

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 8.00 PM
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs Newton (part), Cheesman, Butler, Alden-Morris, Everett, Thompson, Pallant, Mrs T. Irving – Clerk, Cllr Cooke (KCC), 2 members of the public.

In the absence of the Cllr Newton, the meeting was chaired by the Vice Chairman, Cllr Cheesman.

- 1. APOLOGIES:** Cllr Brooks – work commitment; Cllr Newton – (part of the meeting due to conflicting MBC meeting; Cllr Fincham – work commitment.

The apologies and reasons for absence were noted and accepted.

- 2. NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO RECORD ANY ITEMS:** None received.
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None declared.
- 4. ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** None received.

The meeting was reconvened.

- 5. APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING 4 JANUARY 2022:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Cheesman.
- 6. CRIME REPORT:** 1 Crime has been reported on e-watch.com:

Monday 17 Jan around 10.21 am in Gorham Drive.
Recently delivered parcel stolen front doorstep.

PCSO Greaves has confirmed that she will shortly be starting maternity leave and during her absence the parish will be covered by PCSO Anna Hick.

- 7. REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:**
 - 7.1 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Cllr Cooke reported that KCC's Precept will be increased by the maximum amount possible. KCC is likely to overspend £21M, which is largely due to youth services (caused by youths coming into the country). Young people are suffering different levels of mental health issues as children have not had the chance to develop social skills, due to isolation/Covid.

Cllr Cooke has around £4K left in his budget (this is separate from his Member's Grant and is designated for young people).

KCC's Reconnect program will be starting soon.

KCC Highways are working with the government and will be taking powers of enforcement on the roads. Cameras will be installed by KCC for the purpose of fining road users that, for example, enter yellow boxes. In addition, the weight restrictions in Leeds village can be enforced, etc. The maximum fine will be £70 with the money raised going to Highways.

Cllr Cooke was congratulated on his forthcoming appointment as Vice Chairman of KCC.

7.2 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Not available.

7.3 REPORT FROM DCA REPRESENTATIVE: It was confirmed that the Easter Egg Hunt will go ahead now that Covid restrictions have been lifted.

Plans are being made for the Fete on Saturday, 4 June.

The toilet renovation is now complete.

3 New groups have joined the centre.

8 FINANCE:

i. Items for Payment

Aylesford Electrical	Removal of Christmas Lighting	802.04
J. Noyce	Litter Picker's Salary (Jan)	347.49
T. Irving	Clerk's Salary/Expenses (Jan)	993.80
KCC Re Kent Pension Fund	Clerk's Pension (Employer/Employee Conts)	349.25
Paul Waring	Maintenance of Roundabout	40.62
Heart of Kent Hospice	Donation (Agreed 04.01.22)	150.00

Cheques Received:

NS & I Acct	Interest	1.06
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Balance of Current Account: £24,181.13 credit, after all cheques sent

Balance of Investment Account: £10,605.44 credit

Acceptance of the previously circulated financial report was proposed by Cllr Butler, seconded by Cllr Thompson and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**

The drop in interest of the investment account was discussed and the need to consider alternative arrangements.

ii. **Review of Litter Picker's Sick Pay:** Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that in this instance, an additional payment for 10.5 hrs sick pay will be made. Clerk to advise that all annual leave should be used.

iii. **Donations Requests: Jack Carter – World Scout Jamboree/Bearsted Scouts:** The donation request/the desire to help the community whilst fundraising was discussed. Clerk to advise that help from the Bearsted Scout group would be most welcome on the DPC stall + general help at the DCA Fete and at the

Olympicnic. It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that in recognition of the help, the council will then make a donation at the Christmas Ceremony on 3 December to Bearsted Scouts in the sum of £100. Donation agreed under LGA S137.

Jack to be requested to attend a council meeting after the Jamboree to speak about his experience.

- iv. **Consider Membership Renewals: CPRE** – It was unanimously agreed to renew membership at £36 **RESOLVED**.
SLCC – It was unanimously agreed to contribute 2/3 of the membership at £124 (1/3 will be considered by OPC) **RESOLVED**.
- v **Other Matters to Report:** Auditing Solutions has requested that information is made available for an audit between 21 to 24 March. Clerk to provide certain documents for review, prior to the audit.

The Clerk reported that she has not received a response from the Rock Choir regarding a donation in their name, or confirmation of attendance at the Christmas Ceremony. Alternative contact details were provided.

9. **REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS:** It was unanimously agreed to carry out the following amendments:

3 i Requirement to stand when asking a question to be removed.

‘.....and stand when speaking (except when a person has a disability or is likely to suffer discomfort). The chairman of the meeting may at any time permit a person to be seated when speaking.’

4vi Delete entire clause and renumber ‘shall determine if the public may participate at a meeting of a committee’.

4vii Delete entire clause and renumber ‘shall determine if the public and press are permitted to attend the meetings of a sub- committee and also the advance public notice requirements, if any, required for the meetings of a sub-committee’.

- 10 **COMMITTEES: Terms of Engagement.** It was noted that committees have not been able to meet regularly due to Covid. It is hoped that with the lifting of restrictions, committee meetings may now be able to return to taking place on a regular basis.

11 PLANNING:

Awaiting decision by MBC

21/503538/SUB

Land West of Church Road, Otham

21/503538/SUB Land West of Church Road

21/503585 Land West of Church Road

Applications Granted:

21/506663 – 89 Murrain Drive

21/506424/FULL – 81 Murrain Drive

21/505109 – 4 Longham Copse

21/505728 – 15 Ellenswood Close

21/504454 – 80 Murrain Drive

Applications Refused:

21/505762 – 12 Kings Acre

- 12 OLYMPICNIC 2022:** Date for the Olympicnic was deferred until the March meeting. Comments were taken on board from Cllrs Everett and Thompson regarding scheduling of races etc.

Cllr Cheesman stated that due to never knowing how many volunteers will assist and how many residents of varying ages will attend, it was necessary to agree to disagree on some of the proposals. However, a list of the type of races will be considered. Also for consideration at the committee meeting will be the provision of refreshments for volunteers.

- 13 GOVERNANCE & POLICIES REVIEW: Contract for Litter Picker.** Clerk to check what templates are available on the SLCC website for adoption. **ACTION: Clerk**

- 14 QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE (2022):** A sketch of the proposed plinth was circulated to all by Cllr Newton. Suggestions for the inscription are invited from all. These must be provided by no later than close of business on 3 February.

KHS has agreed the Cultivation Licence. Permission for the plinth is being checked.

An unveiling ceremony will be held at a time/date TBA during the BH 02/06/22 to 05/06/22. (Apologies received from Cllr Alden-Morris)

- 15 BEE CORRIDORS:** The work is set to commence on 10 March 2022. To ensure continuity, MVCP to organise the materials and deliver to site as required.

- 16 FOXDEN DRIVE HEDGE:** Following consideration of the three quotations, it was proposed and seconded to accept Paul Waring's. **RESOLVED.** Work is required to be carried out during February to ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed.

Following concerns expressed by Cllr Newton about the height of the hedge, it was subsequently agreed that the hedge needs to be cutback 2 ft across the top, with the side tidied accordingly. Clerk to update Mr Waring and request an updated estimate.

ACTION: Clerk

- 17 CONSIDER JUBILEE BENCH FOR FOXDEN DRIVE:** MBC has set aside a picnic bench for installation on the grass, above the play area. Once installed, DPC to consider if a plaque would be considered appropriate.

- 18 CCTV UPDATE:** Following a review of the current system by Cllrs Everett and Pallant, 3 quotes were discussed with an agreement reached for a new DVR box to be installed. Clerk to ask NT Security to carry out work as per their original estimate. *Subsequent to the meeting, it was discovered that a new box may not be necessary as this does not form part of the quotation from NT Alarms.* **ACTION: Clerk**
- 19 GARDEN COMPETITION – SPRING 2022:** Cllr Cheesman made contact with Coolings Garden Centre to request someone to act as judge. They advised it is their busiest time of the year and they will have to discuss the possibility with head office. If Cooling are unable to help, Cllr Cheesman agreed to approach Notcutts or SE Daffodil Society. **ACTION: Cllr Cheesman**
- 20 CHRISTMAS LIGHTING INSTALLATION/CONTRACTORS:** Clerk to contact festive lighting contractors to request quotations for the 2022 installation. **ACTION: Clerk**
- 21 SALT BINS:** Clerk to update the Street Lighting Report and circulate to all councillors with a request to check the salt bins when checking the columns. **ACTION: All**
- 22 HONOURS BOARD:** Clerk to make contact with the signwriting company to request the board is updated. Cllr Everett volunteered to remove and deliver the board. **ACTION: Cllr Everett/Clerk**
- 23 DATE OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING/ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:** It was agreed to hold the meetings as follows: Annual Parish Meeting – 5 April at 7.45 pm, Annual General Meeting – 3 May at 7.45 pm (Apologies received from Cllr Cheesman).
- 24 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:**
- **Boundary Commission meeting** – Attended by Cllrs Butler and Newton
 - **KALC** – Attended by Cllr Butler (minutes circulated by KALC)
 - **Meeting with Bellway Homes/Otham Parish Council/CAARA** – Attended by Cllr Newton and the Clerk (Notes from the meeting circulated).
- 25 URGENT CORRESPONDENCE:** Various correspondence circulated by email for comment.
- **Downsmail** – requesting support.
- 26 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS:** Flagpole/Downsmail.
Please contact the Clerk if you have items that you wish to be considered for future agendas

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.02 pm.

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 8 pm on Tuesday, 1 March 2022