

**MINUTES OF DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 22 JUNE 2021 AT 8.00 PM
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs Newton (Chairman); Cheesman; Butler; Alden-Morris; Fincham; Rajalingam; Brooks; Mrs Irving – Clerk.

- 1 APOLOGIES:** Cllr Weeks – other commitments; Cllr Fairhurst – family commitment.
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO RECORD ANY ITEMS.** None received.
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None received.
- 4 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** None received.
- 5 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETINGS 4 MAY 2021:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were signed by Councillor Newton (previously agreed minutes were also signed)
- 6 CRIME REPORT:**
As reported on e-watch.co:
9 April between 06.15 and 15.45 in Pennine Way. Somebody destroyed plants and trees in the garden of a residential property. The police are continuing their enquiries.

It was noted that there have been drug related problems with youths in local areas. Cllr Newton advised that police have stepped up their efforts to make more of a presence.

- **Stolen Tommy.** This has now been reported to the police by the Clerk and given a crime reference number of 46/81719/21

The crime has been investigated but there no further lines of enquiries that can be made and therefore the investigation has been closed. If any new evidence becomes available this decision may be reconsidered.

KA-M

A replacement Tommy was discussed, with a decision postponed until the 6 July meeting.

The existing Tommy will be removed by Cllr Alden-Morris and stored in the shed this forthcoming weekend. It was agreed that future displays will be restricted to the month of November (commencing when RBL launch their appeal). Consideration to be given as to how it/they can be better secured.

7 COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr Cooke stated that there is not currently a lot to report.

- KCC is facing a big deficit, with Covid grants only available for 1 year only. Cllr Cooke's grants will be severely cut.
- It was noted that the forthcoming boundary reviews should not impact on Downswood.
- It will be challenging to move forward more positively on a relief road.
- Cllr Cooke stated that he will be focusing his efforts on young people.

8 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT: Cllr Newton also stated there is little to report this month.

- The Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee is now Communities, Housing and Environment. Cllr Newton remains a member of this committee.
- The Hazlitt Theatre. This is going to be operated privately – Cllr Newton will provide updates when something happens.

GN

9 REPORT FROM DCA REPRESENTATIVE: Mr Everett stated that more groups are now coming back to the centre, although weddings/celebrations are still limited to 30.

The DCA has been lucky with grants; including a grant from Cllr Cooke to refurbish the kitchen.

10 FINANCE:

i. Items for payment – No new payments made.

ii Donation Request: Bearsted Parish Council – Summer Play Scheme. A donation of £100 was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED

iii Financial Regulations Review: No comments were received following the circulation of DPC's existing FRs and NALC's model document. After discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that DPC will adopt the model document as suggested by the Internal Auditor.

TI

iv Banking Procedures/Signatures: It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk will start the process of adding the Chairman as a signatory and removing Cllrs Greenhead and Weeks (the latter as per the Cllr's request). Once this process is complete, electronic banking will be investigated.

TI

v. Insurance Policy 2021/2022: Documentation was circulated in advance of the meeting. Following discussion, acceptance of the renewal schedule from Zurich was **RESOLVED** in the sum of £446.66.

vi Repairs in the Parish/Consider Designation of Odd Job Person. Following due consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to accept Mr Everett's kind offer to take on necessary repairs on a job by job basis. Each task will be considered

individually, with Mr Everett being responsible for his own Tax/NI. All repairs must be agreed with the Clerk and/or Council prior to commencement.

vi Other Matters to Report: CCTV. Some progress is being made with the FOC replacement camera. The company is considering the Clerk's request to waive the installation cost of £325.50 as a goodwill gesture.

A request for training to be explored.

TI

11 PLANNING: New Applications and Existing Applications Update:

- 21/502613/FULL - 57 Foxden Drive
PROPOSAL: Demolition of car port. Erection of a two storey side extension.

The council's decision is to neither oppose, nor support this application.

Bellway Homes hosted a meeting on 11 June to discuss the Church Road development. Cllrs Newton, Cheesman and the Clerk were present with Cllrs Hipkins & Gray (OPC) and Ms Skipp (CAARA) also present – full details have been circulated to members and appear on the website.

It was noted that following the excavation of the Church Road field, an archaeology report is being prepared by KCC and will likely be available in September.

Clerk to source planning legislation information and forward to members to assist with planning decisions.

TI

- 12 CHRISTMAS LIGHTING – LOAD TESTING QUOTATION:** KHS has provided a quotation in the sum of £1,540 (no increase since this was last carried out in 2018). Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation. In addition, the usual application charge of £30 will apply and will be invoiced at the same time.

- 13 OLYMPICNIC:** It was agreed to purchase 150 medals, as all previously supplied.

TI

A separate meeting will be held to discuss games and sundry items that will be required for the day i.e. hand sanitiser/wipes/gloves/masks/etc. Date of meeting TBC.

Mr Richard Young's very kind offer to purchase and donate a set of relay batons was gratefully accepted.

Taner (ice cream vendor) has sold his vehicle to Charlotte who has agreed to attend.

- 14 CONSIDERATION OF FLAG POLE:** The Community Centre's current flag pole consists of a scaffold pole, which makes it difficult to raise/lower a flag. Mr Everett agreed to investigate the cost of a suitable flag pole which will allow the council to consider financing a replacement. **JE**
- 15 GARDEN COMPETITION:** Cllr Cheesman's suggestion to request Bloomin Garden Services judge the competition was agreed. A small gift will be purchased in appreciation of the service provided. All short lists are requested to be with the Clerk by 30 June. **ALL**
- 16 QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINIUM JUBILEE (2022):** A Cultivation Licence would need to be completed in order to use the grass verge close to Reinden Grove, with permission granted by Highways.
- As some reservations were made about this proposal, it was suggested that further consideration is given to how to mark the occasion and whether, perhaps, a finger post sign could be installed? All to consider ideas and report back. **ALL**
- 17 DATE FOR GOVERNANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE:** Awaiting Cllr Fairhurst. **AF**
- 18 OPEN SPACES:** A brief meeting was held on 1 June when it was agreed to postpone for another day. A new date of Tuesday, 29 June at 7 pm was agreed, meeting at Mallards. **OS**
- MBC has advised that they are seeking quotes for a large scale project at Mallards which will improve conditions at the water's edge and the eroding islands. Further information will be provided in due course.
- 19 ENGLAND TREES ACTION PLAN 2021-2024:** Cllr Newton advised the meeting about the government's plan to plant forests. Funding will be provided to communities to buy trees but they will be responsible for planting them. Cllr Newton would like to see the field opposite the church become a 'green lung' and will continue to make enquiries. **GN**
- 20 SOCIAL MEDIA –** Cllr Alden-Morris to request login details and assist with management of the site. **WEBSITE –** Clerk continues to update. **NEWSLETTER–** Whilst no provision was made in the budget for this, it was agreed to investigate the cost of providing up to 4 issues per year. Cllr Fincham to request a quotation for printing from HMPS. **KA-M**
PF
- 21 URGENT CORRESPONDENCE:** **TI**
- Clerk to respond to Mr Kraft's letter by way of concluding the matter.
 - Note from Mr Everett was discussed. It was agreed that the bat & owl boxes will be removed from the centre as soon as possible. Open Spaces to find a suitable location at their next meeting. Other items have been resolved during the course of the meeting.

- Mr Young regarding overgrown vegetation in two locations on Deringwood Drive. This has already been reported to KCC by the Clerk.

22 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS & ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Gift for Bill Greenhead/Replacement Tommy/Bee Corridor.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.15 pm

The next meeting will take place at 8 pm on Tuesday, 6 July 2021.