# MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall, Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 14 January 2016 commencing at 7.00pm.

Councillors present: MM Oldfield, in the chair, and DA Adams-Payne, JW Barker, CE Hall, LEA Joel, RS Martin (7.02pm), MAC Seidler, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, JL Waters and KO Winters. Clerk: Mrs J Wardle

Other attendees: Dist. Cllr A Bailey

### 125/15 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Dist. Cllr M Bradley.

#### TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 126/15

- Cllr DA Adams-Payne declared a personal interest in item 134/15 (Lt Downham Fete 1. Committee) because she is a member of the Fete Committee and a prejudicial interest in item 137/15.1 (To appoint Complaints Committee) because she is a member of the Cemetery Working Group and has a complaint made against her. (Declaration 001-2016).
- Cllr LEA Joel declared a prejudicial interest in item 137/15.1 (To appoint Complaints Committee) 2. because she is a member of the Cemetery Working Group. (Declaration 002-2016).
- 3. Clir MM Oldfield declared a personal interest in item 134/15 (Lt Downham Fete Committee) because she is a member of the Fete Committee and a prejudicial interest in item 137/15.1 (To appoint Complaints Committee) because she is a member of the Cemetery Working Group. (Declaration 003-2016).
- 4. Clir BL Taylor declared a prejudicial interest in item 137/15.1 (To appoint Complaints Committee) because he is a complainant. (Declaration 004-2016).
- 5. Cllr GH Taylor declared a prejudicial interest in item 137/15.1 (To appoint Complaints Committee) because she is a complainant. (Declaration 005-2016).
- 6. Cllr Winters was asked if he would declare an interest in item 137/15.1, as he is a member of the Cemetery Working Group and a complainant. He refused to declare an interest.
- 7. Cllr KO Winters – Prejudicial Declaration 006-2016 (see item prior to 129/15)
- Cllr JW Barker Prejudicial Declaration 007-2016 (see item 137/15)

#### **PUBLIC FORUM** - No comments 127/15

#### **DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS** 128/15

Cllr Bailey expressed sadness that Cllr Philip Read died before Christmas. Cllr Bailey reported 1. on County issues. CCC will have a 1.99% increase on the CCC element of the Council Tax; Conservative County Councillors believe there are still opportunities to make further back office efficiency savings and are pushing officers to rationalise the way they work; in a bid to make £31M cuts in the Children, Families and Adult directorate, the Transforming Lives project will allow social workers to use their professional judgement and skill to help people to live more independently and choose the right services and support for them, which is often at a reduced cost to the public purse. The Ely Bypass is still on track for delivery by the end of 2017. Due to Cllr Read's death, a by-election for the Sutton Division, which includes Downham Villages, will be held on 18 February 2016.

Cllr Bailey reported that ECDC will not increase its element of Council Tax in 2016/17, as promised in the election last May; ECDC has a balanced budget until 2018; work has begun on the cinema development and it is on track for opening in the summer of 2016; ECDC Full Council recently voted to start the East Cambs Trading Company - the first project is development of housing in Barton Road, Ely, which will help to lower the amount of borrowing required to fund the Leisure Centre development; the Boundary Commission has largely supported the ECDC submission, but has not changed the proposal of Littleport West as a new two councillor Division. She also supported the closure of the Droves notice put out by CCC for Byways 44, 45 & 49.

Lastly, Cllr Bailey recommended that the Parish Council considers Community Land Trust, which would enable the Parish to have control of a development in the parish and who lives there. The land is held in perpetuity and can help to push away speculative developers. The Council agreed to arrange a public meeting for a presentation on Community Land Trust. Cllr Bailey will arrange for someone to contact the Clerk.

- 7.30pm Dist. Cllr A Bailey was thanked for her report and left the meeting.
- 7.31pm **Cllr KO Winters** declared a prejudicial interest in item 137/15.1 (To appoint Complaints Committee) because he is on the Cemetery Working Group. (Declaration 006-2016).

## 129/15 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

 Resolved that the minutes of 3 December 2015 were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

# 130/15 MATTERS TO REPORT

- 1. **(Min.115/15.5) Water leak** The problem was solved following the replacement of ball valves and floats and the adjustment of the water level regulator in the troughs.
- 2. (Min.55/15.3) Friends of Downham Feoffees School Grant request towards whole school theatre trip A letter of thanks was received and read at the meeting stating that all the children had a great time.
- 3. (Min.115/15.3) Dog bins installed LD Rec and Lawn Lane.
- 4. (Min.89/15.3) Lt Downham Recreation Area Zipwire Project The Clerk reported that she had submitted an Expression of Interest on 10/12/15 to Tesco Community Grant Scheme instead of applying to Amey Cespa, which could be considered for funding of the Pavilion Refurbishment. She conducted a survey with the Downham Feoffees schoolchildren asking if they would like a new Slide, Timber Trail or Zipwire,. An overwhelming majority of 83% chose the Zipwire. Confirmation is awaited of whether the project has been shortlisted. If successful, LDPC will be one of three projects to receive an £8000, £10,000 or £12,000 grant. The decision will be made by Tesco Ely shoppers, who will choose which projects receive the specified funding.
- **5. (Min.99/15.1) Mason Hyde bus shelter cleaning** Mason informed that he would clean the shelters on 05/01/16. He was asked to include the Youth Shelter in the recreation area.
- **6. (Min.101/15.2) Council office computer and printer** The Clerk reported spending £859 ex. VAT for the purchase of a computer, printer, MS Office software (one lifetime licence), 3-years warranties of service support available 24/7 on the computer and printer and including a charge for PC World to set up the computer ready for immediate use. Included was free one year use of PC World Cloud to store or back up documents. The Clerk will research Cloud before use.
- 7. Cartshed Vandalism It was reported that the Cartshed was subject to vandalism and graffiti around the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of January. The Conservation Group reported it to the Police. Due to public involvement and comments on social media, four youths were named as being involved and some had admitted the anti social behaviour. The Council had no objections to PCSO Jonathan Hall completing a Guardian Awareness Programme (GAP) Form on this occasion, which would be held on record and raised if the youths were identified in another crime or incident.
- 8. New Audit Regime 2017/18 A new Audit Regime is to come into effect from April 2017 following the Government's decision to remove the Audit Commission in April 2015. The Council has until 31 January to decide if it wishes to opt out of a Sector Led Body procuring audit services, similar to what the Audit Commission procured. It was agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting on 28/01/16 to formally discuss the details and make a decision that will be held for the next five years.
- 9. ECDC Parish Conference/Workshop event 18/02/16 re East Cambs New Local Plan Parish Council representatives are invited to be involved and contribute towards the new Local Plan. Cllrs LEA Joel and KO Winters volunteered to attend the 2pm session because a Parish Council meeting was in the evening. The Clerk will email the names to Richard Kay, ECDC Strategic Planning Manager.

# 131/15 PLANNING MATTERS

- 1. Planning correspondence -
- 1.1 15/01542/FUL Mr John Eagle, 101 Main Street, Little Downham Construction of a timber shed to east of house Resolved Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

1.2 16/00003/HRN Mr Clive Spencer, Oak Farm, West Fen Road, Ely – H1 – 290 meter of hedgerow to be removed (to be replanted with new hedge)
 (Site location is situated in Witchford Parish but close to Lt Downham parish boundary) – Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council made no comments regarding this application.

## 1.3 For information only:

ECDC: Applications approved: 15/01149/FUL, 15/01164/FUL, 15/01202/FUL, 15/01234/FUL, 15/01260/FUL, 15/01264/FUL,

## 132/15 FINANCE

- 1. Monthly Internal Audit was carried out by Cllrs MM Oldfield and JL Waters.
- 2. To review Little Downham Youth Group Funding (Min.115/15.1) The Council agreed it did not want to fund the payment of employees. It noted that the Youth Group had £1398.57 in unrestricted funds and considered it had enough funds to run the new drama group for six months without outside funding. The Council would be happy to review the request later in the year.

Resolved unanimously not to give a grant to the Little Downham Youth Group on this occasion because its Accounts show it holds sufficient unrestricted funds for the new Drama Group, however, the Council would be willing to review the request in six months time on receipt of attendance and finance figures.

- To approve bills and other items for payment The following items presented for payment were proposed by Cllr MM Oldfield and Cllr JL Waters.
   Resolved unanimously to approve BACS payments 395 406 and direct debits for the total sum of £5371.85.
- 3.1 The Clerk reported that the new oak seats had been delivered, the invoice had not been received yet and a brass plaque is to be ordered for the seat that Kenny and Harpal Atwal are sponsoring.

  Resolved that the Clerk is authorised to arrange payment of the invoice from MJ Elliott for the three oak seats @ £1161.00 when received and to order the brass plaque when details on the plaque have been confirmed with Mr & Mrs Atwal.

## 133/15 COUNCIL MATTERS

To review and approve revised Pension Discretions Policy (Min.102/15.1) – CCC Pensions Team reviewed the revised Pensions Discretions Policy sent to LGSS and suggested the rewording of four items. It was proposed by Cllr DA Adams-Payne and seconded by Cllr CE Hall that the suggested re-wording be approved and the revised Pension Discretions Policy amended accordingly. A recorded vote result was as follows: In favour (10) - Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, JW Barker, CE Hall, LEA Joel, MM Oldfield, RS Martin, MAC Seidler, BL Taylor, GH Taylor and JL Waters, Abstention (1) - Cllr KO Winters. The Clerk was instructed to minute that Cllr Winters had chosen to abstain because he didn't understand it or want to understand it and he was abstaining because he hadn't abstained for a long time.

Resolved to approve the re-wording of four points as recommended by LGSS Pensions Team and amend the Little Downham Parish Council Pensions Discretions Policy accordingly.

# 134/15 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS

- 1. Lt Downham Fete Committee request permission to hold a Fete on Saturday, 04/06/16 in Lt Downham Recreation Area Request approved unanimously.
- 2. To review Grazing Agreements for Myles Meadow and Holts Meadow 2016 season Grazing Agreements were reviewed and unanimously approved. The Clerk informed that invites for tender were on notice boards and she will write to the previous tenants.

## 135/15 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

- 1. Replies re matters reported from previous meetings No replies received
- 2. To report current matters of concern:
- **2.1 Main Street Zebra Crossing** The Belesha Beacon is still not lit opposite the school. The Clerk will contact CCC Street lighting again.
- **2.2** Eagles Lane, Lt Downham Streetlight out outside No. 1.
- **2.3** Fourth Drove, Lt Downham The drove is messy, ask CCC Highways if any work is planned.

#### **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS** 136/15

- It is hereby resolved in accordance with Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to 8.37pm 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 137/15, 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.
- Having previously declared prejudicial interests, Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, MM Oldfield, LEA Joel, BL Taylor, GH Taylor and KO Winters left the meeting prior to the next item being discussed.

#### 137/15 **COUNCIL MATTERS**

As a result of the Parish Council Chairman and Vice Chairman leaving the meeting, it was proposed by Cllr CE Hall, seconded by Cllr JL Waters and agreed unanimously that Cllr MAC Seidler be appointed as Chairman for the next item.

The Clerk informed the remaining members that a further two complaints had been received since the last meeting making a total of four complaints for the Complaints Committee to consider. She read the basic nature of each complaint.

- Cllr Waters asked if Cllr Barker should also declare a prejudicial interest in item 137/15.1 8.42pm because he was brother-in-law to Cllr Winters, who is involved in three of the four complaints that the appointed Complaints Committee is due to consider.
- 8.46pm Clir JW Barker declared a prejudicial interest in item 137/15.1 (To appoint Complaints Committee) because he is brother-in-law to Cllr Winters who has a complaint made against him and is on the Cemetery Working Group (Declaration 007-2016). Cllr Barker left the meeting.
  - 1. To appoint Complaints Committee to consider four formal complaints received - The members discussed who would be on the committee and who to invite as independent people in accordance with the Parish Council's Complaints Handling Procedure. Resolved unanimously that Parish Councillors CE Hall, MAC Seidler and JL Waters be appointed on the Little Downham Parish Council Complaints Committee, that Cllr MAC Seidler be appointed as Chairman of the Committee and the Clerk be instructed to invite

The reasons that Mr Allen and Mr Jellicoe were selected were because they are longstanding Councillors with years of experience and knowledge of the Parish Council Code of Conduct to be able to consider all complaints impartially. The Clerk will arrange a mutually convenient date and venue for the Complaints Committee meeting to be held.

8.57pm The meeting was re-opened to the public and Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, JW Barker, MM Oldfield, LEA Joel, BL Taylor, GH Taylor and KO Winters were invited to return to the meeting.

Mr Ian Allen and Mr George Jellicoe to be the two Independent People.

### **REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION - None** 138/15

There being no further business, the meeting was clo	osed at 9.00 pm.	
Signed	(Chairman)	Date