

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON TUESDAY 5 MARCH 2024 AT 8.00 PM  
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Present:** Cllrs R. Cheesman - Chairman; J Cottis; A-M Butler; J Tournay; B Cottis; K Alden-Morris; P Fincham; Mrs T. Irving – Clerk/RFO; 2 Members of the Public

Prior to commencing the meeting, Councillor Roz Cheesman advised where the emergency exits can be found.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr R Wingett – holiday; Cllr Newton – conflicting appointment; PC James Phillips.  
The apologies for absence were noted and accepted.
- 2 NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO FILM/PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD THE MEETING:**  
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 06.02.24:**  
The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Cheesman.
- 5 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** No questions were raised.

The meeting was reconvened.

- 6 REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:**
  - 6.1 County Councillor** )
  - 6.2 Borough Councillor:** ) Not available.
  - 6.3 DCA Representative** )

- 7 CRIME REPORT:** (obtained from e-watch.co)

Frithwood Close. Sunday 25th of February around 23:30. Somebody entered a Volvo parked in a residential driveway. Items inside had been moved around but nothing was stolen or damaged.

Monkdown. Wednesday 21st of February between 23:00 and 23:59. Somebody broke into a vehicle parked in the road. They do not appear to have taken anything.

Frithwood Close. Between 23:00 on Saturday 17th of February and 05:30 on Sunday 18th of February. Somebody entered a vehicle and went through all storage areas. They do not appear to have taken anything.

It was noted that someone has been arrested and charged for the above crimes. Residents have been asked to share any relevant video footage they may have with the Police.

A meeting was held with PC James Phillips & Task Force Officer PC John Boyd on 28/2/24 when local issues were discussed. The Council was specifically asked not to share email details for PC Phillips to avoid him becoming overloaded. All contact to be made via 101 (non-emergency), 999 (emergency) or via the Kent Police website: <https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

## 8 PLANNING:

### **Applications Awaiting a Decision.**

23/505211 - 69 Longham Copse

23/502544/full – 32 Reinden Grove

### **Applications Refused.**

23/504382/TPOA The Glebe, Otham.

There are no sound arboricultural reasons for the works which are considered unnecessary for the reasons stated in the application.

## 9 RIVER LEN NATURE RESERVE UPDATE:

Members of DPC held a very positive meeting with MBC, during which the Borough confirmed their commitment to making the project a priority (areas to be cleared to encourage wild flower regrowth & picnic tables to be introduced. A specific request was made that the bike track is allowed to remain).

MBC has applied for the Community Payback Spring Clean via Helen Whately's office.

## 10 CHRISTMAS CAROLS & LIGHTS 07.12.2024. Update from the Sub-Committee meeting.

The following points were agreed:

- It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to purchase a tree in the region of £50 (subject to approval by Highways). Clerk to ask Highways if their contractor is prepared to plant the tree on the grass verge, close to the Downswood Stone wildflower bed **RESOLVED**.
- Booking to be confirmed with balloon modeller at £250 and face painter at £110. Proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**
- Snow machine to be investigated for outside use – approx. budget £100
- All to consider renaming the event with something catchy.
- Oldest motifs to be retired (Bell, Little Venus, Sparkle, Orion and Shooting Star (3573) ) Consideration to be given to donating to a local school or charity.
- Load testing of columns to be requested around July/Aug.
- Garlands to be located on the furthest points of the display and the motifs in the middle, or a couple of garlands followed by 1 x motif on a repeat pattern. (A specific pattern could be problematic if permission to use certain columns is

refused AFTER the permit application has been submitted i.e. garland/motif needs to be specified for column number KDAL xxx. The suitability of the motif/garland for a particular column is then assessed by Highways. (If a motif is refused, a garland can usually be substituted).

- Garlands to be all the same colour
- Rock Choir has been requested.
- Cllr Cheesman awaiting call back from Valley Park School.
- Sparkx has confirmed cost of installation/removal/testing & storage of lights @ £3,250. Proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed **RESOLVED**

## 11 FINANCE:

### Monthly Financial Statement - February 2024

Opening Balance

	£
Balance of Current Account:	<b>34,868.00</b>
Balance of Investment Account:	£
	<b>10,615.31</b>

Less cheques sent:	Details	Amount £
Staffing Costs (February)	Payroll & Expenses	2,126.66
DCA	Hall Hire - APM/APCM	9.64
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,136.30</b>

**Cheques Rec'd:**

Nil

**Closing Balances:**

	£
Balance of Current Account:	<b>32,731.70</b>
Balance of Investment Account:	£
	<b>10,615.31</b>

#### 11.1 Approve Statement of Account:

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

**11.2 Fixed Asset Register:** Christmas lighting to be amended to reflect disposal of motifs @ £50 each and include new garlands (purchased Dec '24). **ACTION: Clerk**

**11.3 Review of Bank Accounts/Banking Arrangements.** It was agreed to open a NatWest Bankline Account. **RESOLVED.** Cllr Butler to suggest options for investment account at April's meeting. **ACTION: Cllr Butler**

**11.4 Donation Policy:** Cllr Wingett's policy to be amended:

1.3 to include 'support organisations which benefit local residents'

**11.5 Consider Donation of Easter Eggs to the DCA.** It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to spend a maximum of £20 on small, wrapped eggs. **RESOLVED.** Cllr Butler to purchase and reclaim on expenses. **ACTION: Cllr Butler**

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

## **12 TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES/HIP:**

Corner protection/yellow lines have again been requested for areas in the parish that are regularly blocked by double parking (resulting in missed bin collections).  
Highways will be visiting the locations with Planners to review the situation first hand.

Highways Officer to consult with planners to seek advice on appropriate signage etc to assist with safe crossing at the Church Road /Deringwood Drive junction.

The Clerk was advised that Cllr Cooke agreed at a recent Residents Forum that he will 'sort out bollards' for Deringwood Drive. Clerk to ask Cllr Cooke for an update. **ACTION: Clerk**

Following an enquiry, it was subsequently confirmed that the placement of large rocks on a public grass verge, adjacent to the highway is not permitted: *'All installations on the highway need to be of approved assets..... the person who placed them should be aware if there is an accident, they may be held liable!'*

Hedge restricting sightlines on Church Road has been reported.

The next CPTG meeting will be held on 7 March (Cllr Butler to stand in for Cllr Cheesman).  
**ACTION: Cllr Butler**

**13 GARDEN COMPETITION:** Notcutts has agreed with Cllr Cheesman to judge the competition at the end of June/beginning of July.

**14 OLYMPICNIC 13.07.24:** The following quotations were proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED:**

Four Jays: 2 x Event Toilets (to be delivered & collected on 13.07.24) in the sum of £310.

Kents Castles: 2 x Bouncy castles (to include generator & fuel) in the sum of £300.

Guides, Brownies and & D of E participants to be approached as possible volunteers.

**ACTION: Clerk**

**15 TREE UPDATE: Highways/Fir Tree** – Awaiting a response from Landscaping Team.

**16 CCTV:** Awaiting date from Open View for removal of equipment.

**17 COMMEMORATION OF D-DAY (6 JUNE 1944) 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY:** Tommies to be positioned together by the wildflower bed at Reinden Grove (to be displayed for just a few days).  
**ACTION: Cllr Cottis/Cllr Newton**

Cllr Fincham's suggestion for a children's display to be considered following more detail.

**ACTION: Cllr Fincham**

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

- MBC removed hazardous waste & a wooden pallet from Church Road within a couple of hours of it being reported by the Clerk. There had been a delay removing flytipping at Foxden Drive, but this has also now been cleared.

- Website re.gov.uk domain. Following helpful advice from Spectulise, it was agreed that due to the cost and complexity of these changes, DPC will delay until clearer information is available/it becomes compulsory.

#### **19 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:**

- An introductory meeting with DPC/OPC Cllrs & PCs James Phillips/ John Boyd (see Item 7).
- MBC re Local Nature Reserve on 14 February (see Item 9)
- Cllrs Alden-Morris, Cheesman and Fincham attended the Residents Forum of 13 February. All the issues mentioned – parking, speeding, appearance of the parish and anti-social behaviour – have already been addressed by the PC. However, it was noted that Cllr Cooke has also agreed to personally investigate and report back on some of the issues raised.
- HIP update meeting with Community Engagement Officer on 21.02.24 (see Item 12).

#### **20 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED:**

- Email from resident regarding Mallards Way pond. It was agreed that it is not considered appropriate for the PC to request sight of the tenders for the work from MBC.
- Letter from Downswood resident regarding the Residents Forum was noted (see Item 19 above).

#### **21 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS: Annual Memberships.**

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 9.58 pm**

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 8pm on **Tuesday, 2 April 2024.**