



**Full Council Minutes Downswood Parish Council Meeting  
held at 8pm on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at St Nicholas Church**

**Present** Cllrs R. Wingett – Chairman, R Cheesman, J Tournay, A Fincham, P Fincham, J Cottis, L Rustem, Z Duffield, Mrs E Hull – Clerk/RFO, MBC Cllrs Denis Spooner, Val Springett and two members of the public

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

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** were received and accepted from Cllr A-M Butler
2. **NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO FILM/PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD THE MEETING:**  
Councillor Wingett
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None
4. **APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 3 MARCH 2026** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Wingett
5. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA ONLY**  
(The public can send in questions at any time, and raise issues with a Cllr prior to the meeting, these can then be considered at a later meeting) – No questions were raised
6. **DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS**
  - 6.1 County Councillor – Not available
  - 6.2 Borough Councillors - Reports were received from Cllr Spooner see Appendix 1, and a verbal report was received from Cllr Springett
7. **CRIME REPORT** – Crimes reported e-watch.co  
Due to a number of cars being stolen extra police patrols in the area have taken place
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 this agenda and the meeting to which it pertains. None received

9. FINANCE:

**FINANCIAL REPORT 07.04.26**

	<b>UNITY BANK</b>	<b>UNITY</b>	<b>NS &amp; I</b>
	Current Acct	Instant Access	Saving Acct
Balance b/f	<b>1,507.83</b>	<b>36,748.42</b>	<b>10,911.98</b>
<b><u>Transfer of funds</u></b>	2,000.00	-2,000.00	
<b>Expenses: Name</b>			
Heart of Kent Hospice	Donation	100.00	
Staffing Costs March	Payroll & Expenses	1816.42	
Unity Bank	Service Charge	7.00	
<b>Total expenditure:</b>	<b>1,923.42</b>		
<b>Receipts:</b>			
<b>Interest</b>			
		214.63	
<b>Caxton's Commercial Ltd</b>	Litter picking contribution	567.84	
Otham Parish Council	Shared Computer	50.00	
<b>Balance c/f</b>	<b>2,202.25</b>	<b>34,963.05</b>	<b>10,911.98</b>

9.1 Approve Statement of Account (Report previously circulated to Cllrs for consideration) **RESOLVED:**  
Proposed by Cllr J Tournay, seconded by Cllr A Fincham and unanimously agreed

9.2 Consider Grant Donations:

i Bearsted Scouts – World Scout Jamboree 2027 Clerk to contact Bearsted Scouts to request donation form

ACTION: Clerk

9.3 Ratify cost of laptop and Microsoft Office 365 for the Clerk £679.79

Proposed by Cllr P Fincham seconded by Cllr J Tournay all in favour **RESOLVED**

9.4 To agree the purchase of a mobile phone and printer with costs up to £500 for the Clerk

Proposed by Cllr R Cheesman, seconded by Cllr A Fincham all in favour **RESOLVED.**

9.5 Other Matters to report – None

10. **TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING POLICY**

10.1 IT

Proposed by Cllr R Cheesman, seconded by Cllr A Fincham, all in favour to adopt the policy **RESOLVED**

11. **RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:**

i. Open Spaces Committee

The notice board at Mallards has been fixed, a cupboard to store the Christmas lights has been purchased. It was raised to if the road closure signs kept in the shed were still required and noted they were purchased for the resilience plan which will be a future item on an agenda

Overgrown vegetation along the footpath at Horton Downs to be cut back.

ACTION Cllr P Fincham

ii. Social Committee

The Committee held a meeting with The Orchard to consider the possibility of hosting a fireworks event in November. It was noted that the cost of such an event was too costly. Proposed by Cllr Duffield seconded by Cllr Rustem all in favour **RESOLVED** to put on hold the idea of a fireworks display

It was also noted the DCA have two summer events this year, one in June and one in August and that it would be better to approach the DCA in the possibility of the parish contributing to the cost of a face painter or equivalent at the DCA Summer events.

Consideration will be given to producing a parish survey asking residents of Downswood what events would they like the parish to consider for next year. This will be subject to a future agenda item.

ACTION: The Clerk to contact firework company and Orchard to inform them that the firework event has been placed on hold for now

**12. TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS FROM THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

**12.1 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS/GARLANDS**

The Clerk to approach Bearsted Parish Council to see if they are interested in the lights ACTION Clerk  
To seek quotes for brackets to hold Christmas trees ACTION Cllr A Fincham

**13. HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (HIP):**

13.1 To consider and agree the HIP for submission to KCC

Proposed by Cllr A Fincham, seconded by Cllr Z Duffield, all in favour **RESOLVED**

Clerk to send to KCC

ACTION: Clerk

13.2 To consider or not to publish on the parish website

Proposed by Cllr R Chessman, seconded by Cllr J Cottis, all in favour **RESOLVED,**

Clerk to publish on website

ACTION: Clerk

14. **UPDATE REGARDING ASSERTION 10** (Digital & Data Compliance) update was given by The Clerk

15. **CLERKS REPORT** to Receive reports & updates on previous actions

Working on internal audit and website and chasing previous actions including Friends of Mallards with MBC and employing a Community Warden with KCC

**16. REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED**

- Cllr Wingett – Attended a seminar regarding TOP'S (Tree Preservation Orders)

**17. CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED**

A letter of thanks has been received from Marie Curie for the donation of £100.00

18. **MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST** (This item is not for issues that require a decision, it is where Cllrs can ask for items to be placed on the next agenda, or update on something they have seen or heard)

The Clerk to contact MBC in regard to the Downswood sign missing from the nature reserve

ACTION: Clerk

Inconsiderate parking while football matches taking place at Mallards and concerns raised where vehicles including buses are unable to pass. The Clerk to ask HIP contact at KCC about the possibility of yellow lines near the roundabout

ACTION: Clerk

Future agenda item The purchase of poppies for lampposts

Please contact the Clerk if you have additional items for consideration

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.37.  
Date of next meeting: To be held at 8.00pm on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May in St Nicholas Church.

DRAFT