

Downley Parish Council
Minutes of the Council held online, via Zoom
on Tuesday 9 March 2021 at 7.09 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 Councillor P Turner, 3 members of the Public and 1 member of the Press

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

1) Apologies for Absence (8282/03/21)

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Bowden and Chandarana who had both experienced technical issues signing into the meeting.

2) Chairman's Welcome (8283/03/21)

The Chairman, Councillor Moyra Lazenby, introduced and welcomed to the meeting Mr. Giles Tandy the new Parish Clerk who would be taking up his new appointment on 26th April 2021. Mr. Tandy acknowledged the welcome extended to him and looked forward to joining the Council.

3) Declarations of Interest (8284/03/21)

None.

4) Public Participation (8285/03/21)

None.

5) Minutes (8286/03/21)

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Council held on 5th, 9th, and 10th February 2021 were presented for adoption. It was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings held on 5th, 9th, and 10th February 2021, be received, approved, and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

6) Reports from Buckinghamshire Councillors (8287/03/21)

Members had before them, copy having been previously issued, the report by Councillor Turner. Councillor Turner gave a brief update on the vaccination programme. It was **RESOLVED that the report be received and noted with thanks.**

Councillor Turner left the meeting at 7.30 pm.

7) Planning Applications (8288/03/21)

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	DPC Decision
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21/05260/FUL	4 Old Farm Road	Approve
21/05254/FUL	36 Middlebrook Road	Approve
21/05369/CTREE	19 Commonsides	No recommendation
21/05270/FUL	Bramley House, Downley Common	Approve
21/05239/FUL	32 Sunnycroft	Approve
21/05421/FUL	55 Plomer Green Lane	Refuse
21/05433/FUL	33 Talbot Avenue	Approve
21/05506/FUL	41 Selwood Way	Approve

8) **Decision Notices** (8289/03/21)

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

Application Number	Address	BC Decision
20/08284/LBC	The Timber Barn Plomer Green Lane	Approved
20/08104/CLP	12 Fulton Close	Refused
20/07918/FUL	28 Gosling Grove	Approved
20/08423/FUL	The Stables Downley Common	Refused
20/08103/FUL	37 Downs Park	Refused
20/07873/FUL	57 Sunny Croft	Approved
21/05111/FUL	83 Westover Road	Withdrawn
20/07563/FUL	6 Curlew Close	Approved

9) **Committee Reports** (8290/03/21)

a) Staffing Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 17th February 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) Finance Committee

The Chairman of the Finance Committee presented an oral report following the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 4th March 2021. The Chairman informed the Council of the Committee's recommendations to:

- (i) appoint Claritas Accounting to undertake the Council's internal audit arrangements and payroll function.
- (ii) appoint Councillors to lead on the investigation and further report into the contracts for street lighting, emptying dog bins, grounds maintenance, and the Community Centre.
- (iv) adopt revised Financial Regulations
- (iii) appoint a contractor for the Street Lighting Upgrade, with respect to which further discussion would be had in closed session at the end of the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be received and noted, and that the recommendations as presented be adopted.

10) Progress Report (8291/03/21)

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.

11) Policy Review (8292/03/21)

As part of the Council's review of its Governance arrangements, Members had before them new Whistleblowing and Equality & Diversity Policies for adoption by the Council along with revised Complaints Procedure and Data Protection Policies.

In noting these Policies were commissioned by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in 2019, it was **RESOLVED** that the Council adopts the **Whistleblowing and Equality & Diversity Policies along with revised Complaints Procedure and Data Protection Policies as presented.**

12) Financial Regulations (8293/03/21)

Members had before them revised Financial Regulations based on the Model Financial Regulations templates produced by NALC in July 2019. It was **RESOLVED** that the Council adopts the new Financial Regulations as presented.

13) Street Lighting in Narrow Lane (8294/03/21)

Members considered the Locum Clerk's comprehensive report which updated the Council on the current position concerning the streetlight in Narrow Lane corner of Commonsides. Having regard to the recommended course of action to complete this project, it was **RESOLVED** that the Council

- (i) **rejects any suggestion that it will pay for felling the three conifers and replacing these with establish trees or hedges;**
- (ii) **undertakes sensitive pruning of the conifers sufficient to enable the light to operate effectively at the Council's own expense;**
- (iii) **instructs Sparkx to commission SSE to complete the installation of the lamp to the supply outside 23 Commonsides at a cost of £2727.89 +VAT + any inflationary costs;**
- (iv) **pays for an extended bracket to the streetlight to ensure effective operation; and**
- (v) **ensures the resident is fully informed of the Council's decisions.**

14) Park Fencing School Close Park (8295/03/21)

The report gave details of the history of the collapsed perimeter post and rail fencing surrounding School Close Park, the progress in reporting this to Buckinghamshire Council who proposed the construction of a perimeter earth bund which had been rejected, the views expressed by residents and alternative solutions including the erection of low wooden posts similar to those surrounding the Common.

Members reiterated their previous objection to the provision of an earth bund, a view supported by residents of School Close following a survey of some of the

householders fronting the Green on the grounds that the proposed earth bund would not stop illegal encroachment especially if there were gaps between the inspection covers and services etc. The bund itself would soon become an attraction for BMX bikers.

Councillors accepted that a post and rail fence would be costly and quickly get broken and instructed the Clerk to write to Buckinghamshire Council to consider erecting wooden posts around the Green, similar to those surrounding Downley Common. These boundary posts serve the village well and would be less visually intrusive than a post and rail fence or an earth bund. It was **RESOLVED that the Clerk progresses this matter as discussed at the meeting.**

15) Cloud Storage (8296/03/21)

Councillor Naik had not been able to progress this item but would discuss the matter further with Councillor Bowden. It was **RESOLVED that the matter be deferred to the next meeting.**

16) Website WCAG 2.1 Compliant (8297/03/21)

The report outlined the Public Sector Bodies (Websites & Mobile Applications No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 that came into force in late 2018. Its aim is to ensure public sector websites and mobile apps are accessible to all users, especially those with disabilities.

In noting that all parish councils must have a website that complies with Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA rating so that it meets Accessibility Guidelines as set in the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility regulations as a minimum standard, it was **RESOLVED that Councillor Bowden contacts the Council's current web designer and also explores the two companies referred in the Clerk's report and presents a further paper to the next meeting.**

17) Advertising in the Village (8298/03/21)

The Council considered an application from a local estate agent seeking to erect advertising signage to the side of the passenger bus shelter on Commonsideside. Members were unhappy about the signage as they believed it would detract from the visual appearance of the Common and Commonsideside and would not add any real amenity to the village. It was also felt that to permit this request could set a precedent for others to follow. It was **RESOLVED that permission for the erection of advertising at this location be declined.**

18) Use of Mannings Field (8299/03/21)

Members considered an application from the Chairman of the Downley School Parents Association for the use of Mannings Field by Happy Circus to raise funds for the school. The event organiser was in attendance and the Chairman allowed her to address Members' concerns about insurance, number of performances, alternative locations, parking and overspill onto Commonsideside, and litter. In noting that the Council leases the land from West Wycombe Estate, it was **RESOLVED that subject to the approval by West Wycombe Estate, the application as presented be permitted free of charge.**

19) Replacement Parish Noticeboards (8300/03/21)

Several noticeboards within the village were in poor condition and the report gave details of 3 company quotations for the supply and delivery of replacement 2 bay noticeboards. The Chairman confirmed the condition of the boards at Westover Road, Pheasant Drive and The Memorial Hall were dangerous and should be replaced as a matter of urgency. Following a full and frank exchange of views it was **RESOLVED that the Council accepts the quotation in the sum of £1357.68 +VAT supplied by Greenbarnes, excluding installation, for three new parish noticeboards at Westover Road, Pheasant Drive and the Memorial Hall, the Clerk to seek a discount for the supply of 3 boards.**

20) Annual Meeting of Electors(8301/03/21)

The Council discussed the date for the Annual Parish Meeting. Recognising that local elections would take place in May it was **RESOLVED that the Annual Meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday 18 May at 7 pm and that the Annual Meeting of Electors would be held on Tuesday 25 May at 7 pm**

21) Payment of Invoices (8302/03/21)

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

Chq. No.	Payee	Amount	Details
1941	Excel Office Supplies	£642.84	Stopped cheque 1917 pd 29/10/20 unpresented
1942	Excel Office Supplies	£81.08	Bal. of unpaid invoice 53245 plus sales order 120166 Office supplies
1943	Buckinghamshire Council	£318.00	Advertising Costs for Clerk's Vacancy
1944	Richard Bowden	£234.17	Website hosting Paper and printer ink
1945	SSE	£279.19	Street Lighting
1946	Moyra Lazenby	£7.02	Postage expenses
1947	TBS Hygiene	£972.00	Dog bin emptying for Oct 2020- Jan 2021
1948	Castle Water	£237.63	water charge allotments Aug- Jan 2021
1949	Mike Kennedy	£3,003.77	Professional fees and office expenses for February 2021
	TOTAL	£5,775.70	

22) Date and Place of next meeting (8302/03/21)

It was agreed that the next ordinary meeting of Council shall be held by zoom on Tuesday 13 April 2021 at 7 pm

23) Exclusion of the Public and the Press (8303/03/21)

It was **RESOLVED that the Public and the Press be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960 as matters which are considered to be private and confidential were about to be discussed.**

24) Upgrade of the Council streetlights (8304/03/21)

The Council had placed a contract with the Government's Contract Finder for the replacement of the Council's sodium streetlights with new LED lanterns. Companies had been invited to submit bids by 1st March 2021.

Councillor Bowden presented details of 4 companies who had submitted quotations which he had analysed and presented in spreadsheet form; copy having been issued to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

Having regard to an outstanding issue that had arisen when the specification of works was formerly issued in 2020, the increase in project costs to which the Clerk reassured the Council of its current financial position, and mindful of the Council's primary aspiration to complete this project, it was **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Council appoints Sparkx to undertake the contract for the replacement of the Council's sodium streetlights with new LED lanterns within an approved budget of £67,000 plus £3,000 for contingencies, subject to a further on-line meeting with the company to discuss matters of details;**
- (ii) that the Clerk writes to the previous petitioner to assuage their concerns, and**
- (iii) that the Council's thanks and appreciation be recorded to Councillor Bowden for all this work in connection with this project.**

25) Closure of the Meeting (8305/03/21)

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55 pm

Chairman_____

Date_____