

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

**Present:** Cllrs Cheesman (Chairman); Bevan; Butler; Ladds; Greenhead; Laing; Weeks (part); Mrs Irving (Clerk); PCSO Stevens (part); Cllr Marchant - Rodney Williamson - KALC; Cllr David Marchant (MBC); fourteen members of the public (part), Rajen Kantaria (part).

**1 APOLOGIES:** Cllr Clark (unwell); Cllr Chainey (work commitment).

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllr Butler - Re Item 15 i) - Willow Rise Pre-school Donation Request.

**3 POLICE REPORT**

Crime figures from 07/10/08 to 03/11/08.

12/10/08. Longham Copse. Front near side window of car broken.

13/10/08. Redsells Close. Spare wheel taken from underneath compartment of vehicle. This may have occurred at work address (Notcutts, Maidstone).

23/10/08. Longham Copse. Stick-on number plates stolen from vehicle.

26/10/08 Graffiti on shutters of Spires Medical Centre.

A meeting to discuss CCTV was held on 21/10/08 with PCSO Stevens, Cllrs Cheesman & Marchant, Jim Noyce (part), two officers from MBC, John Grant (Police Architecture Liaison Officer) & Clerk. Report to be prepared by John Grant detailing recommendations for improved security etc at The Spires Shops/flats/surgery. Report will also mention that lighting is not considered to be good enough in the Community Centre car park. A ball park figure of £8,000 has been quoted for an additional camera, which would hopefully be monitored in the control centre. Further meeting to be arranged with all interested parties present.

Arial photographs were circulated to cllrs; these illustrated the additional coverage that a mobile camera could provide from the same site as the now defunct police camera, versus the coverage provided by the existing DPC fixed camera.

**4. KHS REPRESENTATIVE RE. TRAFFIC CONGESTION -** KHS declined the invitation to attend the meeting but a statement from Louise Rowlands - Transportation & Development Engineer - was read to the meeting. The statement referred to; a capacity analysis which indicated that the introduction of traffic signals would not be detrimental to capacity or safety, lights being provided by the developer at no cost to the Authority and the fact that they consider the permanent signals will be more efficient than the temporary signals as these will be responsive to demand and coordinated with the Ashford Road signals. KHS also stated that they will be monitoring the permanent signals and their effect on the surrounding areas to ensure disruption is kept to an absolute minimum.

**5. ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC –**  
A number of questions raised related to concern at the increase of traffic travelling through

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Downswood, following the temporary traffic lights in Willington Street. (A representative from KHS was invited to attend the meeting to answer questions - see item 4.)

One resident counted 120 vehicles travelling up Spot Lane in half an hour. It was also noted that the emergency services are using Mallards Way/Spot Lane to avoid being held up in Willington Street.

Mallards Way residents are finding egress from drives extremely difficult during peak hours & crossing the road to get to the park was reported as 'very frightening'.

Cllr Marchant commented that he was nearly knocked down twice on Sunday by vehicles coming down from Sutton Road into Downswood. He is continuing to press for weight restrictions on all Downswood entrances.

Clerk requested to ascertain whether original planning application featured traffic lights & which Parish Councils were consulted.

#### **6. KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS - RODNEY WILLIAMSON.**

Mr Williamson was invited to the meeting to elaborate on the services provided by KALC & to allow cllrs to determine whether this provides value for money.

Mr Williamson stated 289 Parish Councils (93%) are members of KALC. They are a non profit making organisation and as much money as possible is obtained from training etc, before subscription fees are set. Membership can be likened to an insurance policy and benefits include; keeping up-to-date with information, legal advice, a number of resources available on website, training courses, area committee, membership to KALC includes membership of NALC, newsletter.

Mr. Williamson apologised if responses from KALC are sometimes slow, but they are not heavily resourced and there are times when they are snowed under.

Mr. Williamson stated that the questions raised during item 4 were very interesting and he would be happy to take the issues up with Kim Hills (KHS) at a meeting arranged for later in the week.

Following a request from Cllr Cheesman to make a decision regarding membership of KALC, a resolution was passed that DPC would remain members in 2009/10.

#### **7 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2008:**

Following the addition of Cllr Ladds name to persons present & MBC CF Grant of £6,385.00 moved from 'out' column to 'in' column on financial projection (16i), the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of proceedings

#### **8 URGENT MATTERS:**

- 'Give Way' white line markings at Mallards (Bearsted side) are worn away.
- Supermarket trolley in shrubbery, near the notice board in Foxden Play Area.
- Cllr Laing has made a report to the police that a number of young people are drinking in Mallards Open Space on Saturday nights.
- 'Give Way' sign is missing from the bottom of Church Road.

**9 KENT INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY:** The additional information submitted by AXA - in response to MBC's request - does not answer all the questions raised. KHS have not provided their report. However, MBC are making the necessary arrangements for a

further consultation and it now appears less likely that the application will be 'called in' by the Government.

## **10 MATTERS ARISING:**

### **• Mallards Way:**

**Open Space** - Following Cllr Cheesman's informal on site chat with MBC operatives, a request has been made to the Parks & Open Spaces Officer for the PC to receive a copy of the weekly and/or monthly inspection report(s). Areas of concern include; replacement fencing required - by entrance to play area, path inside the play area is dangerous & needs extending, bottom of steps - by the slide - needs to be properly surfaced + handrail?, reinstatement of mini spinner, brackets worn on springers, gap in hedge leading to private land needs filling. It was also noted that, although reported previously, the play surface under the truck remains inadequate - Cllr Laing to provide photograph.

**Roundabout.** The Clerk has received the necessary form to apply for a Licence to Cultivate. An outline of planting design will need to be provided + proof of public liability insurance to the value of £5 million. KHS advised the PC may wish to consider requesting MBC to landscape the roundabout, thereby removing the need for a licence (approval will still need to be obtained from KHS/MBC). Clerk to request quotation from MBC for planting & maintenance of shrubs as they deem suitable.

**Grass Verges.** KHS stated 'pyramid' type paving would be unsuitable for this area as it would not last. The matter has now been resolved as, despite stating bollards could not be installed, bollards are now in situ.

**Fishing** - In the light of evidence supplied to the PC, it was questioned whether fishing should continue. Although the PC can only make recommendations to MBC, several options were considered. These included; abolishing fishing along the path or banning fishing for a trial period. It was unanimously agreed to invite a representative from the fishing club to the December meeting to enable them to state their case.

• **Foxden Drive Play Area** –Open Spaces Committee confirmed an Ariel Runway, or similar equipment, will be purchased from 2009/10 budget.

• **Traffic Calming** – Church Road/Deringwood Drive. Clerk has again requested an update but nothing has been forthcoming. Rodney Williamson to raise the subject with Kim Hills.

• **Additional CCTV** - See Item 3.

• **Newsletter Delivery.** Cllr Ladds reported that Zoe Sturgess is no longer interested. Cllr Laing & Rajen Kantaria to contact Clerk with details of suitable local candidates.

• **Christmas Carols & Lights Ceremony.** Jim Noyce has confirmed that he will resume his role as Father Christmas. Cllrs Butler & Chainey have refreshments in hand. Lights have been collected by Hilights and are due to be installed any day. Clerk to discuss possibility of storage of lights with Gala. To conserve energy, it was agreed that the lights should be switched off at 11.30 pm each day (1 hour earlier).

• **Community Event** - Decision deferred to next meeting

• **Grasscutting/Replacement Fencing (Parish land, rear of Murrain Drive).** Having examined the quotations at OS Meeting, Cllr Greenhead proposed S.W. Yorke & Sons are requested to carry out the work, seconded by Cllr Bevan & unanimously agreed.

## **11 CLERK'S REPORT: No further news to report.**

## **12 COMMITTEE REPORTS – None available.**

**13 REPORTS FROM SEMINARS ATTENDED** – Clerk met Parish Liaison Officer, Pam Kaur, at KHS Meeting on 14/10/08 when road safety was discussed.

MBC meeting held on 15/10/08 to discuss fishing at Mallards with Gordon Newton, Alison Broom, Brian Moss & Clerk present. Alison Broom to speak to the fishing club to find a consensus & advise Clerk ASAP.

CCTV meeting - See item 3.

## **14 PLANNING**

### **Applications Granted**

MA/08/1691 - 15 Frithwood Close

MA/08/1657 - 19 Horton Close

## **15 FINANCE**

### **i) Donation Requests; Kent Congo - Kent Scouts Expedition to Republic of Congo.**

Check to be made whether trip is going ahead in view of the current situation in the Congo.

**Willow Rise Pre-School** - It was resolved that a cheque be raised for £200 to purchase new mats for the children. Representative to be requested to attend cheque presentation at Carols & Lights Ceremony.

**Age Concern** - It was resolved to contribute £150 towards Christmas parties.

### **ii) Items for payment.**

Balance of Current Account £1,081.40 credit, after all cheques sent.

Balance of Investment Account £ 9,586.14 credit.

The council confirmed approval of the following payments.		£
J.A. Noyce	Litter Picking (Oct)	281.25
T.A. Irving	Clerk's Salary & Expenses (Oct)	690.30
NatWest	Stopped Cheque Fee (charged in error - to be Reimbursed)	10.00
RBL	Remembrance Day Wreath	35.00

**Cheques received** - No cheques received.

**iii) Standing Orders** - Currently being reviewed by Cllr English.

**iv) Other matters to report.** 2009/10 Draft Budget has been circulated to cllrs for discussion at December meeting.

**16 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES** – None available.

## **17 CORRESPONDENCE.**

- Mr & Mrs Pateman & Mrs Jenner have confirmed they will be attending the Carols & Lights Ceremony re. gardening competition prizes.
- Maidstone Youth Sport Achievement Awards 2008 - DPC to nominate Alex Torbica, Alexandra Adams & Zoe Sturgess.
- Communities in control: Real people, real power.

Codes of Conduct for local authority members & employees. Cllr Butler to consider consultation.

**18 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT.**

- **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK** - Cllr Marchant reported that the S.E. Regional Plan has been changed, resulting in additional houses & the strategic gap between Medway & Maidstone being removed. The cabinet insisted that the plan should not be considered and it was returned forthwith. Date of next meeting 10/12/2008.
- Consultation document re. Residential Extensions should be circulated soon.
- Tree Preservation Orders have been approved for all trees in East Wood, Otham.
- The review of Otham Conservation Area will be carried out in the first batch & this should be during the early part of 2009. Any comments would be appreciated.

**19 ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT NEXT MEETING:** Draft Budget, Newsletter Delivery.

**DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – 2 DECEMBER, 2008**

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.35**