

**MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting of Little Downham Parish Council held in the Village Hall, Main Street, Little Downham, on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018 commencing at 7.00pm.**

**Councillors present:** JL Waters, in the chair, and JW Barker, GJ Hayter-Smith, RA Maxey, MM Oldfield, DR Parson, MAC Seidler, GH Taylor, and KO Winters. **Clerk:** Mrs J Wardle

**Other attendees:** None

**1/18 TO ELECT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2018/2019**

1. It was proposed by Cllr KO Winters and seconded by Cllr GJ Hayter-Smith that Cllr JL Waters be nominated for Chairman. There were no other nominations.

**Resolved unanimously to duly elect Cllr JL Waters as Chairman for 2018/19.**

2. **Chairman to sign Declaration of Acceptance of Office** - Cllr Waters formally accepted the position of Chairman of Little Downham Parish Council by signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman.

**2/18 TO APPOINT VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL 2018/2019**

1. It was proposed by Cllr GH Taylor and seconded by Cllr DR Parson that Cllr KO Winters be nominated for Vice Chairman. There were no other nominations.

**Resolved unanimously to duly appoint Cllr KO Winters as Vice Chairman for 2018/19.**

Cllr Winters accepted the position of Vice Chairman of Little Downham Parish Council.

**3/18 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Cllr CE Hall, Dist. Cllrs A Bailey and M Bradley and County Cllr L Dupre. No apologies: Cllr G Ord.**

**4/18 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - None**

**5/18 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

1. **Resolved that the minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018 were correct and to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

**6/18 PUBLIC FORUM – No comments**

**7/18 TO APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE FOLLOWING BODIES:**

**Resolved that the Parish Council representatives be as follows:**

1. **Book Café Subcommittee** (3) - Cllrs CE Hall, MAC Seidler and GH Taylor
2. **Downham Parish Conservation Group** (1) - Cllr JW Barker & RA Maxey (substitute)
3. **Parish Website Working Group** (1) – Robin Pearl, Richard Maxey and the Clerk
4. **Village Hall Committee** (1) – Cllr CE Hall
5. **Downham, Pymoor & Coveney Parish Magazine** (1) – Cllr RA Maxey

**8/18 TO APPOINT MEMBERS AS THE FOLLOWING:**

**Resolved that the Parish Council representatives be as follows:**

1. **Staff Appraisal Officer** – Cllr JL Waters
2. **Lead Child Protection Officer** – Cllr MM Oldfield.

**9/18 FINANCE**

1. **To review the effectiveness of the system of internal control** – It was proposed by Cllr GH Taylor and seconded by Cllr GJ Hayter-Smith that the system of internal control be approved.

**Resolved unanimously to approve the effectiveness of the system of internal control.**

2. **To receive and note Annual Internal Auditor's Report 2017/18** - The Internal Auditor's Report was read to the Council and Mrs Wallace brought the following three matters to its attention:

**1. General fund balance**

*The balance of the General Fund has grown again this year and is now equivalent to more than twice the level of annual expenditure. Ideally I would expect the General Fund balance to be much lower than this; sufficient to cover anticipated costs in the coming year in the event that you do not receive your precept payment for example.*

However I know that the Council has two big projects planned:

1. The pavilion refurbishment: I understand that the latest quote for work is £75,000 and that you have applied to ECDC for matched funding of 50% of this total.
2. New burial land: I understand an area of land has been identified but not yet purchased. Once purchased, there will be many associated costs as the land is prepared and made suitable for burial purposes. It is not possible for me to anticipate the amount of these costs but I can imagine that they may add up to a sizeable amount. I also understand that the council does not wish to finance the new cemetery through borrowing.

Bearing the above projects in mind, I feel that it is acceptable to have such a large General Fund balance, in addition to earmarked reserves.

However, should actual costs turn out to be lower than anticipated or if grants are successfully obtained to contribute towards these costs then when setting future precept levels, please review these balances. I expect to see a reduction in the General Fund once these projects are commenced and I would also expect to see a reduction in the precept level if costs are lower and/or grants are obtained.

#### 2. Asset Risk Management review

Each year the Council performs a detailed risk management review of the assets it holds. Last year's report was reviewed by the Council in January 2017. I understand that the Clerk requested someone to perform this review in February but at the year end no report has been received. When it arrives please ensure it is properly reviewed and any matters of attention are followed up. It is important that these reviews are performed annually so please ensure that the next review is performed within 12 months of this review.

#### 3. Confirmation of year end VAT debtor

At the time of writing this report, I have not been able to confirm the year end VAT debtor, as HMRC have not yet sent the repayment or sent confirmation of the claim which was correctly submitted before the year end. When this supporting documentation has been received I will confirm the balance in the account is disclosed correctly.

The Council noted the points of the report and will take them into consideration accordingly. It was proposed by Cllr MAC Seidler and seconded by Cllr GH Taylor.

**Resolved unanimously to accept the Internal Auditor's Report for year ending 31 March 2017.**

3. **To approve Year End Accounts 31 March 2018** – The Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer presented the Accounts to the Council. It was proposed by Cllr MM Oldfield and seconded by Cllr GJ Hayter-Smith to approve the Parish Council Accounts 2017/18.

**Resolved unanimously to approve the Little Downham Parish Council Accounts for year ending 31 March 2018.**

#### 4. **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18 Part 3:**

- 4.1 **To complete and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2017/18** – The Council formally read and agreed with all statements confirming that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. It was proposed by Cllr MAC Seidler and seconded by Cllr MM Oldfield that the Annual Governance Statement is approved.

**Resolved unanimously that the Council approved the annual governance statements and authorised the Chairman and Clerk to sign Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018.**

- 4.2 **To approve Accounting Statement 2017/18** – It was noted that the Clerk/RFO certified on 04/05/2018 that for the year ended 31 March 2018 the Accounting Statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return presented fairly the financial position of the authority and its income and expenditure. The figures in Section 2 were approved as the year-end Accounts 2017/18. It was proposed by Cllr MAC Seidler and seconded by Cllr MM Oldfield that the Section 2 - Accounting Statement be formally approved and signed.

**Resolved unanimously that the Council approved the accounting statements and that the Chairman duly sign Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2017/18 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2018.**

#### 10/18 **PARISH COUNCIL LAND AND ASSETS**

1. **Hire of Lt Downham recreation field and Pavilion for football matches in 2018/19 season:**

- 1.1 **Witchford Colts FC – Request use of three football pitches for various age group teams –**

The Council reviewed all field rents and decided to increase the current rates for football teams and the Cricket Club. It was noted, WCFC had offered to purchase new goals for the adult pitch. **Resolved unanimously to increase the rent to £250 for the 2018/19 season for Witchford Colts FC and to £100 for 2018 season for Lt Downham Cricket Club, which included use of the Pavilion.**

- 1.2 **Liam Badcock – Request use of adult pitch for new Saturday Football Team (The Isle FC)**  
– the Council approved use of the adult pitch as a home ground for The Isle FC.  
**Resolved unanimously to charge £30 per game for the 2018/19 season The Isle FC, which included use of the Pavilion.**

It was noted that the goal areas of the adult pitch at Lt Downham needed top soil and grass seed as soon as possible in preparation for the start of the football season in August. Cllrs Barker and Parson offered to check the areas and quantify what was needed. In order to proceed as soon as possible, it was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would use delegated powers.

**Resolved to authorise the Chairman and Clerk, under Financial Regulations Clause 11.1(c)(i) delegated powers, to approve costs and order materials prior to the next Council meeting for Little Downham adult pitch goal areas.**

2. **Mrs S Booth – Request Council to remove Ivy from her wall at Cub Green, Lt Downham** –  
It was suggested that the handyman severed the Ivy at, or below, ground level and removed from the wall when it had died off. This would avoid damaging the wall. The handyman was also asked to trim the weeds in the area.

**11/18 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

8.30pm

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 12/18 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.

**12/18 HUMAN RESOURCES**

1. **To formally approve staff salary increases:**

- 1.1 **Parish Clerk** – The Clerk’s pay scale and rate was based on the National Salary Award for Local Government Clerks 2018-2019 recently accepted by the Unions and set by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC). The Clerk was not due an incremental increase. It was noted that lower Spinal Column Points had been restructured and the Clerk’s SCP was renumbered as 32.

**Resolved unanimously to approve and accept the National Salary Award for 2018-2019 pay scale and rates for the Clerk and increase her salary in accordance with her SCP rate backdated to 01/04/2018.**

- 1.2 **Parish Council Handyman** – The Handyman’s salary is not set to any pay scale. It was decided not to increase his salary in line with the National Salary Award rate of 2%, but to increase by 50p per hour (4.5%)

**Resolved unanimously to approve an increase of the handyman’s salary from £11 to £11.50 per hour backdated to 01/04/2018.**

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.35 pm.

Signed ..... (Chairman) Date .....