

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022 AT 8.00 PM  
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Present:** Cllrs A-M Butler; J Cottis; J Tournay; G Newton (part); Mrs T. Irving – Clerk/RFO.

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the offer from Councillor John Cottis to chair the meeting was accepted.

- 1. APOLOGIES:** Cllr Cheesman – other commitment; B. Cottis – health related; Cllr Newton for lateness, due to a conflicting meeting; Cllr Alden- Morris – family commitment. The above reasons for absence were noted and accepted.
- 2. NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO RECORD ANY ITEMS:** The Clerk for the purpose of minuting
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None declared.
- 4. ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** No members of the public were present.
- 5. APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING 1 NOVEMBER 2022:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Cottis.
- 6. CRIME REPORT:** Crime reports issued on e-watch.co.uk.  
**Pennine Way.** Between 14.00 hrs and 15.00 hrs on 10 November. Somebody broke into a residential property and stole various power and hand tools.
- 7. REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:**
  - 7.1 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Not available
  - 7.2 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Not available.
  - 7.3 REPORT FROM DCA REPRESENTATIVE:** Not available.

- 8. FINANCE:**
  - 8.1. Approve Statement of Account**  
**Items for payment**

|                      |                             |          |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| DCA                  | Hall Hire (Finance Meeting) | 17.55    |
| RBL                  | Wreath                      | 50.00    |
| ICO                  | Data Protection Fee         | 40.00    |
| Collector Set Prints | Newsletter/Posters          | 155.00   |
| Staffing Costs       | Payroll & Expenses (Nov)    | 2,327.07 |

|             |                                     |          |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| A.M. Butler | Expenses – Christmas Ceremony       | 46.68    |
| Sparkx Ltd  | Christmas Lighting Installation etc | 2,820.00 |

**Cheques received:**

|      |            |          |
|------|------------|----------|
| MBC  | PSS Grant  | 95.00    |
| HMRC | VAT Refund | 1,905.74 |

**Balance of Current Account: £29,769.38 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 Tournay and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**

**8.2. 2023/24 Budget Proposal/Agree Precept:** The proposals from the Finance Committee meeting held 16 November 2022 were circulated to all members in advance of the meeting.

Whilst the precept proposal from the FC Committee was agreed, it was proposed, seconded & **RESOLVED** to round the total figure up to £37,000.

**8.3 Consider donations:**

**Maidstone Rock Choir** – Donation of £50 towards expenses was **RESOLVED** in accordance with Local Government Act S137.

**Maidstone Mediation** – Following discussion, it was agreed that a donation is not considered appropriate at this point in time.

**The following item (8.4) to be held in closed session.** It was not necessary to go into closed session as no members of the public were present.

**8.4 Annual Salary Review (SCP):** Item was discussed and **RESOLVED**.

**8.5 Other Matters to Report:** None.

**9 PLANNING: New Applications and Existing applications Update:**

Re: 22/505482/FULL - 29 Horton Downs

PROPOSAL: Garage conversion into a part habitable space and store and erection of a first-floor side extension. Comments required prior to the deadline of 2 January 2023.

**10 GOVERNANCE & POLICY REVIEW:** It was agreed that the draft contract (as provided by another PC) will be typed by Cllr Butler and presented to the council for final consideration. It was agreed that full payment will be made when routes are considered icy/too dangerous for litter picking.

**ACTION: Cllr Butler**

**11 TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES/HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN:** Following correspondence between KCC's Road Safety Project Manager and the Clerk, 3 locations will have tube surveys (ATC's) which will be funded by Highways. (The RSPM was unable to trace who was responsible for the previous ATC's.)

Cllr Tournay has monitored the Orchard Spot roundabout in an attempt to gather the requested photographic evidence, as it was thought that this might confirm that the damage was caused by PSV/HGV's. However, none has been witnessed. All to continue to monitor.

**ACTION: All**

- 12 CLERK'S REPORT: To receive reports & update on previous actions:** No additional items to report.
- 13 OPEN SPACES/DOWNSWOOD DIGGERS UPDATE:** It was agreed to postpone further DD meetings/projects for the winter months. A resident's suggestion to plant bulbs was circulated to members for consideration. However, due to the recent snowfall, it has not proved possible.
- 14 CONSIDER CCTV QUOTATIONS:** Following discussion, it was agreed to retain the existing equipment for the time being, with upgrading reconsidered if there is a change in circumstances.
- 15 FLOOD WARDEN(S)/CONSIDERATION OF FLOOD OR EMERGENCY PLAN:**  
Cllr Newton has attended the training program and has subsequently volunteered to write a Flood Plan. Cllr J. Cottis volunteered his services if further help is required.
- 16 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:**  
**KALC** Maidstone Committee meeting 28.11.22 – Attended by Cllr Butler  
**SLCC** Branch meeting at The Great Danes 08/12/22 - Attended by the Clerk.
- 17 CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND LIGHTS:** The event was a great success and positive feedback was received. It is estimated that approximately 180 people were in attendance. Great music was provided by The Rock Choir and Rev Mark Pavey & family. Thanks are recorded to everyone that helped.
- Clerk to request quotes for 2023 festive lighting/storage. **ACTION: Clerk**
- 18 FOXDEN DRIVE HEDGE:** Quotations to be requested for cutting back the hedge.  
**ACTION: Clerk**
- 19 CIVILITY & RESPECT PLEDGE:** It was **RESOLVED** that Downswood Parish Council will take the pledge. **ACTION: Clerk**
- 20 ELECTIONS 2023:** Councillors were reminded that Downswood is up for election in May 2023. Information will be circulated by MBC closer to the time.  
Due to the proposed Boundary Review – see Item 21 below – Downswood will likely be back up for election in 2024.
- 21 MBC BOUNDARY REVIEW: Community Review Parishes (2022) consultation (Closure 29<sup>th</sup> January 2023).** Councillors were reminded of the *electoral proposal* to merge Downswood with Madginford (as detailed by Cllrs Butler & Newton at 01.02.22 meeting & per email of 4 March '22). Following discussion, it was agreed that no comments will be submitted.

**22 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED:**

- Missing person. Fortunately found and is currently recovering in hospital. Thanks were expressed by the family for all the help and support they received from the community.
- Request for Poppy Display. The request for a larger tribute was discussed. However, as Downswood did not lose anyone in the war and as there were no known casualties, it was agreed that the current Tommies x 2 are a fitting tribute, combined with the nearby War Memorial in Otham.
- Work Experience Request x 3 (D of E Award). Currently no suitable work is available, although the situation may change in the Spring. In the meantime, Clerk to make enquiries with the DCA to see if they can help?

**23 CONSIDER THE NECESSITY FOR JANUARY 2023 MEETING:** It was agreed that a meeting will not be held in January. If urgent business should arise, an extraordinary meeting will be called.

**24 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS:** Request for more litter bins between The Spires Shops and Mallards (Cllr Newton to discuss with MBC in the meantime and report back at February's meeting).

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 8pm on **Tuesday, 7 February 2023.**