



Downton Parish Council

**Minutes of the DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING held on
MONDAY 24 APRIL 2025 7:00pm
THE DOWNTON MEMORIAL CENTRE (CENTENARY ROOM)**

Councillors present: Jane Brentor (Chair) (JB), Dave Mace (DM), Stuart Carter (SC), Gareth Watts (GW), Stephanie Jalland (SJ), Paul Roberts (PR).

Plus: Melanie Camilleri (MC) – Clerk/RFO, Susan Parsons (SP) - Admin Officer, and seven members of the public.

MINUTES

84/25 Public Question Time

Planning Application PL/2025/01334 (applicant): made representation on Rights of Way access to all properties (not just his) and addressed comments regarding privacy.

Witherington Road from Standlynch (up to where it joins Clarendon Road): reported that it is in a dreadful state – potholes and degradation from the edges of the road. Causing damage to vehicles and presents a safety risk for cyclists. Appeal for DPC to influence urgent repair by WC Highways.

VE & VJ Day 80th Anniversary: lighting The Beacon event taking place BH Monday 05 May at 7pm. Two WW2 Veterans attending will light The Beacon and war songs will be sung. Cllr Watts and Malcolm Dean will be making good the bottom of the pole and the pole has been painted. Gas safety certificate obtained (copy provided to DPC) – Salisbury company carried out FOC. Please can DPC help promote the event.

Flower tubs on The Green: have been moved with permission from DPC. Seeking approval that they may remain in their new positions.

Downton Society representative:

- i) Attended the Salisbury Conservation Panel meeting. The Conservation Officer, Joselyn Sage, will be writing to the resident of Creel Cottage in relation to the building being on the Risk List. No action required for DPC.
- ii) Requested if the updated Neighbourhood Plan would be covered at the Downton Annual Parish Meeting on 28 April e.g. is previous work still valid or is a new one required?

Employment Tribunal: a resident expressed that she'd found some details of the case upsetting, that she wanted to make it clear she's never asked DPC a question on behalf of either Bev Cornish or Paul Cornish, and that she wants to move on.

- 85/25 To receive a report from PC Marc Evans:** Did not attend and no report provided
- 86/25 To receive a report from Cllr Richard Clewer (Wiltshire Council):** Apologies received due to work commitments in London.
- 87/25 Apologies for Absence:** Cllrs Matt Randall (MR) and Andy North (AN). Reasons noted and accepted.
- 88/25 Declarations of Interest**
- i) To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda:
 - DM Agenda 100/25 i) (Memorial Centre)
 - GW Any matter in relation to R Watts, Planning Application PL/2025/01334
 - SC: Planning Application PL/2025/01334
 - JB Agenda 93/25 vi), Planning Application PL/2025/02559
 - PR: Planning Application PL/2025/02349
 - ii) To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests: None
 - iii) To consider and grant requests for dispensation in accordance with relevant circumstances under Standing Order 13(h), as appropriate: None
- 89/25 Minutes**
- i) **RESOLVED:** the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on **10 March 2025** were approved.
- 90/25 Employment Tribunal Claim Case Number: 1400672/2023: Mrs B Cornish (Claimant) and Downton Parish Council (Respondent)**
- i) Noted that Downton Parish Council has successfully defended the Employment Tribunal Claim on all counts.
 - ii) The Chair, Cllr Brentor, read out a statement on behalf of the Council. This statement had been prepared, approved, and published observing all legal requirements of an authority¹ You can read the full statement here [[Legal Judgement – Downton Parish Council](#)]
 - iii) In light of the outcome of the court case, resolution 300/24 iv) (relating to DPC paying the Claimant’s backdated Employee Pension Contributions to LGPS Wiltshire Pension Fund for the period 25 Nov 2019 to 31 March 2020) was discussed. **RESOLVED:** unanimously that, despite the Claimant not being legally entitled to public money funding her employee pension contributions (sum £461.71), it would not be proportional or a worthwhile effort for DPC to pursue recovery of these monies because of time and cost implications to the Clerk. Councillors wish to move forward and to focus on projects for the betterment of the parish.
- 91/25 Local Elections 01 May 2025**
- i) Noted that Cllrs Brentor, Mace, Carter, Watts, Jalland, Roberts, and Randall will be elected (uncontested) on 01 May and take office on 06 May. JB reported that Cllr North did not nominate to stand again due to personal circumstances, and that he’d expressed a desire to be co-opted back onto DPC at a future date should there be a vacancy. It was unanimously agreed to record thanks for Cllr North’s outstanding work and contribution to DPC. It was agreed that JB will write to him.
 - ii) **RESOLVED:** DPC’s Co-option Policy was unanimously approved and adopted.

¹ - Sections 4(1) and 6(4) of the Local Government Act 1986.
 - the ‘Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (31 March 2011)’; a code by which Local Authorities in England are required to have regard in coming to any decision on publicity.
 - the Hillingdon Judge’s comments on responses to urgent matters such as media queries (NALC Legal Topic Note 1).

92/25 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 Application PL/2025/01334 (applicant): will be considered under Agenda 94/25.

Witherington Road from Standlynch (up to where it joins Clarendon Road): GW indicated that WC Highways work is about to get underway. It was agreed that SP will contact Graham Axtell WC Highways (cc Cllr Clewer) to establish full extent of the works to remedy.

VE & VJ Day 80th Anniversary: Noted with thanks.

Flower tubs on The Green: will be considered under Agenda 95/25.

Downton Society representative:

- i) Creel Cottage: noted with thanks.
- ii) Neighbourhood Plan: JB will address at the Annual Parish Meeting

Employment Tribunal: no discussion took place

93/25 Village Matters

- i) Parish Steward: unavailable in May due to Highways works on highways (visibility at junctions). Some DPC jobs have been carried forward to June.
- ii) Bollards on the Borough Green: installation and subsequent expressions of thanks from members of the public noted. An offer to paint them white was noted with thanks, however, it was agreed that this would not be practical due to differences in construction of the bollards (some are concrete; some wooden, requiring different types of paint) plus the cost of future maintenance. SP to write back to the member of the public.
DM raised damage to the greens in other areas and would like them to be considered as suitable to instal bollards. Agenda item for the May meeting
- iii) Gully Clearance: The Gully Team was present in The Borough yesterday. Outstanding jobs include Lode Hill and Slab Lane which will be carried out during the nighttime because of reduced volume of traffic
- iv) Street Nameplates: noted that request for replacements to go through LHFIG. Defer consideration to June meeting pending SP compiling a list of all missing nameplates in the parish.
- v) Memorial Gardens - wooden gate: noted with thanks Richard Watts has fixed the broken hinges to the gate (free of charge). This is a temp fix as the gate is not in good shape so to keep under review.
- vi) Moot Rec: **RESOLVED:** unanimously that the request from the Downton Green Network to remove an inch of turf from an area of approximately 40 sq metres of the northeastern end of the Moot Recreation ground (in order to plant wildflower seeds) was approved. JB abstained from voting, forfeiting her vote. Noted that the depth will be no greater than is permitted (due to it being on an archaeological site). Also noted that the removed turf may be repurposed for the Play Tunnel and other bare patches.
- vii) Zebra Crossing (outside the Co-op): noted that SP has made a request to Highways to repaint the crossing and repair the lights
- viii) Bridge Cleaning: SP delivered a report on cleaning and restoration of Downton's bridges with special thanks to all of the volunteers who were involved. The Iron Bridge must be carried out by Highways due to rust and environmental considerations
- ix) BT Heritage K6 phone box High Street: BT has proposed to remove the phone box due to low usage and sufficient mobile phone coverage. Cllrs noted that the phone box is sited on WC land and that a Licence to Occupy would likely be necessary. Suggestion

that the phone box could be purposed as a Downton Tourist Info Centre in association with the Wiltshire Towns Programme.

RESOLVED: to adopt the phone box pending consideration and agreement that it is suitable to repurpose as a Downton Tourist Info Centre in association with the Wiltshire Towns Programme, and subject to landowner consent.

- x) VE & VJ Day 80th Anniversary: noted event taking place to mark the Anniversary on 05 May (Agenda 84/25)
- xi) Memorial Gardens: the request from Downton Band has been withdrawn.

94/25 **Planning**

- i) The planning appeal in relation planning application PL/2024/07405 (40 The Borough, Downton, Salisbury, SP5 3ND. Erection of a new dwelling) was noted. To consider and resolve to submit a comment to the Planning Inspectorate by 13 May 2025. SJ and GW abstained from voting, leaving an inquorate no. of councillors (four) to pass a resolution. Accordingly, DPC will not submit a comment.
- ii) The applications received were considered and recommendations made to Wiltshire Council Planning Authority (see Planning Schedule)
- iii) Planning decisions were noted (see Planning Schedule)

95/25 **Downton Cuckoo Fair 2025**

- i) **RESOLVED:** The Council's decision (and Risk Assessment) to grant approval to relocate the Council's Flower Tubs on The Greens to the north side next to the B3080 (3 metres from the kerb edge) was ratified. Comment was made on how level and secure the tubs are in their new positions. Agreed that this will be looked into and remedied.
- ii) Note that the Parish Council's insurer has confirmed that they are satisfied there is no need to use a qualified electrician provided the "responsible person" is simply plugging in plugs to the unmetered connection.
- iii) Downton Primary PTA's request (and Risk Assessment) to run a Duck Race on the Bank Holiday Monday 05 May. The event raises money on behalf of the Primary School (correction to Agenda). The only comment made by DPC was that the PTA should seek permission from Longford Estate as they are using the 100m stretch of stream along Avon Meadows.

96/25 **Downton Public Toilets**

- i) **RESOLVED** emergency repairs and maintenance relating to 1) a vandalised toilet seat (women's toilets) and 2) water leaks (men's toilets) were ratified
- ii) Noted that the Wallgate hand washer in the men's toilets is not working on every occasion. MC to discuss remedy with contractor in consultation with a plumber.

97/25 **Children's Corner or Playground Charity (for which DPC is sole Trustee)**

MC reported that: -

- i) she's submitted Annual Returns to The Charity Commission for 2022/23 and 2023/24. Previous Annual Returns submitted were incorrect as they claimed £10 p.a. expenditure. Incorrect as this expenditure was made by DPC for rental of land from Longford Estate at Carlton All Saints (upon which the Children's Play Park is sited). The Charity owns land at Barford Lane which it rents to the Scouts and the Cadets. MC reported that having checked with the Charity Commission, corrections to these historic returns will not be necessary.
£5 p.a. rental: had been paid every year by the Scouts, but not always by the Cadets. All outstanding rent has now been invoiced and collected.
- ii) Renewed Leases for the Scouts and the Cadets: are being drawn up by their respective legal teams. MC reported that she's received a question about the land not being registered. MC will look into this and report back to full council. MC has requested

copies of insurance cover from Cadets and Scout relating to their structures on the land.

- iii) MC reported that rental income from the Scouts and Cadets had been paid into DPC's Lloyds bank account. Whilst using DPC's account as a feeder account is acceptable, the Charity must have its own bank account. Bank charges, however, may wipe-out the £10 p.a. income. MC to discuss with John Murray (internal auditor) and PKF Littlejohn (external auditor). In the meantime, monies are held by DPC and recorded in the accounts as earmarked reserves
- iv) MC reported the Charity Commission has agreed that the Charity may voluntarily apply to remove itself from registration (as income <£5K threshold)
- v) Proper governance e.g. separate meetings and Minutes to the Council must now be put in place for the Charity. MC will establish and report back to full council

98/25 Governance

- i) To consider and resolve to approve a Council Communications Policy: deferred to the May Meeting
- ii) **RESOLVED:** the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy was unanimously approved and adopted

99/25 End of year Accounts 2023/24

MC delivered the following report in relation to the 2023/24 accounts: -

- The external auditor, PKF Littlejohn, has concluded its audit stating the "AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no matters give cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met"
- Objection raised by a member of the public: -
 - PKF Littlejohn has concluded its work. Only one matter raised had met the eligibility test by virtue of it relating to the Asset figure declared on the Accounting Statement (Box 9). MC had offered to send a full explanation and evidence to the member of the public free of charge, however, the member of the public did not reply, nor did they withdraw their objection, as suggested they could do by PKF Littlejohn.
 - MC provided a full explanation and evidence to PKF Littlejohn who were satisfied as to the accuracy of the Asset figure.
 - Regrettably, the work carried out by PKF Littlejohn in relation to this objection has given rise to a cost to the local taxpayer – costed on an hourly basis (£355+vat). MC was able to mitigate this cost due to the clarity and precision of explanation provided to PKF Littlejohn.
 - The Notice of Conclusion may now be published on DPC's website.

100/25 End of year Accounts 2024/25

- i) **RESOLVED:** the Investment Strategy Policy was unanimously approved and adopted
- ii) (Resolution 75/25 iii): Noted that a Lloyds 95 Day Notice Account was opened on 21 March 2025 with an opening balance of £83K (funds transferred from the Lloyds Business Bank Instant Access Account).
- iii) **RESOLVED** the Cash Flow Report and payments for year end 31 March 2025 was approved.
- iv) **RESOLVED** the Bank Reconciliation prepared by the RFO for year end 31 March 2025 was approved and signed-off as correct by Members of the Council
- v) **RESOLVED** the following documents were unanimously approved for publication on DPC's website in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (Council's with a gross annual income and expenditure greater than £200,000): -
 - All items of expenditure above £250
 - Details of Contracts where value exceeds £5,000

- Award of Grants by the Parish Council
- vi) MC delivered a verbal report on Earmarked & General Reserves for the year end 31 March 2025.
- vii) **RESOLVED** the updated Asset Register @31 March 2025 was unanimously approved
- viii) MC delivered a report on the internal and external audit timetable in relation to the Annual Governance and Accounting return

100/25 Finance

- i) **RESOLVED** the Cash Flow Report and payments for April 2025 were approved.

DM abstained from voting, forfeiting his vote on the Memorial Centre invoice. GW abstained from voting, forfeiting his vote on all invoices relating to R.Watts and Downton Cleaning Services.

Expenditure exceeding £250 (excl salary payments per Local Government Transparency Code 2015)

Payee	Detail	Amount £ (incl vat)	Method
PWLB	Loan repayment	8,730.45	BACS
GW Shelters	Clean x9 Bush Shelters + Report	475.20	BACS
GW Shelters	Replace missing panel bus shelter	260.23	BACS
ldverde	Bin emptying (March)	312.74	BACS
ldverde	Grounds Maintenance (March)	1,091.35	BACS
Downton Cleaning Services	Public Toilets Cleaning (March)	985.00	BACS
WALC/NALC	Annual Subscription	1,130.84	BACS
South West Councils	Membership	630.00	BACS
AJGIBL	Cyber package Insurance renewal 2025/26	367.36	BACS
R.Watts	Paint Goal Posts CAS	295.00	BACS
R.Watts	Memorial Gardens footpath/shelter repairs	590.00	BACS
R.Watts	Refurbish and repaint Memorial Gardens railings	2,250.00	BACS
R.Watts	Instal posts Borough Green	600.00	BACS

- ii) **RESOLVED** the Bank Reconciliation prepared by the RFO was approved and signed-off as correct by Members of the Council for April 2025

Account Balances

Lloyds Business Account 10 April 2025: £12,564.24

Lloyds Commercial Instant Access Account: 10 April 2025: £60,023.40

Lloyds 95-Day Saver: 02 April 2025: £83,078.70

- iii) Noted that DPC will consider and adopt Financial Regulations (based upon NALC's updated model template) at the May meeting.
- iv) **RESOLVED** renewal of Cyber insurance cover was ratified.

101/25 Committee & Working Group Reports

- i) To receive reports from Committees and Working Groups: None
- ii) To resolve to agree on any actions arising from these Reports: None

102/25 Councillors' Reports

- i) To receive reports from Councillors

GW: attended a Carver Trust meeting. The Accounts were signed-off. Cllr Brentor raised that GW is named as a Trustee on the Charity Commission website. GW stated that this is not correct, and that the entry would need to be corrected by the Charity.

PR:

- Wished to express his apologies for planning application PL/2025/02349 (digital display screen in the Co-op window). He was led to believe that all permissions had been considered before the sign was installed. He'd escalated the matter immediately to Co-op HO after discussing planning requirements on signage with MC. The sign was then switched off.

- Reported that when he attended the recent Cuckoo Fair Committee meeting, a Member of the Committee delivered a 2-3 minute ‘bombardment’ on the subject of *Employment Tribunal Claim Case Number: 1400672/2023: Mrs B Cornish (Claimant) and Downton Parish Council (Respondent)* using words and adopting a tone which he found hostile and undermining towards him as a Councillor and Downton Parish Council as a whole. PR reported that he felt harassed.

PR said that after the Cuckoo Fair meeting, other Members of the Committee approached him expressing their shock; congratulating him on the calm and dignified manner in which he’d handled this unprompted and unwarranted outburst.

Cllrs expressed concern about this incident - that the Committee Member had high-jacked a Cuckoo Fair Committee meeting in order to air their personal grievances towards Downton Parish Council. Particularly as this was the 2nd occasion that the same Committee Member had behaved in such a way towards PR.

JB asked PR if he wished to continue representing Downton Parish Council at future Cuckoo Fair Committee meetings because that Committee Member would inevitably be present. PR responded that he did wish to continue; he recognises the benefits the Cuckoo Fair delivers to the whole community, and that is what he is focussed on. However, he does not wish to experience any further incidents of this nature.

Downton Parish Council will consider what action it will take in response to this incident at the May meeting.

103/25 **RESOLVED:** that Agenda item 104/25 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.

104/25 **Barford Lane Cemetery Grounds Management 12-month Contract**

- i) To consider tenders received and resolve to award the contract

RESOLVED: to award the contract to Idverde £4,320 + vat.

It was noted that Idverde will provide the following inclusive to the contract at no additional cost: -

- Top-up all sunken graves with topsoil and re-seed the grass
- Reduce the tall hedging (left side border with Longford Estate)

MC to arrange a site visit between Idverde and DPC (MR, SP, MC) to discuss logistics.

105/25 **Date of Next Meeting**

The **Annual Parish Council Meeting** for **Downton Parish Council** will be held on **12 May 2025** at **7:00pm** in **The Downton Memorial Centre (Bonvalot Room)**.

Being no further business, JB closed the meeting at 21:35pm.

DRAFT MINUTES TO BE SIGNED AT THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING