

**MINUTES of a meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall,
Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 25 May 2017 commencing at 7.45pm.**

Councillors present: JL Waters, in the chair, and JW Barker, G Hayter-Smith (7.15pm) RS Martin, MM Oldfield, G Ord, MAC Seidler, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, and KO Winters. **Clerk:** Mrs J Wardle

Other attendees: 12 parishioners (inc. 4 arrivals 7.05pm).

14/17 **TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllr CE Hall, Dist. Cllrs A Bailey and M Bradley and County Cllr L Dupre.

15/17 **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. **Cllr RS Martin** declared an interest in item 21/17.1.3 (Application 17/00733/FUM) because he is a tenant of adjacent land. (Declaration 013-2017).
2. **Cllr G Ord** declared a personal interest in item 11/17.1.5 (Application 17/00772/FUL) because the applicant is a friend. (Declaration 014-2017).

16/17 **PUBLIC FORUM**

Mr Highnam and Mr Cusick both expressed objections to item 21/17.1.2 (application 17/00667/FUL).

7.05pm Four parishioners arrived.

17/17 **PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY**

1. **To co-opt new councillor** – Three candidates applied for the vacant position. Following a second paper ballot, Mr G Hayter-Smith received an overall majority of votes and was duly declared as the new councillor of the Parish Council. Cllr G Hayter-Smith signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and joined the Council at the table. The Chairman thanked the other applicants for their interest and attendance the meeting.

7.15pm One parishioner left

18/17 **COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

All Councillors were attending the ECDC Full Council meeting, and as a result of the forthcoming General Election and being in 'Purdah', there was not much to report.

1. **Dist. Cllr M Bradley** issued a report in his absence. In brief, he updated on several planning applications that parishioners had expressed their concerns to him about and, following a presentation at the Internal Drainage Board meeting recently, the Environment Agency's plan to raise the Mid Level Barrier Bank, which could have serious consequences of flooding for Pymoor and surrounding area. He had agreed to meet with Basil Taylor to discuss this and prepare a response via the Internal Drainage Board and ECDC to send to the Environment Agency about the issue. He will report back to the Parish Council in due course.
2. **County Cllr L Dupre** issued a report in her absence. She informed of her success at being re-elected as the Sutton Division County Representative. In brief, she updated on changes at the County Council, an Air Quality and Pollution action plan and that the Specialist Fertility Treatment Consultation had been delayed due to 'Purdah'. She informed of her surgeries in Sutton on 20/06/17 and 11/07/17. She will confirm dates in the Book Café in due course.

19/17 **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

1. **Resolved** that the minutes of 20 April 2017 were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.
2. **Resolved** that the minutes of 11 May 2017 AGM were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.
3. **Resolved** that the minutes of 11 May 2017 (General Meeting) were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

20/17 MATTERS TO REPORT

1. **(Min.174/16.3) Cannon Street bus shelter** – The shrub and all rubbish was removed by CCC. Cannon Street, Lawn Lane and Ely Road shelters will be cleaned when repairs have been carried out to the latter two.
2. **(Min.174/16.4) Trees on Cub Green** – Cllr J Barker, KO Winters and the clerk met with Mr & Mrs Booth on 02/05/17 at Cub Green. Cllrs Barker and Winters proposed that the Parish Council remove a large tree on Cub Green adjacent to Mr & Mrs Booth's wall and the electricity substation, and also a small self-setter growing between the wall and substation. The Clerk has arranged to meet a tree contractor to discuss specifications for tree works at Cub Green and Straight Furlong and will obtain quotes to present at a future meeting. It was confirmed that the handyman had removed Ivy from two other trees. Mr & Mrs Booth accept that due to the bird nesting season, the trees will not be removed until the autumn.
3. **(Min.178/16.1) Play Area Inspections** – Wicksteed has confirmed the booking and informed that unaccompanied inspections will be carried out in July.
4. **(Min.158/16.2) RPA Basic Payment Scheme** – The clerk report that the 2017 BPS application was submitted at the end of April.
5. **(Min.7/17.3.1 Internal Auditor's Report 2016/17** – Supporting documentation confirming VAT recovered 2016/17 was received and had been forwarded to the Internal Auditor, as she requested. With regards to the summary of interest on bank accounts, Barclays informed that, as it no longer deducts tax from the interest accrued, it does not issue summary statements.
6. **Conservation Group Meeting Report** (Cllr J Barker) – The Conservation Group had rejected a request from Bush Craft to stay overnight in the Local Nature Reserve, which would have resulted in lighting fires and setting up camps. It had agreed to consider requests to plant memorial trees. It had decided, following consultation with the Parish Council, to install kissing gates at the north entrances of Holts Spinney to restrict motorcycle access because of the health and safety issue for other users of The Holts. A public notice has been put up to inform of the decision and to advise anyone requiring disabled access to contact the Parish Clerk. Quotes are being obtained for one French drain across the lower part of Pingle Wood. The group will have a stall at the Lt Downham Fete on 03/06/17 and hopes to recruit new members. Its next meeting is on 19/07/17.

21/17 PLANNING MATTERS

1. Planning correspondence -
- 1.1 **17/00457/FUL** Mr Brian Mulley, 59 Cannon Street, Lt Downham - Demolition of vacant property, and construction a new 3 bedroom chalet dwelling with associated parking – AMENDMENT – The amendment involves Structural Information, ecology and reduction in height.
Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no comments regarding this application.
- 1.2 **17/00667/FUL** Mr Jason Constable, 51 Cannon Street, Lt Downham – Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of 2no. four bedroom two storey detached dwellings, 4no. three bedroom one & a half storey detached dwellings and 1no. three bedroom two storey detached dwelling - **Little Downham Parish Council had concerns regarding this application and unanimously recommended outright refusal for the following reasons.**
 1. **Development of the site** – The proposed development would result in the loss of an ancient orchard and is in effect a change of use of the land to residential. The proposed boundary landscaping would have a detrimental effect on neighbouring dwellings due to anticipated growth of proposed tree and shrub varieties and lack of maintenance. The backland development would result in a loss of privacy to neighbouring dwellings. The application is believed to be contrary to various policies of the East Cambs Local Plan 2015 and the provisions of National Planning Policy Framework.
 2. **Out of keeping with adjacent dwellings and the local area** – The proposed contemporary 1.5 storey units to be built in the existing orchard are out of keeping with dwellings in the surrounding area and village. Although they are assumed to be unobtrusive by way of their flat sedum roofs, they have no character and do not complement the area.

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3. **Parking concerns** – Concern was expressed that the allocated two parking spaces per dwelling was not enough for the future residents and visitors of the proposed three and four bedroom dwellings. Inevitably, this would result in cars being parked on the site access road and on-street parking on Cannon Street, which is a busy thoroughfare often used by large farm and haulage vehicles and already subject to regular parking issues.

4. **Access** - The access road is considered too narrow for the anticipated number of vehicles associated with six new 3-bed and 4-bed dwellings. It is on a slope and has visibility issues to the east due to the adjacent garage of No. 49A. These issues could cause problems for drivers exiting the site, as well as access to and from the site for construction, delivery and emergency vehicles. There is no allocated footway for pedestrian access.

5. **Loss of natural habitat** – Loss of the Orchard (approximately 1.5 ha) would have a devastating impact on the local wildlife of the area, which is sited a few hundred yards north and west of the Little Downham Local Nature Reserve and protected species, such as the Great Crested Newts and Bats. Does to application conform to Policy ENV7 of the Local Plan (2015) in respect of the protection of biodiversity and guidance contained within The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) in respect of undertaking of Appropriate Assessments of Habitats Directive Species?

6. **Outside the development envelope** – Although this is not a reason for refusal on its own, it is observed that five of the proposed dwellings are outside of the development envelope and plots 3 – 6 are considered as backland development. Approval of this application could set a precedent for further backland applications into the open countryside.

Additional comments

7. The Parish Council considered its comments following representations from seven local residents attending the council meeting and others expressing objections in correspondence.

8. Appendix A of the Design and Access Statement relates to that of a development in Waterbeach and South Cambs District Council. It has no relevance to the proposed application at Little Downham in East Cambs District and therefore does not demonstrate that the development achieves 9 'green lights' and is eligible for the 'Built for Life' accreditation.

1.3 **17/00733/FUM** Mr Ian Hale, Works adjacent to 7 Cannon Street, Lt Downham – Construction of 11no. four bedroom, 9no. three bedroom, 7no two bedroom dwellings & associated works. It was noted that Mr Hale had offered to meet with the Parish Council to discuss details of the application. The planning case officer had no objections to the Council submitting a comment on 23/06/17. The Council decided to defer the item and invite Mr Hale to the 22/06/17 meeting.

1.4 **17/00772/FUL** Mr Shane Dunnett & Ms Rachel Quilter, 15 California, Lt Downham – Demolish existing conservatory and erect single storey extension
Resolved - Little Downham Parish Council had no comments regarding this application.

For information only:

1.5 **ECDC - Applications approved:** 16/00610/FUL, 17/00569/TPO

8.00pm 11 parishioners left the meeting.

8.03pm One parishioner returned.

22/17 **FINANCE**

1. **Monthly Internal Audit** was carried out by Cllrs JW Barker and BL Taylor.

2. **To review list of Direct Debits** – It was agreed that the direct debits were acceptable.
Resolved unanimously to approve the list of Direct Debits for 2017/18.

3. **Magpas Air Ambulance - donation request** – It was proposed by Cllr MM Oldfield and seconded by Cllr KO Winters to grant a donation of £262 to fill a helicopter fuel tank.
Resolved unanimously to approve a donation of £262 to Magpas under S137, Local Government Act 1972.

8.10pm One parishioner left.

4. **To review Parish Council Savings Accounts** – Lloyds Bank Deposit Account and Barclays Bank 10-days Notice Premium Accounts interest rates are currently 0.05% and 0% respectively. Following a discussion on new savings accounts, it was proposed by Cllr MAC Seidler and seconded by Cllr MM Oldfield to open a 1-year Fixed Business Bond with Hampshire Trust Bank, a 100-days notice account with United Trust Bank and a Business Instant Saver with Nationwide. Deposits for the new accounts will come from the Barclays Bank Gen Res Account and the Lloyds Bank Deposit Account. The Lloyds Bank Current Account will remain the same. The Barclays Bank LD Rec Fund and Countryside Accounts will be reviewed in due course.

Resolved unanimously to deposit funds as follows:

- £80,000 in a 1-year Fixed Business Bond with Hampshire Trust Bank @ 1.40%;
 - Remaining balance of the Barclays Bank General Reserve 10–days notice Account into the 100-days notice account with United Trust Bank @ 0.90%;
 - To top up the 100-days notice account with United Trust Bank with funds from the Lloyds Bank Deposit Account;
 - To transfer the balance of the Lloyds Deposit Account to a Business Instant Saver with Nationwide @ 0.40%.
5. **To approve purchase of a new dog bin and position of installation at upper Townsend** – A new dog bin, ground anchor and ground anchor post will cost £287.17 (inc. VAT) from Wybone. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllrs Oldfield and Ord should meet on site to discuss a suitable location for the bin prior to purchase.
6. **To approve bills and other items for payment** – No payments for approval on this occasion.

23/17 PARISH LAND AND ASSETS

1. **Witchford Colts FC – request use of three pitches at Lt Downham Rec during 2017/18 season** – The matter was deferred to the next meeting for the Clerk to consult with Little Downham United FC, who use the adult pitch on Sunday mornings. It was noted that Lt Downham Swifts, who generally play at Pymoor, occasionally use Lt Downham during the wetter months if Pymoor field is waterlogged. The Council will review the field rent rates at the next meeting.
2. **Emilie Packman – request permission for bouncy castle on Pymoor Rec field** – The Council had no objection to the request.
Resolved unanimously to grant permission to Emilie Packman for bouncy castle on 22/07/17 and stipulate that the following conditions apply:
- that she will carry out an inspection of the field where the marquee is to be sited to ensure there are no harmful objects on the ground before and after the event;
 - that any damage to the recreation field or car park is made good as soon as possible after the event;
 - No fireworks are permitted.

24/17 PARISH MATTERS

1. **Environment Agency Total River Strategy Update – (Cllrs BL Taylor & KO Winters)** – Following Dist. Cllr Bradley's report earlier in the meeting, it was decided to defer this item to the next meeting.

25/17 HIGHWAYS, PARISH PATHS & BYWAYS

1. **Replies re matters reported from previous meetings:**
- 1.1 **Black Bank Road and Common Road, Lt Downham (Min.111/16.1.1)** – The Local Highways Officer reported that a budget is available for Fen roads. CCC had a site visit with contractors on 17/05/17 and is looking to retread and strengthen the worst distorted areas with grid reinforcement underneath the surface, as it will stop the sinking and hopefully stop the road failing so quickly. They looked at Downham common too. As it is a large and expensive scheme with road closures, work will not start for at least 3 months.
2. **To report current matters of concern:**
- 2.1 **Black Bank Road, Little Downham** – Cllr Winters expressed concern about the road and that a car with four lads in came off Black Bank Road last week.

26/17 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

8.40pm

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 27/17 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.

27/17 PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS

1. **Myles Meadow 2017 Grazing season – to consider tenders** – No tenders were received. It was noted that hay will need cutting in June. It was agreed that Cllr Barker could approach Matthew Golding to see if he is interested in cutting the hay.

2. **Pavilion update – to consider proposed internal layout (Min.174/16.1)** – The Council considered a draft internal layout of the Pavilion with proposed alterations and suggestions by Greg Saberton. The internal alterations included:
 - removing the toilets in the front changing rooms, extending the shower areas to provide 5 showers and extend the entrances into the lobby area;
 - to add a toilet to the ‘ladies’ toilet area;
 - to part extend the kitchen into the lobby area;
 - to create a disabled toilet in the lobby area;
 - to create a Referees room in the old youth club store room.

It was proposed by Cllr MM Oldfield and seconded by Cllr MAC Seidler to approve the proposed alterations, along with new windows, doors, fascia, soffit, sanitaryware, kitchen units and worktops, sink, oven/hob, ventilation and heating. **A recorded vote result was as follows:**
In favour - (9) Cllrs JW Barker, G Hayter-Smith, MM Oldfield, G Ord, MAC Seidler, RS Martin, BL Taylor, GH Taylor, JL Waters, Against – (1) Cllr KO Winters.

28/17 REQUEST OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION - None

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.55 pm.

Signed (Chairman) Date