

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2024 AT 8.00 PM
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs R. Wingett - Chairman; R Cheesman; A-M Butler; D Everett; P Fincham; J Everett; J Tournay; Mrs T Irving – Clerk/RFO; MB Cllr – Val Springett, KC Cllr Gary Cooke; 8 members of the public

Introductions were made to the members of the public.

Cllr Wingett made a fire safety address.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Nicky Clifford – Holiday, Cllr Gordon Newton – Conflicting Appointment; MB Cllr Denis Spooner – Personal Matter.
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO FILM/PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD THE MEETING:** One member of the public and the Clerk for the purpose of minuting.
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** Cllrs D & J Everett - matters concerning the Community Association, Cllr Butler – Item 8.
- 4 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL HELD ON 03 SEPTEMBER 2024:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Wingett.
- 5 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**
 - Are there plans to build in the field opposite St Nicholas Church? It was confirmed that it is not a site in the existing Local Plan, and the PC has not been notified of development plans.
PC to make further enquiries at the next Community Liaison meeting.
 - Is it possible for yellow cross hatching to be installed for traffic turning right at the Willington Street traffic lights? Cllr Cooke to follow this up at the 6-monthly review.
 - The PC confirmed that they are not aware of plans for a pedestrian crossing on Church Road.
- 6 REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:**
 - 6.1 Kent County Councillor.**
 - Cllr confirmed that he has authorised a donation for £750 towards the Christmas lights. The DCA will also be receiving a donation.
 - The previously discussed bollards are no longer relevant, as they have been superseded by double yellow lines.

6.2 Maidstone Borough Councillors. A report was submitted by Cllrs Springett & Oliver – Appendix 1 & 2 respectively. Cllr Spooner sent his apologies for no report, due to being unwell.

6.3 DCA Representative – Not available.

7 CRIME REPORT: No reports available from e-watch.co.

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 the agenda and the meeting to which it pertains.

New Applications – None.

Applications Granted

24/502178/TPOA- Tress Along River Len Footpath Spot Lane.

The above was reported to MBC's Planning Committee. The Committee considered the application acceptable for arboricultural safety management (duty of care to users of the footpath).

24/502051/FULL – 18 Kings Acre

24-502203 – 10 Foxden Drive

24-502297 – 17 Gorham Drive

24/503518/FULL – 61 Willow Rise

Pending Decision by MBC

23/502544/full – 32 Reinden Grove

9 TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES: Bollards – no longer applicable (see item 6.1)
Speedwatch – Currently being addressed by the Combined Parishes Traffic Group – update awaited.
Consider Speed Indicator Device Request (Combined Parishes Traffic Group) – As above for Speedwatch. It was confirmed there is very little speeding in the parish & that a SID is not currently considered necessary.

10 FINANCE:

Downswood Parish Council **Balance**

Monthly Financial Statement to 30 September 2024

Opening Balance:	£	63,693.04	
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Payments Comprising:

Unity Bank Account	£	20,254.56	
Forvis Mazars	External Audit		252.00
J Everett	Olympic Expenses		39.66

Unity Bank	Service Charge	11.94	
Staffing Costs - Sept	Payroll and Expenses	2,720.99	
	Total Payments:	£3,024.59	17,229.97

NatWest Acct:	£	32,741.04	
Nil Payments			
	Total Payments:	Nil	

Cheques Rec'd:			
DCA	Litter Picking Contribution	163.58	
HMRC	VAT Refund	1,354.92	
Caxton's Commercial	Litter Picking Contribution	567.84	
	Total Rec'd:	£2,086.34	34,827.38

N S & I (Investment Acct)		10697.44	<u>10,697.44</u>
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Closing Balance: **Total: £62,754.79**

- 10.1 Approve Statement of Account:** (Report previously circulated to Cllrs for consideration). Acceptance of the report detailed above was proposed by Cllr Butler, seconded by Cllr Tournay and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**
- 10.2 Investment Account Update:** Following a proposal by Cllr Butler to close the NatWest account and open a Unity Investment Account, the motion was seconded by Cllr J Everett and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED** Cllr Butler to forward a link for information purposes. **ACTION: Cllr Butler**
- 10.3 Clarify Authorisation of Expenses:** No individual councillor can make a purchase on the PCs behalf, as they must first be authorised by full council.
- 10.4 Other Matters to Report:** (See also item 6.1). Councillor Cooke was thanked for his grant of £750 towards the Christmas lighting.
- 11 OPEN SPACES: Consider Community Orchard Plaque or Interpretation Board** – Following initial enquires with outside companies, quotes have been received in excess of £1,000 for an interpretation board. However, a discussion with MBC resulted in the possibility of an interpretation board being purchased via their supplier for approximately £150 (exc a pedestal). **Equipment for Litter Picking** – MBC was thanked for providing 6 x litter picking sticks, 6 x hi viz vests stating 'Litter Picking Volunteer', a box of green bags and 6 x bag hoops. All items have been stored in the shed for future use.
- Report on meeting with Maidstone Borough Council 20.09.24:** Cllr Fincham gave a brief report of the meeting. Minutes have been circulated.
Cllr Springett to advise Cllr Wingett when MVCP are working in Bearsted, to allow him attend and raise Downswood issues. **ACTION: Cllrs Springett/Wingett**

12 CHRISTMAS EVENT 07.12.24. Consider Organisation of the Event & DCA Directive.

Having carefully considered the discussion paper and listened to the various comments from Councillors, it was unanimously agreed that it will continue as a DPC event, with a review carried out during 2025. **RESOLVED**

Entertainment – Cllr Wingett to prepare a schedule for the event.

ACTION: Cllr Wingett

Lighting Proposals – Caxtons has agreed to the shop motifs.

A permit application has been submitted to KHS

It was agreed that timers will be set to come on at 15.00 hrs and switch off at 23.30 hrs.

Consider costs and implications of storing motifs/lights locally (see also item 13). Cllr Butler tried to establish the cost of storage, but was unable to do so without the dimensions of the objects to be stored. However, it has been established that costs are likely to be high.

MBC to be asked if they can assist with storage*.

13 CONSIDER ADDITIONAL STORAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR DPC EQUIPMENT - *See above.

14 ASSESSMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES: Having reviewed the recently set up Open Spaces and Social Sub-Committees, it was agreed to ‘tidy them up’ and allow a little longer to see how they develop.

15 CLERK’S REPORT: Receive reports & updates on previous actions.

- **LVPAS.** Following a request from the Clerk, the group has confirmed that they will install a new notice board at Mallards, with contact details, etc.

It was noted that due to the size of the pond, fishing is capped at 40 members.

No fishing will take place during the desilting project.

- **MBC** responded extremely quickly – within 15 minutes – to a recent fly tipping incident.

16 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:

- MBC Advanced Planning training attended by Cllr Wingett on 07.10.24 (slides are expected).
- Kent Association of Local Councils attended by Cllr Butler – minutes have been circulated.
- A meeting with Cllrs D & J Everett, MB Cllrs V Springett & C Oliver, Cllr R Wingett and the Clerk was held to provide some clarity about the joint DPC/DCA roles held by Cllrs Everett. It was agreed for a Memorandum of Understanding be drafted for consideration.

ACTION: Cllr Wingett/Clerk

17 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED: Various correspondence circulated by email - No issues raised.

18 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS: Please contact the Clerk if you have items that you wish to be considered.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

The next scheduled meeting of the Council will be held at 8pm on Tuesday, 5 November 2024.