

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON TUESDAY 2 JULY 2024 AT 8.00 PM  
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Present:** Cllrs R. Wingett - Chairman; R Cheesman; P Fincham; G Newton; D Everett; N Clifford; J Everett; Mrs T Irving – Clerk/RFO; MB Cllr – D Spooner; 8 members of the public

Introductions were made by Councillors to members of the public.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr Anne-Marie Butler – unwell; Cllr G Newton – work commitment. The apologies were noted and accepted.

Borough Councillors V Springett & C Oliver – conflicting meeting.

- 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 - if matters concerning the Community Association arise.

- 4 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL HELD ON 11.06.24:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Wingett.

- 5 RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR/PUBLICATION OF VACANCY:** Following the resignation of Councillor Barabara Cottis, a casual vacancy notice has been displayed on parish notice boards.

- 6 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

Questions raised:

The Willington Street/Deringwood Drive traffic lights - Clerk to report to KCC.  
Deringwood Drive verge – to be tackled by Open Spaces.

- 7 REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:**

**7.1 Kent County Councillor** – Not available.

**7.2 Maidstone Borough Councillors.** A written report was submitted by Cllrs Spooner & Oliver – Appendix 1 & 2 respectively. (Cllr Springett advised that she had no additional information to submit.)

**7.3 DCA Representative.** Cllr Clifford reported that no meetings have been held.

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

Cllr Everett reported an incident with catapults at Mallards which was attended by the police.

**9 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**

24/502051/FULL – 18 Kings Acre

No objection

**Pending Decision by MBC**

24-502203 – 10 Foxden Drive

No objection by DPC

24-502297 – 17 Gorham Drive

No objection by DPC

23/502544/full – 32 Reinden Grove

**Applications Granted**

23/503247/TPO – Trees along River Len Footpath

Whilst permission has been granted, it was less than applied for by the Parks Dept.

**10 TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES: Bollards/Speedwatch.**

Bollards – No update received from Cllr Cooke.

Speedwatch – No further information received.

**11 OLYMPICNIC 13.07.24:**

- Barbeque update. It was suggested that the Badminton Club would run a barbecue in conjunction with the DCA (profit to be retained by the groups). Concerns were reiterated regarding tying up volunteers with other duties and ensuring correct insurance/hygiene certificate\* are obtained. Following a vote, a barbecue was agreed. (\*These were confirmed)
- Due to an issue with insurance, a tug of war will not take place.
- Budget for Sundry Items (sweets, refreshments, etc)/Consider Purchase of Drinks/Crisps from the DCA). It was **RESOLVED** that up to £100 can be used from the Open Spaces budget (receipts must be provided).
- Update re Sub-Committee Meeting of 12/06/24 (notes circulated).  
No further updates to report.

## 12 FINANCE:

### Monthly Financial Statement to 2 July 2024

Opening Balance

	£	
Balance of Current Accounts:	<b>36,224.91</b>	NatWest
	£	
Balance of Investment	<b>25,000.00</b>	Unity
Account:	<b>10,697.44</b>	

#### Less cheques sent NatWest

Acct:	Details	Amount £
Zurich Insurance	Annual Insurance Premium	511.91
PPL PRS Ltd	Music Licence	98.15
Staffing Costs (June)	Payroll & Expenses	2,616.81
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,226.87</b>

#### Cheques Rec'd:

N/A

#### Closing Balances - Current Accounts:

	£	
NatWest:	32,998.04	
	£	
Unity (Acct Pending)	25,000.00	
<b>Total</b>		<b>£ 57,998.04</b>

N S & I

Balance of Investment	£
Account:	<b>10,697.44</b>

**12.1 Approve Statement of Account:** Acceptance of the previously circulated report was proposed by Cllr Fincham, seconded by Cllr Cheesman and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**

**12.2 Unity Bank** – An application has been submitted and is awaiting approval.  
Investment Account Update – to be provided by Cllr Butler.

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

**13 OPEN SPACES: Update re: Maintenance of the Orchard Spot Roundabout** – It was reported that this has been addressed by DPC's contractor and it looks much better.

A report was also provided by Cllr Fincham to confirm what has been considered by Open Spaces. Three main areas have been identified as requiring cutting back: behind the bus stop, further down towards behind Pennine Way (where a bush is growing across the path) and the SSSI.

Members would like confirmation of which areas are owned by KCC/MBC and if work can be carried out on them?

A budget for a mower and/strimmer/tools would also be useful. Will training/PPE be required? If volunteers attend, is it possible to have a budget to offer refreshments?

It was suggested that a meeting could be set up with MBC/KCC to ask what advice/help they can provide?  
**ACTION: Clerk**

With prior agreement from MBC, work has been carried out in Foxden Drive Play Area.

If more hi viz vests are required, Clerk to be advised of sizes/quantities. A check will be carried out to see what might already be available in the shed.  
**ACTION: OSC/Clerk**

Cllr Spooner was requested to investigate if tools etc could be financed from his devolved budget?  
**ACTION: Cllr Spooner**

**Consider Replacement Lavenders for QEII Tablet /Purchase of Buddleia /\*Coronation Orchard Plaque:** Updates not available (see 11.06.24 minutes) \*Suggestions invited from all.  
**ACTION: OS Cmte**

- 14 GARDEN COMPETITION UPDATE:** Judging has been carried out by 2 x employees of Notcutts Garden Centre. The centre very kindly added an additional prize of a £50 voucher to be given to the winner. The winning gardens will be announced as soon as contact has been established with the residents.

It was suggested that a different type of competition could be considered for 2025.

**ACTION: All**

- 15 CHRISTMAS EVENT 07.12.24.** Update from previous actions:

- Entertainment – The (adult) Community Choir of Greenfields School has confirmed their attendance.  
It was agreed to request the Boxley Bellringers to attend for a donation (circa £50 tbc).
- Lighting. It was **RESOLVED** to repair of one of the faulty motifs at a cost of £55\*. The Clerk advised that no action has been taken regarding Sparkx/Highways as it has not been agreed how this will proceed (see 11.06.24 minutes).  
(\*Following an email from Sparkx to advise there will be an additional charge of £120 labour, this was put on hold).  
It was suggested that, in future, the motifs could be scrapped and replaced with decorated Christmas trees.
- Tree. It was agreed that it will be too late in the year to plant a fir tree for this year's display. However, the Clerk will apply for a Cultivation Licence for future displays on the Orchard Spot roundabout and close to the totem pole. Tree to be in the region of 6 to 8 ft.  
**ACTION: Clerk**

- 16 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN:** The plan has been circulated to all by Cllr Wingett. This will be a public record of all the work that is being carried out by DPC. Updates will be issued, as and when required.  
**ACTION: Cllr Wingett**

**17 CLERK'S REPORT:** Receive reports & updates on previous actions.

- As reported in Item 13, maintenance of the roundabout has been carried out.
- A wall that was repaired on a pedestrian walkway between Mallards Way & Cotswold Gardens has again been damaged. Highways has been asked to consider a redesign.
- Caxtons advised that the delay in removing the graffiti from The Spires is due to a water supply problem. However, it is in hand and will be removed ASAP.
- A new 'Downswood Parish Council' hi viz vest has been supplied to the litter picker, who confirmed that he does not require any additional equipment.
- Highways advised that neither lighting, tree planting or maintenance of the roundabout can be included on the Highway Improvement Plan (HIP). This is to be used for safety schemes only.
- Kings Portrait – Obtained by the Clerk via information from SLCC. It was agreed to donate the portrait to the DCA for display in the hall.

**18 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:**

- Cllr Wingett attended Planning Training by Zoom which included discussion on the new laws. If there are more than 9 houses, builders have to give a minimum of 10% land over to nature. (It was noted that Maidstone Borough Council will require 20%) Construction companies are expected to leave all sites better than when they started.

**19 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED:** Nil

**ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS:** The Clerk was requested to remove the statement at the bottom of the agenda regarding public attendance.

Please contact the Clerk if you have items that you wish to be considered.

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.50 pm**

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 8pm on Tuesday, 3 September 2024.