

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 15 December 2011 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Councillors present: Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, in the chair, CM Frankland, GF Frankland, CE Hall, RS Martin, BGF Smith, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, and KO Winters.

In attendance: PC K Humble, Dist. Cllr A Goodge, County Cllr P Read and two parishioners.

130/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllrs NK Missin and MM Oldfield.

131/11 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. **Cllr CE Hall** declared a personal interest in item 142/11.1 (Lt Downham Village Vision results) because members of her family have an interest in land referred to in the document (Declaration 017-2011).
2. **Cllr RS Martin** declared a personal interest in item 139/11.1.3 (Application 11/01082/FUL) because he is a tenant of land opposite Otterbush Farm (Declaration 018-2011).
3. **Cllr BL Taylor** declared a prejudicial interest in item 139/11.1.1 (Application 11/01035/FUL) because his son is the applicant (Declaration 019-2011).
4. **Cllr GH Taylor** declared a prejudicial interest in item 139/11.1.1 (Application 11/01035/FUL) because her son is the applicant (Declaration 020-2011).

132/11 PARISH CRIME MATTERS

1. **Police Crime Reports** - Between 16/11/11 – 14/12/11 eleven crimes were reported in Lt Downham and one in the Pymoor area (one burglary residential, one burglary commercial, one burglary shed-garage, one theft of motor vehicle, three theft, one fraud, three criminal damage, one harassment). On the forces command and control system there were 34 calls for services.
2. **To report recent events** – PC Humble informed that many crimes relate to residential burglaries and farm matters and recently there have been haystack fires at Sutton, Mepal and Witcham. He suggested that people ensure their properties are secure at all times and requested they remain vigilant and report to the police anything they think is suspicious.
PC Humble finished his report by informing that was retiring at the end of December and that PC Steve Gilbey was transferring in from Histon to take over the Downham Villages Ward, which is included in the West Neighbourhood Panel. There will also be some big changes in April.
The Chairman thanked PC Humble for his attendance at Council meetings and duty to the Parish. She presented him with a card from the Parish Council and a gift of appreciation from the Parish.

7.23pm PC Humble left the meeting. The Clerk left the meeting to lock the village hall front door after an ECDC drop-in session held in the main hall. 7.24pm Clerk returned.
Cllr Winters left the meeting. 7.25pm Cllr Winters returned.

133/11 SKATE PARK REQUESTS

1. **To consider request for a Skate Park in Pymoor (Min.114/11.1)** – Replies were received from Pymoor Social Club and Pymoor Football Club, who had no objections to the proposed site. For health and safety reasons, it was suggested the facility should not be used when cricket matches are held and a sign should be erected informing of that. It was noted that no comment had been received from Pymoor Cricket Club despite efforts to encourage a reply in time for the meeting. The Council decided to agree the site in principle but it would still want to approve the final plans of what will be installed and where. In considering the proposed site near residential dwellings, it was requested that the installed equipment is not noisy.
Resolved unanimously to give permission, in principle, for the skate park to be sited as proposed on the west side of Pymoor Recreation Field to the rear of dwellings on Pymoor Lane and Straight Furlong.
The Clerk will write to Jack Jenkins informing of the Council's decision.
2. **To consider request for a Skate Park in Little Downham (Min.114/11.2)** – Replies were received from Little Downham United Football Club and Little Downham Cricket Club. Neither had any objections to the proposed site other than to suggest a warning notice is put up to advise of the possibility of cricket balls reaching the area during cricket matches. It was noted that members of the youth group use netball poles on the site but had not been consulted. The Council deferred the decision to the next meeting for the Clerk to contact the Youth Group.

134/11 PUBLIC FORUM

1. Mrs Mary Misson wished to inform the Council of her objections regarding item 142/11.2 relating to her property at Lawns Farm, Main Street, Little Downham, of which part is proposed to be in the revised Conservation Area. It was reported that ECDC's Conservation Officer was aware of Mrs Misson's concerns and would be willing to discuss amendments with her.

135/11 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS (Dist. Cllrs A Bailey & A Goodge)

1. Dist. Cllr Goodge updated on the parking charges being discussed in Ely, comments being made regarding the centre of Ely, the abrupt stopping of the park and ride facility, licensing matters such as boarding kennels and taxi signage that's still being sorted out.

136/11 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT (County Cllr P Read)

1. County Cllr Read informed that ECDC had the opportunity to contribute towards a community bus scheme but did not have the funds so the scheme has gone to another authority, at a recent HCV meeting it was agreed to look at levelling some roads to stop lorries rattling during the night, scrap is an ongoing problem and it has been suggested that scrap dealers install cameras or identity cards are issued to identify people selling scrap.

8.08pm Dist. Cllr Goodge and County Cllr Read were thanked for their reports and left the meeting.

137/11 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. **Resolved** that the minutes of 22 November 2011 (Full Council) be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record after the following were amended:
 - item 114/11.1 line 4 – replace the word *thought* with the word *would*
 - item 125/11.1 line 2 – insert after the word Road with the words *and Pymoor*.

138/11 MATTERS TO REPORT

1. **(Min.124/11.1) Little Downham Play Area Picnic table** – Been ordered but awaiting delivery.
2. **Little Downham Village Hall Room Hire Charges** – Notification was received that room fees will increase with effect from January 2012 to £8.00 per hour in the summer (April to September) and £9.00 per hour in the winter (October to March) due to additional heating costs.
3. **Ouse Washes: The Gateway to the Fens project** – Information was received inviting village organisations with an interest or a project in mind relating to the Ouse Washes to be involved in a Heritage Lottery Funding application to be submitted in February 2012. The Downham Conservation Group has no projects in that area. Cllr Winters requested a copy of the project details.
4. **(Min.120/11.1) Murfitts Tyres, Littleport** – Dist. Cllr Bailey confirmed that permission is given to store tyres at the site. The owner must apply for permission to shred tyres.

139/11 PLANNING MATTERS

1. **Planning correspondence -**
 - 1.1 **11/00942/FUL** Mr Terry Ryan, 4 Leaford Drive, Lt Downham – proposed 2 storey link extension and garage conversion to form family annexe – **Amendment – Alteration to proposed extension – Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns on the application.**

8.25pm Prior to the next item being discussed, Cllrs B & G Taylor left the meeting.

- 1.2 **11/01035/FUL** Mr R Taylor, 1 Mount Pleasant Farm Cottages, 66 - 68 Main Street, Pymoor - Extensions to front and rear – **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns on the application.**

8.29pm Cllrs B & G Taylor were invited to return to the meeting.

- 1.3 **11/01082/FUL** Mr & Mrs Hayes, Otterbush Farm, The Hythe, Little Downham - Two storey side extension & internal alterations – **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns on the application.**
- 1.4 **For information only:**
ECDC Applications approved: 11/00984/CLE (not referred to the Parish Council for comment)

140/11 FINANCE

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs DA Adams-Payne and BL Taylor.

2. **To inform of changes to the MBNA credit card** – Notification had been received that MBNA Business card accounts had been transferred to Barclaycard, that changes were to be made and they “*won't be issuing a new Barclaycard owing to the status of the account*”. Following concerned enquiries by the Clerk, Barclaycard apologised and confirmed that letters had been sent out incorrectly and that there was no problem with the Council's account. A new card will be issued in February when the current one is due to expire.
3. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - Proposed Cllr DA Adams-Payne, seconded Cllr BL Taylor. **Resolved** unanimously to approve list of payments for cheque numbers 000922 to 000933 and direct debits for the total sum of £5350.07.

141/11 POLICIES

1. **Equality Act 2010 – to consider and adopt draft Equality Policy** – In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, public bodies are required to have a policy in place by 31/01/12. **Resolved** unanimously to adopt the draft Little Downham Parish Council Equality Policy without amendment and with immediate effect.

142/11 PARISH MATTERS

1. **ECDC – Little Downham & Pymoor Village Vision – to answer questions from ECDC re consultation results** – The Parish Council was disappointed that only 57 responses were returned to ECDC, which equated to 2.8% of the parish electorate. It was therefore considered that the results were not a true representation of the parish. The Council decided to answer ECDC's questions but to make comments based on what it thought would be most beneficial to the Parish. In general for Little Downham, the Council supported development outside the development envelope. The majority of the Council was in favour of 20 and 30 houses respectively being developed on land identified off Cannon Street and off Ely Road, Little Downham, with employment preferred off Cowbridge Hall Road. For Pymoor, the Council was in favour of up to 10 houses being developed outside the development envelope and supported housing growth in all areas identified on the questionnaire map. A copy of the council's comments is held on file.
2. **ECDC – Little Downham Conservation Area and Boundary Review Appraisal – consultation deadline 19/12/11** – It was noted that there were anomalies with some words and matters in the document. Following discussion, a vote was taken to generally support or object to the appraisal. The result was recorded as follows:
 - To generally object to the appraisal – 4**
 - To generally support the appraisal – 3**
 - Abstention (not sure of opinion) – 2**

Reasons for objection: “Why change the conservation area. If it has worked for so long then don't change it.” “The changes are not consistent and it does not give good enough reasons in the document to change it”

Reasons for support: “It follows property boundary lines and doesn't cross through half of houses anymore.” “Support in general even though reservations regarding some parts of The Lawns.”

The Clerk forwarded the above comment and requested that the Council is notified when the document was adopted.

3. **ECDC – Ely's Car Parking Proposals – consultation deadline 31/01/12** – It was decided to defer to the January meeting.

9.30pm Mr & Mrs Misson left the meeting.

143/11 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings**
 - 1.1 **Pymoor Sidings Railway Bridge, Pymoor** – CCC Highways has inspected the area. There is some cracking but the surface is stable at the moment. It will continue to be monitored and potholes repairs ordered, as required.
 - 1.2 **To consider proposed locations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Commemorative Tree and Hedge Planting and offer of trees from CCC for Broad Hurst Piece (Min.101/11.2)** - It was unanimously agreed to purchase a tree for Church Green, Little Downham. The Clerk will obtain prices for the next meeting. It was decided not to plant trees or shrubs on Hurst Lane. The Clerk will thank Karen Whymark for her offer.

2. **To report current matters of concern**
- 2.1 **Martins Lane, Lt Downham** – Concern that someone has put large rocks/boulders on the highway verge.
- 2.2 **Marshalls Lane, Lt Downham** – Concern that 4x4 vehicles have used the lane and drove three days this week and it now cannot be walked on.
3. **CCC – Local Minor Highway Improvements – to consider a bid for 2012/13** – The Council considered a suggestion of signs warning of Monk Jack deer on the carriageway, which would cost a total of £502. It was decided against installing signs as there are many deer in the countryside. It was decided not to submit a bid for 2012/13 because the Council has its own projects in mind for 2012/13.

144/11 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

9.36pm

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 145/11, 146/11 and 147/11, 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.

145/11 PARISH LAND

1. **Recreation Areas - to consider quotes to replace safety tiles with 'grass' mat safety surfacing at Lt Downham and Pymoor Play Areas** – Three quotes were received, but were considered expensive. It was suggested contacting the Insurance company to enquire if grass could be reinstated in the play since legislation has changed and organisations are encouraged to provide natural play for children. The Clerk will make relevant enquiries.
Resolved not to accept grass matting quotes on this occasion but for the Clerk to enquire about grass surfacing under play equipment.
2. **Local Nature Reserve – to consider tenders for the re-laying of Holts Meadow eastern boundary hedge** - Four companies were invited to tender. One quotation was received and considered acceptable.
Resolved unanimously to award the contract to Truelink Ltd for the re-laying of Holts Meadow eastern boundary hedge at a cost of £600 + VAT.

146/11 LITTLE DOWNHAM PAVILION

1. **To consider tenders re architectural services for the Pavilion extension and refurbishment** – Quotations received from CE Building Design, Neil Cutforth & Associates and Greg Saberton Design were considered in detail. It was proposed by CM Frankland and seconded by CE Hall to accept the quotation from Neil Cutforth & Associates. A vote result was: 8 In favour and 1 Against.
Resolved to accept the quotation and award the contract re architectural services for the Pavilion extension and refurbishment to Neil Cutforth & Associates.

Due to the lateness of the meeting and at the Chairman's discretion, the following item was deferred to the next meeting.

147/11 HUMAN RESOURCES

1. **Handyman - to consider annual staff appraisal**
2. **Clerk – to consider annual staff appraisal**

148/11 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

1. ECDC – Ely's Car Parking Proposals – consultation deadline 31/01/12
2. Human Resources – Handyman and Clerk's staff annual appraisals.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 10.07pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date