

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 28 May 2015 commencing at 7.00pm.**

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

Other attendees: Five parishioners.

16/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Cllr CE Hall, Dist. Cllrs A Bailey and M Bradley and County Cllr P Read.

17/15 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. **Cllr LEA Joel** declared a personal interest in item 24/15.1.1 (Application 15/00460/FUL) because the applicant is a neighbour (Declaration 011-2015).

Further declarations of interest were made during item 19/15 (Parish Council Vacancy)

18/15 PUBLIC FORUM - No comments

19/15 PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

1. **To co-opt new councillor** – The Clerk read out the ‘one councillor, one vote’ procedure. She announced the names of the five candidates and read out their individual reasons for wanting to be a councillor. Each candidate present was invited to add to his or her comments. The Chairman invited members declarations of interest following the announcement of the candidates names. The following declarations were made:

Further Declarations of Interests (17/15):

2. **Cllr LEA Joel** declared a personal interest in item 19/15 (Vacancy Co-option) because one of the candidates is a neighbour (Declaration 012-2015).

3. **Cllr BL Taylor** declared prejudicial and pecuniary interests in item 19/15 (Vacancy Co-option) because one of the candidates works for the same company that he is a Director of (Declaration 013-2015).

4. **Cllr GH Taylor** declared prejudicial and pecuniary interests in item 19/15 (Vacancy Co-option) because one of the candidates works for the same company that she is a Director of (Declaration 014-2015).

5. **Cllr JL Waters** declared a personal interest in item 19/15 (Vacancy Co-option) because one of the candidates is a friend (Declaration 015-2015).

7.10pm Cllrs BL & GH Taylor left the room prior to voting taking place.

Following three paper ballots and the Chairman using her second and casting vote, Mrs MAC Seidler received a majority of votes and was duly declared as the new councillor of the Parish Council. Cllr MAC Seidler signed a Declaration of Acceptance and joined the Council at the table. The Chairman thanked the other applicants for their interest and attendance.

7.30pm All attendees left the meeting. Cllrs BL & GH Taylor were invited back into the meeting.

20/15 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS’ AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORTS – No reports

21/15 PARISH CRIME REPORT – Members viewed Annual Crime Reports for the Parish and Ward.

22/15 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

1. **Resolved** that the minutes of 16 April 2015 were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record following the deletion of the words *The Clerk* at item 188/14.1, line 2.
2. **Resolved** that the minutes of 14 May 2015 AGM were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.
3. **Resolved** that the minutes of 14 May 2015 were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

23/15 MATTERS TO REPORT

1. **To consider funds request from Downham Parish Conservation Group (Min.183/14.3)** - The Conservation volunteers thanked the Council for the £500 grant and the comments expressing appreciation of their work.
2. **National Rural Crime Survey** - People who work or live in rural areas are asked to give their views on policing in their community and the impact crime and ASB has on them. The aim of the survey is to improve awareness of crime in rural areas and encourage crime prevention, inform government policy and help ensure funding is not disproportionately lost from rural areas. The online survey closes on Wednesday, 24th June.
3. **Conservation Group Meeting 24/05/15 - Report by Cllr DA Adams-Payne** – Brown pigtail caterpillars have invaded some fruit trees in the orchards and are causing problems. The volunteers will be holding a PR event in a marquee at the Fete on 6th June to encourage interest and new members. Some of the Council's grant will be used to establish a picnic area near the bug hotel, which schoolchildren can use during their visits. A person requesting permission to place Geocache items in the Local Nature Reserve was invited to attend the meeting but did not turn up. A 'Spotting Board' has been suggested in the LNR for people to say what they have seen recently. Tony Payne is to carry out a Moth Survey soon from 21:00 to 01:00. Two 16 year olds are being mentored for the Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

24/15 PLANNING MATTERS

1. **Planning correspondence -**
- 1.1 **15/00460/FUL** Mrs Catherine Runciman, Bramley House, 100 Main Street, Lt Downham – Erection of three new family dwellings on land behind Bramley House with new vehicular access to Main Street - **Resolved that the Parish Council had concerns regarding this application and recommended that the concerns be addressed by amendments to the scheme.**
Concerns:
 1. **Site density** - It is considered that the proposed three family dwellings will result in an overdevelopment of the site. Two Bungalows would be preferred.
 2. **Volume of traffic** – The proposed three family dwellings show on-site parking for two vehicles each. However, potentially this could be much higher with the possibility of four adults living in each dwelling. This could generate a lot of vehicles driving in and out of the narrow entrance.
 3. **Loss of parking on Main Street** – The new entrance will reduce on-street parking in this area and outside the post office that is held in the adjacent Community Rooms.
- 1.2 **For information only:**
ECDC: Applications approved: 15/00217/FUL
ECDC: Applications refused: 15/00273/FUL

25/15 FINANCE

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs LEA Joel and RS Martin.
2. **To receive the Internal Auditor's Report for the Accounts 2014/2015** – The Report was read to the Council and two matters were brought the Council's attention. Mrs Wallace had noted the building up of year end balances for two significant capital projects and suggested that if funding is successful or the projects cost less than anticipated, then the balances should be considered when setting future precept levels. Also, that she had been the internal auditor for several years. **Resolved to accept the Internal Auditor's Report 2014/15 and the two matters for attention were noted for future reference.**
3. **To approve Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2015** - The Council formally read through and completed Section 2. It was proposed by Cllr DA Adams-Payne and seconded by Cllr RS Martin that the Annual Return be approved. A recorded vote was requested and the result was as follows: **In favour (10)** - Cllrs DA Adams-Payne, JW Barker, LEA Joel, RS Martin, MM Oldfield, MAC Seidler, BL Taylor, GH Taylor and JL Waters, **Against (1)** - Cllr KO Winters.
Resolved that the Chairman and the Clerk duly sign the Annual Return 2015.
The completed Annual Return and other specific documents will be sent to PKF Littlejohn LLP (External Auditors) by 08/06/15.

4. **To consider provision of new play equipment in Lt Downham and Pymoor Play Areas** – Following a lengthy discussion on equipment and funding, it was proposed by Cllr LEA Joel, seconded by Cllr MAC Seidler, and agreed unanimously to replace the old see-saw and safety tiles in Pymoor Play Area with a new multi-spring see-saw and wetpour surfacing. The £7500 cost will be met using £4963.33 of Public Open Space S106 funding and Parish Council funds. It was agreed to seek grant funding to provide a zipwire in Lt Downham Play Area.
Resolved unanimously to apply to ECDC for POS S106 funding of £4963.33 and use Parish Council funds to purchase the Hags SMP Multi-Spring See-saw and wetpour safety surfacing to replace the old see-saw and safety tiles in Pymoor Play Area.
Resolved unanimously to seek grant funding for a zipwire in Lt Downham Play Area.

5. **To approve BT Telephone Business Plan for the office line** – BT informed that the monthly business line rental was to increase by 5% in July to £19.95 + VAT. Following negotiations, the Clerk reported that BT offered to reduce the line rental to £14.20 + VAT and the BT Business Plan approved in December 2014 will re-commence for 24 months to May 2017.
Resolved unanimously to approve the new 24 month BT Business Plan contract.
Cllr Waters informed the Clerk of an alternative business telephone supply service that has competitive rates. The Clerk will check out the details.

6. **To approve bills and other items for payment** - Items presented for payment were proposed by Cllr LEA Joel and seconded by Cllr RS Martin.
Resolved unanimously to approve the payments of cheque nos. 001059, 001061 and BACS payment 320 for the total sum of £180.00.

26/15 COUNCIL MATTERS

1. **Boundary Commission – Review of Electoral boundaries** – Information was received from the Boundary Commission and County Cllr Bill Hunt (Haddenham Division). The Council discussed the Boundary Commission’s proposed changes to produce a new (two member) ‘Super Division’ called **Littleport West** and Cllr Hunt’s objections to the new ‘Super Division’. The proposed change will see the merging of Haddenham division (Aldreth, Earith Bridge, Little Thetford, Haddenham, Stretham, Wentworth, Wilburton, Witchford) and Sutton division (Sutton, Mepal, Witcham, Coveney, Wardy Hill, Little Downham, Pymoor), with part of north Ely, Chettisham, half of Littleport and Black Horse Drove. The Parish Council disagreed with the proposed changes for the following reasons:
 - The new ‘Super Division’ is considered too large;
 - It is considered that each member would have difficulty providing a service to support and represent the different issues across the division;
 - Parish Councils and their communities within the ‘Super Division’ would lose the relationship they have with the County Council because each member would be ‘stretched’ to be in contact with the 14 Parishes on a monthly basis;
 - The rural villages have different issues than the urban residential areas in Ely and Littleport;
 - It is recommended that the ‘Super Division’ be divided in two with one member in each division.

The comment is to be submitted online prior to the consultation closing date 06/07/15.

27/15 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS

1. **All Weather Court – to consider a maintenance re-spray** – The handyman recommended a maintenance re-spray of the Astroturf now that the better weather is here, as the chemical will be able to penetrate through the sand and help reduce Algae forming in late autumn and winter.
Resolved unanimously to approve a chemical maintenance spray of the All Weather Court by Artificial Grass (Cambridge) Ltd.

28/15 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings** – Nothing to report.

2. **To report current matters of concern:**
- 2.1 **Parish verge cutting** – It was felt that the grass cutter had not done a very good job cutting the verges on the last occasion. The Clerk informed that the grass was very long on both occasions when Truelink Ltd has been in to cut the verges. She had asked at the beginning of May for the grass to be cut much shorter in Lt Downham play area. She will discuss both these matters with Truelink. It was noted that the recreation field is being cut satisfactorily.

29/15 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS –
9.10pm 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 30/15, 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.

30/15 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS
1. **Cemetery – update** – St Leonard Churchwardens replied apologising for the drawn out process of the Diocese’s reply, which also included legal opinion. The Churchwardens informed that the parcel of land is held in a charitable trust of which the Incumbent and Churchwardens are the trustees. Any proceeds from the sale of the land would be locked in the trust and would be very difficult for the church to gain any benefit from the money. The three trustees are all of the opinion that they must therefore decline to sell this land to the Parish Council. The Council accepted the reply. The Cemetery Working Group will arrange to meet and discuss its options.

31/15 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION
1. Pavilion Extension and Refurbishment

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.29 pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date