



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Downley Parish Council held on
Tuesday 9th January 2024 at 7:30 p.m.**

Present: Councillors M Lazenby (Chairman presiding), S Biggs, P Brooks, A Lenard, A Mann, W Monroe-West, and W Steneskog

In attendance: One member of the public present

Officers: G Tandy (Clerk)

Buckinghamshire Councillor P Turner.

1) Apologies for absence (8778/01/24)

Apologies were received from Councillors K Chandarana, C Lenton and T Snaith.

2) Declarations of interest and Dispensations(8779/01/24)

None

3) Minutes (8780/01/24)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2023 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

4) Public participation session (8781/01/24)

A member of the public spoke with regard to item 09) on the agenda, solar panels at the Community Centre. He queried the phrase "Made in Germany" describing this as a very wide term, pointing out that Audi TT's are assembled in Hungary he wondered then if a Chinese panel could carry a made in Germany sticker. He explained that within the UK there are no regulations on the location of BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) but that guidelines might be introduced in the future. He also explained that in 2022 there had been 5 serious BESS fires in Germany/Austria.

5) To receive and note the reports of Buckinghamshire Councillors (8782/01/24)

Cllr Turner's reported on a recent meeting with Buckinghamshire College who are moving from their site at Flackwell Heath to a new site in Oxford Road High Wycombe. This will be a major project at High Wycombe and the Flackwell Heath site will be developed as housing.

6) Planning Committee (8783/01/24)

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 14th December 2023 were received and noted.

7) Councillor Reports (8784/01/24)

Cllr Biggs reported on the first meeting of the Downley Day Committee and Cllr Lazenby reported on the first meeting of the Festival Committee. Both groups being in the early stages of planning the 2024 events.

Cllr Lazenby reported that the year's first meeting of the Sandpits Pond working party was planned for the first weekend of February with activities set to mirror the timetable used in 2023.

8) Christmas Tree at Jubilee Green (8785/01/24)

The provision of a seasonal Christmas tree at Jubilee Green was warmly welcomed but there was no appetite for a Christmas tree to be planted there as a permanent fixture. Cllr Biggs put forward a proposal for a Christmas tree to be planted but no one could be found to second the motion and it was not moved forward.

9) Solar Panels at the Community Centre (8786/01/24)

Council considered a request made by DOSCA (The Downley Old School Community Association) that they be allowed to fit a solar energy system to the building including polysilicon panels to the roof and batteries and inverters in the kitchen off of the Beech Room. Solar panels are a permitted development outside of a conservation zone, the Community Centre is within a conservation zone and planning permission would be required. DOSCA are applying for this. The Clerk had contacted Gallaghers Insurance who confirm that they have no issue with the proposal and would continue to provide cover. They wished merely to be advised of the reinstatement costs of the system.

Regarding the issue of modern slavery, the Clerk had sought guidance from BMKALC (Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils) letting them know that the proposed supplier made use of German made polysilicon panels. BMKALC suggested that DOSCA ask the supplier to provide Made in Germany certification. Proposed by Cllr Steneskog and seconded by Cllr Monroe-West it was RESOLVED that subject to the provision of Made in Germany Certification or suitable letter of comfort, Downley Parish Council would grant permission to DOSCA to fit a solar system at the Community Centre.

10) Budget for 2024/2025 (8787/01/24)

Council considered the budget for the year 2024/2025. Proposed by Cllr Steneskog and seconded by Cllr Lenard, it was RESOLVED unanimously to request the same level of precept as that taken in 2023/2024 being £110,000.00.

11) Wild Garden at Faulkner Way (8788/01/24)

Following a suggestion from a resident, Council considered planting a wild garden in Faulkner Way to replace the area of grass at the end of the cul-de-sac close to the footpath to Gosling Grove. The intention was for the proposal to tie in with the Parish Councils avowed environmental aims and if judged successful to act as a test bed for similar sites throughout the Parish. Proposed by Cllr Lazenby, seconded by Cllr Monroe West it was RESOLVED to plant a wild garden at Faulkner Way.

12) Bank Reconciliations (8789/01/24)

The reconciliation of the Unity Trust Current account as at 31/12/23 was noted.

13) Invoices (8790/01/24)

Payments made since the last meeting on 12th December 2023 were noted and approved. The schedule of invoices received through December and January still outstanding was considered and authorised.

14) Clerks Progress Report (8791/01/24)

Noted

15) To note the date and place of the next meeting (8792/01/24)

Tuesday 13th February 2024 at 7:30 p.m. at the Downley Community Centre

16) Closure of the meeting (8793/01/24)

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 20:17.

Chairman

Date