

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL
HELD AT 8.00 PM ON TUESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2008
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs Cheesman (Chairman); Bevan; Butler; Ladds; Weeks; Mrs Irving (Clerk); PCSO Stevens (part); Cllr Marchant; S. James/J. Davies/N. Delahaye - LVP&AS, Cllr David Marchant (MBC) (part); one member of the public (part), Rajen Kantaria (part).

1 APOLOGIES: Cllr Clark (unwell); Cllr Chainey (work commitment); Cllr Greenhead (work commitment); Cllr Laing (???)

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Cllrs Ladds/Cheesman - re Item 14 i) Choir Donation, Cllr Bevan re. Item 9 Christmas Lights.

3 POLICE REPORT

Crime figures from 04/11/08 to 01/12/08.

6 Vehicle doors levered and damaged (nothing taken). Areas mainly targeted were; Longham Copse & Foxden Drive.

- 1 Outside light damaged
- 1 Theft from motor vehicle
- 1 Rear garden fence damaged
- 1 Vehicle taken without owners consent.

Graffiti/tagging: Further information is now available - investigations ongoing.

Police Surgery to be held at Downswood Community Centre on Tuesday, 9 December between 7-8 pm.

4. LVP &AS REPRESENTATIVE(S) RE. FISHING AT MALLARDS OPEN SPACE. The club was asked what action they are taking in response to the injuries being caused to wildlife. They explained that regular patrols are carried out by the bailiff (ND) but they have no powers to stop people from fishing & can only request non members to leave the site. Action can only be taken if fish are actually removed from the lake. 75% of the youths fishing in the river are nothing to do with the club. Various suggestions of how discarded fishing equipment came to be at the lake were made; swans feeding from the bottom of the lake could be pulling up equipment from 10/15 years ago, birds could be flying the equipment over from Mote Park, wildlife could be removing from litter bins, or it could have been discarded by youths fishing at the river.

The club make every effort to keep the area clean & are currently in talks with MBC regarding a management plan which, it is hoped, will improve the situation. Although 2008 has seen record membership, the lake is not over fished & is predominately an amenity for local youths.

It was agreed to monitor the situation as it should be possible to get a clearer idea of the amount of litter being left behind now that unofficial litter picking has stopped. The club were requested to keep a log of incidents & advise DPC. Representatives were thanked for attending the meeting & allaying fears.

5. ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC –

No questions.

6. APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2008:

The minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of proceedings

7 URGENT MATTERS:

- Deferment of January Meeting? It was agreed to defer the January Meeting & call an extraordinary meeting, if necessary.
- Cllr Marchant informed the meeting that he had been in discussion with Robert Sunley regarding the formation of a Community Area Group. The purpose of the group would be to provide support in the event of an emergency and although members would be earmarked, it is hoped that they would never actually have to meet. It was pointed out that Downswood could easily be cut off as there are limited means of egress/ingress. DPC are requested to give the matter some thought with, ideally, two members of the PC volunteering to join the group.

8 KENT INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY: Currently no further news - Careful eye to be kept on website for updates.

9 MATTERS ARISING:

- **Mallards Way/Open Space:** MBC has provided updates regarding:
Inspection Reports - checks are being made whether they can be provided to DPC.
Mini Spinner Roundabout - Parts have not been received or are in the system awaiting fitting. Play Area Surface - Operatives to be asked to assess at next inspection.
Roundabout - Ball park figure received from MBS of £5,000 to landscape, supply & plant shrubs. Due to higher than expected costs, Clerk to enquire whether it would be possible to plant 3 x silver birch trees with white trunks.
- **Traffic Calming - Church Road/Deringwood Drive.** No further information received, although Rodney Williamson discussed the proposals with Kim Hills & received assurances that the matter is progressing.
- **Additional CCTV** - No contact received from MBC/Police. Cllr Marchant/Clerk to chase.
- **Newsletter Delivery.** Contact details provided by Rajen Kantaria - Ryan Perkins has undertaken delivery of the latest edition.
- **Christmas Carols & Lights Ceremony.** Cllr Weeks enquired whether a request had been made by the church to sell calendars at the event. Although no previous approach had been made, it was agreed that the church could man a stall. It was resolved to accept the quotation from Gala lights of £40/month x 10 months/year to store motifs. As a small thank you to Mr. & Mrs Bevan for free storage over the past few years, it was proposed by Cllr Butler, seconded by Cllr Weeks & unanimously agreed that a gift should be purchased to the value of £100. Cllr Bevan to advise Clerk of suitable gift.
Apologies were received from Mr & Mrs Pateman as due to a conflicting appointment they are unable to attend the ceremony.
- **Community Event** - Decision deferred to next meeting
- **Grasscutting (Parish land, rear of Murrain Drive).** It was resolved to accept MBC's quotation of £60 per occasion; cutting to take place during May, August & November.

Clerk to check with Yorke fencing that additional supports on the new fencing are a temporary measure only.

• **APM Suggestions for Speaker(s).** Steve Horton - KHS & Environment Agency. Clerk to enquire whether LVP & AS would be interested in giving a presentation.

10 CLERK'S REPORT: Foxden Drive notice board requires attention as it is in a poor state of repair. It was agreed to resite the board as the current location is impracticable. Clerk to make enquires with regard to new site outside Foxden play area.

Laptop has been provided by KALC for supply to councillor. As Cllr Ladds confirmed that he is not interested in the laptop, Clerk to issue on loan to Cllr Clark.

11 COMMITTEE REPORTS – None available.

12 REPORTS FROM SEMINARS ATTENDED – Cllr Cheesman to circulate report re. KALC's APM on 8 November.

13 PLANNING - Nothing to report.

14 FINANCE

i) **Donation Requests; Kent Congo - Kent Scouts Expedition to Republic of Congo, Otham Church Choir.** It was resolved to donate £100 & £80 respectively.

ii) **Items for payment.**

Balance of Current Account £10,645.31 credit, after all cheques sent.

Balance of Investment Account £ 9,586.14 credit.

The council confirmed approval of the following payments.

		£
MBC	Benches/Bin Installation	2,808.25
Age Concern	Donation	150.00
Willow Rise	Donation	200.00
Gala Lights	2 x Motifs	881.25
S.W. Yorke	Murrain Picket Fencing	498.20
S.W. Yorke	Close Board Fencing	1,034.01
T.A. Irving	Clerk's Salary & Expenses (Nov)	775.63
J.A. Noyce	Litter Picking (Nov)	225.00
Ryan Perkins	Newsletter Delivery	50.00
Mr. D. Pateman	1 st Prize - Gardening Competition	50.00
Maureen Jenner	2 nd Prize - " "	25.00
Peter Daly	3 rd Prize - " "	15.00
Paul Waring	Supply & Plant Bulbs	123.38
Alex Torbica	Youth Achievement Award	20.00
Alexandra Adams	Youth Achievement Award	20.00
Chalkgate Ltd	Spring Clean Refreshments/Bin Liners/Gloves	199.87

Cheques received:

Nat West	Refund of Stopped Cheque Fee	10.00
MBC	2 nd Instalment Concurrent Functions	6,385.00
DCA	Litter Picking Contribution	62.50
Caxtons	Litter Picking Contribution	182.00
MBC	Grant - Foxden Play Area Fencing	10,000.00

iii) Litter Picker/Clerk's Annual Review. It was resolved that the Litter Picker's salary should be increased to £6.75/hr with immediate effect. The Clerk will be lifted two points to SCP 17 and paid the rate of £9.134, backdated to 01/04/08.

iv) Draft Budget 2009/10. It was agreed to remove the following items from the draft; Benches/Litter Bins (Foxden), Mallards (New metal fence - Play Area/Road), Mallards Roundabout (Landscaping), thus making a saving of £23,065. Cost of storing Christmas motifs added to budget, making a total for Christmas lights of £3,400. Following the above amendments, it was resolved to set the precept at £17,000 for 2009/10.

v) Standing Orders - Cllr English has confirmed that DPC's Standing Orders are in order. Clerk is currently reviewing *suggestions* made by Cllr English - to be discussed at next DPC Meeting.

iv) Other matters to report. - No further matters.

15 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES – None available.

16 CORRESPONDENCE.

- Communities in control: Real people, real power.

Codes of Conduct for local authority members & employees. Cllr Butler confirmed the document is for information only.

- **MBC - Review of land and property assets.** Details requested re. Council owned parcels of land within parish which are underused or neglected/land which could be combined with PC land to secure greater community benefit.

- Rajen Kantaria sends best wishes for the forthcoming Season & 2009 to all councillors.

17 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT.

- KHS are reported to be actively looking at additional road signs for the area.

- Willington Street traffic lights: Correspondence is still being received from residents objecting to the lights. Cllr Marchant has requested information with regard to how the lights will be phased/how sensors will be operated.

18 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MEETING:
Community Event.

DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 3 FEBRUARY, 2009.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.30 pm.