

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 13 December 2012 commencing at 7.00pm.**

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

In attendance: Dist. Cllr T Goodge and 2 parishioners.

127/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Dist. Cllr A Bailey and County Cllr P Read.

128/12 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. **Cllr BL Taylor** declared a pecuniary and prejudicial interest in the following item 136/12.2 (Cemetery – Additional Burial Land offers) because he has submitted an offer and his land is adjacent to the existing cemetery (Declaration 033-2012).
2. **Cllr GH Taylor** declared a pecuniary and prejudicial interest in the following item 136/12.2 (Cemetery – Additional Burial Land offers) because she has submitted an offer and her land is adjacent to the existing cemetery (Declaration 034-2012).

129/12 PUBLIC FORUM

Sue Foulger expressed concerns regarding parking on Main Street (item 138/12.4) but would not suggest yellow lines in too many places because vehicles will speed on Main Street if lines restrict parking. She has recently spoken to CCC Highways about her concerns.

130/12 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS (Dist. Cllrs A Bailey & A Goodge)

1. Dist. Cllr Goodge informed of the Ely Car Parking Charges Consultation that closes on 01/03/13, the need to 'use or lose' the Neighbourhood Panels because they are not being used enough, that more consideration is being given to diversion routes on the A142 following an accident, that following public consultation wheelie bins are to be introduced for recycling and the black bin bags will continue, ECDC is waiting for the Government to say how much grant will be given towards Local Support Tax, which will affect the Parish Precept, and a public consultation is taking place until January 14 on whether Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service should collaborate further, or merge fully, with Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service.

7.22pm Christmas greetings were exchanged as Dist. Cllr T Goodge and 2 parishioners left the meeting.

131/12 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT (County Cllr P Read)

1. An email was read from County Cllr Read informing that the County has done away with the Area Joint Committees; so he thinks that in East Cambs they will do what they have done for the last two years and meet with all local County Councillors to draw up a short list for minor improvements with the help of the local officers at County Highways (Witchford). He wished the Council and staff a Merry Christmas.

132/12 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. **Resolved** unanimously that the minutes of 22 November 2012 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

133/12 MATTERS TO REPORT

1. **(Min.100/12.1) Pymoor Play Area Fence** – Following site visits and discussion with Total Supplies, the fence was completed on 11/12/12 and the company requested payment of the remaining 50% of the invoice. To avoid possible additional charges, the final payment was authorised. On agreeing to pay the balance, the Council instructed the Clerk to email stating that "the workmanship of the fence installation is not good because there is not a gap under all the fence panels, which there should be. This matter should have been brought to the Council's attention at the time of installation to determine if the fence should remain level or be staggered in height. There is also concern that in order to reduce the height of the gate post it was knocked down into the ground, which questions whether the action has shattered the surrounding concrete and become loose or the post may drop in time". It was noted that the Council's handyman is willing to dig soil from under relevant panels to provide a gap.

2. **Cambridgeshire Acre – Cambridgeshire Playing Fields Association Network** – Cambridgeshire ACRE wrote informing that it had decided that membership of CPFAN should now be included as part of the main Cambridgeshire ACRE membership offer at no additional cost. The Clerk confirmed that a payment of £40 for the CPFAN element for the Council's five-year membership to Cambridgeshire ACRE paid in 2011/12 had been refunded to the Council.
3. **Clerk's Annual Leave during Christmas and New Year – Office Closure** - The Council office would be closed from midday on Friday, 21/12/12 and re-opened on Thursday, 03/01/13.

134/12 PLANNING MATTERS

1. **Planning correspondence -**
For information only:
 - 1.1 **ECDC - Applications approved: 12/00763/FUL, 12/00908/FUL, 12/00952/FUL,**
 - 1.2 **ECDC - Application refused: 12/00289/FUL, 12/00853/FUL**

135/12 FINANCE

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs CM Frankland and BL Taylor.
2. **Downham Parish Conservation Group: New Recruitment Campaign** – In order to encourage and invite new members and volunteers, the group plans to set up a social media site on Facebook and produce business cards to promote the Conservation Group and its activities. The Council unanimously agreed to support the group, whose work is to maintain the Parish Local Nature Reserve and Community Orchard on behalf of the Council.
Resolved unanimously to provide a grant of £300 from the Countryside Account to the Downham Conservation Group for its new Recruitment Campaign and related matters.
3. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - Proposed by Cllr CM Frankland, seconded by Cllr BL Taylor and unanimously agreed.
Resolved unanimously to approve list of payments for cheque numbers 001014 – 001016, direct debits and BACS payments 042 to 052 for the total sum of £28491.58.

136/12 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS

1. **Pavilion - Results of Parish Organisation Survey** – Following the survey closing date of 10/12/12, the Clerk collated the results for distribution at the meeting. It was agreed that the Pavilion Working Group would meet to review the results and report back to the Council.

8.09pm Having declared interests, Cllrs BL & GH Taylor left the meeting before the next item was discussed.

2. **Cemetery - Result of request for Additional Burial Land Offers** – Two conditional offers were presented to the Council: One from Mr & Mrs BL Taylor relating to land off Cowbridge Hall Road (already offered) and the other from Messrs Runciman relating to land off Eagles Lane. The Runciman offer is to donate 3.5 acres to the Parish Council for use as a cemetery and for permission to use part of the remaining 11 acres field as a woodland burial ground, which to all intents and purposes would remain as an enclosed pasture with no headstones, floral displays or any kind of ornamentation and have negligible impact on the local environment. It was agreed that more information was required regarding the Runciman offer.
Resolved for the Cemetery Working Group to make further enquiries regarding the Runciman offer and report back to the Council.

8.21pm Cllrs BL & GH Taylor were invited back to the meeting.

3. **Bus shelter adjacent 100 Main Street, Lt Downham - to consider proposals to re-position** – Due to there being no other potential locations for a new shelter, it was suggested to enquire about building a new brick shelter in the corner of the Old Methodist Chapel garden and the corner of the proposed entrance to the potential building plot.
Resolved that the Clerk should write a letter to St Leonard's Church and the landowners to enquire about building a new brick shelter on their land.
4. **All Weather Court – new fence and condition of surfacing** – Kestrel Fencing has begun work to install goal recesses and replace the fence. The Council considered comments from a user group requesting additional maintenance of the surfacing. It was decided to ask the Handyman when he carries out the weekly check to clean any muddy areas of silt on the surface. The Clerk will ask Cambridge Sport Surfaces for a recommended cleaning programme and equipment.

5. **Came & Company – Advice re Increased frequency of Public Liability Claims** – Due to a modern culture of public liability claims, Came & Co recommended carrying out frequent checks of play areas, recreation grounds and other Council responsible areas. It was noted that the Council already has weekly checks in place. The Clerk was asked to check on the recommended and legal requirements for regular checks on trees.
6. **Lt Downham United FC – Request to treat goal area of adult pitch at Lt Downham Rec Field** – The Council agreed to the request to sand now and grass seed later in the season.

137/12 PARISH MATTERS

1. **Neighbourhood panel 14/01/13 at 7pm, Witcham Village Hall – issues to report** – None
2. **Mr Turrell email: Dog Fouling in Little Downham** – Mr Turrell emailed to complain about frequent dog fouling in Matthew Wren Close, Bury Green and Main Street. The Council sympathised but can only rely on residents' reports to ECDC via the website. ECDC no longer employs a Dog Warden to carry out patrols. The Clerk will forward Mr Turrell's email to ECDC.

138/12 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

1. **Replies from CCC Highways re matters reported from previous meetings:**
 - 1.1 **Gully near St Leonards Church, adjacent to Lawns Farm entrance, Main Street, Lt Downham** – CCC apologised if the wrong gully was emptied. An order has been placed for both gullies in this location to be cleaned.
 - 1.2 **First Drove and North Fen Drove, Lt Downham** – This drove has been inspected and it is considered fit for purpose as a local access road with one property at the bottom. It was noted that some minor repairs may be required at a future date.
 - 1.3 **Gully at junction of Station Road and Black Bank Road, Lt Downham** – There are no gullies at this location. Grips have been cut in the verge to release standing water from the road.
2. **To report current matters of concern**
 - 2.1 **Beild Drove, Lt Downham** – Following a recent road traffic collision at this junction, the street signs were damaged and reported to relevant authorities. It was pointed out to ECDC, who provides street nameplates, that the previous spelling of Bield Drove was wrong. ECDC requested confirmation of the preferred spelling. The acceptable spelling was BEILD.
 - 2.2 **Street Nameplates** – The Lawn Lane sign is missing near California, the Cannon Street sign at Townsend needs re-fixing and the Brick Kiln Lane sign needs cleaning and straightening up.
 - 2.3 **Cowbridge Hall Road, Lt Downham** – Concern regarding ponding by one side of the grassed triangle at the junction of Ely Road.
 - 2.4 **Black Bank Road, Lt Downham** – Concern regarding the condition of the north side carriageway on Littleport side of the 'Armourstore' site.
3. **CCC: Local Highway Improvement Scheme – bids for 2013/14** – A bid was proposed to address the lack of pedestrian footway along California, reduce the current national speed limit from 60 mph to preferably 30 mph from California to Cowbridge Hall Road, and to provide a proper passing place on Cowbridge Hall Road.
Resolved to submit a bid of proposals from California to Cowbridge Hall Road, to confirm a financial contribution of at least 10% and a minimum amount of £1000.
4. **Parking on Main Street and Cannon Street** – It was noted that cars parked on Main Street and Cannon Street often cause difficulty for large vehicles, particularly where the roads narrow such as between Pond Lane and the Cost Cutters Store on Main Street and the junction of Martins Lane and White Horse Lane on Cannon Street. It was agreed to request CCC Highways to consider yellow lines in difficult/narrow sections such as near 52 Main Street and the top of White Horse Lane.

139/12 CORRESPONDENCE

- For information only:**
1. **ECDC Waste Strategy – Recycling Grant Successful**
 2. **SLCC – Localising Council Tax Support** – Information that the Government is to provide a grant to Local Billing Authorities (District Councils), which may or may not be passed on to Parish Council to offset a reduction in Band D Council Tax payments that contribute towards the Parish Council Precept, as a result of some people being eligible for Council Tax Support. ECDC is unable to confirm the situation at present, as it is waiting for notification from Government, which is expected around 20/12/12. Parish Councils are not permitted to set their Precepts until notified by the District Councils.

140/12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS – see Motion below

9.35pm

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 141/12, 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.

141/12 TENDERS

- 1. **War Memorial Maintenance quotes** – Three quotes were received and options were considered in detail. It was noted that funding for the maintenance work will come from the Council's general reserve savings, as funds have not been allocated in the Council's budget and no grants are available. The Clerk was asked to check the British Legion website for any war memorial grants. A vote result to accept the quotation from P A Hibble was: 7 In favour, 2 Against and 1 Abstention.
Resolved to accept the quotation of £5750 + VAT from P A Hibble for the cleaning and replacement of damaged parts of the war memorial, recut and painting of existing names, and supply of a splayed block with eight additional names and dates.

142/12 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION - None

The Clerk was asked to distribute the meetings' agendas a week earlier to allow members more time to consider the items on it.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.55pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date

