

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 19 January 2017 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Councillors present: JL Waters, in the chair, and JW Barker, CE Hall, LEA Joel, RS Martin, MAC Seidler, BL Taylor, GH Taylor and KO Winters. **Clerk:** Mrs J Wardle

Other attendees: Dist Cllr A Bailey and County Cllr L Dupre.

126/16 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllrs MM Oldfield and G Ord.

127/16 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. **Cllr BL Taylor** declared the following interest (Declaration 001-2017).
Cllr GH Taylor declared the following interest (Declaration 002-2017).
1.1 Pecuniary interest in item 132/16.1.1 (Application 16/00885/RMA) because they are the applicants.

128/16 PUBLIC FORUM – No comments

129/16 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

1. County Cllr Dupre reported that all winter gritting routes were now operational with a full complement of drivers. Following a fatal crash on the A142 between Block Fen and Mepal before Christmas, CCC said it will be working with the road safety charity iRAP (International Road Assessment Programme) to conduct a technical assessment of the A142 between Chatteris and Ely, and develop proposal for implementation, subject to consultation and funding. The CCC Transportation Strategy for East Cambridgeshire was considered and approved by CCC Economy & Environment Committee on 16/12/16, with the exception that officers will consult with councillors regarding further work to the strategy in relation to the impacts of traffic noise, air pollution and vibration. On 12/01/17, CCC's Health Committee received a report on health outcomes in the Cambridgeshire districts, which demonstrated that health inequalities are closely related to income deprivation and to educational attainment, which itself is related to family circumstances. The Cambridgeshire districts are all very different from each other, though barriers to housing are very similar in extent across all districts while being different in their causes. Meet your councillors surgery dates in the Book Café are 03/02/17 & 06/03/17.
2. Dist. Cllr Bailey reported that ECDC did have a balanced budget for 3 years, but now for only 2 years because the Chancellor has changed the bonus from grant schemes, whereby ECDC received 80% and CCC received 20%, to 100% going to CCC for adult social care. ECDC's recycling target of 60% was achieved in late 2016 and in that quarter was the highest in Cambridgeshire. The Waste Collection contract is due for renewal and there are a couple of options being considered, which include extending the current contract with Veolia by one year or the Trading Company taking on the service and offering services to neighbouring districts. The new housing on Barton Road can go ahead, as the Archaeological digs only found minor historic items, such as a plate. The development will generate £1.7m for the Leisure village. Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are at various stages in Soham, Kennett, Witchford, Swaffham Bulbeck, Haddenham and Wilburton. Swaffham Prior is completed and Stretham is nearly done. Cllr Winters asked Cllr Bailey about the CLTs and if they were all outside development envelopes. He argued points with her and kept interrupting when she was trying to explain that it was a policy written in the East Cambs Local Plan. She said it's about the community taking it forward and having control of the housing. She said he was welcome to phone her to discuss it further.

7.25pm Cllrs Dupre and Bailey were thanked for their reports and left the meeting.

130/16 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. **Resolved unanimously that the minutes of 15 December 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

131/16 MATTERS TO REPORT

1. **(Min.143/15) SAAA Audit Procurement Services – Confirmed Appointment of External Auditors 2017-2022** – SAAA announced the conclusion of its procurement process on 30/11/16. The award of limited assurance review contracts for Cambridgeshire has now been confirmed as PKF Littlejohn LLP (who is the existing external auditor).

2. **(Min.58/16.2) Rural Payments Agency Basic Payment Scheme** – BPS 2015 - still pending. RPA confirmed in November that it had received the Council's objection and it was waiting to be allocated to an officer. BPS 2016 – a partial payment of £1152.95 was received 20/12/16 pending approval of the application. This might result in a further payment being received on approval, or a refund request if calculated differently.
3. As an update of matters pending, the Clerk reported the following:
 - 3.1 **(Min.61/16.2) Tango Swing seat** – Following a site visit, email and phone enquiries, the Clerk was unable to obtain three quotes for tandem swing seats. The Hags SMP Tango swing seat must be hung from an 8ft frame. It cannot be hung from the existing cradle swings frame because the frame is approximately 60 years old and the integrity of its structure for the change of swing seat cannot be confirmed. A new frame, seat and safety surfacing would cost around £7000 + VAT. Wicksteed Leisure Ltd produced the Memory Swing @ £750 + 5% carriage and VAT. It is a different design and only compatible with Wicksteed frames. Sovereign Play Equipment Ltd does not produce a tandem swing and could not provide a quote.
 - 3.2 **(Min.62/16.2) Website** – In between general work and matters of priority, she was looking at other parish council websites and assessing what she thought were good ones, in order to obtain quotes from the service provider and ensure that the Parish Council could provide a good website service.
 - 3.3 **(Min.76/16) Pavilion Refurbishment** – The Clerk met with three contractors in November, but had only received one quote. Two contractors suggested that more detailed specifications were required in order to provide a competitive quote. It was suggested that the Clerk contact a building designer to enquire of costs to draw up detailed specifications.
 - 3.4 **(Min.108/16.6) New Bank Accounts** – Details of higher interest rate savings account options have been obtained from other Parish Council clerks and are being looked into.
 - 3.5 **(Min.124/16) New Cemetery Land** – The Pre-application Planning Advice Request was part completed and required papers were being prepared to accompany the application.
 - 3.6 **(Min.122/16.1.2) LHI Application** – The application to reduce the speed from 40 mph to 30 mph needs police support. The Clerk is to discuss the prospects with Mr Crosby (Police Traffic Management Officer) and was invited to attend an interview at CCC Highways 06/02/17 to promote the application and answer questions.
 - 3.7 **(Min.122/16.3) HGV Covenants** – Letters had not been sent to local companies yet.
 - 3.8 **(Min.111/16.2.1 & 122/16.1.1) Straight Furlong Trees** – The Clerk had not had the time to arrange site visits with contractors. A qualified tree surgeon had cut down the dead Ash tree.
 - 3.9 **Pymoor Fence** – Attempts were made in Sep/Oct last year to contact a contractor to look at the fence, but he did not return the Clerk's calls. The Clerk had since not had the time to arrange site visits with contractors due to other commitments.
4. **Bus Shelter issues** – In recent strong winds, a top panel broke and blew out of Lawn Lane bus shelter. A replacement panel is needed. A few years ago, a pane was stolen from Second Drove and not replaced at the time. It was noted on the recent annual risk assessment but is questioned whether to replace now, as it is not on a scheduled bus route. Use of Second Drove will be monitored.
5. **Annual Risk Assessment 2016** - Tony Payne carried out the annual assessment in December and the Clerk was meeting with the handyman to review the summary of matters raised. The results of the summary will be presented to the Council its meeting on 23/02/17.

132/16 **PLANNING MATTERS**

1. Planning correspondence -

7.34pm Cllrs BL & GH Taylor left the meeting.

1.1 **16/00885/RMA** Mr & Mrs BL & GH Taylor, Land adjacent Mount Pleasant Farm, 66 Main Street, Pymoor – Approval of the details for reserved matters for Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout & Scale of planning application 16/00133/OUT – **Amendment** – The amendment involves amended designs.

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

7.40pm Cllrs BL & GH Taylor returned

- 1.2 **16/01776/RMA Clients of MWS Architectural Ltd, Land to south of 65 Main Street, Pymoor –** Erection of 4 no. dwellings and associated works including scale, layout, appearance, access and landscaping.

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

- 1.3 **16/01778/FUL Mr & Mrs D Chapman, 5 Bishops Close, Lt Downham –** Two storey side extension. Front and rear single storey extensions.

Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no concerns regarding this application.

For information only:

- 1.4 **ECDC - Applications approved:** 16/00078/FUL, 16/01181/OUT, 16/01316/FUM, 16/01504/FUL

- 1.5 **ECDC - Applications refused:** 16/01382/OUT, 16/01391/OUT

133/16 **FINANCE**

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs CE Hall and MAC Seidler.

2. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - It was proposed by Cllr CE Hall and seconded by Cllr MAC Seidler.

Resolved unanimously to approve BACS payments 543 – 551 and Direct Debit for the total sum of £5863.87.

134/16 **PARISH LAND AND ASSETS**

1. **Land Registry Application by Church Commissioners for England to register mines and minerals – whole, powers of working – B25(WPW) on land lying on the west side of Hurst Lane, Little Downham [namely land to rear of 33-35 Cannon Street]** – The application related to the Community Orchard that the Parish Council leased from Cambridgeshire County Council under a 60-year lease (expires 12/10/2065). Land Registry informed that freehold rights are already accepted on the Register. The Parish Council had no objection to the application.

2. **Lt Downham Conservation Group – Ditch cleaning along Pingle Wood south boundary (Min.121/16.2)** - The Conservation Group will formally discuss the proposed work by Freeman Plant Hire Ltd at its meeting on 25 January. It will consider the need to clean out the dike in relation to the effect that removing a 3m strip of vegetation would have on Pingle Wood. The matter was deferred to the next meeting.

3. **To review grass cutting specifications for 2017 season (Min.47/16.2)** – The revised specifications were approved. It was noted that the grass cutting had got better by mid summer.

4. **To review grazing agreements for 2017 season** – The Grazing Agreements for cattle grazing in Myles Meadow and sheep grazing in The Holts were approved. The deadline for the receipt of tenders was confirmed as 20/02/17.

135/16 **PARISH MATTERS**

1. **East Cambs Local Plan Conference 18/01/17** – It was reported that Cllrs B & G Taylor attended the 2 pm session and Cllr Winters attended the 6 pm session at ECDC. Cllrs B & G Taylor informed that it was the last opportunity for the Parish Council to add things to the plan and to put land forward. They felt that ECDC officers focussed mainly on Soham, Sutton and Littleport, because they were where most of the housing, infrastructure and schooling were to be. The plan will result in a 30% growth in the District. Cllr Winters reported the same.

2. **East Cambs Local Plan public consultation 12/01/17 – 22/02/17 (Min.106/16.1)** – The draft East Cambs Local Plan, policies and allocated sites, were available to view online on ECDC website. Following a discussion of ECDC's selected allocated sites in Lt Downham and Pymoor, it was proposed by Cllr KO Winters and seconded by Cllr BL Taylor that the Parish Council should recommend more provisions for building land above what is currently allocated. Some members disagreed and felt that the sites ECDC had allocated, in addition to recent planning applications, were sufficient for the parish and no comments for additional building land were required. **A recorded vote result was as follows: In favour (4)** – Cllrs JW Barker, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, KO Winters, **Against (4)** – Cllrs CE Hall, LEA Joel, MAC Seidler, JL Waters, **Abstentions (1)** – Cllr RS Martin. **Due to the equal number of votes, the Chairman used a second and casting vote to vote against the proposal. The final result was: In favour (4), Against (5), Abstentions (1).**

Resolved by a majority decision that the Parish Council considered ECDC's selected allocated sites for Lt Downham and Pymoor were sufficient for the parish and no further comments were required to recommend the provision of more building land.

136/16 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

1. Replies re matters reported from previous meetings

1.1 Main Street, Lt Downham – The clerk reported that she had not reported the drain concerns because she was unable to see where the problems were. The Chairman will take photographs tomorrow and forward to the Clerk for CCC Highways.

1.2 Pymoor Lane Street Name Plate – The damaged sign was reported by the Clerk in November. ECDC had expected it to be done in December. It is now on the ground. ECDC is chasing it up.

1.3 Network Rail Level Crossing Closures (Min.49/16.3) – CCC requested the Parish Council's formal views of its decision not to object to the Coffue Drove closure and to object to Furlong Drove closure. Following a discussion regarding the redirection of the Byway at Furlong Drove, it was proposed by Cllr GH Taylor and seconded by Cllr JW Barker that the Parish Council should not support CCC's response regarding the closure of Furlong Drove crossing. **A recorded vote result was as follows: In favour (6) – Cllrs JW Barker, CE Hall, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, KO Winters, JL Waters, Against (0), Abstentions (3) – Cllrs LEA Joel, RS Martin, MAC Seidler.** Some members felt that they did not have enough information to make a formative decision. They were not familiar with the remote location and had no maps to view. The majority thought that the crossing was difficult for horses to cross and, in their opinion, not many people used the Byway. They saw no reason why FP8 could not be upgraded to a bridleway.

Resolved by a majority decision that the Parish Council voted against supporting the County Council's proposal to object to Network Rail's proposed closure of Furlong Drove Crossing.

2. To report current matters of concern

2.1 North Fen Crossing, Lt Downham – Two holes approximately 1ft round by 3 inches deep need filling just over the crossing.

2.2 Temporary signs on the highway verges - more sandbags are needed to stop them blowing over.

137/16 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

1. Update on voluntary registration of Parish Council land

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.50 pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date