

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 15 December 2016 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Councillors present: JL Waters, in the chair, and JW Barker, CE Hall, RS Martin, MM Oldfield (7.05pm),
G Ord, BL Taylor, GH Taylor and KO Winters. **Clerk:** Mrs J Wardle

Other attendees: County Cllr L Dupre, Dist Cllr M Bradley.

113/16 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllrs LEA Joel and MAC Seidler.

114/16 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. **Cllr CE Hall** declared a personal interest in item 119/16.1.3 (Application 16/01583/LBC) because she is a member of the Village Hall Committee (Declaration 039-2016).
2. **Cllr RS Martin** declared interests in the following items (Declaration 040-2016):
 - 2.1 119/16.1.3 (Application 16/01583/LBC) because he is a Trustee of the Village Hall Committee;
 - 2.2 119/16.1.4 (Application 16/01665/FUL) because he has an interest in adjoining land;
 - 2.3 119/16.1.8 (Application 16/01692/FUL) because he owns adjoining land.
3. **Cllr JL Waters** declared a personal interest in item 119/16.1.3 (Application 16/01583/LBC) because she is a member of the Village Hall Committee (Declaration 041-2016).

Late declarations:

4. Declaration made prior to item 119/16.1.8 - **Cllr MM Oldfield** declared a personal interest in item 119/16.1.8 (Application 16/01692/FUL) because her sister lives next door at No. 45 (Declaration 042-2016).

115/16 PUBLIC FORUM – No comments

7.05pm Cllr Oldfield arrived and apologised for being late.

116/16 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

1. County Cllr Dupre reported that CCC had agreed to reinstate last year's winter gritting routes and also the street lights that had been switched off at night in towns and large parishes. The Government had published draft legislation to set up the additional Devolution tier of government and it was formally noted that the Mayor will be elected on 04/05/17, on the same day as the County Council elections. The County Council's Transportation Strategy for East Cambridgeshire was to be considered by the Economy & Environment Committee on 16/12/16. It included a list of major schemes planned in the district. East Cambs Connect is a new 'flexible minibuss service' and, subject to approval from the Traffic Commissioner, will be launched soon. The intention is that four minibusses will operate from 7:00am to 7:00pm Monday to Friday, taking pre-booked passengers between any two points in East Cambridgeshire for a fixed fare of £4 single or £8 return. Holders of concessionary bus passes will be able to use the service for half the standard fare and the council has also arranged with the Ely and Littleport Timebanks that Timebank credits would be usable as currency for East Cambs Connect journeys. The Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee met on 07/12/16 to consider an update to Network Rail's proposals for level crossings in the county. It proposed to support the changes at Coffue Drove but to object to the proposals for Furlong Drove. The Health Committee met to start scrutinising the local NHS Sustainability & Transformation Plan. The Plan lays out a '10 point plan' for change and the Health Committee will be asking the Clinical Commissioning Group about the deliverability of its proposals and its analysis of the risks. The County Council has carried out a series of public consultations on its budget for 2017/18 and needs to identify £96.8m in savings in the next five years. £54.9m has been identified to date. Dates of Lorna's Meet Your Councillor surgeries are 11/01/17 and 10/02/17 [NB - February date is now 03/02/17].
2. Dist. Cllr Bradley reported on a couple of planning applications that had been called in. He apologised to anyone that is having problems viewing documents on the ECDC website. ECDC hopes the problem will be solved soon.

7.15pm County Cllr Dupre and Dist. Cllr Bradley were thanked for their reports. County Cllr Dupre left.

117/16 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. **Resolved unanimously that the minutes of 24 November 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

118/16 MATTERS TO REPORT

1. **(Min.106/16) East Cambs Local Plan suggested development sites** – ECDC confirmed that the site to the rear of Cannon Street was the preferred allocated site for development in Little Downham and the site north of Straight Furlong was the preferred allocated site for development in Pymoor. It was noted that the allocated site to the east of B1411 from the A10 to The Balk had not been chosen as a preferred site for Ely, further information was available on the ECDC website and a 6-week public consultation is due to be held in January/February 2017.
2. **(Min.108/16.7) Lt Downham Recreation Area Electricity contract** – The EDF electricity contract (Tariff - Fixed for Business 65 to Dec 18) had been renewed and will expire December 2018. The direct debit payments will be £39 per month. A credit balance of £276.22, that should have been refunded automatically, had been refunded to the Council.

119/16 PLANNING MATTERS

1. **Planning correspondence -**

- 1.1 **16/01253/FUL** Mr & Mrs Brian Peters, 8 Fourth Drove, Lt Downham – New 4 bed dwelling.
Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.
- 1.2 **16/01385/FUL** Mr F Gilbert, Site to south of 37 – 39 cannon Street, Lt Downham – Proposed 2no four bed dwellings – plots 1 & 2. A vote to recommend outright refusal for the reasons shown below was recorded as follows: In favour - (4) Cllrs CE Hall, G Ord, MM Oldfield, JL Waters; Against (4): Cllrs JW Barker, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, KO Winters; Abstentions (1): Cllr RS Martin. As a result of the votes being equal, in accordance with Council Standing Orders Clause 1r, the Chairman used her casting vote and voted in favour of recommending outright refusal.
Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had concerns regarding this application and recommended outright refusal for the following reasons:
 1. **Narrow Access** – The access drive is considered too narrow for the expected increase of vehicles associated with two new 4-bed dwellings on the site, which would be in addition to vehicle movements of the existing 4-bed dwelling, the ‘pick your own fruit’ farm and the fishing lakes.
 2. **Back land development** – The proposed development would set a precedent for further development on the site.
 3. **Outside the development envelope** – The proposed development is situated outside the development envelope and would form a second tier of dwellings to the south, and rear, of properties on Cannon Street.
 4. **Sewerage Concerns** –The application form states that the two 4-bed dwellings will be connected to the mains sewer, yet the development site is situated considerably lower than Cannon Street.**Additional comment**
 5. **The Parish Council considered its comments following receipt of objections and concerns by local residents.**

7.45pm Dist Cllr Bradley left the meeting.

- 1.3 **16/01583/LBC** Mr Graham Hayter-Smith, Lt Downham Village Centre, Main Street, Lt Downham – To fit air to water heating units on rear of the flat roof over the ladies toilets.
Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.
- 1.4 **16/01665/FUL** Mr & Mrs Tony McEnaney, Beald House, California, Lt Downham – Proposed garage/store/study – **Resolved** - Little Downham Parish Council had concerns regarding this application and recommended outright refusal for the following reasons.
 1. **Site planning history** – Following planning approval in 2000 for a replacement dwelling and garage on this site, permission was granted in 2001 to adapt the roof space of the garage to accommodate a one-bedroom flat for holiday letting. Planning application 16/00483/FUL was recently approved for the change of use from holiday let to permanent residential dwelling of the one-bedroom flat above the garage (retrospective). The Council has concerns that the proposed garage/store/study would in time also be inappropriately converted to permanent residential dwelling.
 2. **Backland development and overdevelopment of the site** – The new garage/store/study is proposed to be built half within the northern boundary of the residential area behind the existing garage and half beyond the development line in an adjacent paddock. Approval of the application would result in a change of use of part of the paddock.

For information only:

- 1.5 ECDC - Applications approved: 16/01346/PDR, 16/00786/FUL,
- 1.6 ECDC - Applications refused: 16/01214/OUT
- 1.7 ECDC – Applications withdrawn: 16/00262/FUL

Prior to the next item being discussed, Cllr MM Oldfield declared a personal interest in the application because her sister lives next door (Declaration 042-2016).

Addendum item:

- 1.8 **16/01692/FUL** Mr & Mrs Andy Meek, 43 Ely Road, Lt Downham – Rear extension.
Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

120/16 **FINANCE**

- 1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs JW Barker and BL Taylor.
- 2. **To review updated budget proposals 2017/18 (Min.108/16.2)** – The updated budget document was issued to all members with their agenda. The budget items deferred from the last meeting were resolved as follows:
 - 2.1 **To consider the purchase of a mower for grass cutting by the handyman (Min.108/16.3)**
– After discussing the costs to purchase a mower, insurance and maintenance, storage facilities, increase of handyman's hours and salary and possibility of pension auto-enrolment, the Council decided it was more cost effective to continue with the current grass cutting arrangements.
RESOLVED unanimously not to purchase a Parish Council mower for grass cutting.
 - 2.2 **To consider the provision of a contract mobile phone for the handyman (Min.108/16.4)**
– An email from the handyman was read to the Council. The handyman stated that he would supply phone cover until the beginning of April 2017, he was happy to carry on using his own phone, and, knowing the Council had set a cap of £60 per year, he would submit a pay as you go voucher each month with effect from April 2017.
RESOLVED unanimously not to purchase a contract mobile phone for the handyman, but to accept submissions for reimbursements of a £5.00 pay as you go voucher monthly for the handyman's own mobile phone.
 - 2.3 **Handyman's salary increase review (Min.99/16.2)** – In considering the handyman's salary, the Council noted that it was last increased with effect from 01/12/2015 by 4.8%. Knowing that the National Joint Council (SLCC & NALC) had agreed a National Pay increase of only 1% per annum for April 2016-2018, the Council felt it was not justifiable to increase the salary this year.
RESOLVED unanimously not to increase the handyman's salary on this occasion.
- 3. **To set Precept for 2017/18** – It was proposed by Cllr MM Oldfield and seconded by Cllr CE Hall and agreed unanimously to set the 2017/18 Precept at £78,724.00, which is an increase of 1.5% on the current precept. It was anticipated that the Band D Council Tax rate will be less than last year due to an increase of dwellings in the parish.
Resolved unanimously to set the Precept at £78,724.00 for 2017/18 financial year.
- 4. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - It was proposed by Cllr JW Barker and seconded by Cllr BL Taylor.
Resolved unanimously to approve BACS payments 529 – 542 and Direct Debit for the total sum of £5336.94.

121/16 **PARISH LAND AND ASSETS**

- 1. **Lt Downham Local Nature Reserve and Community Orchard – to consider request to plant a tree and inter ashes** - The Conservation Group discussed the matter at its meeting on 23/11/16 and decided in favour by a majority vote of planting donated memorial trees but was against the interment or scattering of ashes. The Council was asked to ratify the decision for future guidance.
RESOLVED unanimously to approve the planting of donated memorial trees in the Local Nature Reserve and Community Orchard when liaised with the Conservation Group, but not to approve the interment or scattering of ashes.
- 2. **Lt Downham Conservation Group – Ditch cleaning along Pingle Wood southern boundary**
– The Council considered a quote from Freeman Plant Hire Ltd requested by Keith Norton. Cllr Barker reported that it had been suggested to ask the Community Payback team to clean out

the dike and the Conservation Group would cut away some bushes for access. The Clerk was instructed to refer back to the Conservation Group to ask how much the proposed work is needed and, if so, how soon it should be done. The matter was deferred to the next meeting.

3. **To consider a formal opening of the Zipwire (Min.93/16.1)** – It was decided it was too late to hold a formal opening of the Zipwire unless requested by Groundworks or Tesco Bags of Help.

122/16 COUNCIL MATTERS

1. **East Cambs Parish Council Conference 12pm on 3 February 2017** – Cllrs JL Waters, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, KO Winters and the Clerk expressed an interest to attend.

8.40pm Cllr KO Winters left the meeting. 8.45pm Cllr Winters returned.

122/16 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings:**
 - 1.1 **Trees on Straight Furlong, Pymoor** – A resident of Straight Furlong had contacted ECDC, CCC and the Clerk, to report a dead Ash tree outside of their property on the highway verge and request permission to cut it down. The Parish Council had no objection to the removal of the dead tree on the proviso that a new tree is planted nearby. The Clerk will reply to the parishioner.
 - 1.2 **CCC Local Highway Improvement bid 2017/18** – The Clerk reported that following consultation with CCC an application to improve Seven Sisters was not accepted due to costs. In liaison with the Chairman, an application had been submitted to reduce the speed limit on Main St, Pymoor.
2. **To report current matters of concern:**
 - 2.1 **Adventurers Drove, Oxloade** – The condition of the road is bad and very uneven.
 - 2.2 **Main Street, Lt Downham** – A drain appears to have dropped outside the Fish and Chip shop. A drain over on the side of the kerb is missing near No. 39.

3. **CCC HGV Covenant – to consider use of the document in Little Downham Parish** – Following concerns expressed by parishioners regarding the impact that large vehicles have in the parish, the Council considered a document CCC had issued and adapted for parishes to use to agree certain conditions with local farmers and hauliers. It was proposed by Cllr MM Oldfield, seconded by Cllr GH Taylor to initially contact the following local companies: Chambers, Lees, Corkers Crisps, Buffaload, Turners, Mick George, Purple Skips. A recorded vote was requested and the result was as follows: In favour (9) JW Barker, CE Hall, RS Martin, MM Oldfield, G Ord, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, JL Waters, KO Winters. Against (0). The decision was unanimous.

123/16 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

9.09pm **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 124/16, 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.**

124/16 PARISH LAND AND ASSETS

1. **New Cemetery land update (Min.51/16)** – The Clerk reported that she had spoken with landowners who were be willing to sell potential cemetery land to the Council. In liaison with the Chairman, emails were subsequently sent to various authorities and organisations to seek pre-planning advice, information or concerns that they might have in relation to a potential burial land application. The Clerk issued members present at the meeting with a copy of the email replies. In conclusion, there were no objections; however, it was noted that comments could be subject to change in formal responses of a planning application. It was decided to request formal pre-application planning advice from ECDC.
RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to submit a Pre-application Planning Advice Request with the Local Planning Authority (ECDC).

125/16 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION - None

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.10 pm.
Members were invited to stay for mince pies, mulled wine and chocolate truffles provided by the Chairman and the Clerk.

Signed (Chairman) Date