

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT 8.00 PM ON TUESDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2011
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs Cheesman (Chairman); Bevan (part); Greenhead; Butler; Roberts; Chainey; Ladds; Mrs T. Irving (Clerk); PSCO Stevens (part); Cllr Cooke (KCC); Chris Chainey.

1 APOLOGIES: Cllr Weeks (work commitment); Cllr Bevan (late due to work commitment); Cllr Marchant (MBC); PCSO Stevens; Rajan Kantaria.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None.

3 POLICE REPORT - DOWNSWOOD CRIME FIGURES from 7th December 2010 to 29th January, 2011.

07.12.10 Longham Copse.

Disc cutter stolen from a parked lorry. The alarm on the lorry was activated and two males were seen running off. Patrols carried out and area searched for the males with no trace. The disc cutter was found and handed back to the owner.

20.12.10 Deringwood Drive

A parked vehicle had its windscreen wipers damaged. The vehicle was left in Deringwood Drive due to heavy snow in the side turnings. No further lines of enquiries.

25.12.10 Grampian Way

The lower panel of an entrance door to a property was damaged. This has been classified as criminal damage. No suspects and no other lines of enquiries.

09.01.11 Grampian Way

Two Asian males attended an address in Grampian Way to view a motor vehicle that was advertised for sale. They carried out a test drive and said that they wanted to give a deposit for the vehicle and handed back the key to the owner. The two males did not return. When the owner tried the key in the vehicle he realised they had in fact swapped his key for a fake key. The owner informed the Police. On the balance of probabilities it would appear that an offence of theft has been committed with the intention to steal the vehicle at a later time. This has been allocated for further investigation.

13.01.11 Pennine Way

Burglary and theft. Car Stolen from a driveway in Pennine Way - suspects have been charged with the offence.

13.01.11 Murrain Dive

A report that charity bags containing clothes were stolen from outside of a property in Murrain Drive. Other lines of enquiry

16.01.2011 Chiltern Close

Front door to property in Chiltern Close damaged. This has been recorded as an attempted burglary, ongoing enquiries.

4 COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION. Cllr Quinnell has resigned from the Parish Council due to personal circumstances. The Borough has been informed and the required legal notices are displayed on parish boards.

5 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC –
Christmas lights were discussed.

6 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2010:
The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

7 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT.

'KCC will approve its budget for next year at the February 2011 Meeting. To achieve the zero adjustment of the precept, Kent has made savings of £95 million for 2011/12 and will need to make further savings next year of approx £65 million.

The number one priority of the council is improving the quality of care provided via the authority's children's social services following the inadequate assessment made by Ofsted. Paul Carter has indicated that if there has not been the level of improvement as identified by Ofsted within one year – he will stand down.

Highways have a new cabinet member and children's social services has been taken out of education and allocated a new dedicated cabinet member.

I have been asked to continue doing the job I have been doing but have additionally assumed responsibility for primary school attainment. So I am now Deputy Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills.

Elected Members have awarded themselves an 11% pay cut.

At least three further salt bins are being pursued for Downswood. It was pleasing to receive letters from Murrain Drive residents thanking me for the salt bin.

I continue to chase KHS regarding the state of the road surface at the bottom of Mallards Way.

Pot holes are again becoming a priority and resource is being made available to provide remedial action.

All of my Member's grant money has been allocated for the current financial year but members will retain their discretionary grants at least into next year.

G. Cooke 01/02/2011'

8 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

- Members are reminded that the next Neighbourhood Forum will be held on 10 February when CCTV will be discussed.
- There will be no Devolved Budget available during 2011/12.
- Cllr Marchant has offered to represent both Downswood and Otham at the KALC Area Committee Meeting on 01/03/11.

9 CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND LIGHTS CEREMONY. Mrs Noyce thanked the PC for their offer, but whilst she will continue to assist Jim in his role she declined a Mother Christmas outfit.

2 December 2011 was agreed for this year's ceremony (subject to the hall being available).

A firework display was ruled out, but there is a possibility that a 'couple of rockets could mark the switch on'.

It was resolved to purchase additional lights; possibly a light for the roundabout + two further motifs. A representative from Gala Lights will be invited to attend DPC's March Meeting to discuss ideas further. Load testing of 'new' columns + timers and four new timers for existing columns will be required

It was noted that the LED bulbs had resulted in a small cost saving due to two years free storage, a reduction in energy costs and FOC filament bulbs supplied during 2010.

10 MATTERS ARISING:

- **Mallards Way Fencing** – It appears wooden fencing will be installed, as opposed to the PC's preferred option of metal fencing (due to longer lasting properties). Therefore it was not felt appropriate to contribute towards the cost of a replacement.

- **Handrail for Willow Rise/Old Church Road.** Cllr Butler/Clerk to visit site to determine viability of a handrail. It was felt that it may not be a feasible option due to on-going maintenance costs.

- **Foxden Drive Play Area.** The Clerk has been advised by Parks and Open Spaces that a reassessment of play areas is due to be carried out and therefore it may be a 'waste of money' to refurbish existing equipment at present. It was agreed to delay until after the reassessment has taken place.

Clerk to request more information from the Borough's Officer regarding his suggestion for a fence in the wood, near the BMX area (estimated cost of £500).

11 URGENT MATTERS:

- Removal of restrictor bollard in Old Church Road by sweeper operative has resulted in this being unstable. Repairs are likely to be required as it could be kicked over.

- Shield required for column near No. 23 Kings Acre as this is extremely bright.

- MBC to be requested to carry out a litter pick of BMX track in the wood.

12 FINANCE

i) Items for payment

Balance of Current Account £19,922.28 credit, after all cheques sent.

Balance of Investment Account £9,938.62 credit.

The council confirmed approval of the following payments:

Mrs. A-M Butler	Christmas Ceremony Refreshments	26.26
KCC (KCS)	Newsletter Printing	129.15
Hilights	Erection/Dismantling of Christmas Lights	2,150.25
Jim Noyce	Litter Picking (December)	239.25
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary & Expenses (December)	743.31
HM Revenue & Customs	PAYE	398.08
DCA	Hall Bookings for 2011	252.40
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary & Expenses (January)	747.93
J. Noyce	Litter Picking (January)	244.40

Chalkgate	Bin Liners	18.59
JPG Group	Refund of Unused Contributions	162.33

ii) Clerk's Pension. Information provided by KCC was circulated to councillors for consideration prior to the meeting. Following discussion, a resolution was passed as follows:

- Mrs Teresa Irving – current Clerk to the Council – will be allowed to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Future Downswood Parish Council Clerks will be considered for the scheme following the necessary qualifying period (currently five years).
- The Parish Council wish Mrs Irving to join the LGPS as from April, 2010 (it is understood that both Employers and Employees contributions will need to be backdated to this date and will need to be paid no later than 31.03.2011).
- It was confirmed that the contribution rate calculated by the LGPS actuaries is agreeable and it was acknowledged that the employer contribution rate may change following a triennial valuation of the LGPS (next valuation 2013).

iii) Other Matter to Report. Further investigation to take place regarding the provision of bin liners for two bins at The Spires Shops. Cllr Cheesman to contact previous litter picker(s) to see how this originated?

MBS have provided a quotation of £700 for the provision and installation of a new bench (as per the existing style) at Foxden Drive/Longham Copse bus stop. Alternatively, repairs can be carried out in soft wood for £154 or hardwood for £235. It was unanimously agreed that the existing bench is not worth repairing and a price should be sought for an Enviropol bench (as per Mallards).

13 CLERK'S REPORT.

- KCC has written to the owner of the bush obscuring the Murrain Drive/Monkdown walkway to request it is cut back.
- Otham residents were not successful in their bid to purchase The White Horse Public House. It was bought by a private individual who plans to re-open it for business in the near future.
- In line with expected dates for the election (normally held on the first Thursday in May), it was resolved to hold Downswood Parish Council's Annual Meeting on 10 May at 8 pm to elect officers and assign committees. Downswood's APM will precede the Parish Council's Meeting of 3 May.

14 REPORTS FROM SEMINARS ATTENDED – Cllr Ladds attended the Police Forum Meeting & a copy of his notes were included in the circulation pack.

15 PLANNING.

New Applications.

MA/11/0080 – 18, Ravens Dane Close.

Erection of single storey side extension.

The Parish Council do not wish to comment.

16 COMMITTEE REPORTS – None available.

17 NEWSLETTER/WEBSITE. Cllr Bevan to forward a profile to Clerk for the NL (website photo to be used). Details of the church tea parties to be included in the NL. Clerk to forward Cllr Vacancy Notice to Cllr Butler for the website.

18 SPRING CLEAN – Subject to availability of the hall, the Spring Clean will be held on Saturday 9 or 16 April between 10-12 am. Clerk to establish ownership of land (by The Spires Shops) on which the PC notice board stands as this may allow a maintenance plan to be formulated, due to the area being overgrown with weeds again.

19 CORRESPONDENCE (included in circulation pack)

- CAB re. Outreach Sessions and Home Visiting.
- BTCV re. ‘Woody Heritage’ (Kent Heritage Trees Project)

20 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MEETING: DCA Fete, Garden Competition, Memberships/Subscription Renewals. Please inform the Clerk of any other matters at least one week prior to the meeting.

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

DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 1 MARCH, 2011