



# Downton Parish Council

**Minutes of the DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Meeting held on**  
**Monday 09 SEPTEMBER 2024. Start time 7:00pm**  
**MEMORIAL HALL, DOWNTON (BONVALOT ROOM)**

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Councillors present: Jane Brentor (Chair) (JB), Matt Randall (MR), Gareth Watts (GW), Paul Roberts (PR), Stephanie Jalland (SJ), Stu Carter (SC), and Cllr Richard Clewer (Wiltshire Council) (RC)

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

## MINUTES

### **217/24 Public Question Time**

#### Planning Applications for 40 The Borough

- The applicant - attending to answer any questions
- An objector to PL/2024/07405 – wishes to observe

**218/24 To receive a report from PC Marc Evans:** PC Evans didn't attend. Nor did he send a report.

### **219/24 To receive a report from Cllr Richard Clewer (Wiltshire Council)**

- NPPF Consultation: Complex matters for consideration, land supply requirements reverted to 5 years, and unclear as to what it will mean for Neighbourhood Plans. He anticipates the outcome to be an increase in speculative development. He has produced a response to the Consultation which he's happy to share.
- WC has reluctantly returned to weed spraying, where appropriate to do so.

**220/24 Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs Dave Mace (DM), Andy North (AN): Reasons noted and accepted.

**221/24 Declarations of interest:** GW Agenda 235/24 (i) (Public Toilets cleaning)

### **222/24 Minutes**

- i) **RESOLVED:** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on **12 August 2024** were approved.

### **223/24 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.

#### Planning Applications for 40 The Borough

Consideration to this application will take place under Agenda 225/24 i)

## 224/24 Village Matters

- Parish Steward: list of jobs identified for the PS's visit next week. Now inviting jobs for his visit 10/14 October.
- WC's Parish Emergency Equipment Scheme:  
SBD reported an inventory of current supplies (salt, gel sacs, tabards, signage) held by the Parish Council. Agreed to order addition supplies: -
  - Box of gel sacs
  - Five 'Flood Warden' TabardsSBD will arrange for collection of items from High Post Winter Depot (Amesbury)  
Other matters: -
  - SBD has reported to WC that the grit bin at Saxonhurst is empty and needs to be replenished.
  - PR reported residents' request for a grit bin to be installed at the Bishops Mead Estate. SBD will place an order with WC.
- Bulb donation Scheme: SBC to produce a comms poster calling for bulb donations from members of the community. Areas for planting: the Cemetery, The Beacon, Memorial Gardens, Charlton All Saints.
- Community Planting:
  - Bulbs (various locations): Autumn 2024. SBD to incorporate with the bulb donation comms poster
  - Hedge and Tree Planting: SJ to liaise with the schools. JB to write to local groups and organisations. SBD to create comms piece for members of public.
- Footpaths: SBD delivered a report on plans to improve the footpath known as the South Lane Loop. Funding needed for materials to support this objective. MC raised potential use of Wiltshire Towns Programme Grant Programme Yr 3 as this improvement would likely increase footfall into the 'centre' of Downton. The views from the walk are scenic (Instagram-able) and would attract visitors and Walking Groups. The start/finish point of the walk is at The Goat PH. The public may wish to have lunch or a drink at this PH or another establishment in Downton. Cllr Clewer agreed this would meet eligibility requirements for the Grant.

## 225/24 Planning: Part 1

- i) The applications received were considered and recommendations made to Wiltshire Council Planning Authority (see Planning Schedule)
- ii) Planning decisions were noted (see Planning Schedule)

## 226/24 Downton Remembrance Sunday Service & Parade 2024

- i) The application to WC Highways to close the B3080 for the Remembrance Sunday Service Parade was ratified.
- ii) **RESOLVED**: to make a donation of £20 to the Royal British Legion for a Poppy Wreath
- iii) **RESOLVED** Cllr Brentor, as Chair, will lay the Wreath on behalf of the Parish Council

## 227/24 Downton Parish Council Annual Christmas Tree 2024

- After careful consideration of all options, costs, and associated risks with sourcing a Christmas Tree for the 'Switching on the Lights' event on Maypole Green, **RESOLVED** to use the supplier used for the 2023 Christmas Tree (with exact same arrangements for installation and removal). MC to make enquiries with view to placing the order.
- **RESOLVED**: date for the 'Switching on the Lights' event will be **Friday 06 December 2024 5:30pm**.
- Noted £980 is available in the 2024/25 budget for this event. Arrangements to be discussed at the October meeting.

- Noted that the Risk Assessment for this event will be prepared for consideration at the November meeting.
  - Noted that the unmetered electricity connection on the Green has been transferred into Downton Parish Council's name. Consideration now to be given to the Parish Council's responsibility to keep the 'box' secure from a health and safety point of view.
- 228/24 Coronation Living Heritage Orchard**
- i) Noted that the application has been submitted to and accepted by Wiltshire Council.
  - ii) Noted Wiltshire Council has requested that DPC consider a land asset transfer of The Beacon. This will not prevent WC issuing a licence granting permission for DPC to plant the trees. Unanimously agreed that this is not a consideration for the present time.
  - iii) Costs relating to the asset transfer of The Beacon to DPC are not yet available from WC.
  - iv) Unanimously agreed to defer consideration of holding a celebratory opening event following community planting to the January 2025 meeting.
- 229/24 Mural Project Grant Application**
- i) SJ was delighted to report that Downton Parish Council has been successful in its SWAB Youth Grant application for the Mural Project. £1k awarded to match-fund the £1K contribution from DPC. SJ further reported that the mural design will be an environmental theme. The design will be submitted to DPC for consideration and approval at the December meeting with the view to paint around Easter time 2025.
- 230/24 Play Parks**
- i) **RESOLVED:** the Councillor Visual Inspection Forms were approved, subject to changing the frequency of checks to fortnightly (risk-based approach) plus adding the Admin Officer's email as a point of contact.
  - ii) **RESOLVED:** that SBD will obtain quotes for restoration of the Moot Lane Play Park Shelter following vandalism (by fire)
  - iii) **RESOLVED:** that SBD will obtain cost of a high-quality new netball net at Moot Lane Play Park
  - iv) MC reported that whilst Idverde's Contract Manager had accepted responsibility to replace the damaged rubber matting at Moot Lane Play Park, Idverde had not fulfilled the suggested timescale (to be completed by the end of last week). MC to chase.
- 231/24 Memorial Benches & Trees**
- i) **RESOLVED** to grant an applicant's request to instal a Memorial Bench in the Memorial Gardens. MC to send SBC the approved Memorial Bench & Tree Policy so that the application could be formally progressed.
  - ii) **RESOLVED** : the Memorial Bench & Tree Policy was approved.
- 232/24 Topiary Cuckoo Agreement**
- i) **RESOLVED:** In accordance with Standing Order 23(a), the 2-year Topiary Cuckoo Sculpture Agreement between Downton Parish Council and the Downton Society was executed.
- 233/24 Downton Cuckoo Fair**
- i) After a brief discussion, by a majority decision, the Cuckoo Fair's request for Downton Parish Council to write to landowners requesting that their trees along the green be cut back was declined. PR will communicate this decision to the Cuckoo Fair with reasons i.e. that the trees are not considered to be an issue, that they are already well-maintained, that the branches offer shade in the summer, and that they protect the region from prevailing winds.

#### **234/24 Objections raised with the External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn**

- i) To receive a report on the external auditor's decision over the eligibility of the objections raised by a member of the public on the 2023/24 accounts.
- ii) To understand and resolve to agree next steps, if any.

This Agenda item was deferred as PKF Littlejohn has not yet contacted MC. It was noted that PKF Littlejohn's Head of Challenge works part-time and that her indication we'd hear by 'end of August' was subject to dealing with all objections they'd received for all other Town and Parish Council 2023/24 accounts, to be handled in strict chronological order.

#### **235/24 Finance: Part 1**

- i) **RESOLVED:** the Cash Flow Report and payments were approved  
**Account Balances**  
Lloyds Treasurers Account 09 Sept 2024: £11,140.98  
Lloyds Business Bank Instant 09 Sept 2024: £85,378.75  
Lloyds Treasurers Account (Heritage Fund) 09 Sept 2024: £0
- ii) **RESOLVED:** the Bank Reconciliation prepared by the RFO was signed-off as correct by Members of the Council
- iii) Noted that the Clerk
  - has submitted the 2023/24 CIL Expenditure Return to Wiltshire Council.
  - at the request of Wiltshire Council, completed and submitted missing CIL Expenditure Returns in relation to CIL monies received for the Charles Church (14/06561/FUL) and Scotts House (17/03795) developments. This encompassed years 2017/18, 2018/2019, and 2021/22. The legal obligations for a Parish and Town council to monitor and report on CIL are:-
    - Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
    - Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011
    - The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2019
  - had previously submitted the 2022/23 CIL Expenditure Return to Wiltshire Council.

#### **236/24 Finance: Part 2**

- i) **RESOLVED:** the insurance renewal quote effective from 01 October 2024 was approved
- ii) **RESOLVED:** to build-in expenditure 2025/26 budget for Hiscox Insurance Company Ltd to conduct a desk-based buildings valuations in readiness for the 01 Oct 2025 renewal.
- iii) **RESOLVED** GW Shelter Solutions quote was approved, subject to their description of 'framework' also covering the interior, seating, and timetable noticeboard.
- iv) Noted the Payroll contract's fees and terms for the financial year 2025/26. This will be built into the 2025/26 budget for approval. Also noted that they offer a service to re-register the Parish Council with the Pensions Regulator (£10 every 3-years). The next re-registration is due Sept 2025. Agreed to build this cost into the 2025/26 budget for approval.

#### **237/24 Sysmetix IT Support Contract**

- i) MC delivered a report on performance of delivery of the contract since this function was outsourced by TechB. **RESOLVED:** that MC will submit a formal letter of complaint to the MD, to reduce the contract to one device, and consider continuation of the contract at the October meeting when Cllr Mace has returned from annual leave.

#### **238/24 Planning: Part 2**

- i) The latest Housing Land Supply and Housing Delivery Test in terms of Wiltshire's housing land supply position was noted as being superseded by the new Labour government's National Planning Policy Framework consultation. See also Cllr Clewer's report Agenda 219/24.

- ii) Cllr Brentor delivered a report on the National Planning Policy Framework webinar. See also Cllr Clewer's report Agenda 219/24. It was agreed that JB will complete the consultation response on behalf of DPC (reflecting views of Councillors and the community).
- iii) Noted that comments are invited on the Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document Consultation.

#### **239/24 Staff Training**

- i) **RESOLVED:** for the Admin Officer to attend SLCC online training course 'Getting People Engaged with your Social Media Content' (11 November 2024 9:15am – 12:30pm). Non-members £35+vat
- ii) **RESOLVED:** for the Admin Officer to attend SLCC online training course 'Cemetery Legal Compliance' (5+6 February 2025 9:15am – 12:30pm). Non-members £165+vat  
It was unanimously agreed that as the 2024/25 budget does not have funds allocated for staff training, the cost for these courses will be met from DPC's general reserves.

#### **240/24 Downton Parish Council Lock-up**

- i) The 'tidy and clear-out' party for the Council's storage facility on the Longford Estate will be: JB, SBD, MC. Others said they'd be available, subject to date/time due to work commitments. Date and time to be set and circulated.
- ii) **RESOLVED:** delegated authority to (securely, safely, and legally) dispose of items, where considered necessary, is granted to MC as Clerk, RFO, and Proper Officer; and in accordance with the Data Retention Schedule contained in the Information and Data Protection Policy adopted by full council on 15 July 2024
- iii) **RESOLVED** up to £50 budget to dispose of items, should there be a cost to do so. If exceeds this amount, MC and JB have delegated authorities.

#### **241/24 Committee & Working Group Reports**

- i) **RESOLVED:** the Terms of Reference for Committees and Working Groups document updated to include the Wiltshire Towns Programme Working Group and the 3-year Strategy Working Group was approved.
- ii) **RESOLVED** the 3-year Strategy Working Group will comprise: GW, AN, JB, SBC, and MC

#### **242/24 Councillors Reports**

- i) Noted that Cllr Mace had circulated an email with instruction on Cllrs moving across to.gov.uk email addresses
- ii) Reports from other Councillors  
**SJ:** delighted to report that £20 has been donated towards the purchase of Lavendar bushes at the Cemetery  
**JB**
  - Attended a meeting with Head of WC Planning to discuss their comments on the updated NDP and agree next steps, including establishing if the changes were considered material.
  - Meeting with BWSCA set as Monday 30 Sept (time to be agreed).

#### **243/24 Correspondence, AOB, urgent matters**

- i) Noted that the Clerk's summons for Jury Service has been postponed by the Jury Summons Officer.

#### **244/24 Date of next meeting**

The next Meeting for **Downton Parish Council** will be held on **Monday 14 October 2024** at **7:00pm** in the **Memorial Hall, Downton (Bonvalot Room)**.

Being no further business, JB closed the meeting at 09:50pm.

**DRAFT MINUTES TO BE SIGNED AT THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**