



*Little Downham
Parish Council*

Annual Report 2019/20

Chairman's Introduction

I would like to present this Annual Report to provide you with information about the Parish Council's activities during 2019/2020. I have been chairman for the last 12 months but will be standing down as from May 2020.

During this time, the Parish Council has continued to work for the benefit of the parish, maintaining and enhancing facilities, such as the recreation and conservation areas. Following many years and much hard work of trying to find suitable land for additional burial ground, we have finally decided not to pursue this project.

At present, we are all affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and I want to personally thank Mark Taylor and Ross Taylor, both of whom are Parish Councillors, for their initiative of providing free vegetables for those parishioners who were unable to obtain them. This continued for several weeks and was also funded by the Downham Feoffees Charity. This was a crucial action that informed the parish that help was available and I know other councillors also responded and helped people around them, a huge thank you to all of you. It is reassuring to know that the community can act and come together in a crisis.

I would like to thank all Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk for their hard work and commitment during the past year and a thank you also to all the volunteers who maintain our conservation areas, book café, community groups, etc.

If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor or a volunteer please contact Jackie Wardle the Parish Clerk.

Marilyn Oldfield

Chairman Little Downham Parish Council

Who and What is the Parish Council?

Little Downham Parish Council comprises of 11 voluntary Councillors who serve for a term of four years and represent an electorate of 2028 (Electoral Register 01/02/2019).

The Council employs three part-time members of staff: Mrs Jackie Wardle, as the Parish Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer and Proper Officer; Mr Derek Mitchell as Parish Council Handyman and Mrs Avril Hayter-Smith as Book Café Manager. The Council employed Canalbs Ltd to carry out the Internal Auditor duties for 2019/20.

Mr Robin Pearl is the editor of the Parish Website and regularly updates the site with information from the Clerk, parish organisations and businesses.

Parish Council meetings are generally held monthly on a Thursday evening in the Committee Room (Book Café) of Little Downham Village Hall. Planning meetings, public meetings and extraordinary meetings are held as required if urgent business needs discussing, or deadlines dictate, prior to the next Full Council meeting. Occasionally Working Groups are formed in order to gather information or research between meetings and provide reports to the full Council for decisions to be made.

Agendas and information about Council meetings are displayed on the Parish Council Notice boards that are located on the corner of the Village Hall, Main Street, Little Downham, and in the bus shelter, School Lane, Pymoor. The forthcoming agenda, approved minutes and other information about the Parish Council and the community can be seen on the parish website:

www.littledownham.net

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings and may speak during Public Forum on matters that are on that meeting's agenda. Matters relating to items that are not on the agenda can be given to the Clerk in writing or via email for inclusion on the next relevant agenda. The Parish Council is not permitted to make a decision on matters that have not been duly advertised to the public, unless any matters are considered urgent, such as to relate to public health and safety, or are authorised in the Council's Standing Orders.

The Parish Council is responsible for parish grass cutting and its own street furniture. It owns and manages the Local Nature Reserve (consisting of Pingle Wood, Myles Meadow and The Holts Spinney and Meadows), Community Orchard (60-year lease from Cambridgeshire County Council) and the play and recreation areas in Little Downham and Pymoor.

At the Council's Annual General Meetings held in May, Parish Councillors elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman, and appoint a Staff Appraisal Officer, Lead Child Protection Officer and representatives on the following bodies:

Downham Parish Conservation Group
Downham, Pymoor & Coveney Parish Magazine Committee
Little Downham Book Café Committee
Little Downham Village Hall Committee
Downham Feoffees Charity (4-year term generally in the election year)

Parish Council Contact Details (June 2020)

Name	Address	Phone no.
PARISH COUNCILLORS:		
John Barker	5 Third Drove, Lt Downham	07545 885538
Andrew Butcher	6 Fourth Drove Lt Downham	
Amber Collins	20 Cross Lane, Lt Downham	07411 205285
Graham Hayter-Smith	55 Ely Road, Lt Downham Email: ldvhallbursar@gmail.com	07887 525393
Richard Maxey	44 Cannon Street, Lt Downham Email: richardmaxeyldpc@mail.com	07770 953293
Dale Parson (Vice Chairman)	Laurel Farm, Main Drove, Lt Downham Email: daleparsonpc@gmail.com	07785 972705
Gail Taylor	Willow Farm, Pymoor Common, Lt Downham	01353 698555
Mark Taylor	Carlisle Farm, Main Drove, Lt Downham Email: Mark.taylor.pc11@gmail.com	07831 810052
Ross Taylor	Westmoor House, 68 Main Street, Pymoor	07774 554077
Jo Waters (Chairman)	56A Cannon Street, Lt Downham Email: jowaters666@hotmail.com	07736 999253
Owen Winters	C/o Valhalla, Third Drove, Lt Downham	01353 699246
CLERK:		
Jackie Wardle	30 New Close Road, Lt Thetford, Ely, Cambs CB6 3HQ Email: ltdownhampc@btinternet.com	01353 649499
DISTRICT COUNCILLORS:		
Anna Bailey	40 Cambridge Road, Ely, CB7 4HL Email: anna.bailey@eastcambs.gov.uk	01353 663253
COUNTY COUNCILLOR:		
Lorna Dupre	Inglefield, 119 High Street, Sutton CB6 2NW Email: lorna@lornadupre.org.uk	07930 337596

LITTLE DOWNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

Year Ended 31 March 2019		Year Ended 31 March 2020
	INCOME	
79,904.00	PRECEPT	81,102.00
2,904.53	HIGHWAYS & PARISH MAINTENANCE	2,959.82
20.00	GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	0.00
1,471.00	RECREATION FACILITIES	1,520.00
	CAPITAL PROJECTS	7,000.00
875.45	CONSERVATION AREA	695.45
2,437.38	FINANCE & GRANTS	7,863.13
<u>£87,612.36</u>	TOTAL INCOME	<u>£101,140.40</u>
	EXPENDITURE	
74,316.25	CAPITAL PROJECTS	3,730.00
9,456.83	HIGHWAY & PARISH MAINTENANCE	13,311.39
51,506.65	STAFF	53,851.92
11,193.48	GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	6,968.01
2,992.00	RECREATIONAL FACILITIES	3,090.00
1,049.78	CONSERVATION AREA	911.68
817.00	FINANCE & GRANTS	895.77
<u>£151,331.99</u>	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>£ 82,758.77</u>
	GENERAL FUND	
173,755.93	Balance at 1 April 2019 >	110,088.50
87,612.36	Add Total Income	101,140.40
261,368.29		211,228.90
151,331.99	Deduct Total Expenditure	82,758.77
110,036.30		128,470.13
52.20	+/- from Earmarked Reserves	1,059.61
<u>£110,088.50</u>	Balance at 31 March 2020 >	<u>£127,410.52</u>

Reserves:

Earmarked Reserve Balance £44,170.83

What we did in 2019/20

- A total of 10 Full Council meetings and three extraordinary meetings were held;
- Considered and commented on 68 Planning Applications and 4 Appeals;
- Responded to documents and various consultations from other authorities;
- Reviewed the Council's Budget and Accounts during the year and resolved to increase the Precept by 1.5% for 2019/20. (Due to an increase in the number of dwellings in the parish, this actually resulted in an increase of 0.5% on the local element of the Council Tax compared to the previous year);
- Received an unqualified (successful) external audit on Accounts 2018/19;
- Financed the Little Downham Book Café along with a £1520 (50%) contribution from the Downham Feoffees Charity for room hire fees;
- Approved £500 Grant for the Citizens Advice Rural Cambs;
- Funded and updated the Parish Website: littledownham.net;
- Supported and funded Downham Parish Conservation Group, who work for and on behalf of the Parish Council overseeing the management and maintenance of the Local Nature Reserve and Community Orchard;
- Maintained the Local Nature Reserve and Community Orchard;
- Maintained Little Downham and Pymoor Recreation Areas and Play Areas and carried out weekly and annual inspections of the areas and play equipment;
- Maintained and monitored CCTV equipment in Lt Downham Recreation Area;
- Completed Lt Downham Pavilion refurbishment (subject to review in 12 months);
- Refurbished Little Downham Pavilion fascia and soffit;
- Arranged parish grass cutting of village verges and Parish Council land;
- Maintained Parish Council owned Street Lights;
- Carried out Annual Risk Assessments on Parish Council assets;
- Removed a tree and cleared overgrown Ivy, Brambles and shrubs on Cub Green, Lt Downham;
- Reported Highways and Public Rights of Way matters of concern to Cambridgeshire County Council;
- Reported street nameplates, dog fouling, litter and dog waste bins, waste collections, recycling and fly tipping matters to East Cambs District Council;
- The Clerk and Cllr Maxey attended training sessions through CAPALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks;

What we did in 2019/20 cont...

- Reviewed insurance specifications in October 2019, and after five years of monitoring, decided to flatten the BMX Track in Lt Downham Recreation Area due to a lack of use and to reduce wasted expenditure in insurance and grass and weed cutting five times a year. A public notice was placed in the parish magazine in November 2019 informing of the pending decision and requesting any queries by 21st November. The track was flattened in May 2020.
- In February 2020, the Council reviewed its number of unsuccessful attempts over the past ten years to purchase suitable burial land in the parish. By a majority decision, it was agreed not to continue. The Council subsequently wrote to the Cemetery Committee to inform of the Council's decision.

What we did in early 2020/21

- Due to the Government's national restrictions to control the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, Local Authorities were not permitted to hold any face to face meetings. Following approval of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (April 2020), section 78 Regulations enabled the Council to hold remote meetings up until May 2021. The Council resumed meeting (remotely) in May 2020.
- The Clerk was granted delegated powers to make decisions, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, during any period of restricted activity declared by the Government in respect of Covid-19.
- Thanks were expressed to Marilyn Oldfield, who resigned as a Parish Councillor after serving 12 years. Marilyn was wished all the best for the future.

Parish Council Plans for 2020/21

- Review Pymoor and Little Downham play area safety surfacing;
- Re-paint Pymoor and Little Downham Play equipment;
- Consider a scheme and submit a Local Highway Improvement bid;
- Continue to serve the community and maintain amenities for the benefit and enjoyment of parishioners.

Appreciations

For 2019/20, thanks were expressed to:

- Parish Councillors who attended Council meetings and carried out parish business voluntarily to maintain amenities and services on behalf of the community and received no remuneration for their time;
- Parishioners who carried out voluntary work for and on behalf of the Parish, such as Downham Parish Conservation Group and the Book Café, as well as those that supported other parish organisations, of which there are many and so varied to mention, but still as important in our community;
- Pymoor Cricket & Social Club for cutting Pymoor recreation field and play area;
- District Cllr Anna Bailey and County Cllr Lorna Dupre, who carried out their duties during the year on behalf of the parish in matters relating to East Cambs District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council;
- Robin Pearl, editor of the Parish website: www.littledownham.net and Jan Holland, booking clerk for the All-Weather Court;
- Parish Council staff: Jackie Wardle (Parish Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer and Proper Officer); Derek Mitchell (Parish Council Handyman) and Avril Hayter-Smith who managed the Book Café in accordance with Cambridgeshire Libraries agreement and arranged the cake and voluntary staff rotas.

Please note this list is not conclusive and apologies are made to anyone who feels that they have been missed out.

Copies in larger print can be requested from the Parish Council by telephone on 01353 649499 or printed from the document on the website:
littledownham.net

Enquiries regarding this publication can be made to:

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