

DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Virtual¹ Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 8th March 2021 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr Brentor (Chair) and Cllrs Cornell, Hall, Mace, Randall (from 8.30 pm), Roberts and Watts.

In attendance: Unitary Councillor Richard Clewer
Mrs Bev Cornish, Parish Clerk

Also present: Eleven members of the public.

Part 1

335.20 Election of Chair

Cllr Cornell proposed, Cllr Watts seconded and it was RESOLVED that Cllr Brentor be elected as Chair.

336.20 Election of Vice-Chair

Cllr Brentor proposed, Cllr Cornell seconded and it was RESOLVED that Cllr Mace be elected as Vice-Chair.

337.20 Public Question Time:

A member of the public advised that a window in her cottage had been broken by a catapult being fired into it recently. She said she was very disappointed to find out that the Salisbury Community Policing Team had the keys to the halls in Redlynch and Wilton but the hub in Downton was still unavailable to it. She said she felt that the presence of a police car outside the Memorial Centre would provide a deterrent.

She also said that she hoped that the Council would be reporting that the bridge project was closed and no further monies would be spent on it, especially as the Longford Estate had been clear on this in its letter. She also expressed concerns about the amount of money being spent on staffing matters which she felt could be spent in a much better way.

A member of the public asked if the Council could help with the changing of the law with regard to the use of catapults.

A member of the public expressed their concern about the Local Plan consultation and said that they would be happy to help with the revising of the Neighbourhood Plan.

¹ 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

A member of the public asked about the amount of money being spent on an investigation into staffing matters and the Council's liability for the adjudication on the staff pension matter.

338.20 Unitary Councillor's Report

Cllr Richard Clewer gave a brief report as follows:

- On policing issues and the continuing issue of anti-social behaviour and catapult damage. John Glen and his Chief of Staff were very aware of the issue and the request to introduce a Public Space Protection Order for the areas of Downton and Redlynch.
- Progress was being made with the CEO of Wiltshire Council on the introduction of the PSPO but this would not be able to be put in place until well after the elections in May.
- Salisbury CPT was compiling a list of CCTV cameras and 'ring doorbells' and everyone should let Salisbury CPT know of their devices. The police were now really engaged with the issue and it was important that all information be provided to them so that they could follow up any leads following incidents taking place.
- On the issue of the Local Plan, Cllr Clewer advised that this was a pre-consultation from which the evidence would be going into shaping the full consultation taking place later this year. It was important that if Downton wished to state that it was time to take a pause on more housing because of traffic, parking and drainage etc, this was included in its response.

339.20 Apologies

Cllr Brentor advised that Cllr Pearce may join the meeting late but in the event she did not attend the meeting due to a family commitment, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the apology and the reason for it be approved.

340.20 Minutes

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on Monday 22nd February 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record with the change to the wording of Minute 330.20 to read 'It will be easier for a Locum Clerk to understand the Rialtas Business Systems financial software than to understand bespoke spreadsheets'.

341.20 Declarations of Interest and Dispensation Requests

- 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 Cornell declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in planning application 21/01098 and did not vote.

Cllr Mace declared personal and non-pecuniary interests in planning applications 21/01098 and 21/01530 and Agenda items 351.20 and 352.20 as a trustee of the Memorial Centre and did not vote.

Cllr Hall declared personal and non-pecuniary interests in planning applications 21/01098 and 21/01530 and did not vote.

Cllr Brentor declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest in planning application 21/01530/FUL and did not vote

b. To consider any Dispensation Requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered:

No dispensation requests were received.

342.20 Business Raised During Public Question Time:

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED as follows:

- The Council would spend as little money as was possible on the adjudication of the staff pension matter but it needed to obtain outside advice. No further information could be provided on this because it was a personnel matter.
- The Chair of the Memorial Centre Committee should be contacted regarding the use of the Centre as a hub for the Salisbury Community Policing Team.
- The issue of the bridge project being closed would be addressed when the report was given later in the meeting.
- She would contact the member of the public who had advised that they would be happy to help with the revising of the Neighbourhood Plan.

343.20 Planning and Tree Works Applications

21/00591/FUL Hope Cottage, Barford Lane, Downton - Single storey extension with porch: Downton Parish Council RESOLVED to raise no objection to this application but queried the inconsistencies in the application form in terms of the cladding shown on the plans and the available parking area once the extension is built.

21/01098/FUL 37 Moot Close, Downton - Construction of covered rear porch and timber garden gym: Downton Parish Council RESOLVED to raise no objection this application on the grounds that it was compliant with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

21/00745/FUL South Lane, Cottage South Lane, Downton - Proposed ground floor rear extension, loft conversion with front and rear dormers, floor plan redesign, facade alterations and all associated works: Downton Parish Council RESOLVED to leave the decision on this application to the Conservation Officer.

21/01681/TCA Long Close House, Long Close, Downton - G1 - Yew x 2 - Fell T1 Field Maple - Remove deadwood from the crown T2 Scots Pine Fell T6 Scots Pine Fell T7 Sweet Chestnut – Fell: Downton Parish Council RESOLVED to leave the decision on this application to the Tree Officer.

21/01280/FUL 111 Moot Lane, Downton - Remove conservatory and build new sun room: Downton Parish Council RESOLVED to raise support this application on the grounds that it was compliant with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

21/01530/FUL 68 Moot Gardens, Downton - Demolition of a poor quality rear flat roof addition, the construction of a single storey rear extension, the conversion of the loft space into accommodation and a garage conversion into an annex: Downton Parish Council RESOLVED to support this application on the grounds that it was compliant with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

344.20 Planning Application Decisions

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the decisions on the following applications be noted:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| 21/00641/TCA Hamilton House, Barford Lane, Downton T1 & T2 - Yew - To trim back 6 or 7 branches that extend past the rest of the canopy by approximately 2m, that are overhanging the garden. | No objection |
| 20/02009/FUL Station House, The Sidings, Downton Extending and conversion of existing garage to a dwelling (to rent out) and associated landscaping | Refused |
| 20/10637/LBC Old Forge Cottage, High Road, Charlton All Saints Replacement of 5 uPVC windows on part of west facing elevation. | No objection |
| 21/00133/PNEX 15 Batchelor Way, Downton Certificate of Lawfulness for proposed single storey rear extension | No objection |

345.20 Internal Auditor's Report

Following a report from the Clerk that the report was yet to be received, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the item be deferred to the next meeting.

346.20 Risk Assessment for Absence of the Clerk

Following a report from Cllr Mace, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the item be deferred to the next meeting when the Council's Risk Registers were to be reviewed.

347.20 Payroll outsourcing

Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Roberts seconded and it was RESOLVED that:

1. This be deferred to the next meeting to enable the employee consultation to be completed;
2. The recommendation made in the report be approved in principle subject to the necessary virement within the 2021/22 budget being agreed at the next meeting to account for the £300 expenditure.

348.20 Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2021/22

Cllr Hall proposed, Cllr Mace seconded and it was RESOLVED that Fair Account be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditors for 2021/22.

At this point in the meeting Cllr Brentor proposed, Cllr Hall seconded and it was RESOLVED to exclude two members of the public from the meeting. They had joined 1 hour after the start of the meeting and were being disruptive and on the basis of a brief risk assessment that the further 20 unrecognisable members waiting in the waiting room of the Zoom meeting, that they also be excluded from joining the meeting.

349.20 Financial Regulations

Following a proposal of suggested wording from Cllr Mace, Cllr Watts seconded and it was RESOLVED that the changes to address the risks identified in the Absence of the Clerk Risk Assessment be approved.

350.20 Burial Regulations

Following consideration of a report from the Administrative Officer, Cllr Mace proposed some minor changes. He proposed, Cllr Hall seconded and it was RESOLVED with 2 objections from Cllrs Randall and Watts that the changes to Burial Regulations and the recommendations made in the report be approved.

351.20 Upgrade to Memorial Hall Alarm

Cllr Roberts proposed, Cllr Hall seconded and it was RESOLVED that:

1. Option 1 in the Report be approved at a cost of £603, plus an annual charge after 12 months of £125; and
2. The offer from the Trustees of the Memorial Hall to be on the call list to respond to any such fire alarm alerts be accepted.

352.20 Fire Alarm Maintenance Contract

Cllr Hall proposed, Cllr Cornell seconded and it was RESOLVED that Southern Security Services Limited be approved as the provider of Fire Alarm maintenance at the Downton Memorial Centre for 2021/2022 at the cost of £255.

353.20 Wiltshire Council Local Plan Review Consultation

Following a lengthy discussion, Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Hall seconded and it was RESOLVED that the response compiled by the Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group be approved with the agreed minor changes.

354.20 Register of Graves Book

Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Hall seconded and it was RESOLVED that the purchase of a new Register of Graves Book from Shaw & Sons at the cost of £212.20 be approved.

355.20 Ratification of Clerk's Delegated Powers for Emergency Expenditure

Cllr Mace proposed, Cllr Hall seconded and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk's emergency spend under her delegated powers of £39.96 to upgrade Dropbox for the Clerk and Administrative Officer for the months of February and March be ratified.

Cllr Brentor further proposed, seconded by Cllr Mace and RESOLVED that the motion be varied to include approval for a monthly contract with Dropbox from April.

356.20 Representative and Working Group Reports

Community Area Transport Group:

Cllr Hall gave a brief report on a recent meeting at which no matters discussed affected Downton. He said that an application will need to be submitted for the dropped kerb in Wick Lane opposite the entrance to the Charles Church development.

Telephone Box in the High Street:

Cllr Hall advised that BT had upgraded the telephone box, following his raising it with them to make the necessary repairs, and it was now operational with a telephone useable with debit/credit cards.

Wiltshire Area Localism and Planning Alliance:

Cllr Hall gave a brief report on a recent meeting which he said was rather depressing because of the number of towns and parishes which were receiving requests for large developments of houses because of the lack of a 5 year housing supply in Wiltshire.

Meeting with Wiltshire Police: Cllr Brentor gave a brief report on a recent meeting at which there had been a report from Inspector Pete Sparrow on the level of crime recorded in South Wiltshire over the last year. There was also a discussion on the implementation of a Public Space Protection Order for the use of catapults and the need to gather information on which properties in Downton and Redlynch have CCTV.

Downton Memorial Hall Committee: Cllr Mace gave a detailed report on the activities of the Memorial Hall Committee over the last year. The Centre had continued to be used by the pre-school and with a £10,000 Covid-19 grant from Wiltshire Council, the Centre’s finances had not been impacted as much as first thought. He also advised that the Centre would be opened in accordance with the Government’s Roadmap and it was likely that the hall would be used from at least mid-March to mid-May, and potentially up to late August, as an NHS vaccination centre.

Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group: Cllr Brentor gave a brief report on a recent meeting at which the Local Plan response was devised. She said that some members had attended the virtual consultation meeting at which the paper on rural communities within the Local Plan was discussed. The group also considered whether to apply for Wiltshire Council to undertake a housing needs assessment which may take 2 years due to the length of the list of towns and parishes which have asked for an assessment to be completed.

Bridge over the Avon Working Group: Cllr Brentor gave a brief report ahead of meeting on Friday 12th March which was delayed to await any feedback from a meeting of Longford Estates Trustees on 5th March. She said the second letter from the Estate was very clear in confirming the withdrawal of its in principle support to enable the bridge to be built on its land and the permissive path to cross its land. The forthcoming meeting will determine how that information is communicated to residents.

In response to a question asked by a member of the public about whether this project was finally over, Cllr Brentor stated that the Council could not ever say that it was finally over because the money had been spent and the work had been done and the reports were on the shelf for referring back to in the future should the Estate change its mind.

357.20 Payments

- To resolve to approve the payments for March:
- £840 Maranji Commercial & Domestic Cleaning
- £748.79 Bawden Managed Landscapes
- £222.76 Idverde
- £27.59 Ionos
- £29.23 West Mercia Energy
- £45.19 BT Group
- £405.00 Play Inspection Company
- £1,098.00 Peter Kent – Bridge designs
- £3,682.00 Treemenders

£344.62 Southern Security Services – Memorial Hall Alarm
 £100.05 Longford Estates - Rent for allotments and Borough Greens
 £104.00 Mrs A McGowan – Homeworking Allowance
 £223.01 Mrs B Cornish – Homeworking Allowance
 £258.65 Mrs B Cornish – Expenses - Phone, broadband, stamps Jul '20 to March '21
 £100.73 Zoom fees

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the payments be approved.

358.20 Accounts for Payment

| Payee Detail and payment made by bank transfer | £ |
|---|------------------|
| Maranji | 840.00 |
| Bawden Managed Landscapes | 748.79 |
| Idverde | 222.76 |
| West Mercia Energy | 29.23 |
| Ionos | 27.59 |
| BT Group | 45.19 |
| Play Inspection Company | 405.00 |
| Peter Kent – Bridge designs | 1,098.00 |
| TreeMenders | 1,584.00 |
| TreeMenders | 2,088.00 |
| Southern Security Services – Memorial Hall alarm | 344.62 |
| Longford Estates – Rent for allotments and greens | 100.05 |
| A McGowan – Homeworking Allowance Dec-Mar | 104.00 |
| B Cornish – Homeworking Allowance Apr-Mar | 223.01 |
| B Cornish – Expenses July 20 – Mar 21 | 258.65 |
| Zoom | 100.73 |
| Dropbox | 39.96 |
| Staff Salaries and Pensions incl backdated pay | 4912.78 |
| Total | <u>13,172.36</u> |

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the Accounts for payment for March be approved.

Balances to be Approved and Noted as at 08.03.2021

Current A/c: £3,837.65 Deposit A/c: £88,336.94
 Memorial Hall Extension A/c: £3,320.01

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

359.20 Budget to Actual Report

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the Budget to Actual Report up to 31st March 2021 be approved and noted.

360.20 Virements

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the Virements up to 31st March 2021 be approved.

361.20 Earmarked Reserves

Following advice from the Clerk that the Council needed to retain a General Reserve of at least 3 months of operational expenditure, Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the approval of Earmarked Reserves be deferred to the next meeting when knowledge of the year end figure was likely to be known.

362.20 Correspondence

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

1. Wiltshire Council - Emails regarding:
 - A number of updates on Covid-19 and Wiltshire Council's work.
 - Minutes for Southern Wiltshire Area Board, Thursday 28th January and Agenda for meeting on Thursday 11th March at 7.00 pm
 - Notes for Southern CATG Meeting – 17th February 2021
 - Information on the Census 2021
 - Town and Parish Council Elections Update
 - A notice of a Temporary Closure of: A338 from Warrens Lane to Batten Road, Downton
2. WALC – March newsletter, Election posters and Election Q&As.
3. 1st Downton Scout Group- An email confirming safe receipt of grant and thanks.
4. Salisbury Journal – An email asking for a comment on the WALPA letter on neighbourhood planning.
5. Downton4family – An email providing an update on the work of the charity over the last year.
6. Cranborne Chase AONB – An email advising of a Spring series of online talks.
7. CPRE – An email about the Best Kept Village competition.
8. Longford Estates – A letter from the Resident Agent regarding withdrawal of in principle approval to use their land for a permissive path and bridge.
9. Parishioners – A number of emails in response to the Downton Society's newsletter expressing concerns about the potential for future development in to go against the Neighbourhood Plan.
10. Parishioner – An email regarding bonfires.
11. Parishioner – An email regarding works to replace the fence on the eastern side of the Memorial Gardens.
12. Parishioner – An email about ongoing maintenance at the Charles Church development.
13. Parishioner – An email regarding catapults.
14. Parishioner – An email regarding the proposed development by Formula Land.
15. Parishioner – Several emails regarding the Bowling Club Lease.
16. Non-Parishioner – An email regarding the installation of a bench.
17. Non-Parishioner – An email providing positive comments on the circular path.

363.20 Clerk's Report

Cllr Brentor proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk's report be noted:

Amenities

Update on future scheduled work to be completed within the parish:-

- Tree work at Moot Lane Recreation Ground and Memorial Gardens completed on 1st & 2nd March 2021 to complete highest priority work from the recent tree report.

- Parish Steward next due in March. List of tasks collated for him – he did not come to the parish in February as on other tasks for WC.
- Await new road nameplates (5 in total) – anticipated by WC for supply and installation in March.
- Bollards ordered by WC and installation anticipated for June/July 2021 (supply delayed by Covid & Brexit).
- Iron Bridge to be repainted by WC contractor – timescales currently being discussed – April onwards.
- Play Equipment – latest inspection reports completed in February. Wick Lane and Memorial Gardens – low risk, Moot Lane Recreation Ground and Charlton All Saints – moderate risk. Reports currently being analysed in detail to identify potential actions for next Amenities Committee meeting.

Current issues reported:

- Broken picnic table at Charlton All Saints play area
- Broken cradle seat on swings at Moot Lane Recreation Ground
- Wooden noticeboard on Moot Lane blown over – new replacement required.
- Small piece of equipment missing on chain for one of swing seats in Memorial Gardens.

Memorial Gardens: Following discussions with the primary school more matting will be provided by Cuckoo Fair to cover the entrances school entrances within the playground ahead of official school return on 8th March.

Bowling Club: The committee of Downton Bowling Club has commented on the proposed terms of its potential lease with BWSCA. The Council’s new solicitor (following the previously solicitor’s retirement) has been instructed to work with the BWSCA’s solicitor on the new Head Lease.

Police Meeting:

The Clerk is still working Richard Clewer’s PA to set up a meeting with neighbouring parishes and County Councils, New Forest District Council etc to address anti-social and other key policing issues.

Elections:

Wiltshire Council has set up a webpage for parish and town council elections from which members of the public can download nomination forms and a timetable – all nomination forms need to have been submitted by 4 pm on Thursday 8th April 2021: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/elections-town-parish>

364.20 Date of next meeting

Cllr Brentor advised that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Monday 22nd March 2021 at 7.30 pm on Zoom.

Cllr Brentor proposed from the chair and it was RESOLVED to continue the meeting beyond 10.00pm to complete the remaining items on the agenda.

Part 2 – EXEMPT MATTERS – EMPLOYMENT & STAFFING

365.20 The Chair to propose the following resolution – ‘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’:

Cllr Brentor proposed, Cllr Cornell seconded and it was RESOLVED that the meeting be closed to the press and public.

366.20 Cllr Cornell to provide an update on staffing matters, including those in relation to the actions approved under agenda item 245.20 of the Council meeting held on 14th December 2020, and to decide and resolve on any further actions to be taken.

Cllr Cornell provided an update on staffing matters, which included those matters relating to the actions approved under agenda item 245.20 of the Council meeting held on 14th December 2020, and which were being progressed by the members of the Staffing Committee in accordance with the advice received from South West Councils, the Parish Council’s HR Advisors.

Cllr Cornell explained that there was a potential need for an HR adviser to provide support at an upcoming meeting with the employee and their union representative and for which there would be a fee of £410.

After a discussion, Cllr Cornell proposed, Cllr Watts seconded, and it was RESOLVED to reallocate £410 of the £5,000 of reserves which had been allocated, by resolution of the Council at agenda item 333.20 of the Parish Council meeting held on 22nd January 2021, to cover the potential costs of an adjudication service, in order to enable an HR advisor to attend a meeting involving members of the Staffing Committee, and to authorise the members of the Staffing Committee to spend the sum of £410 (ex. VAT) for that particular purpose.

Cllr Cornell then went on to remind members that, for personal reasons, she would not be available to act as a Parish Councillor, and hence as a member and as the chair of the Staffing Committee, from 20th March until, approximately, 14th April. As this would result in the Staffing Committee ceasing to be quorate during this period Cllr Pearce had been approached and she has confirmed that she would be willing to temporarily become a member of the Staffing Committee to enable it to remain quorate during Cllr Cornell’s absence.

After a further discussion, Cllr Watts proposed, Cllr Roberts seconded, and it was RESOLVED, subject to members having sight of an email from Cllr Pearce confirming her agreement, to appoint Cllr Pearce to the Staffing Committee for the period of Cllr Cornell’s absence.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 22:18.

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