

Downley Parish Council
Minutes of the Council held online, via Zoom
on Tuesday 12 January 2021 at 7.00pm

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 Councillor P Turner
2 Members of the Public.
Officer: M Kennedy (Locum Clerk)

The Chairman welcomed everybody present to the meeting and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

1) Apologies for Absence (8231/01/21)
None.

2) Declarations of Interest (8232/01/21)
None.

3) Public Participation (8233/01/21)

Paul Homer, resident and Trustee of the Downley Old School Community Association (DOSCA) and the Downley Communications Forum addressed the meeting on the following matters:

- (i) Agenda Item 12 Downley Controlled Crossing Feasibility Study Mr. Homer apprised Councillors of the Downley Communications Forum's decision to contribute £2,500 towards this feasibility study. Members were unaware of this pledge.
- (ii) Erection of Banners in Downley Village Mr. Homer wanted to make Councillors aware that 2 banners promoting a GP surgery in Disraeli and Downley had been erected outside Tara's News and the Co-op. Members questioned whether permission had been sought for these banners. **ACTION: Clerk to investigate this.**
- (iii) DOSCA – Council Representative Members were told that the Association no longer has a representative from the Council. Although this is not covered in the lease agreement between the Council and DOSCA, it was felt that a Council representative would be beneficial although it was understood that the Clerk had previously assumed this role. **ACTION: Agenda item to next meeting.**
- (iv) Street Light Hithercroft Road by Bus Stop Mr. Homer reported the failed lamp at this location. A Member confirmed this light is part of the LED Lighting replacement contract for which tenders are currently invited. **ACTION: Councillor Bowden to update residents on this project through the Village Newsletter**
- (v) Car on the Highway Mr. Homer drew the Council's attention to a vehicle on Plomer Green Avenue without an engine but covered in tarpaulin that was parked on the highway close to another property that have 5 scrap cars and many tyres in the garden. Together this could present a major risk. Mr. Homer had reported the matter to the Buckinghamshire Council but was seeking the Parish Council's support to ameliorate the situation. It was understood the vehicle was taxed but there may be other road safety/environmental concerns. **ACTION: Clerk to progress.**

4) Minutes (8234/01/21)

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 15 December 2020 were presented for adoption. It was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2020, be received, approved, and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

5) Reports from Buckinghamshire Councillors (8235/01/21)

Councillor Turner gave a brief oral report. Referring to Mr. Homer's previous comments about a van parked on Plomer Green Avenue, Councillor Turner said that he was aware of the situation and had reported the situation over many years. If vehicles are not roadworthy then the police will intervene or if they have no MoT and are parked on the highway then DVLA can be notified. **ACTION: Councillor Turner and the Clerk to progress as discussed at the meeting.**

Councillor Turner reported that redevelopment of Burrows House should start by the end of January, subject to Covid restrictions.

As regards the Covid vaccine, Councillor Turner confirmed that all over 80-year-olds will be offered a vaccination by the end of January through their GPs. He reinforced the need for all residents to comply with social distancing regulations. It was suggested that the Downley Covid Action Group promotes the regulations in the Downley Village Newsletter. **ACTION : Councillor Naik to progress.**

Councillor Turner left the meeting at 7.30pm

6) Committee Reports (8236/01/21)

It was proposed by Councillor Lenard, seconded by Councillor Lazenby and **RESOLVED that the report of the Staffing /HR Committee held on 8 January 2021 be received, considered, and adopted and that the recommendations contained therein be approved.** Arising from the report:

Minute No. 5 Terms of Reference

The Chairman, Councillor Lenard, reinforced the Committee's role, its interacting with the Council, the need for a good dialogue between councillors and their ability to raise matters of concern about the Clerk's performance, capability, or disciplinary issues. Councillor Lenard as committee Chairman will take the lead on this.

Minute No. 6 Appointment of the Clerk

The Chairman confirmed that all committee members would take an active role in the recruitment process and that all applications received by 17 February would be reviewed.

Arising from the Minutes it was **RESOLVED that the committee shall henceforth be known as the HR Committee.**

7) Planning Applications (8237/01/21)

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.

January 2021				
Application Number	Address	Postcode	Planning Committee	DPC Decision
20/08103/FUL	37 Downs Park	HP13 5LU	Approve	Approve
20/08284/LBC	The Timber Barn	HP13 5XN	No Recommendation	No Recommendation

8) Decision Notices (8238/01/21)

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

January 2021			
Application Number	Address	Postcode	BC Decision
20/07438/FUL	Hill Cottage Plomer Hill	HP13 5NB	Approve
20/07765/CLP	83 Westover Road	HP13 5HX	Certificate Granted
20/08010/ADRC	8 Narrow Lane	HP13 5XP	Permit - detail Reserved by Condition
20/07806/FUL	31 Hithercroft Road	HP13 5LT	Approve
20/07761/FUL	40 Sunny Croft	HP13 5UR	Approve

9) Draft Budget for 2021/22 (8239/ 01/21)

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Councillor R Bowden, presented the draft income and expenditure account for the financial year commencing 1 April 2021, copy having been issued, which had been recommended for approval by the Finance Committee following their meeting on 7 December 2020. It was noted that allotment rents were still being collected by BACS payments however reconciliation to the list of current tenants was proving difficult due to incomplete records having been passed to the Locum Clerk. It was **RESOLVED that the draft budget for 2021/22 be received, approved, and adopted.**

10) Precept for the year 2021/22 (8240/01/21)

Members considered the precept to be levied on the Buckinghamshire Council for the financial year commencing 1 April 2021. Councillors welcomed the slight reduction in the precept which would reduce the overall tax burden on taxpayers in Downley. It was **RESOLVED that a precept of £100,000.00 be levied on the Buckinghamshire Council for the financial year commencing 1 April 2021.**

11) Progress Report (8241/01/21)

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.

(i) Street Lighting Tender

The Clerk informed the Council that the replacement Street Lighting Contract had been upload on the Government's Contract Finder and that the closing date is 1 March. However, the Council was faced with a potential legal challenge from a company who maintained that they had been awarded the contract in 2020. The Council had sought professional advice and was adamant that while the company had undertaken non-destructive testing of the columns a contract had not been

signed for the replacement of the lamps. It was **RESOLVED that the matter be left to the Clerk to further investigate and respond on the Council's behalf.**

(ii) Streetlight in Narrow Lane

The Clerk reported that the owner of 23 Commonsides had responded to the Council's request to cut back the overhanging trees in his garden and was seeking 2 further quotations before undertaking this work. The connection to the supply had been referred to the electrical contractor to further investigate with the energy provider. It was **RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

(iii) Additional Defibrillator for the Village

The Council had proposed an additional defibrillator outside Tesco Express. However the store holds a device within the premises and Members were invited to consider alternative locations within the village. A member suggested K S Starlight Stores would be an ideal location due to its proximity to the Common, its position within the High Street, and footfall is high. Alternative proposals were suggested including the Memorial Hall, where it was understood the Council is Custodial Trustee. It was **RESOLVED that the Clerk further investigates this proposal and that the matter be deferred to the next meeting.**

12) The Downley Controlled Crossing Feasibility Study (8242/01/21)

Council had applied for LAF funding for a survey to determine if there is a suitable location for a pedestrian crossing in the Village. The new Community Board had approved this scheme and had invited the Council to approve a matched funding contribution of £4,855.22. It was **RESOLVED that the Council contributes £4,855.22 towards The Downley Controlled Crossing Feasibility Study representing 50% towards the cost of the Study, the Clerk to liaise with Paul Homer of the Downley Communications Forum on their pledged contribution of £2,500 towards this study.**

13) Park Fencing School Close Park (8243/01/21)

The perimeter post and rail fencing surrounding School Close Park had collapsed in many places and needed repair. The matter had been referred to Buckinghamshire Council who had proposed the construction of a perimeter earth bund that had been rejected by this Council. Members considered alternative options including the replacement of the rail with low wooden posts like those surrounding the Common, to be supplied by West Wycombe Estate; allowing the bund to be constructed to a low level and top planted with grass and flowers; consulting the residents to garner their views; and referral to Barratt Homes.

It was understood that while the open space was transferred to the former Wycombe District Council, the knee rail fence was excluded by the developer, Barratt Homes and was not adopted by Bucks County Transport at that time. It was suggested that responsibility for the reinstatement and repair remains with Barratt Homes, and **RESOLVED that the Clerk writes to Barratt Homes in this matter to establish ownership and the adoption of the land as highway land by Buckinghamshire Council.**

14) Report of the External Auditor on the Accounts for 2019/20 (8244/01/21)

The Council was pleased to note that in the Auditor's opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The Auditor had however, raised three matters that required the Council's attention to which the Clerk had presented suggested responses. It was **RESOLVED that the report be noted along with the suggested responses set out in the Clerk's report.**

15) Council Policies for Adoption (8245/01/21)

Members considered the adoption of three policies that related to capability, disciplinary, and grievance, copies of which had been issued and had been previously considered and recommended for approval by the HR Committee at its meeting of 8 January 2021. It was **RESOLVED that the Council formally adopts the policies on Capability, Disciplinary and Grievance.**

16) Payment of Invoices (8246/01/21)

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

Ch No.	Payee	Amount	Description of goods/services
1928	cancelled cheque		
1929	Royal British Legion	£16.00	Poppy Wreath
1930	KAD Garden service	£1,101.00	Grass cutting /Leaf clearance November
1931	Colin Clarke Construction	£6,114.00	Works to Downley Community Centre
1932	PKF Littlejohn	£480.00	External Audit Fee
1933	Mr Peter Redman	£1,368.00	Clearing Downley Village for Jan-Sept 2020 (replacing cheque number 1926 payable to Fourlegswood
1934	West Wycombe Estate	£450.00	Annual Rent of Jubilee Allotment Gardens
BACS	M W Kennedy	£2,162.63	Replacing cheque Nos. 1927 & 1928 Professional fees & Expenses Locum Clerk for November – Both cheques stopped
BACS	M W Kennedy	£3,094.86	Professional fees & Expenses Locum Clerk for December
	TOTAL	£14,786.49	

The Chairman indicated that BACS payments had been made to the Clerk as there had been problems with cheque signing and differences with the Bank Mandate, with respect to which 11 former councillors were still on the Mandate and would be removed while the 3 co-opted Councillors needed to be added.

17) Date and Place of next meeting (8247/01/21)

It was agreed that the next ordinary meeting of Council shall be held by zoom on Tuesday 7 February 2021 at 7pm

18) Closure of the Meeting (8248/01/21)

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.38pm

Chairman _____

Date _____