

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2023 AT 8.00 PM
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs R. Cheesman - Chairman; A-M Butler; K Alden- Morris; J Tournay; J Cottis; R. Wingett; B Cottis; G Newton, Mrs T. Irving – Clerk/RFO; Cllr G Cooke, KCC (part); 12 Members of the Public

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** PC Mitch Hunt.
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO FILM/PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD THE MEETING:** A resident confirmed their intention to record + the Clerk for the purpose of minuting.
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** No declarations received.
- 4 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 05.09.23:**
Following a correction to Item 14 of the minutes 'Gold' was amended to read 'Golden', the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Cheesman.
- 5 COUNCILLOR VACANCY:** Consider Co-option. Vacancy ongoing.
- 6 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** Questions were addressed - see also Page 4 of the minutes.

The meeting was reconvened.

7 REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:

7.1 County Councillor.

- Cllr Cooke thanked residents for their attendance at the parade to honour the ship's company of HMS Kent.
- Work on the A2163 in Leeds is almost complete.
More work is due to be carried out on Deringwood Drive.
- Ongoing consultation: Community Wardens.
A consultation on library services will be coming up.

7.2 Borough Councillor – Nothing to report.

7.3 DCA Representative – Nothing to report.

8 CRIME REPORT:

Reinden Grove. On Tuesday 26th of September, somebody stole the batteries from temporary traffic lights.

9 PLANNING:

New Applications

23/504410/Full – 25 Monkdown

Erection of a two-storey side extension and a single storey rear extension including changes to the fenestration. Removal of existing conservatory.

23/504382/TPOA Tree Preservation Order Application: Translocate nine trees T2, T3, T6, T9, T11, T12, T14 and T15. Remove/replace two others and replace them with six trees T10 and T13. All details as set out in Report.

Application Permitted

T1 - Oak tree at the rear of property to be crown reduced/reshaped to = previous pruning points. Height from 14m to 12m. Width from 10m to 8m

Awaiting Decision

23/502544/full – 32 Reinden Grove

23/503675/FULL - 34 Pennine Way

23/503644/FULL - 21 Cheviot Gardens

23/503383/TPO - Tree Preservation Order Application: 13 Kings Acre

Local Plan Review. Maidstone Borough Council Consultation: start date 29.09.23, end date 13.11.23.

10 CONSIDER ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT FOR THE RIVER LEN:

Following the notice displayed by MBC on 14 Sept '23 to confirm an area of the River Len has been designated Nature Reserve status - the question of ongoing maintenance was raised. Clerk to contact MBC to establish if the financial commitment onus is on Maidstone Borough Council? It is hoped that it will be managed correctly, not just left in its current state. Will the reserve be managed by MBC, or will a separate group be set up?

ACTION: Clerk

Future involvement to include Bearsted PC & Helen Whatley.

11 CONSIDER PURCHASE/PLANTING OF SPRING BULBS.

Due to the verge work that is currently being carried out by contractors, it was agreed to defer this item until 2024.

12 FINANCE:

12.1 Approve Statement of Account:

Opening Balance

	£
Balance of Current Account:	51,303.10
Balance of Investment Account:	£
	10,615.31

Less cheques sent:

	Details	Amount £
KALC	Clerk & Chairman Conferences	126.00
Staffing Costs (September)	Payroll & Expenses	2054.22
	Total:	2,180.22

Cheques Rec'd:

West Kent Prison	Spires Medical Centre (2022 & 2023 Invoices)	256.00
	Total:	256.00

Closing Balances:

Balance of Current Account:	£49,378.88
Balance of Investment Account:	£10,615.31

Acceptance of the previously circulated account was proposed by Cllr Alden-Morris, seconded by Cllr Butler and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**

12.2 Consider Mallards Way/Deringwood Drive Roundabout Proposal.

Supply and plant shrubs @ £9.75 each & grasses @ £10.75 each. Open Spaces to confirm which/how many of the selection x 5 will be most suitable for the location.

ACTION: Open Spaces

(Plants in 2L pots with normally 2/3 plants per m). Preparation of borders, removal of dead/poor plants @ £228.00 ex VAT.

Quotation from Paul Waring proposed, seconded & unanimously agreed with request for the work to be scheduled during March '24. **RESOLVED**

12.3 Consider Donation Request: Mum Hub Kent. Following due consideration, a donation of £100 was proposed, seconded & unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.****12.4 Consider Donation Royal British Legion – Wreath Donation.** A donation of £50 was proposed, seconded & unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.****12.5 Conclusion of 2022/23 Annual Audit:** Notice from External Auditor, Mazars, circulated to councillors/displayed on boards and website.**12.6 Other Matters to Report:** No further matters to report.**13 TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES/HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE:**

Date of next HIP meeting is pending (original Oct dates could not be achieved due to annual leave by Clerk & KCC Officer).

14 TREES UPDATE: Consider Fruit (Coronation) Tree Quotations/S106 Funded:

Clerk has requested a quotation from a nursery in E. Farleigh - no response to date.

Contact has been made with Landscaping Services re S106 trees for the parish. Awaiting a response.

15 CCTV REMOVAL: A quotation has been requested.**16 CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND LIGHTS CEREMONY:** Maidstone Rock Choir has confirmed that they are unable to attend. Consideration to be given to various suggestions; inc Royal Engineers Band, The Dulcettes and local schools.

For action: Programme of the running order will be required/Rev Mark Pavey to be invited to participate/Costume for Father Christmas to be purchased, once a volunteer is agreed.

DCA confirmed that a PA system is always available on the stage.

It was noted that load testing of the columns will be required for 2024.

17 PARISH NEWSLETTER/CHRISTMAS FLYER: All requested to submit articles for the NL (in time for printing at the end of Oct), with delivery to be made during mid-November.

ACTION: All

18 CLERK'S REPORT: A response has been received from Taylor Wimpey confirming that they are checking ownership of the Ravens Dane Close/Deringwood Drive wall.

19 TOTEM PROJECT UPDATE: Men in Sheds are currently sorting out the artwork for the bee motif.

Having considered the utility maps as provided by Cllr Butler, it was agreed to proceed with the suggested location of 'by the bus stop between Foxden Drive and Longham Copse'.

20 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:

- Cllrs Butler and Wingett – KALC meeting of 25 September.
- KALC's Clerks Conference attended on 27 September with guest speaker Becky Walsh. The presentation included a talk about artificial intelligence, graphic design & scheduling software

21 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED:

- DPC has been invited to attend the unveiling of John Leaf's bench in Mallards Park on 21 October. Cllr Cheesman has been requested to say a few words.
- 80th Commemoration of D Day (6 June 1944).
- Meeting with Helen Whatley MP scheduled for 3 November (subsequently changed to 8 December). Two representatives from DPC to attend.
- The Spires Pharmacy is under the new ownership of Knunal & Kinnari Vyas.

6 At this point in the meeting, the Chairman agreed to adjourn the meeting and reopen Questions from Members of the Public.

A request was made for a Residents' Forum to be considered.

Lighting at Foxden Play Area is currently being checked. Cllr Newton also to discuss with MBC.

25 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS: 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 9.40 pm.

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 8pm on **Tuesday, 7 November 2023.**