

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

Present: Cllrs R. Wingett - Chairman; R Cheesman; P Fincham; J Tournay; N Clifford; Mrs T Irving – Clerk/RFO; 4 members of the public.

Cllr Wingett gave a fire safety address.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllrs A-M Butler – Conflicting engagement; D & J Everett – Unwell; G Newton – Conflicting Appointment; MB Cllr – Val Springett – Conflicting Meeting; MB Cllr Denis Spooner – Unwell.
- 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:** Cllr R – Wingett re. Item 8 – Neighbouring property.
Cllr Fincham – Item 15 CPR Trainer for HMPS
- 4 APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 1 & 16* OCTOBER 2024:** The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Wingett.
*Note Item 4. The DIRG administrator advised the council that it is a public site and that anyone can post on it.
- 5 ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**
 - In response to a question about the field opposite Parsonage Place.
It was confirmed that no further news is available from Bellway Homes regarding future plans to build there. A date for a Community Liaison meeting has been chased several times, but is yet to be agreed.

The Clerk has been advised by CAARA that Church Road will have to close again as South East Water 'did not complete their work'. Road space has been agreed for January '25 to carry out widening of Gore Court Road.

On site, Bellway are working their way through the plots & one more piling phase is expected to be carried out during May '25, lasting for about 1 week.

The meeting was reconvened.

- 6 REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:**
 - 6.1 Kent County Councillor** – Not available.
 - 6.2 Maidstone Borough Councillors.** A report was submitted by Cllr Springett – see Appendix 1.

6.3 DCA Representative – Cllr Clifford was invited to preview the Halloween event and reported the display as ‘absolutely amazing’.
Cllr Cooke has agreed funding for lights at the centre.

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:

Re: 24/504348/TPOA - 15 Bournewood Close Application to crown reduction of 1x Ash tree currently 60ft, proposed dimensions 50ft H and 25ft W, 3x Field Maples to be cut back to fence line and reduced to height of 25ft and 3 to be pollarded to 25ft. 1x Cobnut tree to be cut back to fence and 2x Cobnut to be pollarded to height of 25ft. 2nd ash Tree reduced in height and width by 30% currently 55ft proposed 30ft. All reductions to provide sufficient clearance to the fence boundary and property providing more light to the property and garden
No Objections by DPC

Applications Granted - Not applicable

Pending Decision by MBC

23/502544/full – 32 Reinden Grove

9 TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES: Combined Parishes Traffic Group (CPTG) Update:
Minutes from the meeting of 8 October ’24 have been circulated for information.

Cllr Cheesman reported that two large vehicles appeared to be stuck by the Willington Street/Deringwood Drive junction. The Police were present at one of the incidents*, which Cllr Cheesman will report to Highways at the Parish Seminar.

*PC Stevens has been contacted to ask if he can provide any information.

10 FINANCE:

Downswood Parish Council		Payments	Balance
Monthly Financial Statement to 31.10.24			
		£	
Opening Balance:		62,754.79	
<u>Unity Bank Account -</u>		£	
<u>Payments</u>		17,229.97	
DCA	Hall Hire		12.86
Unity Bank	Service Charge		5.40
KCC	Permit for Christmas Lighting		134.00

ICO	GDPR/Data Protection Fee	40.00
Staffing Costs - Oct	Payroll and Expenses	2,225.10
Paul Waring	Roundabout Maintenance	49.68
KALC	Clerk - Standards Conference (50%)	42.00
Total Payments:		2,509.04

Unity Bank: Payments Received:

Maidstone Borough Council	Parish Services Scheme	63.24
		14,784.17
		£
NatWest Acct:	34827.38	
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Nil Payments/Receipts		34,827.38
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N S & I (Investment Acct):	10,697.44	10,697.44

Closing Balance:	Total:	£
		60,308.99

- 10.1 Approve Statement of Account:** (Report previously circulated to Cllrs for consideration). Acceptance of the report detailed above was proposed by Cllr Tournay, seconded by Cllr Fincham & unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**
- 10.2 Investment Account Update:** Cllr Butler to forward a link for information purposes.
ACTION: Cllr Butler
- The Clerk advised that the best method of closing the NatWest account is via a Switch process, which can be undertaken by Unity Bank, and will require three signatories to authorise. It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the Switch process and transfer all NatWest funds to Unity. **ACTION: Clerk**
- 10.3 Consider Donation for Boxley Handbells – Christmas Performance.** A donation of £50 was proposed, seconded & unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**
- 10.4 Remembrance Day – Purchase Wreath/Agree Donation:** It was **RESOLVED** to purchase a wreath for £25 and make an additional donation of £25 to Royal British Legion. Cllr Wingett will be presenting the parish wreath at Otham War Memorial.
- 10.5 Consider Community Food Bank Donation:** Cllr Fincham advised that a monetary donation is preferable to having items of food donated. A donation policy to be sent to the group, requesting completion as soon as possible. Representative(s) will also be invited to attend the Christmas ceremony, with a view to collecting donations from the community.
- 10.6 Consider 2025/26 Budget Proposal/Finance Committee Meeting (To be agreed):** Members are requested to submit suggestions for consideration in the budget, prior to the Finance Committee meeting. Cllr Fincham confirmed that, subject to suitable storage being found, Open Spaces would like £2K to be considered for equipment. He would also like a new female

Tommie to be considered (cost to be confirmed). A date for the Finance Committee meeting is to be agreed.

10.7 Other Matters to Report: No further matters.

- 11 OPEN SPACES: Interpretation Board/Lectern Requirement:** Cllr Wingett suggested that the wording is kept simple. He volunteered to come up with a design and will share with councillors for consideration. **ACTION: Cllr Wingett**
- 12 CHRISTMAS EVENT 07.12.24.** Cllr Wingett has personally purchased a tablecloth and clips, which he will loan to the PC for the event. Cllr Tournay offered to loan some of her lights. Cllr Wingett has produced a poster for the event for display in the parish.
- 13 CONSIDER ADDITIONAL STORAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR DPC EQUIPMENT:** MBC are unable to help. Cllr Wingett to investigate if DPC piece of land could be used, but it is unlikely to be suitable. (Cllr Clifford mentioned that 2 x fencing panels require attention – photos to be sent to the Clerk for further investigation). **ACTION: Cllr Wingett & Clifford**
- 14 REVIEW OF MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY:** Adoption of the update - which clarifies that everyone using the PC website/Facebook are required to adhere to standards, or be blocked/removed- was proposed, seconded **RESOLVED.**
- 15 CONSIDER COMMUNITY CPR TRAINING EVENT:** Cllr Fincham is a fully qualified trainer & has volunteered to offer provide training to residents. Maidstone Prison has agreed the loan of equipment on a free of charge basis.
Cllr Fincham to suggest training date(s) for the new year. **ACTION: Cllr Fincham**
A 2-hour choke and defibrillator course will be offered to approximately 8 attendees.
- 16 REVIEW OF OPEN SPACES & SOCIAL COMMITTEES:** Clerk to contact Cllrs D & J Everett to establish if they wish to remain as members of the committees. **ACTION: Clerk**
Cllr Clifford confirmed that she no longer wishes to be chair of the Social Committee.
- CONSIDER HR COMMITTEE:** Cllr Wingett advised that legislation for harassment is changing, and it is considered appropriate that the PC should have a separate HR Committee. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Butler, Wingett, Tournay, Fincham and the Clerk will be members of the committee.
- 17 CLERK'S REPORT: Receive reports & updates on previous actions:** In response to a query from a resident, an update was provided regarding Bellway Homes/Parsonage Place - see Item 5.
- 18 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:**
Standards Conference – Attended by the Clerk on 10/10/24.

A presentation was given by the Borough's Monitoring Officer, Civica Training & KALC. Slides have been circulated to all.

Citizens Advice AGM – Attended by Cllr Cheesman on 28 October. A brief update was provided (minutes of the last meeting are available from Cllr Cheesman).

19 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED:

- **Scenic Green Trail – Request to support the proposal (Expression of Interest).**
Cllrs confirmed that they are happy for the Expression of Interest form to be completed and returned. **ACTION: Clerk**
- **Cllr Stuart Jeffrey, MBC Leader, Opportunity to attend a PC Meeting.**
It was agreed to defer a decision (advice to be sought from Cllr Springett and/or Cllr Spooner).

20 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS: Review of Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, Request from Bearsted Parish Council re financial support for the Community Warden.

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

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Date of next meeting: Tuesday, 3 December 2024 at 8 pm.