

**Downley Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the Council held online, via Zoom**  
**on Tuesday 9 February 2021 at 7.00 pm**

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, W Mallen and K Ahmed;  
 2 members of the Public and 1 member of the Press

Officer: M Kennedy (Locum Clerk)

**1) Apologies for Absence** (8254/02/21)

None.

**2) Declarations of Interest** (8255/02/21)

None.

**3) Public Participation** (8256/02/21)

None

**4) Minutes** (8257/02/21)

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 12 January 2021 were presented for adoption. It was **RESOLVED** that the **Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021, be received, approved, and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

**5) Reports from Buckinghamshire Councillors** (8258/02/21)

Members had before them, copy having been previously issued, the report by Councillor Turner. Councillor Mallen gave a brief oral report on the vaccination program and urged Councillors to spread the word among the Black Ethnic Minorities Group where the take up of the vaccination has been low. It was **RESOLVED that the reports be noted.**

*Councillor Turner left the meeting at 7.30pm*

**6) Planning Applications** (8259/02/21)

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	Postcode	DPC Decision
20/08500/FUL	21 Southfield	HP13 5JZ	Refuse
21/05111/FUL	83 Westover Road	HP13 5HX	Approve
21/05067/FUL	4 Curlew Close	HP13 5JY	Refuse
20/08423/FUL	The Stables	HP13 5YN	Refuse
21/05097/FUL	50 Southfield	HP13 5LA	Approve
21/05195/FUL	Highlands	HP13 5TR	Approve
21/05215/HPDN	Highlands	HP13 5TR	Approve

## **7) Decision Notices (8260/02/21)**

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

<b>Application Number</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Postcode</b>	<b>BC Decision</b>
20/008009/FUL	25 Hillfield Close	HP13 5NA	Approve
20/07664/FUL	25 Gosling Grove	HP13 5YS	Approve
20/07820/FUL	48 The Pastures	HP13 5LY	Approve
20/08226/FUL	45 White Close	HP13 5ND	Approve

## **8) Progress Report (8261/02/21)**

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**

Following a surfeit of emails from residents about failed streetlights in the village, a Member advised the Council that a notice had been prepared for the Parish Notice Boards informing the community about the Council's Street Lighting Contract. A similar notice is already on the Parish website and an article had been prepared for the Village newsletter the publication of which has been delayed. It was suggested that a similar message should be issued to the Street Reps Chat Groups and the Chairman offered to forward a copy of the notice for general circulation. It was **RESOLVED that the matter be noted.**

### **(ii) Banner Advertising in the Village**

A member questioned why this item was on the progress report when some of the banners were in the adjoining Disraeli Ward. Permission for the other sites in Downley had been sought and obtained from the businesses concerned. The item had been drawn to the Council's attention by a member of the public at the last meeting and the Clerk had been asked to establish whether permission had been obtained for advertisement consent. There followed a general discussion about whether the Council intended to support the campaign, the absence of suitable premises for establishing a GP surgery in the village and whether GPs would be willing to operate in the village in any case. It was **RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

## **9) Revised Standing Orders of the Council (8262/02/21)**

Members had before them revised Standing Orders for the Council incorporating the NALC revised Model Standing Order published in 2020. Attention was drawn to the proposed change in Standing Order 12e concerning the publication of the Council's draft Minutes prior to their approval at the next Council meeting.

Members agreed that this would cause confusion and to overcome this it would be preferable to wait until minutes are approved before publication on the website.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council adopts the Revised Standing Orders subject to a change in Standing Order 12e to read : The Council shall publish minutes on a website which is publicly accessible and free of charge not later than one month after the Council has approved them

**10) Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy** (8263/02/21)

As part of the Council's review of its Governance arrangements, Members had before them a new Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy for adoption by the Council.

In noting this Policy was commissioned by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in 2019 for the purpose of its member councils and county associations, it was **RESOLVED** that the Council adopts the **Anti-Harassment and Bullying-Policy**.

Arising from the foregoing it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk prepares a list of the Council's adopted policies for Members' information and publication on the website along with other policies for Council's further consideration.

**11) Additional Defibrillator for the Village** (8264/02/21)

Members gave further consideration to options for locating an additional defibrillator in the village following the decision of the Memorial Hall's Trustees not to grant permission for attaching the defibrillator to the left-hand side of the building.

Councillors were disappointed by this decision and were confused as to why the trustees appear to have considered the possibility of siting the defibrillator on the left-hand side wall but not the right- hand side of the building.

Members believed that the right-hand side of the building would be clearly visible from the High Street and easily accessible to the public and sought further clarification from the Trustees on this point.

It was also suggested that the Clerk writes to the owner of Spirit Hair as an alternative location on the High Street. It was **RESOLVED** that **subject to the further response from the Memorial Hall Trustees to the Council's invitation to reconsider their position, the Council authorises expenditure of £1,520 from reserves for the purchase of a defibrillator as set out in the clerk's report. In the event of their decision not to grant approval and permission is granted by Spirit Hair, the installation proceeds at this location.**

Arising from the foregoing it was **RESOLVED** that residents be informed of the locations of all the defibrillators in the village by notice in the Parish Noticeboards and on the website.

**12) New Banking arrangements for the Council** (8265/02/21)

Members considered a switch from the Council's current Bankers, Lloyds Bank, to Unity Bank. While the former does not provide on-line banking with dual signature authorisation, the latter does. Payments are set up on-line by the Clerk ready for payment. The supporting vouchers are made available for 2 Councillors to verify and authorise who would then go on-line to authorise the payments. Payments are only

made when both councillors have completed the authorisation process. It was **RESOLVED that the Council switches to Unity Bank to enable on-line payments to be made in future and that all Councillors be added to the Bank Mandate for authorisation purposes.**

**13) New Finance Software Package for the Council (8266/02/21)**

The Council considered the purchase of a bespoke software package designed for parish councils produced by Edge IT Systems Limited. The AdvantEDGE Finance software has been developed exclusively for Parish and Town Councils and is widely used by the sector.

A Member questioned whether the software would interface with the new Bank Account. While this would be beneficial it was not considered essential given that the Council's existing system is both time consuming and provides no arrangements for budgetary control, preparing monthly reports or year-end summaries, bank reconciliations, or VAT management. It was **RESOLVED that the Council purchases the AdvantEDGE Finance package at a cost of £822 in the first year and £372 thereafter for 5 years, subject to inflationary increases.**

**14) Allotments Report (8267/02/21)**

The report gave details of the arrangements that the Clerk had made to update the Council's allotment records of its 51 tenants, including the recovery of outstanding rent for 2020/21 and in many cases correcting the tenancy records held. It was **RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the Council's thanks be recorded to the Clerk for his efforts.**

**15) Community Right to Bid (8268/02/21)**

Members had before them the report of the Clerk which gave details of the three buildings in Downley previously listed as Assets of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011.

In noting that the five years listing period for both the Le De Spencer's Arms and the Bricklayers Arms has expired, it was **RESOLVED that the Council makes application to the Buckinghamshire Council for the re-listing of the Le De Spencer's Arms and the Bricklayers Arms as Assets of Community Value on the grounds that they both further the social wellbeing and interests of the local community.**

**16) Parish Charter (8269/02/21)**

Members had before them the draft Town and Parish Charter which sets out the relationship between Buckinghamshire Council and town and parish councils in Buckinghamshire, to strengthen partnership working and improve services for residents. The Council was invited to submit comments on the proposals.

Members welcomed the document and in noting the consultation ends on 7 March, it was **RESOLVED that the Draft Town and Parish Charter be supported.**

**17) Gosling Grove Pond (8270/02/21)**

The Council has earmarked £2,500 in the 2021/22 budget for restoration and beautification works to the Pond. The report set out a summary of the work undertaken to the Pond in the past 3 years and recorded in the Council's minutes.

It was reported that records held by the Council in the Community Centre date back to 1991 and refer to the pond as Sand Pits Pond. The extensive work previously undertaken by Clive Knapman, the Chiltern Rangers, and others was acknowledged.

Members agreed that the area could become a real focal point for the village with colourful information boards explaining the history of the site, its environment and habitat. It was agreed that the Chairman approaches Clive Knapman and John Wilson from the local history group to enlist their further support in this project.

Councillors Lazenby, Chandarana, Tozer and Steneskog offered to catalogue the Council's archives, some of which dates back to the 1950s, the documents to be scanned and saved possibly with paid student support. It was further reported that DOSCA had offered to provide a lockable filing cabinet. It was **RESOLVED that the Council progresses this scheme as discussed at the meeting.**

**18) Signage (8271/02/21)**

A Member suggested that the Council obtains a sign "Downley Parish Council" for the Community Centre and Jubilee Allotments. A general discussion followed on signing the three cottages beyond the allotments and the clerk confirmed that he has spoken with the resident who emailed the Council and had referred the matter to the Buckinghamshire Council's Street Naming section. The Clerk was asked to contact West Wycombe Estate for permission to erect a sign on their land and **RESOLVED that the Clerk progresses the matter as discussed at the meeting.**

**19) Email addresses for Councillors (8272/02/21)**

It was reported that 3 councillors were still using their private email addresses for Council business. Concern was expressed that the Council's email server, website and software needed updating, however Members were assured that all computer updates are performed on a regular basis. It was **RESOLVED that the set-up instructions be re-sent to the three Councillors.**

**20) Appointment of a Council representative on the Downley Old School Community Association, DOSCA (8273/02/21)**

Members considered the appointment of a Councillor representative to serve on the DOSCA Management Committee following the vacancy caused by Councillor Egmore's resignation. It was **RESOLVED that the appointment be deferred to the Annual Meeting of the Council in May.**

**21) Payment of Invoices (8274/02/21)**

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

<b>Bank Balance at 29.12.20</b>		<b>was £226,622.11</b>	<b>includes £50,000 ring fenced projects</b>
<b>Ch No.</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Description of goods/services</b>
1936	KAD Garden service	£1,504.00	Grass cutting /Leaf clearance/planting etc Dec & Jan
1937	Kamila Turner	£50.00	Overpayment of Allotment rent
1938	M W Kennedy	£2729.69	Professional fees & Expenses Locum Clerk for January
1939	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	£360.00	Advert for Parish Clerk
1940	M A Lazenby	£60.41	Office Supplies
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£4,704.10</b>	

**22) Date and Place of next meeting (8275/02/21)**

It was agreed that the next ordinary meeting of Council shall be held by zoom on Tuesday 9 March 2021 at 7pm

**23) Closure of the Meeting (8276/02/21)**

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30pm