

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 19 November 2015 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Councillors present: MM Oldfield, in the chair, and DA Adams-Payne, JW Barker, RS Martin, MAC Seidler, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, JL Waters (7.08pm) and KO Winters. Clerk: Mrs J Wardle

Other attendees: One parishioner (7.08pm)

94/15 **TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllrs CE Hall and LEA Joel, County Cllr P Read and Dist. Cllrs A Bailey and M Bradley.

95/15 **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. **Cllr BL Taylor** declared prejudicial interests in item 100/15.1.3 (Application 15/01234/FUL) because the application relates to his son's home, and 100/15.1.4 (Application 15/01164/FUL) and 100/15.1.5 (Application 15/01264/FUL) because the applicant is a next door neighbour. (Declaration 021-2015).
2. **Cllr GH Taylor** declared prejudicial interests in item 100/15.1.3 (Application 15/01234/FUL) because the application relates to her son's home, and 100/15.1.4 (Application 15/01164/FUL) and 100/15.1.5 (Application 15/01264/FUL) because the applicant is a next door neighbour. (Declaration 022-2015).

96/15 **PUBLIC FORUM** - No comments

97/15 **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS** - No reports

98/15 **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

1. **Resolved** that the minutes of 22 October 2015 were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

99/15 **MATTERS TO REPORT**

1. **(Min. 85/15.1) Little Downham Youth Group** – The Clerk reported she had received a copy of the Youth Group's Accounts via email. Parish Council representatives, Cllrs MM Oldfield and GH Taylor, confirmed that they had been invited to a Youth Group Committee meeting on 23/11/15 at Carol Hebbard's house where she will report on the past year of Youth work, the changes that are happening within the youth world and the future for the Youth club and other projects.
2. **(Min.89/15.2) Circus Tyanna** – Mr Christian was unable to meet for a site visit, as he is in London now. He will contact the Clerk when he is back in Norfolk, around mid February.
3. **Local Nature Reserve water leak** – The Clerk reported receiving a high water bill, which indicated there could be a leak. She will ask the handyman to check the troughs and stand pipe. The water has been turned off for the winter and there are no animals in the meadows.
4. **Lt Downham Recreation Area Gate - request to stay open longer** – The Council's volunteer closes the gate at 5 pm. It is often opened again by footballers at 6 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. A disabled parishioner requests that the gate stays open until 7.30 pm when she, her dog and other dog walkers have left the recreation area. The Clerk will discuss the request with the volunteer, who closes the gate when it gets dark and is not aware of whether the footballers will play or not. Mostly they do, but if they don't, the gate could be left open all night.
5. **Damaged goal post at Lt Downham Recreation Field** – Lt Downham United Football manager reported to the Clerk on 15/11/15 that youths had damaged the crossbar and it was on the ground. The Clerk informed that he had not written to the Parish Council for assistance, so believed that he was arranging the repairs.
6. **Bus shelter cleaning** – The Clerk reported that Mason Hyde (local window cleaner) had cleaned the bus shelter on Ely Road and members were welcome to look and express an opinion. A decision to clean all five of the Council's perspex shelters will be made at 03/12/15 meeting.

100/15 **PLANNING MATTERS**

1. **Planning correspondence -**

- 1.1 **15/01202/FUL** Mr & Mrs A Youngman, 24 Kiln Close, Lt Downham – Single storey extension to rear and garage conversion - **Resolved** that the Parish Council had no concerns.

- 1.2 **15/01260/FUL** Mr S Ball, 23 Apple Tree Court, Lt Downham – Modified proposal of previously approved application 15/00601/FUL for two storey side extension - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**

7.45pm Cllrs BL & GH Taylor left the meeting prior to the following items being discussed.

- 1.3 **15/01234/FUL** Mrs Julie Feltwell, 1 Mount Pleasant Cottages, 68 Main Street, Pymoor – Loft conversion to create annex accommodation, rear ground floor extension and construction of double garage - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**

- 1.4 **15/01164/FUL** C N Seeds, 18 Main Street, Pymoor – To erect steel portal framed building to create boiler room and chip store, plus siting of 4 container units each housing one CHP50 wood gasifier unit - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**

- 1.5 **15/01264/FUL** C N Seeds, 18 Main Street, Pymoor – To erect agricultural portal framed building to use as seed drying area and storage space - **Resolved that the Parish Council had no concerns.**

8.11pm Ross Taylor left the meeting. Cllrs BL & GH Taylor were invited back to the meeting.

For information only:

- 1.6 ECDC: Applications approved: 15/00954/FUL, 15/00780/FUL

10/1/15 FINANCE

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs DA Adams-Payne and JW Barker.
2. **To approve funding of a new council computer and printing equipment in 2014/15** – The Council's current computer was purchased in 2009 and runs on Windows XP, which Microsoft stopped supporting with security updates in April 2014. The current printer/scanner/copier was purchased in 2010 and has colour printing problems, which is not economical to repair. The Clerk provided examples and costs of new computers. It was proposed by Cllr DA Adams-Payne and seconded by Cllr JL Waters to award the Clerk a budget to purchase the items she needs. **Resolved unanimously to approve a budget of £1000 (from Asset Replacement) for the Clerk to purchase a new computer, printer/scanner/copier and office software for the Clerk's office.**
3. **To review current financial status 2015/16 & budget proposals 2016/17** - A Copy of the 2015/16 budget update and 2016/17 proposals, that was issued to members with their agenda, was reviewed. It was noted that the Conservation Group's budget had exceeded its funding by £66 due to the Council awarding a grant of £500 this year, as well as the usual funding of its meeting room hire. It was agreed to formally increase this funding to £600 because the volunteers work hard for and on behalf of the Parish Council to maintain parish council land, which the Council appreciates. **Resolved unanimously to increase the budget for the Downham Parish Conservation Group from £500 to £600 in 2014/15 and the 2016/17 proposals.**

For the purpose of Government controls, parish precepts count as part of the District Council's figures. ECDC requested an estimate of the Council's Precept by 04/12/15 in preparation of setting its own budget for 2016/17. It was proposed by Cllr JL Waters and seconded by Cllr KO Winters that the Parish Council's estimated Precept should be an increase of 1.5% on the 2015/16 Precept. The Parish Council would formally set its Precept at the December meeting. **Resolved unanimously to approve an estimated Precept of £77,560.00 for 2016/17.**

4. **Cruse Bereavement – grant request** – The Council considered the request in relation to the support it provides to the parish. Following discussion on this and previous organisation requests, it was proposed by Cllr JL Waters and seconded by Cllr KO Winters not to give a grant on this occasion. **Resolved unanimously not to approve a grant to Cruse Bereavement on this occasion.**
5. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - The following items presented for payment were proposed by Cllr DA Adams-Payne and Cllr JW Barker. **Resolved unanimously to approve BACS payments 376 - 386 and direct debits for the total sum of £7411.05.**

102/15 **COUNCIL MATTERS**

1. **To review and approve updated Pension Discretions Policy** - In accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme, the Pensions Discretions Policy was reviewed and updated. It was proposed by Cllr DA Adams-Payne and seconded by Cllr MAC Seidler to approve the revised Pension Discretions Policy. **A recorded vote result was as follows: In favour (8) - Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, JW Barker, MM Oldfield, RS Martin, MAC Seidler, BL Taylor, GH Taylor and JL Waters, Against (1) - Cllr KO Winters.**

Resolved to approve the revised Little Downham Parish Council Pensions Discretions Policy.

A copy of the approved policy will be sent to Cambridgeshire and Northampton LGSS.

103/15 **PARISH LAND AND ASSETS**

1. **To consider installation of dog bin on Lawn Lane opposite the cemetery** – Balfour Beatty removed the previous dog bin when relocating the streetlight to the other side of the road. The obsolete bin was given to the Conservation Group to be installed down West Fen Drove. It was proposed by Cllr DA Adams-Payne and seconded by Cllr JL Waters to purchase a larger bin (like in Eagles Lane) for the recreation area and relocate the smaller one on Lawn Lane. **A recorded vote result was as follows: In favour (8) - Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, JW Barker, MM Oldfield, RS Martin, MAC Seidler, BL Taylor, GH Taylor and JL Waters, Against (1) - Cllr KO Winters.**

Resolved to approve the purchase of a dog bin (WDB/LU) from Wybone Ltd with appropriate fixings and a new post and fixings for the smaller dog bin to be installed on Lawn Lane.

104/15 **PARISH MATTERS**

1. **Letter – Isle of Ely Arts Festival – requesting art ideas to be held in the parish** – The council had no suggestions at present but would pass the letter on to the Village Hall Committee.

105/15 **HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS**

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings:**
 - 1.1 **(Min.90/15.2.2) Chapel lane, Lt Downham** – PCSO Jonathan Hall informed that he is covering Downham Villages Ward again. He has visited the owner of the vehicles and informed him he could not park on the side of the road like he does. The cars have been removed and CCC Highways has recently re-painted the white line.
 - 1.2 **(Min.90/15.2.2) Ely Road, Lt Downham** – The issue of cars parking on the pavement outside No. 63B has been reported to the police but there has been no report back yet.
 - 1.3 **(Min.90/15.1.3) Street Lights** – The column on Church Green has finally been re-located by Balfour Beatty to the opposite side of the road on Cub Green.
 - 1.4 **(Min.90/15.2.1) Lawn Lane Hedge located between No. 34 and the junction with California** – The CCC highways officer has looked at the hedge and does not consider there to be a visibility issue to the right for vehicle exiting the driveway.
2. **To report current matters of concern:**
 - 2.1 **Oxlode, Adventurers Drove, Pymoor** – Cracks in the road need attention.
 - 2.2 **Main Street Zebra Crossing, Lt Downham** – The Belisha Beacon is still out.
 - 2.3 **Downham Feoffees school Trees overhanging footways** – The trees are still a concern of parents and Busy Fingers Pre School. The Clerk will email the school for an update.
 - 2.4 **B1411 Ely Road** – Clumps of mud from the verge trimming was left on the road and path by Highways contractors.

106/15 **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 107/15, 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.

107/15 **HUMAN RESOURCES**

1. **To consider Handyman's annual staff appraisal** - Mr Mitchell's appraisal was held on 26/10/15. The Appraisal Officer, Cllr M Oldfield, read her report to the Council. There was no change recommended to Mr Mitchell's conditions of employment, hours of work, job description, leave entitlement and pension provision. He attended a playground check training session and no further training required at present. Cllr Oldfield concluded that Mr Mitchell worked well in the parish and was always willing to help keep the parish areas clean and tidy. Following a

discussion on his salary that had not increase in two years, it was proposed by Cllr JL Waters and seconded by Cllr KO Winters to increase to £11 per hour.

Resolved unanimously to approve Mr Mitchell's Staff Appraisal and increase his salary to £11 per hour with effect from 1st December 2015.

2. **To consider Book Café Manager's annual staff appraisal** - Mrs Hayter-Smith's appraisal was held on 28/10/15. The Appraisal Officer, Cllr M Oldfield, read her report to the Council. There was no change recommended to Mrs Hayter-Smith's conditions of employment, hours of work, job description, annual leave entitlement, salary and pension provision. She is regularly updated on County Library plans and development and attends meetings as required. Cllr Oldfield concluded that Mrs Hayter-Smith continues to work well with all the volunteers and encourage new ones to join. Her salary is based on the National Minimum Wage and is increased annually. **Resolved unanimously to approve Mrs Hayter-Smith's Staff Appraisal.**

9.10pm 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 held on 26/10/15. The Appraisal Officer, Cllr M Oldfield, read her report to the Council. There was no change recommended to Mrs Wardle's conditions of employment, hours of work, job description, leave entitlement and pension provision. Mrs Wardle had attended various training sessions during the year. She has responsibilities as line manager to the Handyman and Book Café Manager. In her conclusion, the Chairman stated that Mrs Wardle continues to work hard for the Parish Council, keeping updated with relevant information and passing this to the Parish Council in a timely manner. It was proposed by Cllr DA Adams-Payne and seconded by Cllr MAC Seidler to increase the Clerk's salary in accordance with her contract and note it will be the maximum increase as per the LC2 profile of the National Salary Award Scale. **Resolved unanimously to approve the Clerk's Staff Appraisal and incremental salary increase from LC2/37 to LC2/38 with effect from 1st April 2015.**

9.13pm The Clerk was invited back to the meeting.

108/15 PARISH LAND AND ASSETS

1. **Cemetery update** – In her absence, the Chairman read a report from Cllr Joel informing of the latest cemetery working group meeting and its current enquiries. All members of the working group agreed to meet on 15/10/15 to review the Councillors' preferences and to obtain clear information of what the Council's options were. Various lines of enquiry were agreed. It was noted that the members that attended the meeting were Cllrs MM Oldfield, DA Adams-Payne and LEA Joel. Cllr KO Winters did not attend, nor give apologies before or after the meeting.

The Chairman informed the Council that a formal complaint had been received today from Mr & Mrs BL Taylor against the Cemetery Working Group (CWG) and its recent correspondence to them. The Chairman informed that enquiries by the CWG would cease until the complaint issue is resolved.

The Clerk informed the Council that the complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's adopted Complaints Procedure (Sept 2012). She proceeded to distribute sealed envelopes to the CWG members present (Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, MM Oldfield and KO Winters), and confirmed that Cllr Joel's letter will be hand delivered after the meeting. The envelopes contained a copy of the formal complaint from Mr & Mrs Taylor and a covering letter from the Clerk instructing the CWG that it must provide a response to the Clerk within five (5) working days. When received, the response will be copied and sent to Mr & Mrs Taylor, who will be given 48 hours to inform the Clerk if they are satisfied. If they are not, the council will be required to form a Complaints Committee consisting of three independent Parish Councillors and two additional Councillors from other Parish Councils. All members of the council were issued with a copy of the Council's Complaints Procedure. It was noted that in order to ensure complete independence of the issue for councillors not involved and who could be eligible to be appointed on the Complaints Committee, the letter of complaint was not read to the meeting.

109/15 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION - None

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.25 pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date