

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON TUESDAY 9 MAY, 2023 AT 8.00 PM  
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Present:** Cllrs J. Cottis; B. Cottis; J Tournay; K Alden- Morris;  
Mrs T. Irving – Clerk/RFO; Cllr Gary Cooke (KCC); 9 Members of the Public.

Councillor John Cottis chaired the meeting.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllrs Newton – conflicting appointment; Cheesman – holiday; Butler – unwell.

The above reasons for absence were noted and accepted.

- 2. NOTIFICATION OF WHETHER ANYONE WISHES TO RECORD ANY ITEMS:** 1 Member of the public; the Clerk for the purpose of minuting.

- 3. COUNCILLOR VACANCY:** Co-option. Not applicable.

- 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** No declarations were received.

- 5. ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:**

Questions were raised regarding:

- The telecommunication proposal for Deringwood Drive.
- Willington Street/Deringwood Drive traffic lights.
- Traffic calming for Church Road

- 6. APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF MEETING 04.04.23:**

Following an amendment to Item 8.2 'Internal Audit 2023.23' amended to '.....2022.23' and removal of the sentence in Item 10 regarding an additional bus, the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Cottis.

- 7. CRIME REPORT & POLICING UPDATE:** No new reports

- 8. REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:**

**8.1 COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:**

- Cllr Cooke informed the meeting that there will definitely be an absence of traffic lights at the Willington Street/Deringwood Drive junction.  
The view by some people that this will stop the building of more than 100 houses is incorrect as, in law, permission has already been granted for 421 houses.  
Some form of mitigation will need to come forward to improve the junction.  
A further report to all residents will be made by Cllr Cooke as soon as he can.

**8.2 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:** Not available.

**8.3 DCA REPORT:** Cllr Tournay congratulated the Downswood Community Association for the 'wonderful barbeque/street party they organised'.

## 9 FINANCE:

### 9.1. Receive and Consider Annual Internal Audit Report:

The Internal Report was circulated to all members in advance of the meeting.

R.1 Cllr Alden-Morris or Cllr Tournay to carry out a bank reconciliation every quarter.

R.2 Recommendation regarding uncleared cheques was noted.

**9.2 Approve DPC Accounts YE 31 March 2023.** The annual accounts had previously been circulated to all members for consideration.

It was proposed by Cllr Alden-Morris, seconded by Cllr J Cottis and unanimously agreed to approve the accounts. **RESOLVED.**

**9.3 Consider the Annual Governance Statement:** The statement was duly considered.

**9.4 Approve the Annual Governance Statement:** Proposed by Cllr J. Cottis, seconded Cllr Tournay and unanimously agreed to approve affirmative responses to questions 1 to 8 inclusive (Q9 N/A). **RESOLVED.**

**9.5 Consider the Accounting Statement:** The statement was duly considered.

**9.6 Approve the Accounting Statement:** Proposed by Cllr Tournay, seconded by Cllr J Cottis and unanimously agreed to approve the Accounting Statement as prepared and circulated by the RFO/Clerk. **RESOLVED.**

### 9.7 Approve Statement of Account:

Opening Balance Accts YE 31.03.23

	£
Balance of Investment Account	<b>10,615.31</b>
Balance of Current Account:	<b>26,913.12</b>
Less April Cheques:	
Otham with Langley PCC	100.00
KSS Air Ambulance	100.00
A-M Butler – Expenses	TBC
Staffing Costs	2,043.97
Cheques received:	
MBC – Precept	37,000.00

Closing Balances:

Current Account: **61,669.15**

Investment Account: **10,615.31**

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

### 9.8 Membership Subscriptions:

KALC - Renewal at a cost of £665.08 was proposed by Cllr Alden-Morris, seconded Cllr Tournay & unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**

CPRE – Renewal at a cost of £45.00 was proposed by Cllr Alden-Morris, seconded Cllr Tournay & unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**

**9.9 Other Matters to Report:** There were no further matters.

## 10 PLANNING:

- **Consultation: Maidstone Borough Design & Sustainability Development Plan Document – Reg 18 Preferred Approaches**

Cllr Alden-Morris to provide a link to the document and post basic information on DPC's Facebook and the Community Hub to assist residents with making comments.

- **APPLICATION REF: 23/501546/TNOT56 PROPOSAL:** Electronic Communications for installation of 15m high Phase 8 monopole, 2no. ground-based equipment cabinets, 1no. meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto.

Cllr Alden-Morris to reconsider DPC's comments as submitted for the consultation and advise if amendments are required.

### **Applications Pending:**

23/500557 – The Nature Reserve Spot Lane.

### **Applications Granted:**

23/500960 FULL – 31 Pennine Way.

## 11 TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES/HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN:

Willington Street/Deringwood Drive traffic lights (re Parsonage Place).

A decision regarding further action/a possible public meeting is awaiting Cllr Cooke's response.

Cllr Cooke to establish whether highway funding from Central Government is available to help with the condition of the roads.

Despite a request to delay the traffic survey work, cables are in evidence across roads.

## 12 CLERK'S REPORT: To receive reports & update on previous actions:

- **Retaining walls:** – A response is awaited regarding ownership of the walls in Old Spot Lane & Deringwood Drive.
- **Bench in memory of John Leaf** to be installed in Mallards Park in the next few days.

## 13 OPEN SPACES/DOWNSWOOD DIGGERS UPDATE:

- Update provided regarding installation of bat boxes alongside the River Len. Wild flower garden at The Triangle is proceeding. Deringwood Drive wildflower beds were tidied as suggested by MVCP at the end of last summer. No further work is believed to be required at present. The group would like to plant some bulbs with help from the community at the end of the year.

A question regarding the possibility of having a real Christmas tree with lights close to the 'bee area' was raised.

- **Update: Love Where You Live Grant Application.** The applications were reviewed and scored against the scheme criteria, evaluating how the project supported the objectives outlined in the brief. Following a high volume of applications, confirmation has been received that DPC has been awarded £600 for a Bee/Insect Post. It was suggested that the location could be checked with MVCP; possibly the wildflower garden that is closest to Willington Street?
- 14 FRUIT TREES TO MARK THE CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III:** No further action required until early autumn.
- 15 OLYMPICNIC – Saturday, 15 July:**  
It was suggested that as John Leaf was such an integral part of the Olympicnic, it will be appropriate to say a few words about him on the day.
- Following a request from the Clerk, MPE has asked some of their managers to come along on the day to help. It was agreed to accept their kind offer of a crossbar challenge (MPE to bring a goal post) on the understanding that they will be able to run it.
- Medals x 150 to be ordered with the Coronation insignia on one side and the Olympicnic engraving on the other + purple ribbons. **RESOLVED** in accordance with LGA S145.
- 16 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:** Not applicable.
- 17 GARDEN COMPETITION –** Clerk to circulate a list of roads for councillors to prepare their shortlists (to be returned prior to the 6 June meeting).
- 18 DCA FETE – Saturday 3 June:** In accordance with LGA S145 a budget of £100 to purchase small prizes was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED**
- 19 CCTV –** Ongoing. Further information to be provided at June’s meeting.
- 20 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED:** Various correspondence previously circulated by email.
- 21 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 9.20 pm.

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 8pm on **Tuesday, 6 June 2023.**