

**MINUTES OF DOWNSWOOD'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 4 APRIL 2023 AT 7.45 PM
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs G Newton (Chairman); R Cheesman; A-M Butler; K Alden-Morris; B Cottis; J Cottis; J Tournay; Cllr G Cook (KCC); 9 Members of the Public.

1. Welcome by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr. Gordon Newton.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Pallant.
3. **Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 5 April 2022** were **RESOLVED** as a true & accurate record of proceedings and were signed by the Chairman.

4. Reports from invited groups and associations:

- RBL – Mr David Marchant
Breakdown for Leeds and Broomfield 2022 Poppy appeal;

Leeds and Broomfield School - £174.50

Leeds Castle £94.05

Rumwoods Garden Centre - £89.29

George Pub - £87.62

Downswood Chemist £12.19

David - £39

Wreaths £150

CAF donation £50

TOTAL = £696.65

5 Chairman's report:

It has been a tough year with various problems, one of which is the problem of youths in the play area, particularly by the pond at Mallards, drinking alcohol and causing problems with the equipment and graffiti. I try to remove the graffiti as soon as I see it, but it's not always possible to do it immediately.

32 Youths were in the play area on Saturday night, drinking vodka and smashing bottles. I cleared the area with another resident.

4 Youths had stolen a bottle of milk from the Convenience Store and then jumped on the bottle, spraying milk everywhere.

It's a problem to identify the youths but they tend to come from outside the area. It's a growing issue, not just in Downswood.

The police are not as active as I would like.

I will be raising this with Maidstone Borough Council at their quarterly review.

Councillor Gordon Newton - Chairman

6. CLERK/RFO'S REPORT – Teresa Irving

The following figures are all subject to change if further invoices/receipts are received.

The parish has received a total income of £38,991.50 to date.

This comprises: Precept - £35,020, VAT refund (for the period 2022/23) - £1,905.74, Litter Picking Contributions of £1,338.76, DCA - Flagpole contribution £537.00 (this figure includes an overpayment of £92 which was subsequently refunded) and the Parish Services Scheme make up the remaining payments of £190.00.

The total expenditure for the year amounts to £35,870.41. (This figure excludes VAT of £1,767.03 as this will be reclaimed).

Donations totalled £500 comprising of: £100 DCA Fete, £100 Bearsted Parish Council Summer Play Scheme, £50 each to: Maidstone Rock Choir, Royal British Legion – Wreath, Folly Wildlife Centre, £150 to Otham and Langley PCC towards Churchyard Maintenance.

I would like to conclude by thanking all councillors for their support throughout the year and for everything that you do.

Teresa Irving Clerk to Downswood Parish Council

7. Questions from Members of the Public:

The Members and Clerk introduced themselves and stated what they do.

An offer to help with anti-social behaviour was received from a former police officer who lives in the parish.

'How can we harness this sense of community and what sort of initiatives are there? Volunteers could help, for example, with clearing broken glass'.

Residents were reminded that the Clerk is the first point of contact: details are on the notice board and website.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.