resolved to approve the Clerk's incremental salary increase from LC2/35 to LC2/36 with effect from 1st April 2014.

9.33pm The Clerk was invited back to the meeting. Cllr Winters left the meeting.

119/13 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

1. Pavilion Working Group update
2. Cemetery update

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.35pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date