

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 14 March 2013 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Councillors present: DA Adams-Payne, in the chair, and CM Frankland, GF Frankland, LEA Joel, RS Martin, MM Oldfield, BGF Smith (7.20pm), BL Taylor, GH Taylor and KO Winters. **Clerk:** Mrs J Wardle

Other attendees: None

190/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllr CE Hall, Dist. Cllrs A Bailey, T Goodge and County Cllr P Read.

191/12 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. The Following councillors declared personal interests in item 197/12.1.2 (Application 13/00119/FUL) because they are Parish Council Representatives appointed on the Downham Feoffees Charity:
 - **Cllr DA Adams-Payne** (Declaration 007-2013).
 - **Cllr CM Frankland** (Declaration 008-2013).
 - **Cllr LEA Joel** (Declaration 009-2013).
 - **Cllr MM Oldfield** (Declaration 011-2013).
 - **Cllr KO Winters** (Declaration 014-2013).
2. **Cllr RS Martin** declared a prejudicial interest in item 203/12.1 (Myles Meadow Grazing) because his brother has submitted a tender (Declaration 010-2013).
3. **Cllr BGF Smith** declared a prejudicial interest in item 197/12.1.2 (Application 13/00119/FUL) because he is Chairman of the Downham Feoffees Charity (Declaration 012-2013).
4. **Cllr GH Taylor** declared a personal interest in item 200/12.1 (Pymoor Recreation Field Gala) because she is a member of Pymoor Social Club Committee (Declaration 013-2013).

192/12 PUBLIC FORUM

Cllr BGF Smith informed that the Feoffees had been approached by the Guides prior to submitting the planning application and had no objections to the request on the understanding that should the Feoffees wish to use the land for any reason, the Guides would have remove the storage unit.

193/12 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS (Dist. Cllrs A Bailey & A Goodge)

With their apologies, councillors reported that ECDC had dropped proposed car parking charges.

194/12 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT (County Cllr P Read) – Nothing to report.

195/12 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. **Resolved** unanimously that the minutes of 14 February 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record after the following:
 - **Item 160/12.1, line 2 – delete *and his mother-in-law's property* at the end of the sentence.**
 - **Item 172/12.1, line 7 – delete the word *unanimously*.**
 - **Item 173/12, line 5 – insert the item *4. PP7*.**

196/12 MATTERS TO REPORT

1. **(Min.166/12.1.1) Planning Application 13/00029/FUL** – Following the last parish council meeting, Mr Yarrow has informed that he is aware of the letter objecting to his application and was upset that it stated his cattle was kept in poor conditions and were not looked after. As a result of this, he has had his cattle inspected and, for the Council's reference, has forwarded a copy of their letters to confirm this is not the case.
2. **(Min.165/12.6) Annual Parish Meeting** Thursday, 25th April at 7pm in the Community Rooms, Main Street, Lt Downham. Confirmation that Inspector Paul Ormerod will attend to report on crime matters relating to the parish over the past year, Sue Loaker (Crime Reduction/Community Safety Officer covering East Cambridgeshire) will give a short presentation on the topic of home and personal security, and Gillian Leeper (ESDAR Chief Executive) will give a presentation on the services of Ely & Soham Dial-a-Ride.

3. **Planning Policy Guidelines and Supplementary Documents** – Following comments from Cllr Winters at the 14/02/13 meeting that the Council should not discuss a planning application because the Clerk had not brought PPG7 to the meeting, the Clerk sought confirmation from ECDC (Local Planning Authority) that the Council was not required to refer to planning policy guidelines or supplementary documents when being consulted on planning applications. Alan Dover (ECDC Principal Development Control Officer) emailed the following comment to the clerk:

From what you are saying, the advice that you are giving is 100% correct. All the previous government policy statements and advice have been cancelled, and there is now only the National Planning Policy Framework 2012. Otherwise, it all falls back to the Core Strategy 2009 which is the development plan for East Cambs. That said, parish councils are not being asked to determine applications. Policy implications are dealt with by the case officer. What is needed from parish councils, are their views on the particular development proposals in relation to the parish. The parish councillors have local knowledge and experience that can be very helpful in the consideration of applications. This could relate to traffic issues, flooding, the protection of trees and hedges, the provision of local facilities that might be required as a result of development (probably more relevant in terms of larger schemes), design aspects, or even why a particular proposal might be advantageous/detrimental to the parish.

Cllrs BL Taylor and KO Winters requested a copy of the email.

197/12 **PLANNING MATTERS**

1. **Planning correspondence -**

- 1.1 **13/00095/FUL** Mr Luke Fairhead, 70 Cannon Street, Lt Downham – Replacement of pitched roof - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns on the application.**

7.27pm Having declared an interest in the next item, Cllr BGF Smith left the meeting.

- 1.2 **13/00119/FUL** Little Downham Guides, Land to the rear of Village Hall, School Lane, Lt Downham – Siting of storage container for guides equipment - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns on the application.**

7.31pm Cllr BGF Smith was invited back to the meeting.

For information only:

- 1.3 **ECDC - Applications approved: 11/01099/FUL,**

198/12 **FINANCE**

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs DA Adams-Payne and GH Taylor.
2. **To receive receipts & payments summary (06/03/13) for 2012/13** – A summary of actual figures, prior to this meeting, were viewed. Cllr Winters questioned how much the Council had in reserves and whether it was considered too much. The Chairman confirmed that in accordance with The Practitioners' Guide [Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in England 2010 Page 20, section 2.26 - *Earmarked reserves, which are set aside for specific purposes and for savings for future projects, should be realistic and approved by the council. It is generally accepted that general (i.e. un-earmarked) revenue reserves usually lie within the range of three to twelve months of gross expenditure. However, the amount of general reserve should be risk assessed and approved by the Council.*] it is acceptable for the Council to have between £22,000 and £87,000 in general reserves (based on the Council's gross expenditure for year 2013/14). Following approval of this meeting's payments, the Council will currently have around £71,000 in general reserves. The Council's Fidelity Guarantee is £170,000 and covers the general and earmarked reserves. The Chairman pointed out that the Council has two large projects to consider in the forthcoming year (Pavilion Extension and Refurbishment and the Additional Burial Land) and it requires enough funds to pay invoices before it can claim grant funding.
3. **Ely & District Citizens Advice Bureau – grant request** – Approved.
Resolved unanimously to donate £300 to Rural Cambs Citizens Advice Bureau.
4. **Ely & Soham Dial-a-Ride – grant request** – Approved.
Resolved unanimously to donate £300 to Ely & Soham Dial-a-Ride.
5. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - Proposed Cllr DA Adams-Payne and seconded Cllr GH Taylor. **Resolved unanimously to approve list of payments for cheque numbers 001019 – 001021 and BACS payments 067 to 074 for the total sum of £28977.75**

199/12 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS

1. **Pavilion Working Group – update** – The stage one application to Big Lottery was rejected. Advice on re-submitting the application as given in the reply. Cllr Oldfield and the Clerk are to attend free training workshops on 18/03/13 that will assist in completing a new application. The Pavilion Working Group will meeting to discuss the letter. The Council approved a request from Carol Hebbard (Chair of Lt Downham Youth Group) for a copy of the Big Lottery rejection letter.
2. **Bus shelter adjacent 100 Main Street, Lt Downham – update** – A couple of locations were suggested. The Chairman asked Councillors to look at the area before the next meeting with a view to what's been suggested. The Clerk will enquire about planning permission for the shelter and proposed building plot.
3. **To Register Parish Council and common land with the Land Registry** – The Clerk informed that the Council will need to consult a solicitor and produce statutory declarations on some areas of land that are to be registered.
Resolved unanimously for the Clerk to approach Christine Battersby (Hall, Ennion & Young, Littleport) to assist in registering parish council land with the Land Registry and for Cllr Roger Martin (longest serving member of the council and local historian) to make the necessary Statutory Declarations.

200/12 PARISH MATTERS

1. **Pymoor Social Club – request use of Pymoor Recreation Field for a Gala on 06/07/13** – Approved. Usual conditions apply that any damage to the ground should be made good.
2. **Ely Car Parking Charges and ECDC Parking (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2013** – It was confirmed that proposed charges have been dropped. The Parish Council was delighted on behalf of its parish and asked the Clerk to congratulate Anna Bailey on her efforts to object to the proposals on behalf of Downham Villages Ward.
3. **ECDC Conservation Officer – Buildings of Local Interests** – ECDC Conservation Officer, Lorraine Brown, writes to inform that there are many buildings and structures throughout the District that do not meet the criteria as a listed building or are not found within designated areas. ECDC's aim is to identify buildings of special architectural or historical interest and offer them a level of protection against undesirable alterations and/or irreplaceable loss. Cllr Adams-Payne expressed an interest to attend an introductory meeting at ECDC offices on 22/03/13.

201/12 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings:**
 - 1.1 **Adventurers Drove, Oxlode, Pymoor** – The road has been inspected by CCC Highways and reported that whilst it is undeniably an uneven local access road but there are no actionable defects on it other than pothole work, which is ongoing across the area. The worst potholes were repaired this week. The current Highways budget is not sufficient to carry out major works on these types of road and capital funding has not been successful. There are already Uneven Road signs on the road to warn drivers of the bumpy conditions. The road will continue to be monitored to determine priorities in the coming financial year.
 - 1.2 **Third Drove, Lt Downham** – The above reply also applies to the condition of Third Drove. As for mud on the road, it is primarily a Police matter for them to investigate and take appropriate action. The mud appears to be from the parking of a lorry and other machinery on the highway verge that is now totally devoid of grass. Another complaint about the muddy condition has been received and CCC Highways is considering writing to the resident to advise of responsibilities regarding damage to the highway.
2. **To report current matters of concern:**
 - 2.1 **Seven Sisters Bend, B1411** – Following a fatality near this location on 25/02/13, and subsequent emails received from parishioners, Dist. Cllr Goodge forwarded an email he had received from CCC Highways informing that it is currently investigating the possibility of reducing the speed limit and that the Police and Highways Safety Team will be completing a safety report and site visit shortly. The Clerk was instructed to email CCC Highways and express that the Council has serious concerns regarding the multiple accidents and fatalities that have occurred on the B1411 between the A10 roundabout and Little Downham village and invite Highways officers to suggest a date(s) when they would be prepared to attend a public meeting in Little Downham. The Clerk will copy the email to County and District Councillors and Steven Barclay MP and reply to parishioners.

- 2.2 **Adventurers Drove, Oxloode, Pymoor** – The Council appreciates the pothole work done recently but still has concerns regarding the condition of the road.
- 2.3 **Cannon Street, Lt Downham** – Pothole needs filling near the seat at the bottom of Pond Lane.
- 2.4 **Black Bank Road, Lt Downham** – Cllr Winters noted that CCC Highways had not replied to concerns regarding the narrow verges. Martin Gowler has offered to meet with Cllr Winters re his concerns. It was agreed that Cllr Winters should contact Martin Gowler to arrange a site meeting.
3. **CCC: Parish Paths & Future Partnership meeting 07/03/13 Report (Min.169/12.3)** – The Chairman read a report of the meeting in which she and Cllr MM Oldfield attended and Cllrs BL and GH Taylor attended in place of Cllr Winters. It was reported that the grass cutting budget has been cut considerably and only one team will cut next year, funding is available for footpath walking signs and through the new CIL levy @ 15% - 25%, a new scheme is being set up to develop and enhance the Public Rights of Way network, maintenance work and projects must first be referred and approved by CCC Countryside Team as there may be technical or insurance issues to consider and the Parish Paths Definitive Map can be viewed and downloaded from My.Cambridgeshire.gov.uk website.
The Clerk was instructed to write to Edward Runciman to request that he cuts back his hedge on Footpath No. 21 (between Eagles Lane and the Recreation Area) because it is like a quagmire and not able to dry out.

202/12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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 203/12 & 204/12, 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.

203/12 TENDERS

8.50pm Having declared an interest, Cllr RS Martin left the meeting.

1. Grazing for 2013 season:

1.1 **Myles Meadow** - One tender was received for grazing of Myles Meadow.

Resolved unanimously to accept the tender of £440 from AW Martin for cattle grazing in Myles Meadow.

8.57pm Cllr RS Martin was invited back to the meeting.

1.2 **The Holts** - One tender was received for grazing in The Holts. It was noted that Mr Smith had rented the meadows last year and cut the hay before putting sheep in to graze. The Council stipulated that the hay must not be cut this year.

Resolved unanimously to accept the tender of £80 from L Smith for sheep grazing in The Holts.

204/12 HUMAN RESOURCES

1. **Handyman - To consider initial three-month probation appraisal** – Mr Mitchell's appraisal was carried out by the Appraisal Officer, Cllr D Adams-Payne, on 05/03/13. It was noted that his general working hours are Mondays and Thursdays mornings to 1.30pm and 2pm respectively. He would like a pair of binoculars for tree assessments and to roll the All Weather Court if he can borrow a roller. In order for people to know why his vehicle is in various places around the parish, he has bought a tyre cover for his car stating "Little Downham Parish Council Maintenance". The Chairman suggested that the Council should reimburse Mr Mitchell for this expense and offer him a contract of employment. Mr Mitchell had no matters of concern.

Resolved unanimously to approve the Handyman's report, to reimburse him £15 for the tyre cover, to purchase binoculars and PPE equipment required, offer him a contract of employment and increase his salary to £10.50 per hour with effect from 01/04/13.

205/12 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

1. Drainage maintenance of 100 ft washes (Cllr Taylor)

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.22pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date