



Downton Parish Council

**Minutes of the DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL
EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING held on
Monday 26 February 2024. Start time 7:00 pm
MEMORIAL HALL, DOWNTON (BONVALOT ROOM)**

Councillors present: Jane Brentor (Chair) (JB), Andy North (AN), Stephanie Jalland (SJ), Stu Carter (SC), Paul Roberts (PR), Matthew Randall (MR), and Gareth Watts (GW).

Plus: Melanie Camilleri (MC) – Clerk/RFO, Susan Barnhurst-Davies (SBD) - Admin Officer, and 5 members of the public.

MINUTES

54/24 Public Question Time

- Budget/Precept 2024/25: asked why this had been agreed ‘in secret’
- Budget/Precept 2024/25: he’d asked the Councillors about the increase at the meeting on 12 Feb 2024 and had received a vague response
- Agenda items 61/24 and 62/24: must not be conducted in closed session and in his view can not be voted on due to vagueness of wording

55/24 Apologies for Absence: Dave Mace (Vice-Chair) (DM). Reason noted and accepted.

56/24 Declarations of interest: Cllr Carter declared a pecuniary interest Agenda 59/24 (being a shareholder of Persimmon Homes).

57/24 Business raised during Public Question Time

To resolve to refer any business raised by the public or items of information from councillors either to the appropriate committee or for any other action.

- Budget/Precept 2024/25: was not discussed and agreed ‘in secret’. Downton Parish Council discussed the 2024/25 budget and Precept requirements in open Agenda on three separate occasions. Published Minutes of meetings held on: -
 - EGM 27 Nov 2023 (239/23)
 - 11 December 2023 (248/23)
 - 08 Jan 2024 (17/24)

Only elements of the budget which are subject to exemptions under the FOI Act (Section 40(2) – Personal Information subject to the principles of GDPR and Section 43(2) – Commercial Interests) were discussed under closed Agenda, passed by a resolution which gave reasons for the public’s exclusion.

- Budget/Precept 2024/25: JB re-iterated her response given on 12 Feb – that a formal Parish Council comms was being prepared. This is now ready for full council’s consideration and approval (see Agenda 62/24).
- Agenda items 61/24 and 62/24: A resolution must first be passed to exclude members of the public. JB, as Chair, proposed that Agenda 60/24 be brought forward as the next item on the Agenda. This was unanimously agreed. Agenda 61/24 is Confidential and as such details do not need to be disclosed (per Standing Orders).

60/24 *(brought forward)* **RESOLVED: that ONLY Agenda item 61/24 would be closed to members of the public and press under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Sec 1 (2) by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.**

JB, as Chair, proposed that Agenda 62/24 be brought forward. This was unanimously agreed.

62/24 *(brought forward)* **Downton Parish Council’s public communication on the 2024/25 Precept**

The draft Comms was put-up on full screen and enlarged for the benefit of members of the public to read. JB verbally summarised each of the sections of the draft Comms document.

Cllrs suggested additions which would stop misinformation e.g. dates of the three Parish Council meetings when the budget and Precept was discussed in public, that Town and Parish Councils are not required to hold a referendum on Precept increases, Transparency Code publication requirements for councils with an annual turnover of >£25K and <£200,000 (Downton PC’s last set of published accounts 2022/23 sits in this category).

The comms was unanimously approved (with those suggested changes).

Publication will be in the following locations:-

- Parish Council’s Website (see link [Information for residents about the precept increase 2024/25 – Downton Parish Council](#))
- Noticeboards
- Social Media
- In Downton (print and online)
- Library
- Doctors Surgery

PR added that there were hardly any members of the public who attended these meetings. Plus, there were a number of vacant seats on the Council. GW added that if people want all services to continue, it comes with a cost.

58/24 **Letter of Intention for Downton FC grant application**

- i) Cllr Carter and the Clerk delivered a report on their meeting with the Football Foundation in relation to Downton FC’s grant application for LED floodlights and the Parish Council’s liability in that respect.
- ii) **RESOLVED:**
 - by majority decision, Downton Parish Council will make a joint Grant application with Downton FC to satisfy the Football Foundation’s requirements. GW abstained from voting; forfeiting his vote
 - the ‘Letter of Intention’ to the Football Foundation was approved. GW and MR abstained from voting; forfeiting their vote.

59/24 Persimmon Homes

i) JB delivered a summary of the Parish Council's previous engagement with Persimmon Homes'. Persimmons' Homes have finally responded to the questions put to them in 2021. After a brief discussion it was **RESOLVED** that:-

- the Parish Council will meet with Persimmon Homes (including 1-2 independent persons) to articulate the community's requirements for the site (with reference to the NDP) and ask Persimmon to explain how they are going to support it.
- There is a need for an independent report on water/sewerage.

SC abstained from voting (having declared an interest) forfeiting his vote.

61/24 FOI Requests

No resolutions were passed under this Agenda item.

Being no further business, JB closed the meeting at 8:35pm.

DRAFT MINUTES TO BE SIGNED AT THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING