

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD BY ZOOM ON TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER 2020 AT 8.00 PM**

Cllrs Weeks (Chairman); Fairhurst; Cheesman; Butler; Alden-Morris; Brooks; Mrs Irving – Clerk.

- 1 APOLOGIES:** Cllr Newton (conflicting MBC meeting); Cllrs Fincham & Rajaratnam (received retrospectively – unable to access the meeting); Cllr Cooke (KCC).
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO RECORD ANY ITEMS.** The Chairman advised that Zoom meetings are automatically recorded.
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None received.
- 4 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** None received.

The meeting reconvened.

- 5 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING 1 SEPTEMBER 2020:**  
The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and will be signed by Councillor Weeks at his earliest opportunity.

MW

- 6 CRIME REPORT:** Provided by PCSO Kirsty Greaves  
**3 Crimes of note.**  
1 x Theft from motor vehicle – power tools stolen from Willow Rise  
1 x Theft of phone – Deringwood Shops.  
1 x theft from motor vehicle on Deringwood Drive.

Still receiving calls regarding speeding on Willington Street in the dip at the junction of Deringwood Drive. Will try to organise speed checks.

Extra patrols in the area due to a few theft from motor vehicles. Residents are asked to be extra vigilant.

- 7 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** (Submitted by email)  
My October report to the parishes and for information to others is concentrated on the state of our roads in Maidstone South East with particular emphasis on the rural network that is creaking under the strain of rat running caused by the sheer volume of road closures to facilitate a range of works from burst water pipes to weather damage and scheduled maintenance. Mostly the road closures have been of an "emergency" nature requiring urgent works.

Whatever, the state of our roads is now deplorable and as traffic volumes continue to increase are only likely to get worse.

I have therefore arranged to host a virtual conference meeting with KCC's Highways Manager for Mid Kent and our local Maidstone District Manager. Both officers are very familiar with the highway issues that the south east of Maidstone struggles with. This meeting will include a short presentation about how KCC goes about the business of agreeing diversions where road closures become necessary followed by questions.

I have yet to finalise the date and time but from my conversation with our Mid Kent Manager - I anticipate that it will take place one day next week in the afternoon between 4.00pm and 5.00pm.

Attendance at the meeting will be strictly by invitation from myself as the local County Councillor and host. I am hoping that as best we can, there will be a good balance of representation from across the South East area of Maidstone, and I will certainly try to accommodate as many participants as possible and am happy to consider all suggestions and recommendations from duly constituted organisations.

I would also ask members to note that KCC has made a strong response of objection to proposed planning revisions including housing numbers. Something that I have been working hard at KCC to get the leadership to do, and has now happened.

**8 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT** – Not available

**9 CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND LIGHTS: 5 DECEMBER 2020.** Cllr Weeks stated that it is unlikely that the event will be able to proceed as in previous years.

It was suggested that residents should be encouraged to turn on their Christmas lighting simultaneously at 5pm, having a switch-on throughout the parish. Neighbours to be asked to nominate the best decorated house. It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that 2 prizes will be awarded in the sum of £40 and £30.

To encourage festive spirit, St Nicholas Choir would like to have socially distanced carol singing. This could be carried out by groups of six on major roads in the parish. Father Christmas and elves to participate. Cllr Weeks is liaising with Rev Pavey and will provide an update in due course.

MW

A donation for the choir will be discussed at November's meeting.

**10 REPORT FROM DCA REPRESENTATIVE:** Mr Everett advised the Clerk that he had nothing to report this month.

**11 WILDFLOWER PLANTING:** Update not available. Clerk to check the situation with Cllr Newton.

TI

**12 OLMPICNIC 2021:** A date of Saturday, 17 July 2021 was agreed. To compensate for the disappointment this year, the plan is to make next year's event bigger and better than ever before. Clerk to investigate availability/cost of various inflatables for hire.

TI

**13 UPDATE RE STEPS AT ORCHARD SPOT ROUNDABOUT:** The Clerk emailed the PROW Officer prior to going on holiday and returned to find that steps had been installed. A very good job has been carried out by KCC's contractor, although a possible trip hazard was reported to PROW for investigation.

## 14 FINANCE

### i. Items for Payment

**Balance of Current Account: £31,522.29 credit, after all cheques sent**  
**Balance of Investment Account: £10,528.58 credit**

#### Cheques sent:

Folly Wildlife	Donation	50.00
The Swan Sanctuary	"	50.00
Marie Curie	"	50.00
Air Ambulance	"	150.00
HMRC	PAYE (July to Sept)	141.68
J. Noyce	Litter Picker's Salary - September	444.40
Mrs T Irving	Clerk's Salary/Expenses - "	1062.45
KCC Re. Kent Pension Fund	Employer/Employee Pension Contribution - Sept	396.30

#### Cheques Rec'd

##### From Whom Rec'd

HMRC	VAT Refund 2019/20	1,278.03
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Approval of the above was proposed by Cllr Butler, seconded by Cllr Fairhurst and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**

**ii Annual Return Update:** Awaiting news of completion.

**iii NALC National Salary Award 2020/21:** The Award was circulated to all members for information and implementation in the Clerk's September's salary.

**iv Remembrance Day – Wreath Donation:** In accordance with LGA S137, a donation of £55 was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED** As in previous years, the wreath will be laid at the War Memorial.

**v Proposals for 2021/22 Budget:** It was suggested that the Olympicnic budget should be doubled.

**vi Other matters to report:** RBLI Tommies were collected by Cllr Weeks and are now stored in the shed. Help will be required to install at the following locations: 1 x close to entrance, by Downswood sign & 1 x Mallards roundabout.

MW/?

**15 PLANNING (New Applications and updates on existing applications).**

**Update re Church Road Outline Planning Application:** Clerk to circulate notes from the Inquiry conference call of 22 September. Members were reminded that **the notes are confidential and must not be discussed outside of the council.**

TI

The Inquiry will be held virtually and will commence on 23 November (it is expected to last 5 days).

Cllr Weeks was approached by CPRE to withdraw some items but he is not prepared to do so.

Bellway Homes has lodged their intent to recover costs from CPRE & MBC if they win the case.

**Update re FOI request:** Cllr Weeks has completed the task and will be posting the requested information W/c 12 Oct.

MW

- **TPO 20/502536- 40 Foxden Drive**  
Application to fell one Sycamore tree.
  - **TPO 20/503696- 41 Foxden Drive**  
Application to crown raise Ash to 8m to enable clearance of roof of the house.
  - **20/504008 FULL – 18 Kings Acre**  
Erection of a two storey side extension and a single storey rear extension  
The Council has no objections to this application.
  - **TPO 504327 – 11 Kings Acre\***  
Application to fell 1 x Ash tree
  - **TPO 20/504355 – 11 Kings Acre \***  
Application to crown reduction from 15m height to 12m height and 10m width to 7m width with a crown lift 4m
- \*This appears to be the same tree. Therefore, the Council wishes the crown lift to be approved, rather than having the tree felled.
- **20/503140/FULL – 1 Church Road**  
Demolition of side porch and part of garage. Conversion of garage to store, erection of two storey side and single storey rear extension.  
The Council has no objection to this application.
  - **20/504491/FULL – 15 Frithwood Close**  
Erection of a two storey side extension.  
The Council has no objection to this application.

**16 TABLE TENNIS EQUIPMENT:** Deferred to November's meeting.

**17 URGENT CORRESPONDENCE:**

- Following a request to hold a “pumpkin hunt” or do something for Halloween. It was agreed that a simple sheet showing a trail of pumpkins will be made available for children to follow. This trail will follow major roads in Downswood, with each pumpkin having a letter which will form a word. Cllr Weeks to contact the DCA to see if they would like to assist.
- Concerns were raised in an email regarding the traffic in Mallards Way as ‘drivers are not giving way’. The resident also asked if anything can be done about ‘the build up around that area’.  
The Clerk was requested to pass the concerns to the PCSO to request help.
- Steven Waring has confirmed that the Foxden Drive hedge will be trimmed back on 14/15 October.

**MW**

**TI**

**18 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.42 pm

Please contact the Clerk if you have items that you wish to be considered for future agendas.

**Date of next meeting: 3 November 2020.**