

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER, 2023 AT 8.00 PM
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs R. Cheesman; A-M Butler; K Alden- Morris (part); J Tournay; J Cottis; R. Wingett; B Cottis; G Newton (part); Mrs T. Irving – Clerk/RFO; Cllr G Cooke, KCC (part); 13 Members of the Public.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor G Newton (in case of lateness due to a conflicting engagement).
- 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 04.07.23:** Minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and duly signed by Cllr Cheesman.
- 5. GARDEN COMPETITION PRESENTATION:** The winners were congratulated and those present were awarded a prize and certificate:

1st Prize of £50 – 27 Reinden Grove
‘A really lovely garden with a great range of mature shrubs and perennials. Fantastic Clematis, Sambucus, Physocarpus and some lovely Roses too. Mature Bamboo give height and a lovely texture change’

2nd Prize of £25 – 35 Horton Downs
‘Fantastic mixture of plants in this garden, structure given with Trachycarpus Palm and Cordylines. Healthy Lavenders, and Bananas adding a tropical feel and the Stipa Gigantea is very impressive.’

3rd Prize of £15 – 34 Reinden Grove (hanging basket).
‘Lovely hanging basket with strong colour use in red, white and blue. A variety of interest by using Begonia, Petunia and trailing varieties.’
- 6. COUNCILLOR VACANCY:** A member of the public has expressed an interest and was present at the meeting to get a feel for what’s involved.
- 7. CCTV: Review of Action (Police/Community Protection Team Advice).** Cllr Wingett explained that CCTV regulations have changed over the years. When units were originally installed, the current strict regulations were not in existence. Today, it is highly regulated and its use must be justified.

When incidents occur, it's incredibly important that all matters are reported to the Police.

The work that DPC has been carrying out with Maidstone Borough Council and the Police has been very good and has led to a great success. The way forward is to continue working in partnership with all other agencies to resolve the problems.

There is no justification for the current CCTV cameras and therefore they need to be removed.

Following a vote by Members, it was proposed, seconded and unanimously **RESOLVED** to make arrangements for the CCTV to be removed. **ACTION: Clerk**

8 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

It was confirmed that the PC is aware of the points raised by members of the public that the monopole may have been unlawfully installed. Unfortunately, monopoles are permitted development and the comments about the company name(s) have no substance.

Speeding issues on Church Road.

A request was received for traffic to be rerouted through the Parsonage Place development.

Cllr Cooke explained that this did not form part of the original planning application. However, as a precedent has been set at Bicknor Wood, he agreed to make enquiries. **ACTION: Cllr Cooke**

Councillor Cooke offered to raise the reinstatement of white lining on Church Road with the Highways Manager. **ACTION: Cllr Cooke**

A temporary banner to remind motorists of the 30 MPH speed limit is due to be displayed by Bellway Homes.

The meeting was reconvened.

9 REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:

9.1 County Councillor.

KCC has got a number of ongoing consultations:

- The last few days of the budget consultation.
- Creation of Family Hubs
- Community Wardens. This is a discretionary service - which is considered to be incredibly valuable – and is linked to the budget.

In recognition of the ships company from HMS Kent being granted the Freedom of the County of Kent, the Massed Bands of Royal Marines will be parading from outside the Town Hall on 22 September.

Maidstone Mela will be held in Mote Park on Sunday between 12 to 6.

Please report any potholes on the portal as they start to reappear and advise Cllr Cooke.

9.2 Borough Councillor. Cllr Newton reported that he has been kept very busy since becoming Mayor.

He is due to officially open the new café in Mote Park on 14 September.

9.3 DCA Representative. Councillor Tournay was unable to attend the last meeting due to a back injury.

10 CRIME REPORT:

Mallards Way. On Friday 14 July a fire extinguisher was stolen from temporary portaloos. This was later found and retrieved from the pond.

Cllr Alden-Morris reminded the meeting that she found evidence of aerosol abuse in Mallards Park on 15 July.

Cllr Newton was attacked by a youth on a bike, which he reported to the Police. They considered it to be 'a minor incident'.

Cllr Cheesman was turning into Gore Court Road when 1 of 3 youths - who were standing with fishing rods - threw his rod at her car.

11 PLANNING: The Clerk reminded members of the Planning Committee that they are expected to comment on applications. Planning Committee to review outstanding applications and comment accordingly. **ACTON: Planning Committee**

New Applications

23/503675/FULL - 34 Pennine Way

Erection of a single storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory.

23/503644/FULL - 21 Cheviot Gardens

Conversion of annexe and garage to form 1no. one-bedroom detached dwelling with external alterations.

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

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

Existing Applications

23/502544/full – 32 Reinden Grove

12 FINANCE:

12.1 Approve Statement of Account:

Opening Balance

Balance of Current Account:

Balance of Investment

Account:

£
54,947.00
£
10,615.31

Less cheques sent:	Details	Amount £
Bearsted PC	Summer Playscheme Contribution	100.00
Paul Waring	Maintenance of Roundabout	45.18
R. Cheesman	Expenses - Plants	45.00
Staffing Costs (July)	Payroll & Expenses	2338.81
St John Ambulance	First Aid - Olympicpicnic	126.72
Aylesford Bulls	White Lining - Olympicpicnic	72.00
KALC	Training Course (6 Sept)	44.40
Staffing Costs (August)	Payroll & Expenses	2071.30
Garden Competition Prizes	1st, 2nd and 3d Place	90.00

Total: 4,933.41

Cheques Rec'd:

MBC	Love Where you Live Grant	600.00
DCA	Litter Picking Contribution	148.71
Caxtons	" " "	540.80

Total: 1,289.51

Closing Balances:

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

Acceptance of the previously circulated account was proposed by Cllr J Cottis, seconded by Cllr R Wingett and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**

12.2 Consider Mallards Way/Deringwood Drive Roundabout Proposal.

Vine weevil on the roundabout has been treated. A quotation for the supply and planting grasses and lavenders has been chased.

12.3 Other Matters to Report: Cllr Tournay was thanked for carrying out a quarterly internal review.

A letter of thanks has been received from Bearsted Parish Council for the Summer Play Scheme donation.

13 TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES/HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE:

A resident has asked for a motorbike restrictor to be considered for all access/egress points in Old Spot Lane, to stop motorbikes speeding along the lane. Highways has advised that it will not be possible to finance this from their budget, but the parish council could consider funding it from the HIP.

Further information is required regarding how pushchairs/wheelchairs/pushbikes etc would be able to access the lane? A request was received during the meeting that consideration is also given for restrictors to include Old Church Road.

ACTION – Clerk

14 PROVISION OF TREES: Coronation Fruit Trees

The suggested dwarf trees are: Worcester Pearmain, Golden Delicious, Laxton's Superb and Victoria Plum x 2. (Trees to be financed by previously received grant.)

Quotation from Paul Waring to plant, supply 3' weldmesh guard, irrigation pipe and mulch @ £57.40 per tree (DPC to supply trees, stakes and ties).

Acceptance of the above was proposed by Cllr Butler, seconded by Cllr B Cottis and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**

Location of Section 106 (KHS) Funded Trees:

Suggestions from members of the public are most welcome.

Current suggestions include: Deringwood Drive - Flowering Cherry, Rowan, Hawthorn. Aspen and Hornbeam along the ditch in Mallards Park, adjacent to farmland (the latter subject to permission from MBC). See also Item 17.

15 PARISH CHARTER REVIEW:

Comments received include 'lack of communication, difficult to contact by telephone and the website is difficult to navigate'. Does the Borough still employ a Parish Liaison Officer?

Further comments are welcome. To be received prior to the closing date of 30 September.

16 ORCHARD SPOT ROUNDABOUT: Consider quotation for maintenance work – see item 12.2

17 CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND LIGHTS CEREMONY: Items for consideration:

Purchase of tree for Deringwood Drive. Quotation received for a 7' to 8' tree - which will require a large tub & a stake in the ground + guy ropes (to support the tree during high winds) and two sets of lights (either solar or battery). This was subsequently dismissed in favour of a real Fir Tree, which will be requested as part of the S106 funding.

Father Christmas Costume. It was **RESOLVED** that a replacement outfit will need to be purchased (volunteer required to be Father Christmas).

Lighting. It was **RESOLVED** that 4 x sets of garland lights will be purchased @ £400.

Response still required from Maidstone Rock Choir – Cllr Newton to chase.

Clerk is waiting for the New Road and Street Work Act operative registration card numbers, before a permit application can be submitted to Highways.

- 18 CLERK'S REPORT:** Information received from Bellway Homes is that approx. 6 weeks work remains at the Foxden Drive ramp/footpath works (4 weeks to finish the ramp and 2 weeks of planting).

Old Church Road – which was referred to by Highways as Old Spot Lane – is due to close on 12 October.

- 19 OLYMPICNIC REPORT:** Despite the forecast of strong winds – which meant the bouncy castles had to be cancelled – the day was dry and attendance was good. The event was very popular and everyone appeared to have had a great time. It was agreed that an informal approach to the races works best. Assistance from Charles Tanswell and members of the public has been acknowledged with thanks.

- 20 PARISH NEWSLETTER:** To be published on the reverse side of the Christmas Carols and Lights flyer. All to contribute with articles, with the aim of delivery being made during mid-November.

- 21 CONSIDER COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW/PARISH BOUNDARY IMPLICATIONS:**
Clerk to request clarification of the implications for the Parish Council.
It was unanimously agreed that Downswood would not like to lose the history of being linked with Otham. **ACTION: Clerk.**

- 22 TOTEM PROJECT/LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE GRANT:** It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that Men in Sheds produce the totem locally at £300 (thus saving in excess of £100 in delivery costs). MVCP to install. MBC has agreed that the grant surplus can be retained for complementary purchases - suggestions include; buddleia and replacement platinum blonde lavenders. **RESOLVED.**

Cllr Butler to circulate information regarding suitability of previously suggested possible sites. **ACTION: Cllr Butler**

23 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:

- Cllr Cheesman and the Clerk attended a meeting with an MBC Cllr & Officers at Mallards Park on 18 August to discuss the replacement litter bins. It was agreed to adjust the location of two of the bins and signage to be erected indicating the new location of the third bin. Cllr Newton commented that the new bins appear to be well used.

24 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED:

- **Defibrillator** – Cllr Butler has agreed to be the new Guardian.
- Email from resident regarding maintenance of the roundabout and planting of fruit trees was previously circulated to councillors for information/consideration

25 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS: Planting of Spring Bulbs, Newsletter, Environmental Projects (Helen Whatley MP) – River Len.

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

In accordance with Schedule 12 of LGA 1972 and Standing Orders Clause 3d the meeting closed to members of the public and press at 10.05 pm

26 ACTION REQUIRED: Anti Bullying/Harassment Procedure was held in closed session due to its confidential nature.

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 8pm on **Tuesday, 3 October 2023.**