

Downley Parish Council
Minutes of the Council held online, via Zoom
on Tuesday 13th April 2021 at 7pm

Present: Councillors M Lazenby, (Chairman presiding), R Bowden, K Chandarana, A Lenard, W Monroe-West, V Naik, V Srao, W Steneskog and S Tozer

In Attendance: Buckinghamshire Councillors P Turner, and M Hussain, 2 members of the Public and 1 member of the Press

Officers: M Kennedy (Locum Clerk), and G Tandy (Clerk designate)

1) HRH The Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh (1921-2021) (8306/04/21)

Following the death of HRH The Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh on 9 April, the Chairman, Councillor M Lazenby asked that all Councillors and members of the Public present stand to show their respects with a minute's silence in his honour.

2) Apologies for Absence (8307/04/21)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Srao although he was in attendance albeit remotely and on public transport for the duration of the meeting. Councillor Bowden expressed his apologies for dropping in and out of the meeting on three occasions caused by internet problems.

3) Declarations of Interest (8308/04/21)

Councillor A Lenard declared a personal interest in agenda item 15 Grant Application on behalf of Downley Community Orchard as a friend of the applicant. Councillor M Lazenby declared a personal interest in Planning Application 21/05860/FUL 41 Commonside as a friend of the applicant and because the property is diagonally opposite her own back garden.

4) Public Participation (8309/04/21)

None.

5) Minutes (8310/04/21)

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 9th March 2021 were presented for adoption. It was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2021, be received, approved, and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

Arising from the Minute No. 8300/03/21, Parish Noticeboards, a member sought clarification from the Chairman on a recent article in the Downley Village News that had claimed that the Downley Communications Forum had supplied the noticeboards in the village. Members were reassured that this was a mistake, that it should have recorded their help towards funding some of the noticeboards in the past, and that a correction would appear in the next edition.

6) Reports from Buckinghamshire Councillors (8311/04/21)

Members had before them, copy having been previously issued, the report by Councillor Turner. It was agreed that a copy of his report be uploaded to the website. It was **RESOLVED that the report be received and noted with thanks.**

A Member took the opportunity to ask Councillor Turner whether he could assist in the identification and responsibility of lamp columns in Downley and the payment of the electricity supply. Although representations had been made to Ian Fraser-Fox, the Buckinghamshire Council's Lighting Manger, no response had been received. Following the devolution of street lighting to the parish council by the former Buckinghamshire County Council, it was unclear which lamps were retained by the principal authority and which ones had been transferred to the parish council. Councillor Turner agreed to investigate the matter on the Council's behalf.

Councillor Turner left the meeting at 7.30pm.

7) Planning Applications (8312/04/21)

Councillors considered submitting representations to Buckinghamshire Council on current planning applications. It was **RESOLVED that the Council submits the following comments to Buckinghamshire Council as set out hereunder.**

Application Number	Address	Planning Committee
21/05656/FUL	The Stables Downley Common Downley	Refuse
21/05683/FUL	28 Gosling Grove Downley	Approve
21/05715/PNP30	1A Chapel Street Downley	Approve
21/05732/FUL	47 Talbot Avenue High Wycombe	Refuse
21/05758/FUL	6 Hillfield Close High Wycombe	Approve
21/05763/FUL	83 Westover Road High Wycombe	Approve
21/05774/CLP	2 Partridge Way High Wycombe	Approve
21/05779/ADRC	Hill Cottage Plomer Hill High Wycombe	Approve
21/05878/MINAMD	Hill Cottage Plomer Hill High Wycombe	Approve
21/05818/CLP	11 Southfield Road High Wycombe	Approve
21/05820/FUL	43 Plomer Hill High Wycombe	Refuse
21/05853/FUL	48 Littleworth Road Downley	Approve
21/05860/FUL	41 Commonsides Downley	Approve
21/05928/FUL	The Haven School Close Downley	Approve
21/05959/FUL	10 Old Farm Road Downley	Approve

8) Decision Notices (8313/04/21)

The Council noted the Decision Notices received from the Buckinghamshire Council as set out hereunder.

Application Number	Address	BC Decision
21/05067/FUL	4 Curlew Close	Approved
21/05107/ADRC	Hill Cottage Plomer Hill	Approved
21/05133/CLP	26 Southfield Road	Approved
21/05195/FUL	Highlands School Close	Approved
21/05215/HPDN	Highlands School Close	Details Not Required to be Submitted
21/05260/FUL	4 Old Farm Road	Approved
21/05369/CTREE	19 Commonside	Not to make a Tree Preservation Order

9) Committee Reports (8314/04/21)

a) Finance Committee (4th March 2021)

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 4th March 2021, copy having been issued were presented to Council. It was **RESOLVED that the report be received and noted, and that the recommendations contained therein be adopted**

b) Planning Committee (9th March 2021)

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9th March 2021, copy having been issued were presented to Council. It was **RESOLVED that the report be received and noted, and that the recommendations contained therein be adopted**

10) Progress Report (8315/04/21)

Members had before them a progress report on outstanding matters/projects, copy having been issued. It was **RESOLVED that the report be received, considered, and adopted**

Arising from the report, Members were informed that the Street Light Replacement Project was underway and that the optics had been ordered. Councillor Bowden would liaise with Sparkx for regular updates on the work as specified in the contract.

11) Risk Management Policy (8316/04/21)

As part of the Council's review of its Governance arrangements, Members had before them a revised Risk Management Policy copy having been issued. It was **RESOLVED that the Council adopts the revised Risk Management Policy**

12) Street Lighting in Narrow Lane (8317/04/21)

Members considered the Locum Clerk's further report which updated the Council on the current position concerning the streetlight in Narrow Lane, corner of Commonside. It was noted that Sparkx would commission SSE to complete the installation of the lamp to the supply outside 23 Commonside.

The householder maintained that the Council had damaged 2 trees following the installation of the column and had accepted liability. However, his request for compensation towards the cost of removing all three conifers and replacing them with 3 established trees or a hedge had been refused.

The Clerk's recommendation to award an ex-gratia payment had been rejected by the resident who had sought a 50% contribution from the Council.

Councillors expressed a difference of opinion to the version of events described by the resident. Contrary to his view, Councillors maintained that only one tree, to the left-hand side of the streetlamp, had been cut back, not two. In the absence of any written evidence a view was expressed that professional advice be sought from the Buckinghamshire Council's Tree Officer to ascertain the level of damage. A suggestion that the Council accepts responsibility and settles the claim for 50% damages, was firmly rejected as this could set a dangerous precedent. It was

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Clerk writes to the Tree Officer for the Buckinghamshire Council for his professional opinion; and**
- (ii) the whole issue of compensation or otherwise be referred to the next meeting of the Council.**

13) Cloud Accessibility (8318/04/21)

Councillor Naik gave a detailed oral report with options where data is transmitted and stored on remote storage systems, maintained, managed, backed up and made available to users over the internet. He explained that users generally pay for their cloud data storage on a per-consumption, monthly rate. This could be procured through one account controlled and shared by the clerk or through separate accounts held by each councillor. Typically examples include Amazon Drive, Google, Microsoft One-Drive and Drop Box. It was **RESOLVED that Councillor Naik, supported by Councillor Steneskog prepare a written paper with options and recommendations to the next meeting for Council's further consideration.**

14) Website (8319/04/21)

Members had before them a comprehensive paper prepared by Councillor Bowden. Unfortunately, Councillor Bowden's internet connection dropped, and, in his absence, Council decided that the matter should be deferred to the next meeting. It was **RESOLVED that the matter be deferred to the next meeting.**

15) Replacement Parish Noticeboards (8320/04/21)

The Council had ordered 3 new noticeboards to replace damaged boards within the village. The report identified a fourth board at the Jubilee Allotments that was unsafe and needed replacing. It was **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Council procures a fourth noticeboard from Greenbarnes at the Jubilee Allotments at a discounted price of £1,114.40 ex VAT and installation and that the additional cost + installation be funded from reserves.
- (ii) that the Clerk seeks permission from West Wycombe Estate to erect the board on their land.

16) Grant Application on behalf of Downley Community Orchard (8321/04/21)

The Council discussed an application on behalf of the Downley Community Orchard for a grant of £862.86 for boundary hedging and fencing around the Community Orchard. A member reported on a site meeting held that morning with Chiltern Rangers, and expanded on the proposed scheme for constructing a native hedge to screen the orchard from the lane. Work would be undertaken in September to nap the hedge back and to weave the branches horizontally to create a hedge supported by a low fence to prevent parking at the boundary.

The Council discussed numerous supporting schemes including:

- Substituting the low fence with wooden posts like those surrounding the common to prevent encroachment,
- Temporarily removing the two benches to dissuade antisocial behaviour while the works take place,
- Approaching DOSCA and the Downley Common Preservation Society for volunteer support in laying the hedge and funding towards the project,
- Involving The Downley School in the Project,
- Erecting notices warning that CCTV is in operation, and
- Reinstating the information sign

Members were reminded that while these initiatives were all very laudable, they could not be considered because the only item on the agenda for Council's consideration was the grant application. It was

RESOLVED that the quotation for £862.86 (excluding VAT) provided by Chiltern Rangers for materials and labour be accepted and that while the applicant is the Downley Community Orchard, the Council can reclaim the VAT if payment is made direct to Chiltern Rangers, and that the other matters raised be discussed at a future meeting.

17) Application for a memorial bench on Downley Common (8322/04/21)

The Council had received an application from a local resident who wished to place a memorial bench on the Common. Members considered the request having regard to its policy on memorial benches developed in 2019. It was **RESOLVED that the application as presented be granted subject to compliance with the Council's policy on memorial benches.**

18) Report from the Chairman of Finance Committee (8323/04/21)

Councillor Bowden gave a critique on the Council's financial position and its achievements in the past year and paid tribute to the Locum Clerk for his work.

19) Payment of Invoices (8324/04/21)

The Council received and approved the schedule of payments, as set out hereunder.

Chq. No.	Payee	Amount	Details
1950	Downley Dynamos	£500.00	Grant. Replacing chq.no. 1854 issued 11/3/20 unrepresented
1951	KAD Garden Services	£1020.00	Gardening Services February 2021
1952	Castle Water	£345.68	Water charge allotments. Replacing chq.no. 1900 unrepresented
1953	TBS Hygiene	£216.00	Dog bin emptying for Feb 2021
1954	West Wycombe Estate	£279.19	Rent Mannings Field
1955	SparkX	£6,208.70	Street Lighting Repairs
1956	Edge IT Systems	£986.40	Hosting services, Software set up and training AdvantEDGE
1957	NALC	£360.00	Advertising the post of Parish Clerk
1958	Buckinghamshire Council	£450.00	Purchase of Grit Bin for School Close
1959	Mike Kennedy	£3,256.05	Professional fees and office expenses for March 2021
DD	Plus Net	£43.20	Phone line, call divert and broadband (Community Centre)- March
DD	Telecoms World	£12.24	Phone Line 01494 257711 - March
	TOTAL	£13,677.46	

20) Bank Reconciliation Statement to 28 February 2021 (8325/04/21)

The Council received and approved the bank reconciliation statement to 28 February 2021.

21) Date and Place of next meeting (8326/04/21)

It was agreed that the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council shall be held on Tuesday 18th May 2021 at the Downley Community Centre commencing at 7.30pm.

Chairman _____

Date _____