

# DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL



## **Minutes of the Virtual<sup>1</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.30 pm.**

**Present:** Cllr Mace (Chair) and Cllrs Brentor, Cornell, Hall, Randall, Roberts and Watts.

**In attendance:** Unitary Cllr Richard Clewer

**Also present:** Nine members of the public.

### **Part 1 Agenda**

#### **267.20 Minute Taking**

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that, in the absence of the Clerk, Locum Clerk and Administrative Office, Cllr Brentor would act as minute taker for this meeting and for which she will not be paid.

At this point in the meeting Cllr. Cornell gave notice, as required by the Council's Standing Orders, of some changes to the resolutions at agenda item 279.20 which she intended to propose at that point in the agenda.

The Chair announced some changes to the running order of the meeting, these being:

- agenda item 296.20 to move from the Part 2 - Exempt section of the meeting into the Part 1 public part of the meeting, just ahead of the Exempt part of the meeting.
- item 284.20 to move in front of item 283.20

The Chair also explained that occasions may arise during the course of this meeting when, for reasons of confidentiality, members of the public may be asked to temporarily leave the meeting.

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

**268.20 Public Question Time:**

- A member of the public asked a question about the Footbridge project to which the Chair explained that an answer would be provided at agenda item 285.20 of the meeting.
- Mrs. Nikki Wilson, on behalf of The Downton Society, advised the Parish Council of a recent meeting that the Committee members had with Formula Land concerning their intentions to submit a planning application for up to 100 homes to be built on land to the west of the A338 on the southern edge of Downton. Mrs. Wilson went on to ask three questions:
  1. When is the Parish Council intending to hold the next New Housing Development Committee or Neighbourhood Plan Review meetings?
  2. Who from the Parish Council will be attending the review meetings on Wiltshire Council's Local Plan?
  3. Has Cllr Clewer met with Formula Land?

These questions were answered as follows:

1. The chair of the Neighbourhood Plan review working group will be setting up a meeting, after the Wiltshire Council Local Plan meetings have completed, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> February.
2. Cllrs Brentor, Hall and Mace.
3. No, but Cllr Clewer has been contacted and expressed his view that they are acting prematurely.

The Parish Council is due to meet with Formula Land on 8<sup>th</sup> February.

- A member of the public shared some information she had researched regarding the Council's operations.
- Mr Luke Wordley, a spokesperson for the Football Club, asked for support for the Social Club building, to be heard under agenda item 283.20. He explained that the Social club has been disbanded and that any funds the Council agrees should be paid to the BWSCA. He also explained that an application has not yet been made to the Southern Wiltshire Area board but that he still hopes to make such an application.

**269.20 Unitary Cllr Richard Clewer**

Councillor Clewer explained that Wiltshire Council has been able to manage a stable budget with no cuts to services and a 2% rise in Council tax plus the 3% rise for Social Care to help address the expected rise in Mental Health problems. He has promoted a £1m fund for High Street recovery in view of what he believes to be a very difficult situation following the impact of the Covid pandemic. He relayed information that Lode Hill would be closed to traffic during the February half term week and that, this time, relevant agencies had been notified with school buses, and some morning and late afternoon buses, being able to pass through. He also emphasised that, when the Council meets with developers, he advised that the Council urges developers not to leaflet in view of this being an unnecessary activity during Covid restrictions. Lastly, he provided information that the cost of Parish

elections would be borne locally at a cost of £160 for uncontested elections and approximately £7,000 for contested elections.

### **270.20 Apologies**

Apologies have been received from Cllr Pearce due to personal circumstances. Cllr Mace proposed from the chair and it was RESOLVED that the apology and the reason for it be accepted.

### **271.20 Minutes**

Cllr Hall proposed, Cllr Cornell seconded, and it was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

### **272.20 Declarations of Interest**

#### **a. To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers:**

Cllrs Brentor and Mace each declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest and said that they would not take part in the vote on planning application 20/10759/FUL at agenda item 274.20.

Cllr Hall declared that he had a personal and pecuniary interest in the proposed contract with Jacqui Elkins Bookkeeping at agenda item 279.20 and said that he would not take part in the vote on that part of the agenda item.

Cllrs Roberts and Hall each declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in, and said that they would not take part in, the vote on planning application 21/00133/PNEX at agenda item 274.20.

Cllr Cornell declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in the Scouts item to be heard at agenda item 281.20

#### **b. To consider any Dispensation Requests received by the Locum Clerk and not previously considered**

Cllr Mace advised that no dispensation requests had been received.

### **273.20 Business Raised During Public Question Time**

A letter (or email) will be sent to the resident who had asked a question about the Footbridge project providing him with an answer to his question.

For the Parish Council's planned meeting with Formula Land, Mrs Wilson was invited to attend as an independent observer and Cllr Clewer was also invited to come to the meeting.

It was proposed from the chair, and RESOLVED to approve the actions as stated.

## **274.20 Planning and Tree Works Applications**

### **20/10759/FUL 109, The Borough, Downton.**

It was proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Roberts, and RESOLVED with two abstentions to support this application on the grounds that it was compliant with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

### **21/00133/PNEX 15 Batchelor Way, Downton.**

It was proposed by Cllr Brentor, seconded by Cllr Cornell, and RESOLVED with two abstentions to note this application with no further comment on the grounds that it was compliant with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

## **275.20 Planning Application Decisions:**

The Chairman updated the meeting, and it was RESOLVED that the decisions on the following applications be noted:

- 20/10735/LBC & 20/09890/FUL The Cottage, Barford Lane, Downton - Install 1 replacement window and 1 replacement door      Approved with conditions
- 20/10699/TCA Recreation Ground, Moot Lane, Downton  
Tree works as per attached Schedule      No objections
- 20/10404/TPO Long Close, Downton - 2 x Poplar trees - fell & prune back overhanging branches from adjoining trees      Approved with conditions

## **276.20 Memorial Hall Extension – Contract Fees**

After a brief discussion Cllr Roberts proposed, Cllr Randall seconded, and it was RESOLVED to ratify the payment of £15,000 (plus VAT) to SWH Limited (as approved by the RFO in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 and 12.1), this being a part payment of the residual sum due under the contract between the Council and SWH Limited for the construction of the Memorial Hall Extension.

## **277.20 Locum Clerk – Risk Assessment**

After a brief discussion Cllr Brentor proposed, Cllr Cornell seconded, and it was RESOLVED to approve the document entitled 'Risk Assessment for contracting a locum Clerk', in relation to engaging the Locum Clerk, as approved at item 266.20 of the Parish Council meeting held on 11th January 2021

Cllr Hall asked whether the Locum Clerk appointment by the members of the Staffing Committee met the criteria, in the Risk Assessment document, that 'the locum's qualifications and experience will be to a good standard by choosing one who has been pre-checked by SLCC'. Cllr Brentor confirmed that this was the case and that she would forward relevant information to members.

## **278.20 Delegations to the Administrative Officer**

After a brief discussion, Cllr Hall proposed, Cllr Randall seconded, and it was RESOLVED to adopt the document entitled 'Risk Assessment for Emergency Payments'

After a further brief discussion, Cllr Watts proposed, Cllr Randall seconded, and it was RESOLVED, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, section 101, to delegate temporary powers of the Parish Clerk and RFO (set out in the Councils Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other constitutional policies and procedures) to the Administrative Officer during the short period of absence of the Parish Clerk/ that such delegated powers exercised by the Administrative Officer in such circumstances are to be recorded in a delegation register.

## **279.20 Payroll Provider**

Cllr Cornell read out the amendments that she had proposed at the start of the meeting. Cllr Mace, from the Chair, agreed to hearing this item in four parts, which thus became the following substantive motion:

- A. To resolve to adopt the enclosed risk assessment entitled 'Risk assessment for consideration of outsourcing payroll activities'.
- B. To resolve to direct and authorise the Clerk to give the Council's Administrative Officer access to the payroll records, together with a procedure note describing how to process the payroll and update the records each month and, that the Council requires this action to be completed by the Clerk within two weeks of the Clerks return to work.
- C. Subject to the Staffing Committee conducting a consultation with the Clerk on a potential change to her job description, to outsource the Council's payroll with effect from the payments due from the start of the tax year in April 2021, or earlier in the event of a prolonged period of absence of the Clerk before then. These services to include but are not limited to monthly submissions to HMRC, the schedules to the pension provider and all end of year tasks.

and, subject to approval of C:

- D. To authorise the Staffing Committee to contract with Jacqui Elkins Bookkeeping to be the Council's payroll services provider for the cost of £15.00 per month plus VAT and to authorise both the Clerk and the Administrative Officer to provide, without delay, the payroll services supplier with all the records that they require to perform their services.

Discussions then ensued and decisions were taken, in turn, on each of the above parts of the substantive motion:

- A. Cllr Cornell proposed, Cllr Watts seconded, and it was RESOLVED to adopt the document entitled 'Risk assessment for consideration of outsourcing payroll activities.
- B. Cllr Cornell proposed, Cllr Brentor seconded, and it was RESOLVED to direct and authorise the Clerk to give the Council's Administrative Officer access to the payroll records, together with a procedure note describing how to process the payroll and update the records each month and, that the Council requires this action to be completed by the Clerk within two weeks of the Clerks return to work.
- C. Cllr Watts proposed, Cllr Brentor seconded, and it was RESOLVED, subject to the Staffing Committee conducting a consultation with the Clerk on a potential change to her job description, to outsource the Council's payroll with effect from the payments due from the start of the tax year in April 2021, or earlier in the event of a prolonged period of absence of the Clerk before then and that these services are to include but are not limited to Monthly submissions to HMRC, the schedules to the pension provider and all end of year tasks.
- D. Cllr Watts proposed, Cllr Roberts seconded, and it was RESOLVED to request that a due diligence exercise on the supplier be completed by the Clerk / RFO and reported to the Parish Council meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March and that, subject to this being satisfactory, to authorise the Staffing Committee to contract with Jacqui Elkins Bookkeeping to be the Council's payroll services provider for the cost of £15.00 per month plus VAT and to authorise both the Clerk and the Administrative Officer to provide, without delay once the contract is confirmed, the payroll services supplier with all the records that they require to perform their services.

**280.20 Parish Council Handyperson**

After a discussion Cllr Hall proposed and Cllr Watts seconded to amend the motion, which thus became the substantive motion, to authorise the Amenities Committee to develop a roster of skilled, insured tradespersons from whom competitive quotes could be obtained for ad hoc maintenance works required on Parish Council properties. The voting then took place, and it was RESOLVED to approve the substantive motion.

**281.20 1<sup>st</sup> Downton Scouts Group**

The Chairman reported that, following the Parish Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021, at which approval was given, under agenda item 259.20, to award a grant of £2,000, towards the £2,500 requested by the 1<sup>st</sup> Downton Scout Group, the Parish Council has since been advised by the Scouts that Redlynch Parish Council have awarded them a grant of £500. Cllr Mace went on to explain that it was for this reason that the decision made at 259.20, to consider approving a further £500 at this meeting, has not been included on the agenda. Cllr watts proposed, Cllr Roberts seconded, and it was RESOLVED with one abstention, to note Cllr Mace's report.

## 282.20 Provisional Budget to Actual Report

After a brief discussion Cllr Brentor proposed, Cllr Roberts seconded, and it was RESOLVED to note the Provisional Budget to Actual Report.

## 284.20 Earmarked Reserves

Cllr Mace proposed from the chair at it was RESOLVED to open the meeting to allow members to ask questions of Mr. Wordley concerning the request of DFC/BWSCA, to be considered at agenda item 283.20, for a grant to help bridge their funding gap on a £20,000 project to refurbish The Clubhouse. After clarification that the match funding of £6,000 had provisionally been paid to the BWSCA for this project but that this would not be retained if the project does not achieve the remaining £5,400, Mr Wordley indicated that he would try to obtain a late application to the Area board, which Cllr Mace and Cllr Hall stated that they would support during their attendance at the Area Board meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Cllr Clewer indicated that the Area Board's grant funds were already under considerable pressure and that the deadline had passed for submitting applications for the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January.

Once the questions had been answered, Cllr Mace proposed from the chair and it was RESOLVED to again close the meeting to the public.

After a lengthy discussion the Chairman summarised the consensus of the meeting:

- A. To deallocate the reserves, as recorded in the Earmarked Reserves document, for following items:
  - i. Bridge Over the Avon Project      £1,300
  - ii. Skatepark Event                      £1,800
  
- B. To reduce the allocated reserves, as recorded in the Earmarked Reserves document, for the Cemetery Refurbishment by £1,100 from £4,000 down to £2,900.
  
- C. To vier budgets, as recorded in the Provisional Budget to Actual document at agenda item 282.20, as follows:

Amount	Budget Line From	Budget Line To
£300	Tree/Garden maintenance	Youth Discretionary Grants
£1,500	Wiltshire Council Schemes	
£200	Rent of rooms for meetings	General Maintenance
500	Memorial Hall	
£200	Caring Community WG	
£250	Post Office WG	
£500	Leisure Centre/Library WG	
£450	Communications WG	
£900	Amenities/Skatepark Event	
£500	20 is Plenty School Project	
£1,000	Gazebo & Exhibition boards	

Cllr. Watts proposed and Cllr Cornell seconded to amend the motion, to approve the changes to the budgets and reserves set out above, which thus became the substantive motion. The voting then took place, and it was RESOLVED to approve the substantive motion.

### **283.20 DFC/BWSCA Clubhouse Appeal**

After a brief discussion Cllr Watts proposed, Cllr Roberts seconded, and it was RESOLVED to approve a grant of £2,000 to BWSCA in support of their project to refurbish The Clubhouse.

### **285.20 Footbridge Project**

Cllr Brentor stated that a letter has been received from the Longford Estate withdrawing their 'in principle' permission for a footpath over Estate Land. The impact of this news meant that the Bridge project status report was not considered by Councillors during the meeting. Cllr Hall stated that he had sent the report to the Estate manager prior to the letter being received from the Estate as he considered the document to be public property. Cllr Brentor explained that she considered the report to be addressed to the Council for their agreement on actions to take. After a lengthy discussion Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Brentor seconded, and it was RESOLVED to refer the letter from Longford Estate to the Footbridge Working Group for them to consider its contents and return to the Parish Council with their recommendations for the project.

At this point in the meeting, it being 10.00 pm, Cllr Mace asked the meeting whether they were prepared to continue so that the meeting could complete its business. All agreed and so Cllr Mace proposed from the chair and it was RESOLVED to continue the meeting beyond 10:00 pm.

### **286.20 Plastic Free Downton**

After a discussion Cllr Watts proposed, Cllr Mace seconded, and it was RESOLVED that:

- a) the Parish Council would lead by example by phasing out single use plastics in its meetings and events and
- b) the Parish Council gave its support, in principle and subject to evaluation of the details at the time of each initiative, to all plastic free initiatives in the area

### **287.20 Gypsy and Traveller Plan**

Cllr Hall gave a brief report on his assessment of the relevance of the consultation by Wiltshire Council on its Gypsy and Traveller Plan and recommended that there was no pressing need for Downton Parish Council to respond to this consultation.

Cllr Hall proposed, Cllr Roberts seconded, and it was RESOLVED that Cllr Hall's report be noted and that the Parish Council would not make a submission on the consultation for the Gypsy and Traveller Plan.

## 288.20 Representative and Working Group Reports

There were no reports from Council representatives and members of Working Groups for this meeting.

## 289.20 Payments

It was proposed from the chair and RESOLVED to approve the following payments with the proviso that Cllr Brentor obtains a satisfactory reason for the additional £200 invoiced by Peter Kent compared to the previously approved quotation:

£840.00 Maranji Commercial & Domestic Cleaning  
£748.79 Bawden Managed Landscapes  
£257.04 Idverde  
£27.59 Ionos  
£13.82 West Mercia Energy  
£45.19 BT Group  
£1,098.00 Peter Kent  
£2,268.00 Redlynch Leisure Installations Ltd  
£148.80 Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd

## 290.20 Accounts for Payments

Payee Detail and payment made by bank transfer	£
Maranji Commercial & Domestic Cleaning	840.00
Bawden Managed Landscapes	748.79
Idverde	257.04
Ionos	27.59
West Mercia Energy	13.82
BT Group	45.19
Peter Kent	1,098.00
Redlynch Leisure Installations Ltd	2,268.00
Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd	148.80
Staff Salaries and Pensions	4,153.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,600.97</b>

It was proposed from the Chair and RESOLVED that the Accounts for payment for January be approved.

## Balances to be Approved and Noted as at 25.01.2021

Current A/c: £2,525.95 Deposit A/c: £118,336.03

Memorial Hall Extension A/c: £3,920.01

Cllr Mace proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the balances be approved and noted.

## 291.20 Correspondence

Cllr Mace proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the following correspondence be noted:

1. Wessex Community Action newsletter
2. Neighbourhood Watch National newsletter
3. Email from WC regarding order for 5 new road nameplates – order now confirmed
4. Email from WC regarding query about order for bollards – details now confirmed
5. Email from a member of the public regarding information on stolen cards used in Downton Local police team newsletter
6. Service report from Initial for public toilets
7. Email from a resident regarding parking in the Borough
8. Email from a resident regarding various queries in Charlton All Saints
9. Email from a resident regarding tree work queries at Moot Lane Recreation Area.
10. Request from Downton Football Club regarding potential assistance with funds for an upgrade of the clubhouse.
11. Update from Downton Football Club regarding current activities and 3G pitch intentions.
12. Copy of the BWSCA AGM minutes
13. WC news & advice for resident on COVID-19
14. Email from Downton Bowls Club regarding a request for copies of historic documents
15. WC update regarding proposed recharging of four yearly cycle elections to towns & parishes WC technical briefing note regarding rules surrounding purdah (11th March 2021 – 6th May 2021) in relation to Unitary, Parish & Police & Crime Panel elections on 6th May 2021.
16. Flyer for a Health & Wellbeing Event organised by Karen Lineaker – 11am, 26th January 2021.
17. Email from Downton Moot Society to request financial assistance regarding a project.

Cllr Cornell asked that item 17 be put on the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting.

## 263.20 Grave Request

Cllr Brentor stated that her contact with the Council's grass cutting supplier had established that no additional cost would be charged for strimming around up to 20 additional kerbed graves. After a lengthy debate, the Chairman proposed and Cllr Brentor seconded to amend the motion, which thus became the following substantive motion:

To authorise the Burials Officer to amend the Burial Regulations, with effect from a date ('DATE'), to be determined after taking into account any potential timing issues on reserved plots, such that:

- a) All currently occupied graves will be allowed to retain their existing kerbs, headstones, etc and to have kerbstones added or changed within prescribed constraints, such as those suggested on the supporting document for this agenda item.
- b) All plots reserved prior to DATE will be allowed to have kerbs added, within prescribed constraints, such as those suggested on the supporting document for this agenda item.
- c) After DATE all future plot reservations will be subject to the regulation, without exception, and with the signed agreement that the person(s) arranging the burial have had sight of the burial regulations, that no grave shall be raised by the use of turf, or any other means, above the level of the ground in the immediate vicinity, etc., as stated in the Council's current burial regulations.

The voting then took place and it was RESOLVED to approve the substantive motion, with the following votes being recorded: 5 in favour (Cllrs Brentor, Cornell, Hall, Mace and Roberts) and 2 against (Cllrs Randall and Watts).

#### **292.20 Administration Report**

It was proposed from the Chair and RESOLVED to note the report produced by Cllr Brentor, providing information on recent issues and work completed during the Clerk's absence. Cllr Watts thanked Cllr Mace for the considerable amount of work he has completed to establish the financial situation.

#### **293.20 Date of next meeting**

Cllr Mace confirmed the date of the next meeting as Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 7:30 pm and that it will be held on Zoom.

### **Part 2 – EXEMPT MATTERS – EMPLOYMENT, STAFFING and CONFIDENTIAL**

**294.20 Cllr Mace proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded, and they be instructed to withdraw in view of the confidential nature of the business on staffing and confidential matters about to be transacted.**

#### **295.20 Staffing Committee update**

Cllr Brentor gave a brief update on staffing matters, including the actions approved under agenda item 245.20 of the Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10.33

*Members of the Council considered the foregoing in the matters of consideration of their duties: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability); Crime and Disorder, Health and Safety and Human Rights*