

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,  
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 24 September 2015 commencing at 7.00pm.**

**Councillors present:** MM Oldfield, in the chair, and JW Barker, LEA Joel, RS Martin, MAC Seidler, BL Taylor and JL Waters.  
Clerk: Mrs J Wardle

**Other attendees:** None

**66/15 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, CE Hall, GH Taylor and KO Winters, County Cllr P Read and Dist. Cllrs A Bailey and M Bradley.

**67/15 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - None

**68/15 PUBLIC FORUM** – No comments

**69/15 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS** – No reports received

**70/15 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**1.1 Resolved that the minutes of 23 July 2015 were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

**1.2 Resolved that the minutes of 20 August 2015 were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

**71/15 MATTERS TO REPORT**

**1. (Min. 23/07/15) Lt Downham All Weather Court - reduced charge during the summer school holidays** – Jan Holland reported that she had no more hiring of the court than usual during the school holiday period. She reported that one mother complained about being charged £1, as she was told it was going to be free. Jan was not aware of anyone using the court while she was away and does not know that it had any effect on the youths that climb the fence to play on the court.

**2. (Min.53/15.2) Pymoor Play Area Replacement Seesaw** – Installation has been completed and payment has been made. The handyman will monitor the wetpour in and around the springs underneath, which moves slightly when used. Hags-SMP acknowledged that there is slight movement in the spring base, which is simply down to the flex in the legs that attach to the main spring plate. If it is monitored over time and gets worse, the contracts manager will review it, as it covered by their guarantee.

**3. (Min.53/15.3) Little Downham Book Café** – The Book Café Grand Re-Launch was held on 21<sup>st</sup> Sept. Approximately 30 people attended including Helen Last, Rev. David Newton and Pauline Finney (Cams Libraries, District Library Manager, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland). The event was to celebrate the Book Café's 15<sup>th</sup> 'birthday' and highlight the new children's corner, flooring and change of furniture layout.

**4. (Mins.56/15.1) Lt Downham Recreation Area BMX Track** – Cllr B Taylor was thanked for his work and time cutting the weeds around the BMX track area. Cllr Taylor has organised for Mr Freeman to reshape the track.

**5. (Mins.56/15.2) Annual Risk Assessment 2015/16** – It was noted that Tony Payne had carried out the Annual Risk Assessment of Parish Council assets during August and September and had submitted his reports to the Clerk. The Clerk informed that the recommended actions had been collated in a summary and was being reviewed by her and the handyman. It will be presented to the Council for consideration and approval at the October meeting.

**6. Conservation Area Dog Bins** – Thanks are to be expressed to Piers Smart (Scampers) for two dog bins given free of charge and installed near the Community Orchard and Holts Meadow. Tony Payne is to install the obsolete bin that was removed from an old streetlight on Lawn Lane to West Fen Drove near the corner where the footpath goes along the dyke to Holts Meadow. Conservation volunteers and the handyman will empty all bins.

7. **Transforming Lives - Helping Adults and Older People in Little Downham** - Cllr Oldfield reported attending a meeting and workshop on 22/09/15 to discuss how best to support Adults and Older People in Little Downham. She found it informative but felt it was not something that the Parish Council could take on or deal with. The Parish Council does not have the finances to provide any form of social services for the elderly.
8. **Little Downham Recreation Area** – Circus Tyanna emailed to request holding an event on Lt Downham Recreation field for 3 or 4 days as part of its 2016 tour. The request was deferred to the next meeting for more information.

#### 72/15 **PLANNING MATTERS**

1. **Planning correspondence -**
  - 1.1 **15/00877/FUL** Mr John Eagle, 101 Main Street, Lt Downham – Construction of a timber shed to east of house - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**
  - 1.2 **15/00939/FUL** Mr J Henderson, Land behind 20 – 24 Straight Furlong, Pymoor – Erection of two bungalows - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**
  - 1.3 **15/01006/FUL** Mr & Mrs G Stapleton, 18 Matthew Wren Close, Lt Downham – Two storey extension to side, single storey extension to rear and garage conversion - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**
- For information only:**
- 1.4 ECDC: Applications approved: 15/00554/FUL, 15/00734/FUL, 15/00763/FUL, 15/00804/AGN, 15/00836/FUL, 15/00860/VAR, 15/00957/CLP
  - 1.5 ECDC: Applications refused: 15/00728/FUL

#### 73/15 **FINANCE**

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs LEA Joel and MM Oldfield.
2. **To consider Lt Downham Recreation Area Electricity Contract** – Tariffs for E-on and EDF were considered. EDF offered 7% discount on monthly direct debits and lower individual prices for the day, night, evening and weekend rates.  
**Resolved unanimously to renew the Lt Downham Recreation Area Electricity contract with EDF that will expire December 2016 and continue with the monthly direct debit.**
3. **Rural Cambs Citizens Advice Bureau – grant request** – Dr Batul Dungarwalla (Rural Cambs Citizens Advice Bureau CEO) wrote to thank the Council for its grant of £300 in 2014/15 and requested an increase of grant to £500 for 2015/16, stating that without the support of the Parish Council it will have to consider reducing its services for Lt Downham residents. Members of the Council stated that they had been supportive of the Citizens' Advice for many years and did not appreciate the tone of this year's request. They understood the difficulties of the Bureau but felt the letter was not well written and considered it a threat to not support the parish residents if the Council did not provide a grant of £500.  
**Resolved unanimously to approve a grant of £300 for 2015/16.**  
The Clerk will write to Dr Dungarwalla with confirmation of the grant and its concern regarding her letter.
4. **Parish Council Street Light:**
- 4.1 **To consider renewing CCC energy contract (Min.64/15.1)** – The Clerk provided figures of energy costs and explained that it was easier for the Council to go through the County Council for its energy, as it liaises with Balfour Beatty regarding maintenance too.  
**Resolved unanimously to renew the Parish Council Street Lights Energy Contract with Cambridgeshire County Council for 2015/16.**
- 4.2 **To consider renewing Balfour Beatty maintenance contract** – The contract is for the Parish Council's streetlights in Marshalls Lane, Little Street, Pond Land and School Lane (3). It was agreed to opt for the three-year maintenance option.  
**Resolved unanimously to accept the 3-year term contract with Balfour Beatty from 01/07/15 – 30/06/18.**

5. **To note: *Local Government Pension Scheme Exit Payments For Employers Leaving The Scheme*** – Although not relevant yet, the following Local Pension Scheme clause was brought to the Parish Council's attention for future reference:

**Where an employer ceases in the Fund due to their last active member leaving the scheme, the administering authority can decide to suspend the requirement for the employer to pay an exit payment, if it is likely that the employer will have one or more active members within the specified suspension period. During the period of the suspension notice, the employer would have to continue paying such contributions as the administering authority reasonably requires. If your last active member leaves the scheme, you should contact the Employer Services Team, as soon as possible, to discuss the implications.**

6. **To receive Little Downham Youth Group annual accounts and stats and grant request for autumn term** – Carol Hebbard provided a breakdown of the Parish Council's £500 grant given in May and a basic list of attendance statistics from April 2014 – July 2015. She was unable to forward the accounts because they were still with the Accountant. The Council decided to defer making a decision a grant for the Autumn term and expects to see the accounts at the next meeting. The Clerk will email Carol Hebbard.
7. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - The following items presented for payment were proposed by Cllr LEA Joel and seconded by Cllr MM Oldfield.  
**Resolved unanimously to approve the BACS payments 354 - 363 and a direct debit for the total sum of £5971.91**

#### **74/15 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS**

1. **To consider proposed work on two trees adjacent to Pymoor Recreation Field** – The Clerk reported meeting with Cathy White (ECDC Trees Officer) and a parishioner to look at two Ash trees following concern expressed by the parishioner of falling branches. Cathy confirmed that the trees were okay and it is a common occurrence with Ash trees, but there are some long limbs that could be cut back and some dead and broken branches could be removed. The Clerk will obtain quotes for the next meeting.

#### **75/15 PARISH MATTERS**

1. **Parish Conference 04/11/15 Mandeville Hall, Burwell** – Cllr Oldfield expressed an interest to attend. Cllr Barker informed that Cllr Winters said he would be happy to attend. The Clerk was asked to recommend topics such as *Cambridgeshire Libraries – Community Hubs* and *County Highways issues*, which are considered more relevant to Parish Councils than the proposed health and wellbeing strategy and how the community can meet the needs of its older, vulnerable or isolated members.
2. **Draft Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document Consultation 04/09/15 – 16/10/15** – It was note that this document covers the whole of the county and is too vast and technical for the Parish Council to comment. The Chairman suggested that members view the 94-page document online and make individual comments if they wished.

#### **76/15 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS**

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings:**
- 1.1 **(Mins.58/15.2.1) Downham Feoffees School Trees overhanging Footways** – It was reported that Drew Simpson (Interim Head Teacher) and Stuart Berriman (Chair of Governors) met on 18/09/15 to look at the trees. They will meet with a tree surgeon to discuss the best route forward and be in touch when they have more information of timescale.
2. **To report current matters of concern:**
- 2.1 **Cars parked on Chapel Lane, Lt Downham** – Concern that cars are parking on the side of the narrow road that has been marked on the road as a footway, causing pedestrians to walk in the middle of the road.
- 2.2 **B1411 Lt Downham to Pymoor** – Request grips be cut/redefined in the highway verge.
- 2.3 **Street lights in little Downham** – Some lights are out because Balfour Beatty is still updating the system, the column has not been moved on Church Green to Cob Green (Anna Bailey is also pursuing this) and one Belisha Beacon is still out at the new zebra crossing.

3. **To propose Local Highway Improvement (LHI) project for 2016/17** – It was noted that the edge of the grass in Main Street, Pymoor, is untidy from vehicles parking and driving across it. **Resolved unanimously to submit a bid to request defined parking areas adjacent to the carriageway and grass area outside Nos. 38 – 64 Main Street, Pymoor, and to approve the Parish Council’s 10% contribution, minimum of £1000.**
  
4. **To consider support of winter closure traffic regulation orders on Byways 44 & 45** – It was reported that CCC and local residents were upset and disappointed that 4x4 vehicles have driven recklessly on the above Byways since the temporary closure order ceased at the end of July. They caused damage to the surface, which has ruined the restorative work that was carried out earlier in the year, and has made the Byways very difficult for pedestrians and horse riders to use and enjoy. The Parish Council was asked to support the County Council’s application for a winter seasonal Traffic Regulation Order so the Byways will have the opportunity to restore and not turn into a quagmire. A vote result was: In favour – 4, Against – 2, Abstention – 1. **Resolved to support a Winter Closure Traffic Regulation Order Application by Cambridgeshire County Council on Byways 44 & 45 (October to April).**
  
5. **CCC Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) consultation period to 21/10/15** – It was noted that there was no specific reference to the Downham Parish for the Council to comment on, therefore the Chairman informed that members were welcome to make individual representations if they wished.

**77/15 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 78/15, 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.**

**78/15 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS**

1. **Cemetery – to receive individual comments from members** – Comments were received from the members present, as well as from Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, CE Hall and KO Winters who had provided written copies in their absence. The Cemetery Working Group will review the comments and report back to the Council with a recommendation of proposed action.

**79/15 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION - None**

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.50 pm.

Signed ..... (Chairman) Date .....