

**MINUTES - DOWNSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON TUESDAY 22 MAY 2024 AT 8.00 PM  
IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Present:** Cllrs R. Wingett - Chairman; R Cheesman; B Cottis; A-M Butler; P Fincham; G Newton; D Everett; N Clifford; J Everett; Mrs T Irving – Clerk/RFO; KC Cllr – G Cooke; MB Cllrs V Springett and D Spooner; 9 members of the public

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** No apologies were received.
- 2. NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO FILM/PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD THE MEETING:** One member of the public and the Clerk for the purpose of minuting.
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS:** None declared.
- 4. APPROVE & SIGN MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 02.04.24:** Following an amended to read ‘Staffing Costs (March)’ Item 11 vis (February), the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings and were duly signed by Cllr Wingett.
- 5. ADJOURNMENT FOR QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** No questions were raised. The meeting was reconvened.
- 6. REPORTS RECEIVED FROM:**
  - 6.1 Kent County Councillor.**

Cllr Cooke paid tribute to Cllrs Newton and Cheesman for all the work they have carried out during their respective terms of office.

    - A pothole blitz is now underway.
    - This part of Kent continues to be blighted by road closures.
    - KCC is again facing financial challenges.
    - Cllr Cooke raised just over £20K for Young Carers during his term as Chairman, which ends tomorrow.
    - Cllr Cooke is seeking an update re the status of the traffic lights at Deringwood Drive/Willington Street and when they will be turned on. He will advise accordingly.
  - 6.2 Maidstone Borough Councillors.** Written reports were submitted by both Cllrs Springett and Spooner – Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

Cllr Springett confirmed that the parish now has three Borough Councillors, as opposed to the previous one. (Cllr Ciaran Oliver being the third Cllr).  
Tribute was again made to Cllr Newton for all his hard work during his time as a Borough Cllr.  
Both Cllrs Springett and Spooner confirmed that they hope to attend as many parish meetings as possible
  - 6.3 DCA Representative.** The previous representative, Jen Tournay was requested to provide a report.

Following discussion at the last DCA meeting, it was confirmed that new defibrillator pads are available, the equipment/cabinet was cleaned and it is in full working order. The Chairman thanked Mrs Tournay for all her for her efforts.

Cllr Butler will continue to monitor the defibrillator and will be assisted by Cllr Clifford, as necessary.

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

- Frithwood Close. 10 April between 00.01 and 05.00. A rear registration plate was stolen from a vehicle that was parked in the road.

**8 PLANNING:** New Applications and Existing Applications Update.

**Awaiting a Decision.**

23/502544/full – 32 Reinden Grove

**9 TRAFFIC RELATED ISSUES:** Cllr Cooke to provide an update re bollards and investigate possible funding from his budget. **ACTION:** Cllr Cooke

**Speedwatch.** The names of two volunteers have been forwarded to PC Phillips. Cllr Springett suggested that perhaps volunteers from various parishes could combine to form one group and take in turns to cover the various parishes?

**ACTION:** Cllr Springett

**10 OLYMPICNIC 13.07.24:** Volunteers are still being sought. Help has been requested from the Guides/Brownies and Bearsted Scouts Group. Medals are awaiting collection.

**11 FINANCE:**

**Downswood Parish Council**

**Monthly Financial Statement to 22 May 2024**

Opening Balance	£
Balance of Current Acct:	<b>29,118.63</b>
Balance of Investment Acct:	<b>10,697.44</b>

<b>Less cheques sent:</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
CPRE	Annual M'ship Subscription	45.00
A M Butler	Expenses - DCA Easter Eggs	19.75
SLCC	Annual M'ship Subscription	114.50
Openview Security	Removal of CCTV	423.67
Heart of Kent Hospice	Donation	100.00
First Rescue	Defibrillator Pads	166.80
Emma McLeish	Deposit - Face Painter	50.00
Staffing Costs (April)	Payroll & Expenses	2,218.44
Aford Awards	Olympicnic Medals	487.80
Auditing Solutions	Internal Audit	300.00

	<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,925.96</b>
<b>Cheques Rec'd:</b>		
MBC	Precept 2024/25	39,000.00
DCA	Litter Picking Contribution	148.71
		<b>39,148.71</b>
<b>Closing Balances:</b>		
Balance of Current Account:	£	<b>64,341.38</b>
Balance of NS & I Investment Account:		<b>10,697.44</b>

#### 11.1 Approve Statement of Account:

Acceptance of the previously circulated report was proposed by Cllr Cheesman, seconded by Cllr Butler and unanimously agreed. **RESOLVED.**

- 11.2 Review of Bank Accounts/Banking Arrangements:** Signatories for Unity Bank will be: Cllrs Cheesman, Butler, Wingett and the Clerk **RESOLVED.** Clerk to proceed with opening an account. **ACTION: Clerk**

Cllr Butler to provide an update re possible investment account options.

**ACTION: Cllr Butler**

- 11.3 Review Internal Audit Report/Consider Actions:** The report from Auditing Solutions was duly considered, from which the following is recorded:

*'We are pleased to again conclude that, based on the programme of work undertaken this year, the Clerk and Council have continued to maintain adequate and effective internal control arrangements. We are also pleased to again acknowledge the quality of records maintained by the Clerk and thank her for her assistance, which has ensured the smooth progress of our review.'*

No actions are required.

- 11.4 Consider the Annual Governance Statement:** The statement was duly considered.
- 11.5 Approve the Annual Governance Statement:** It was unanimously agreed to approve affirmative responses to questions 1 to 8 inclusive (Q9 N/A). **RESOLVED.**
- 11.6 Consider the Accounting Statement:** The statement was duly considered.
- 11.7 Approve the Accounting Statement:** It was proposed by Cllr Butler, seconded by Cllr Clifford and unanimously agreed to approve the Accounting Statement as prepared and circulated by the RFO/Clerk. **RESOLVED.**
- 11.8 Consider Annual Membership Subscription:** KALC. It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to continue with membership at a cost of £695.43 Ex VAT.
- 11.9 Donation Request: Mum Hub Kent:** Following discussion, the council would like the group to reapply for consideration at October's meeting. In the meantime, Clerk to request the group get in touch with Cllr Cooke for possible funding.
- 11.10 Other Matters to Report:** None.

- 12 COMMEMORATION OF D-DAY (6 JUNE 1944) 80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY:** (Arrangements for this event have been delayed due to the election.) It was agreed to continue as per minutes of 02.04.24 meeting.

- 13 DOWNSWOOD FETE 01.06.24 – CONSIDER WAYS TO SUPPORT/DONATION:** Cllrs Wingett and Clifford confirmed their availability and agreed to discuss manning a stall.

A donation of £100 for the DCA was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed  
**RESOLVED**

- 14 CHRISTMAS EVENT 07.12.24.** Update from previous actions:  
Sparkx has appointed a new lighting advisor to co-ordinate with the PC.  
The Clerk has been advised that the parish lights have been tested, with 3 requiring repairs (ranging from £55 to £360).

Cllr Cooke offered to work with the PC on the Christmas lighting infrastructure and he might be able to provide financial help.

All are requested to contact the Clerk with suggestions.

It was suggested that the street columns could be included on the HIP.

Cllrs Cheesman & Wingett have not been able to find suitable musical entertainment.  
Cllr Cheesman is still waiting for a call back from Valley Park School, but will contact Greenfields School in the meantime. **ACTION: Cllr Cheesman**

- 15 CLERK'S REPORT:** Receive reports & updates on previous actions:
- Woodcut Farm Business Park. A possible environmental issue regarding foul water being discharged into a nearby pond with an outlet to a water course has been raised with the Clerk. However, Cllr Springett was able to offer reassurance that an application has been submitted for the planning variation and the Environment Agency has been consulted.

- 16 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS/SEMINARS ATTENDED:**
- The Clerk attended an online HMRC Payroll seminar on 10 April.

- 17 CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED:**  
Various correspondence circulated by email for consideration.
- Letter Mr Everett received on 02.04.24.  
Mr Everett agreed to wait for a response from the Chairman re item 17 'Community Action Plan'.

- 18 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS:**  
Please contact the Clerk if you have items that you wish to be considered for future agendas.
- Community Action Plan
  - Bearsted Community Ad Magazine

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15 pm**

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 8pm on Tuesday, 11 June 2024.

## Appendix 1