

# DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL



## **Minutes of the Virtual<sup>1</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 7.30 pm.**

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

**In attendance:** Unitary Cllr Richard Clewer

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

### **Part 1 Agenda**

#### **297.20 Minute Taking**

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

#### **298.20 Election of Chair**

It was proposed by Cllr Mace, seconded by Cllr Watts, and RESOLVED that Cllr Brentor be elected as Chair.

#### **299.20 Election of Vice-Chair**

It was proposed Cllr Cornell, seconded by Cllr Watts, and RESOLVED that Cllr Mace be elected as Vice-Chair.

#### **268.20 Public Question Time:**

- A member of the public asked several questions about Formula Land's potential planning application for a new housing estate on land to the west of the A338 on the southern edge of Downton. Cllr Brentor explained that the Parish Council, at the request of Formula Land, had met with the developer to hear about their intentions and to ask questions of them. It was apparent from this meeting that Formula Land were at a relatively early stage in developing their ideas and that it was not yet clear when a planning application would be put forward.

<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.

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Minutes approved as a true and accurate record and signed as so by the Chairman presiding.

.....Date.....

Formula Land explained that the drainage of the site was an important issue for them to address as part of their planning application. At that meeting reference was made to the firm housing numbers in Downton's Neighbourhood Plan and the very provisional new housing numbers in Wiltshire Council's emerging Local Plan. The Parish Council and residents will be able to formally give their views, to Wiltshire Council as the local planning authority, during the consultation period following the submission of any planning application.

- Mrs Chris Parry raised two concerns:
  - The Borough being deeply under water during episodes of torrential rain, such as the very heavy downpour experienced on the previous Saturday, with cars travelling too fast and creating bow waves that drench pedestrians and properties.
  - The distribution of salt and salt spreading tools to volunteers in good time for the icy conditions expected later in the week.

Cllr Mace agreed that these issues needed to be addressed.

- Mrs. Nikki Wilson, on behalf of The Downton Society:
  - asked for information about WALPA, which features in agenda items 310.20, 311.20 and 312.20;
  - pointed out that many of the members of public attending the meeting were concerned residents from the Catherine Crescent area, adjacent to the potential development envisaged by Formula Land;
  - asked whether the Parish Council would be responding to Wiltshire Council's Local Plan Review Consultation and whether it would be publishing its response to residents.
- In response to these various points:
  - Cllr Hall explained that WALPA, which stands for Wiltshire Area Local Planning Alliance, is a group of over 30 Parish Councils in Wiltshire, including Downton Parish Council, which is collectively lobbying the Government and Wiltshire Council over planning issues that arise when the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year land supply or when a Neighbourhood Plan is more than two years old.
  - Cllr Brentor explained that she would be writing up notes from the Parish Council's meeting with Formula Land and that she could not see any reason why these notes could not be published to residents via local web sites, etc.
  - Cllr Brentor advised that a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was due to take place on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February and that the production of a draft response to the Local Plan Review Consultation would be on its agenda. The expectation was that a draft would be produced and then reviewed and approved at the Parish Council meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February, just in time for it to be submitted by the closing date of 9<sup>th</sup> March. Cllr Brentor expressed her view that she could see no reason why, once approved, the Parish Council's response on the consultation could not be published to residents through the local web sites, etc.

- Mrs. Nikki Wilson expressed a personal view on the planning application for The Bull Hotel at agenda item 306.20 and asked that her point be taken into consideration by members of the Parish Council.

**269.20 Unitary Cllr Richard Clewer**

Councillor Clewer explained that the Wiltshire Council proposal, which he had reported at the previous meeting, concerning the charges to be made to Parish Councils for the cost of running Parish elections, had been withdrawn for the time being.

He went on to explain, in some detail, the importance for communities, such as Downton, to respond to the Local Plan Review Consultation. The current consultation documents are drafts only and so it is a pre-consultation for a formal consultation which will take place in about a year's time.

In the current draft, Wiltshire Council's planning officers have proposed an overall new housing target for Wiltshire that is 5,000 higher than that which is currently required by Government.

Government has given local planning authorities a new requirement of setting new housing targets for each village. However, this does not mean that every village must have more houses. Each area needs to take its appropriate share of the overall housing targets, but this does not mean that development needs to happen everywhere at the same pace.

Downton has had a lot of new housing in the last few years. It takes time to assimilate new houses and their associated impacts on a village. Also, Downton has certain issues, well known to the Parish Council and residents, which need to be taken into consideration before finalising the new housing target e.g. traffic, schools, drainage and sewerage systems, etc.

It is still some two years away before the housing targets will be finalised. Any planning applications for new housing estates submitted by developers before then would be 'called in' and considered by Wiltshire Council's Planning Committee rather than being left to the decision of Officers of the Council.

Cllr Clewer ended his briefing with a reminder of the closure of Lode Hill for two weeks from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February, the first week being half-term, for the needed works to stabilise the bank. He then left the meeting temporarily to attend another meeting.

At this point in the meeting Cllr Brentor, as Chair, closed the meeting to participation by members of the public and Cllr. Mace gave notice, as required by item 1.g of the Parish Council's Standing Orders, of some changes to the resolution at agenda item 309.20 which he intended to formally propose at that point in the agenda.

### **302.20 Apologies**

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

### **303.20 Minutes**

Cllr Brentor proposed from the chair and it was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

### **304.20 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:**

Cllr Brentor declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest and said that she would not take part in the vote on planning application 21/00657/TPO at agenda item 306.20.

Cllr Roberts declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in the Charles Church Bishops Meads Development issues at agenda item 312.20.

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

Cllr Brentor advised that no dispensation requests had been received.

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

In response to the issues raised about flooding in The Borough and of being ready for icy conditions, Cllr Brentor referred to the Parish Council's Emergency Plan, which is currently in the process of being created, and to a meeting which was due to take place on the flooding aspects of the plan, but which had to be cancelled. She went on to report that the Parish Council's Administrative Officer will soon be arranging a new date for that meeting.

Cllr Brentor proposed that the point raised about The Bull Hotel's planning application will be taken into account by members when considering this application at agenda item 306.20.

Cllr Brentor noted that the question about WALPA had been answered and restated that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group would be preparing a response to the Local Plan Review Consultation to come back to the Parish Council for approval at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March and that she expected that the response would be made public.

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

## **306.20 Planning and Tree Works Applications**

### **21/00313/FUL Byways, Slab Lane, Downton**

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

### **20/11609/FUL The Bull Hotel, The Headlands, Downton**

It was proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Mace, and RESOLVED to support this application on the grounds that it was compliant with Policy LE1 of the Downton Neighbourhood Plan but:

- a) to request that a condition be placed on the application that limits the use of this structure to the vending of milk from Nunton Farm Partnership only and that the structure and vending machine be removed forthwith should Nunton Farm Partnership cease to supply milk to the vending machine; and
- b) to point out that the Planning Application Form appears to be in error where it states that there is no loss of parking space.

### **21/00641/TCA Hamilton House, Barford Lane, Downton**

It was proposed by Cllr Cornell, seconded by Cllr Watts, and RESOLVED to leave the decision on this application to the Tree Officer.

### **21/00657/TPO Path rear of 84 Moot Gardens**

It was proposed by Cllr Cornell, seconded by Cllr Roberts, and RESOLVED to leave the decision on this application to the Tree Officer.

### **20/10637/LBC Old Forge Cottage, High Road, Charlton All Saints**

It was proposed by Cllr Mace, seconded by Cllr Watts, and RESOLVED to support the planning application subject to the Conservation Officer's recommendations.

## **307.20 Planning Application Decisions:**

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

- 20/09542/FUL Methodist Chapel, 20 High Street, Downton  
Conversion of former Methodist Chapel to 3-bedroom dwelling house.  
Approved with conditions
- 20/10869/FUL 7 Lode Hill, Downton  
Single storey extension to rear of property, 2 new dormer windows to the rear following the raising in height of 2 existing windows.  
Approved with conditions
- 21/00133/PNEX 15 Batchelor Way Downton  
Prior Notification (larger home extension scheme) - Single storey rear extension rear projection of 3.04 metres with eaves height of 2.82 metres and maximum height of 2.82 metres.  
Prior Approval Not Required

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Minutes approved as a true and accurate record and signed as so by the Chairman presiding.

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- 20/10619/FUL 5 Mill Race View, The Borough, Downton  
Removal of conservatory and construction of single storey rear extension.  
Approved with Conditions

### **308.20 Locum Clerk – Risk Assessment**

After a discussion Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Cornell seconded, and it was RESOLVED with one objection to approve the revised Risk Assessment, entitled ‘Risk Assessment for contracting a locum Clerk’, in relation to engaging a Locum Clerk.

### **309.20 Parish Council Website Maintenance**

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, Cllr Mace suggested that the resolution under this agenda item be amended to the following: To resolve to authorise Cllr Mace to research and return with options and a recommendation for:

- a) a WordPress website maintenance agency to take over the maintenance of the Parish Council’s web site, with effect from 1st April 2021, at an anticipated cost of between £500 and £1,000 per annum and
- b) an IT Support agency to take over the support of the Parish Council’s IT hardware and software with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

This suggested wording therefore became the substantive motion. After a brief discussion, Cllr Watts proposed, Cllr Cornell seconded, and it was RESOLVED to approve the substantive motion.

### **310.20 WALPA Meeting**

Cllr Hall provided a detailed report on the key planning system issues which WALPA have identified and about which, as decided at its meeting on 27th January 2021, had decided, with the support of Parish Councils (see agenda item 311.20 below), to lobby Wiltshire Council and the Government.

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED to note the report provided by Cllr Hall.

### **311.20 WALPA Campaign**

After a brief discussion, Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Roberts seconded, and it was RESOLVED that Downton Parish Council gives its support, and name, to the proposed WALPA press release, with notes, and to the proposed letter to Wiltshire Council and others.

After a further brief discussion Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that Cllr Hall drafts a letter, with the support of the Clerk or Administrative Officer, which is circulated to members for comments and approval by email, to be sent by the Parish Council to John Glen, MP asking him to support WALPA’s campaign by raising its concerns with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP.

At this point in the meeting Cllr Mace proposed, and it was agreed by the Chair, to postpone consideration of agenda item 312.20 (Charles Church Bishops Mead Development) until Cllr. Clewer’s return to the meeting.

### 313.20 Representative and Working Group Reports

Cllr Brentor, on behalf of the Footbridge Working Group, reported on the meeting which they held on 5th February 2021 on Zoom:

- a) The working group was extremely disappointed by the recent letter from the Longford Estate in which it withdrew its in-principle support for a path and bridge across its land.
- b) The working group had previously offered three times to meet with Longford Estate to discuss the concerns which had been raised.
- c) The working group have responses to each of these concerns.
- d) It was noted that the recent letter had come from the Estate Manager whereas the approval in principle in 2017 had been given by the Trustees of the Longford Estate.
- e) The working group intends to write to Lord Radnor (under the Terms of Reference of the working group which identifies that the group will manage correspondence), cc to the Trustees of the Longford Estate, the Estate Manager and the Tenant Farmer in order to understand whether there is any room for reinstating the in principle support:
- f) The working group will produce a press release for publication through Downton's web sites, Parish News and InDownton.

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED to note the report from the Footbridge Working Group and that the group would be writing a letter to Longford Estate and publishing a press release to local media.

Cllr Hall provided a short report from the Southern Wiltshire Area Board meeting held 28th January on Zoom, which included the very welcome news that the Area Board had agreed at its meeting:

- a) to a request from Downton 1<sup>st</sup> Scout Group for a £4,500 grant to help towards the funding of their project to improve the facilities at the Scout Hut in Barford Lane; and
- b) to a request from BWSCA/DFC for a £5,000 grant to help towards the funding of their project to refurbish The Clubhouse.

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED to note the report from the Southern Wiltshire Area Board meeting held 28th January on Zoom.

### 314.20 Minutes

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED to receive and note the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020.

### 315.20 Payments

Cllr Cornell proposed, Cllr Watts seconded, and it was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

£840.00 Maranji Commercial & Domestic Cleaning  
£748.79 Bawden Managed Landscapes  
£27.59 Ionos  
£43.20 BT Group  
£25.00 NPFA (National Playing Fields Association)  
£90.00 Mike Paton Bespoke Carpentry and Joinery  
£123.89 SLCC Enterprises Ltd  
£180.00 SLCC Enterprises Ltd  
£500.00 Internal Audit Yorkshire (Safia Kauser)

### 316.20 Accounts for Payment and Bank Balances

Cllr Cornell proposed, Cllr Watts seconded, and it was RESOLVED that the following accounts for payment be approved and that the bank balances as at 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021 be approved and noted:

<b>Payee Detail and payment made by bank transfer</b>	<b>£</b>
Maranji Commercial & Domestic Cleaning	840.00
Bawden Managed Landscapes	748.79
Ionos	27.59
BT Group	43.20
NPFA (National Playing Fields Association)	25.00
Mike Paton Bespoke Carpentry and Joinery	90.00
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	123.89
SLCC Enterprises Ltd	180.00
Internal Audit Yorkshire (Safia Kauser)	500.00
Salaries & Pensions (exc. HMRC payment)	2,805.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,383.96</b>

#### **Bank Balances as at 08.02.2021**

Current A/c: £9,325.24 Deposit A/c: £108,336.03

Memorial Hall Extension A/c: £3,920.01

### 317.20 Correspondence

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the following items of correspondence received by email be noted:

1. Email from residents regarding the Neighbourhood Plan and potential new housing following a meeting of Downton Society with a developer – various emails/feedback received from 9 different households.
2. Email from a resident regarding road sign for Church Hatch.
3. Email from Wiltshire Council officer asking for support with their application to the Environment Agency regarding a Flood project.

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4. Email from a resident to ask how they can ask questions about the footpath project.
5. Email from the Redlynch Clerk to make an offer of the 'overhead rotator' piece of play equipment at the Redlynch Playing Fields as it is being replaced by a new zip wire. Further information requested about the piece of equipment, so that DPC can consider this at a future meeting.
6. Email from a Wiltshire Council officer to confirm that Wiltshire Council will now cover the cost of repainting Iron Bridge. Wiltshire Council currently in discussion with their selected contractor to identify potential timescales for the work to be conducted (April at the earliest).
7. Email from the Downton Moot Society to confirm that applications have been made to cover all the funding required for their project and therefore they are unlikely to approach the Parish Council at this stage for financial support.
8. Email from the President of Downton Bowls Club regarding their future lease.
9. Email from WC officer to confirm that a tanker visited South Lane in December 2020 to clear silt from underneath the lane following resident feedback.
10. Various WC emails regarding COVID updates (rates etc.)
11. Latest news and events from Southern Wiltshire Our Community Matters.
12. Next CATG meeting scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

### **318.20 Administration Report**

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED to note the report produced by Cllr Brentor, providing information on recent issues and work completed during the Clerk's absence.

Shortly after the start of the discussion on the following item, Cllr Clewer returned to the meeting. At this point Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED to open the meeting to allow Cllr Clewer to participate in the discussion on this item.

### **312.20 Charles Church Bishops Mead Development**

Cllrs Hall and Roberts presented the three issues which residents on the Charles Church Bishops Mead Development had made repeated efforts to ask the developer to put right:

- a) a lamppost in the middle of a pavement;
- b) railings encircling the open space which children and adults must climb or step over to reach the children's play area;
- c) no drop curb opposite the western pedestrian access to Wick Lane.

It is understood that the management company for the estate has agreed to address item b) above but that the developer has yet to respond to residents' requests concerning items a) and c).

After a lengthy discussion, a consensus emerged from which Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair, and it was RESOLVED that:

- a) Cllrs Hall and Roberts will compile evidence of the residents' attempts to resolve the lamppost issue and send it to Cllr Clewer who will take up the matter within Wiltshire Council;

- b) No action will be taken at present on the railings;
- c) Cllr Hall will seek to obtain funding from CATG for the installation of a drop kerb and, as match funding will be required of the Parish Council, to bring this item back to the Parish Council for formal approval of the cost once it has been quantified.

**319.20 Date of next meeting**

Cllr Brentor, as Chair, advised that the date of the next meeting was currently expected to be on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.30 pm but if issues arise that it may be necessary to hold the next meeting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 at 7.30pm.

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

**320.20 Cllr Brentor 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 about to be transacted.**

**321.20 Staffing Committee update**

Cllr Cornell gave a brief update on staffing matters from a Staffing Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021, which included the following items:

- a) the Clerk’s Return to Work Plan;
- b) the business continuity risks for the Parish Council exposed by the long period of absence of the Clerk due to sickness;
- c) progressing the pension contributions back-payments (as approved at agenda item 245.20 of the Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020);
- d) the report received from South West Councils on their independent review (as approved at agenda item 245.20 of the Parish Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020);

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair, and it was RESOLVED to note the update from Cllr Cornell.

**322.20 Staffing Committee Recommendations**

The Staffing Committee brought forward two recommendations from the meeting which it held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021:

- a) **RECOMMENDED:** That the Staffing Committee recommends to full council that the Administrative Officer post, that is due to expire at the end of March 2021, is made permanent subject to consultation with the Parish Clerk as the Administrative Officer’s line manager.
- b) **RECOMMENDED:** That the Staffing Committee recommends full council to approve the payment of up to 10 hours of overtime to the Administrative Officer for hours worked by her above her contracted hours when she covered some of the tasks of the Clerk during the Clerk’s absence in January.

Cllr Cornell advised that the Clerk, as Administrative Officer's line manager, had confirmed her support for the recommendation in item a) above.

Cllr Hall proposed, Cllr Roberts seconded, and it was RESOLVED that the Administrative Officer post, which is due to expire at the end of March 2021, is made permanent.

Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Hall seconded, and it was RESOLVED to approve the payment of up to 10 hours of overtime to the Administrative Officer, for hours worked by her above her contracted hours when she covered some of the tasks of the Clerk during the Clerk's absence in January.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 21:20.

*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*