

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 25 November 2010 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Councillors present: Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, in the chair, DJ Badcock, CM Frankland, GF Frankland, CE Hall, RS Martin, MM Oldfield, BL Taylor and KO Winters.

In attendance: PC K Humble and PCSO J Hall, Dist. Cllr A Goodge, County Cllr P Read (7.06pm) and Dist. Cllr F Brown (7.06pm).

129/10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Cllrs EW Hall, AJ White and Dist. Cllr A Bailey.

130/10 **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. **The Clerk, Mrs J Wardle**, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 148/10 (Handyman 3-months Probation Appraisal) because the handyman is her husband.

7.06pm County Cllr P Read and Dist. Cllr F Brown arrived.

131/10 **PARISH CRIME MATTERS**

1. **Police Crime Reports** – Between 14/10/10 and 24/11/10, four crimes were reported in Little Downham and two in Pymoor. There were also 17 calls for services to Little Downham and seven to Pymoor.
2. **To report recent events** – PC Humble warned that scrap metal thefts were still a target, especially on farms, and requests that if any suspicious vehicles are seen in the parish that they are reported to the police.

132/10 **PUBLIC FORUM**

County Cllr Read introduced District Cllr Brown to the Parish Council as Leader of the District Council & Leader of the Conservative Group. Dist. Cllr Brown answered questions from members relating to District matters.

7.28pm County Cllr Read and Dist. Cllr Brown left.

133/10 **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS (Dist. Cllrs A Bailey & A Goodge)**

1. Dist. Cllr Goodge reported that he had been approached by local residents who had concerns regarding planning application 10/00910/FUL, which the council will consider later on the agenda. He has called it in for the ECDC planning committee to consider and believes the Highways Authority will object to it as well.

7.35pm Dist. Cllr Goodge left.

134/10 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT (County Cllr P Read)** – nothing to report on this occasion.

135/10 **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

1. **Resolved** that the minutes of 14 October 2010 (Full Council) be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record following the insert of '*however, it suggests that a time limit is applied*' at item 114/10.1.2 after the word application and it deleted at item 114/10.1.3.
2. **Resolved** that the minutes of 4 November 2010 (Full Council) be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

136/10 **MATTERS TO REPORT**

1. **(Min.101/10.2) Mr T Warren – request to reduce height of Silver Birch Tree on Church Way** – The Trees Officers at CCC Highways Authority and ECDC replied stating that they do not approve to cut out the top of the tree because it could cause top rot. The Clerk has replied to Mr Warren with this information.
2. **(Min.115/10.2) Ely & Soham Dial-A-Ride – To consider donation request** – A letter of thanks was received and read to the meeting.
3. **(Mins.116/10.4) Installation by Environment Agency of gates at Hundred Foot Bank, Pymoor** – The Environment Agency informed it will relocate a gate at Oxloade to allow local residents to have access to their homes and will extend another gate for large farm vehicles. Signs will be put up informing users of the restricted access and that they will need to contact the Environment Agency Estates Department to request a justified right of access along the haul road between Mepal and Welney.

4. **(Min.90/10) Land Registry** – Confirmation is being sought from Cambridgeshire County Council of what pieces of land are registered as Common Land.
5. **(Min.127/10.1) Emergency Awareness Seminar 11/11/10** – Cllrs BL Taylor and KO Winters reported that in the event of an emergency all authorities will act together, although apparently there is no insurance in place to cover what anyone does, and that ECDC agreed to take into account the risk that the riverbank could burst in Little Downham Parish.

137/10 **PLANNING MATTERS**

1. **Planning correspondence -**

- 1.1 **10/00910/FUL** Deanta UK Ltd, Straight Furlong, Pymoor – Addition of B8 storage and distribution shed (720m²) – **Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council has concerns about this application and recommends outright refusal of permission for the following reasons:**
 1. **The proposal is vast and overbearing and will increase storage capacity and distribution by at least 128%;**
 2. **The site is not suitable for the increased B8 industrial use as proposed because it is in the middle of a small rural village and residential area;**
 3. **The proposed ‘shed’ description is misleading and should be more accurately defined as a warehouse because it is to be used for storage and distribution. Based on the plan measurements, it is believed the warehouse is equal to 756m² and not 720m² as described;**
 4. **The proposal will have a detrimental visual impact on the village and residents living in close proximity to the site and to open countryside to the rear;**
 5. **Access to the site is not wide enough or suitable for HGVs, which have already caused damage to the surface of the road, kerbs and footway on Straight Furlong.**
 6. **The local situation is being exacerbated by lorry drivers asking residents to move parked cars to allow the HGVs a wide access the site.**
 7. **Increases in large vehicle movements through the parish will a detrimental effect on Little Downham Parish, which has had a history of HGV problems.**
 8. **The Parish Council has received letters of objection and concern from local residents.**

For information only:

- 1.2 **ECDC Applications approved:** 10/00758/FUL, 10/00804/FUL

138/10 **FINANCE**

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs DJ Badcock and CM Frankland.
2. **Magpas Helimedix – Donation request** – The request was discussed. **Resolved unanimously not to donate on this occasion.**
3. **Victim Support – Donation request** – It was noted that the £15 surcharge when convicted of a crimes is given to Victim Support. **Resolved unanimously not to donate on this occasion.**
4. **To approve Lt Downham Book Cafe CRB Check for volunteer - L Roberts** – Mrs Roberts is a new member of volunteer staff. The cost of a volunteer CRB check is £13.00. **Resolved to approve the payment of a volunteer CRB Check for L Roberts.**
5. **Lt Downham Book Cafe – to approve inclusion on Council’s insurance policy (at no extra cost)** – This is a formality in order that the Book Cafe volunteers continue to be covered under the Council’s public liability and employers liability insurance policy. **Resolved unanimously to approve the addition of the Book Cafe on the Parish Council’s insurance policy with Broker Network Ltd.**
6. **ECDC – Legal & other work for Parish Councils – provision of services** – The Council was not interested in using the proposed services of ECDC.
7. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - Proposed by Cllr CM Frankland, seconded by Cllr DJ Badcock, and unanimously agreed. **Resolved to approve list of payments for cheque numbers 000770 to 000778 for the total sum of £4538.17. It was noted and approved that cheque number 000756 (£235.00) to NALC for the Quality Council Re-accreditation fee was incorrect and that cheque number 000769 (£117.50) had been issued to replace it.**

139/10 **TRAINING**

1. **To approve draft Training Statement of Intent** – In accordance with the criteria for quality status, the council is required to have a Training statement of Intent. The draft was discussed. **Resolved to approve and adopt the draft Training Statement of Intent.**

140/10 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. **To consider recommendations from Admin & Finance Committee** – The committee’s report was approved. Proposed Cllr KO Winters, seconded Cllr DJ Badcock and agreed unanimously. **Resolved to approve the recommendations from the Admin & Finance Committee meeting on 04/11/10.**

2. **To consider recommendations from Play Area & Recreation Committee** – It was decided not to purchase a net for the Log World in Little Downham but to monitor the condition of the play item. Cllrs Adams-Payne and Oldfield were researching roundabouts and waiting for additional brochures. Following a vote of 8 in favour and 1 against, the following was approved. **Resolved not to purchase the Log World net at present and to approve replacing the old roundabout in Little Downham Play Area.**
Cllr Taylor requested to have the old roundabout when it’s replaced. It was agreed he could have it if he arranged for it to be lifted and removed.

141/10 **PARISH MATTERS**

1. **Report from Neighbourhood Panel Meeting (25/10/10)** – Cllr Winters will provide a report at the next meeting.

2. **Pymoor bus shelter - to consider installation of additional notice board for public use** – It was agreed to install an additional public notice board. The Clerk will obtain quotes.

3. **Cold Callers – to consider signs for the village (Cllr DJ Badcock)** – The Council discussed signs that are erected in other villages but didn’t think it would stop cold callers from knocking on doors. The Clerk was instructed to put something in the parish magazine about cold callers and obtain some stickers to put in the Book Cafe for people to place in their windows.

142/10 **RECREATION AREAS**

1. **Lt Downham Pavilion - to consider maintenance and/or extension** – It was agreed to consider an extension or re-build. The Clerk was instructed to enquire about possible funding.

2. **Lt Downham Play Area – to consider replacing roundabout** – approved at item 140/10.2.

3. **To consider play area annual inspections** – RoSPA, Wicksteed and Digley Associates (insurance company recommended) were considered for independent inspections. **Resolved to appoint Digley Associates to carry out a Scheme 1 Annual Play Area Inspections in Little Downham and Pymoor.**

143/10 **PRESERVATION AREAS**

1. **Downham Parish Conservation Group – to approve proposed works in Holts Meadow (hedge)** – It was proposed to trim back the eastern hedge that is encroaching the Meadow and to re-lay it like the southern hedge that was done approximately four years ago by Truelink Ltd. **Resolved to approve the proposed work by the Downham Parish Conservation Group and fund the project from the Countryside Account, to write and inform the adjacent landowner of the proposed work and to appoint Truelink Ltd to re-lay the eastern hedge when it carries out contract work in the area in the New Year.**

144/10 **HIGHWAYS**

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings**
 - 1.1 **B1411, Second Drove and Third Drove, Lt Downham** – The signs are being re-positioned away from the wind and placed with extra sandbags where required.
 - 1.2 **Cowbridge Hall Road, Lt Downham** – An order has been placed to put planings in the worst vehicle overruns.
 - 1.3 **Straight Furlong to A Furlong including Pymoor Sidings, Pymoor** – An order has been place for some repairs. In the meantime, temporary tarmac has been put in the holes where possible.

2. **To report current matters of concern**
 - 2.1 **Tower Road, Lt Downham** - A pothole needs filling.
 - 2.2 **Lawn Lane, Lt Downham** - The hedge behind the lay-by and telephone box is overgrown and obstructs drivers' visibility from the road to nos. 36, 38, 40.
 - 2.3 **Temporary road signs in the Parish** – Cllr KO Winters proposed, seconded by Cllr BL Taylor, that the Council should complain about the visual impact of the temporary signs on the side of some roads indicating uneven road surfaces. A recorded vote was requested and the result was as follows: In favour – Cllrs KO Winters & BL Taylor. Against – D Adams-Payne, DJ Badcock, CM Frankland, GF Frankland, CE Hall, RS Martin, and MM Oldfield. The proposal was not carried.
 - 2.4 **Corner of North Fen and Brick Kiln Lane, Lt Downham** – Report that an aluminium Street Light column had been hit and was leaning over.

3. **Work on the Drove** – Cllr Martin informed that a 4x4 vehicle had recently smashed through one of his gates. It was reported that some local residents are in talks with CCC and prepared to put up gates on nearby byways. The Council agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent to Messrs M & R Taylor of Carlisle Farm, Lt Downham, in appreciation of their work levelling some droves.

145/10 **CORRESPONDENCE - For information only**

1. **ECDC Tree Works Notifications:**
 - 1.1 **2 Lawn Lane, Lt Downham – To remove two Sycamore trees**
 - 1.2 **The Anchor, 25 Main Street, Lt Downham – To fell Horse Chestnut tree and reduce height of conifers and reshape**
 - 1.3 **St Leonard's Church, Main Street, Lt Downham – to fell three Horse Chestnut trees**

146/10 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was 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 147/10 & 148/10, 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.

147/10 **TENDERS**

1. **Capital Projects – Lt Downham Village Hall Rear Terrace quotes** – Quotes received from CJ Murfitt Ltd, B Jordan and Barrow and Layn were considered and discussed. It was agreed to opt for tarmac outside the village hall front doors to the car park for disabled access.
Resolved to award Barrow and Layn the contract for the Village Hall Rear Terrace work following confirmation from the ECDC Conservation Officer that tarmac is acceptable outside the Village Hall front doors.
2. **Lt Downham Pavilion - Periodic Electrical Inspection quotes** - Quotes received from Holgate & French, DJ Grace and John Audus were considered and discussed.
Resolved to appoint John Audus to carry out the Pavilion Periodic Electrical Inspection.

9.35pm The Clerk left the meeting prior to the following items being discussed. In the Clerk's absence, the minutes of item 148/10 were recorded by Cllr Oldfield.

148/10 **HUMAN RESOURCES**

1. **Handyman – To consider initial three-month probation appraisal** – Mr Wardle's appraisal was carried out by the Appraisal Officer, Cllr D Adams-Payne. It was reported that he was a very willing and able member of staff and been very helpful and efficient during his probationary period. It was noted in the appraisal report that he uses his own tools and has a chainsaw. It was discussed whether to provide an equipment fund to purchase a basic tool kit for the handyman to use or to increase his salary and consider replacing hand tools as required.
Resolved to offer Mr Wardle a Contract of Employment, to increase his salary to £10 per hour as he uses his own tools and to consider replacement of hand tools as required, to arrange for him to attend a 3-hour chainsaw course, to purchase appropriate protective clothing and a ladder and to approve additional hours for specific projects as required.
Thanks were expressed to Mr Wardle for his work on the Pavilion following the break-in.
2. **Clerk – To consider annual staff appraisal** - Mrs Wardle's appraisal was carried out by the Appraisal Officer, Cllr D Adams-Payne. It was reported that she is using the new accounts system, computer and printer and no new equipment is required. It was noted in the appraisal report that her involvement in the pension scheme had not been added to her contract and she had recently worked 30 extra hours to produce the Quality Council re-accreditation portfolio.
Resolved to add the pension scheme to the Clerk's contract as an addendum, to approve a payment of 30 extra hours @ her current hourly rate for the Quality Council portfolio and to approve an incremental increase from LC2/32 to LC2/33 with effect from 1st April 2011.

10.00pm The Clerk was invited back into the meeting and thanked the council for their considerations.

149/10 **REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

1. **Water excavation east of Denver Sluice (Denver Slacker)**

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 10.05pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date