



**Full Council Minutes Downswood Parish Council Meeting
held at 8pm on Tuesday, 2 September 2025 in the Community Centre.**

Present: Cllrs R. Wingett - Chairman; R. Cheesman; J Tournay; P Fincham; G Newton; J Cottis; A. Fincham; A-M Butler; L. Rustem; Mrs T Irving – Clerk/RFO; MB Cllrs Val Springett & Denis Spooner, an invited resident from Coxheath, four members of the public.

Councillor Wingett delivered a fire safety address prior to the meeting commencing.

Councillors and the Clerk introduced themselves to those present.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received and accepted from: Councillor Ciaran Oliver (MBC) – conflicting meeting and Councillor Linden Kemkaran (KCC).
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO FILM/PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD THE MEETING:** Councillor Wingett.
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None received.
- 4 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1 July 2025:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Wingett.
- 15** Item was brought forward to allow the visiting Coxheath resident to share information relating to Coxheath Parish Council's Christmas trees arrangements.

To accommodate the main tree, a 2' ft deep x 1 ft diameter hole is dug in the ground with an inspection cover placed over the top. The purchased tree is usually between 19-20 ft and requires 2 to 3 people to put it up.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Cllrs P Fincham, J Cottis and R Wingett will obtain a price for a Christmas tree and source quote(s) to provide the necessary to house a tree adjacent to The Spires Shops.

ACTION: Cllrs P Fincham, J Cottis & R Wingett

It was suggested that a bracket will also need to be considered to hold the tree in place.

- 5 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.** No questions were raised.

The meeting was reconvened.

- 6 REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:**
 - 6.1 Kent County Councillor** – Not available.

6.2 Maidstone Borough Councillors. Reports were submitted by Cllr Spooner –see Appendix 1 and Cllr Oliver – see Appendix 2. No report was received from Cllr Springett, as matters had already been addressed in Cllr Spooner’s report.

6.3 DCA Representative. The DCA has advised that it will no longer submit a report to the Parish Council.

7 CRIME REPORT: The following crimes have been reported on e-watch.co

- Bournewood Close. On 3 July between 19.00 and 23.00 somebody stole a grey Ford Fiesta GD66*** from the road.
- Gorham Drive. Between 14.44 on Saturday 19 July and 17.30 on Tuesday 8 July, somebody stole the front number plate from a Mercedes C220 parked in the road.
- Reinden Grove. Between 11.00 on Saturday 19 July and 17.30 on Sunday 20 July, somebody damaged a Mercedes A180 parked in the road.
- Longham Copse. On Friday 25 July around 20.40, a group of young people attempted to damage a window of a residential property.
- Reinden Grove. On Thursday 31 July around 15.24 in Reinden Grove, somebody damaged a residential property.
- Reinden Grove. On Friday 8 August between 12.30 and 14.15, somebody attempted to cause damage to a residential property.
- Frithwood Close. On Saturday 16 August around 13.05, somebody tried to damage the roof tiles of a residential property.

8 PLANNING: New Applications and Existing Applications Update.

To consider and resolve the council’s response to planning applications listed below and any additional applications advised by Maidstone Borough Council and are available on their website between the circulation of the agenda and the meeting to which it pertains.

New Applications: None received.

It was agreed to make contact with Maidstone Borough Council to ask for clarification regarding the Borough’s failure to maintain a five-year housing land supply.

ACTION: Cllr Wingett

9 FINANCE:

**DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL REPORT 02.09.25**

	UNITY BANK Current Acct	UNITY Instant Access	NS & I Saving Acct
Balance b/f	709.09	66,582.66	10,911.98
Transfer from Inst Access to Crrt Account	5,000.00	5,000.00	

Expenses: Name

KSS Air Ambulance	Donation	100.00
Staffing Costs - July	Payroll and Expenses	2,165.41
Pete & Anne Fincham	Expenses - Tools for Open Spaces	439.10
KALC	Training - R Wingett (Website)	18.00
Staffing Costs - August	Payroll and Expenses	2,404.21
Paul Waring	Maintenance of Roundabout	52.92
Unity	Service Charge (July & August)	12.00

Total expenditure: 5,191.64

Receipts:

DCA	Credit Re 2025 Booking	68.56
HMRC	VAT Refund	1362.73
West Kent Primary	Litter Picking Contributions	130.00
(Medical Centre)	-	-

Balance c/f 2,078.74 61,582.66 10,911.98

- 9.1 Approve Statement of Account:** (Report previously circulated to Cllrs for consideration). Acceptance was proposed by Cllr Tournay, seconded by Cllr Butler & unanimously agreed
RESOLVED
- 9.2 Consider Draft Financial Regulations:** It was agreed to amend item 1.7 to read: '*authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £1,000*'. The Clerk will recirculate a draft document with the suggested amendment included for further review. **ACTION:** Clerk
- 9.3 Options for the NS & I Savings Account:** Cllr Butler to review and report accordingly.
ACTION: Cllr Butler
- 9.4 Other Matters to Report.** Clerk to request an updated insurance quotation that includes coverage for tools recently purchased for Open Spaces.
Cllr Tournay was thanked for carrying out an interim audit during August.
- 10 POLICIES & PROCEDURES: Training** – draft policy to be recirculated. **Risk Assessment** – adoption of the document **RESOLVED**. **COSHH** – Will only be required if fuel/oil is stored.
- 11. GARDEN COMPETITION.** Unfortunately, the RSPB representatives were not available to judge the competition. Councillor Valerie Springett was thanked for stepping in at the last minute and has advised 1st place in both the colourful and wildlife/nature categories.
The residents will be invited to receive their prizes at the 7 October PC meeting.
ACTION: Clerk

- 12 PLASTIC FREE PLEDGE:** Following discussion, it was RESOLVED to adopt the pledge. It was suggested that the local shops could be invited to participate with the pledge.
- 13 RESTORATION OF MALLARDS SIGN – On hold /CONSIDER OPTIONS HOW TO ENGAGE WITH YOUTHS:** The recent damage at the park was discussed. It was noted that the gate post has 2 x natural cracks and the damage to the gate has now been repaired.
- DPC would like to get round the table with MBC to ask what they have in other parks to engage with youths.
- It was noted that whilst the park is owned and maintained by MBC, they have refused to install CCTV.
- 14 OPEN SPACES – Consider Purchase of COSHH Spill Kit & Foam Fire Extinguisher:** Following consideration – in accordance with LGA S111 - it was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to purchase the above items at an expected cost of no more than £100.
- 15 CHRISTMAS EVENT – 30/11/25.** Confirm Lighting/Actions Required: It was agreed that lighting will be requested for Deringwood Drive, plus the columns previously used in Church Road.
The Social Committee will hold a meeting to confirm all additional requirements.
- 16 CLERK’S REPORT:** Receive reports & updates on previous actions.
- A door panel on the Foxden Notice Board is rotten and requires attention. Cllr Tournay volunteered the services of her husband & Cllr Cottis indicated that he would be willing to assist. The cost of materials to be met by the PC.
 - MBC confirmed that whilst the planters have been earmarked for DPC, delivery will possibly need to wait until the spring.
 - The Foxden Drive kerb stones have been replaced by MBC.
 - It was noted that Parish Councils will be expected to utilise .gov.uk domain email addresses and websites to ensure compliance with government standards for transparency and security. The Clerk and the Chairman have already started investigations and will report back accordingly. **ACTION: Clerk/Chairman**
- 17 PARISH MEETINGS 2026:** Following discussion on whether meetings should be split between the Community Centre and St Nicholas Church, it was RESOLVED to hold a trial meeting at the church on the basis that a free meeting can be arranged for DPCs 7 October meeting, **ACTION: Cllr Wingett**
- 18 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:** Slides from both of the following training events have been shared with Councillors.
KALC: Website Accessibility Compliance – Attended by Cllr Wingett
KALC: Transfer of Assets – Attended by Cllr Wingett

19 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED:

- The DCA has requested a list of all equipment that's stored in the co-owned shed.
Clerk to request that Mr Everett is in attendance when councillors undertake a clear out and dispose of items that are no longer required.

20 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS: October meeting – Visit by KCCs Community Engagement Officer, Emily Rogers.

Please contact the Clerk if you have additional items that you would like considered.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

Date of next full council meeting: **To be held at St Nicholas Church at 8.00 pm on Tuesday, 7 October 2025**