



Downton Parish Council

**Minutes of the DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING held on
MONDAY 13 APRIL 2026 7pm
THE DOWNTON MEMORIAL CENTRE (BONVALOT ROOM)**

Councillors summoned and present: Jane Brentor (Chair) (JB), Gareth Watts (GW), Matt Randall (MR), Paul Roberts (PR), Stephanie Jalland (SJ), Dave Mace (DM), Gary Hawke (GH), and Judith Snares (JS)

Officers present: Melanie Camilleri (Clerk/RFO) (MC) and Susan Parsons (Administrative Officer) (SP)

WC Councillor present: Cllr Richard Clewer

Police present: PC Marc Evans did not attend this meeting

Members of the public present: Seven

MINUTES

383/26 Public Question Time

The Chair will invite members of the public to make representations in respect of the business on the Agenda, ask their questions, or make their statements. The period of time designated for public participation shall not exceed fifteen minutes unless otherwise directed by the Chair. A member of the public shall not speak for more than five minutes.

Public Space Protection Order

As this matter is on the Agenda 393/26, Trustees/Site Manager of The Moot attending wished to provide evidence of recent incidents involving youths with catapults and shooting ball bearings from The Moot into neighbouring private dwellings. These incidents were reported to the police.

Tree Planting

Member of the public attending wished to record her objection to the Oak being planted in the Memorial Gardens due to the proximity of the planting site to their property and the risk to underground flood defence drainage system.

Disabled Parking Space

She'd previously raised concerns with Cllr Clewer regarding parking in Barnaby Close (her husband is disabled) and that he'd said he'd look at installing 2x disabled parking bays (provided there is a Blue Badge in place).

Application process is through Wiltshire Council's LHFIF scheme.

Horses on The Green (The Borough)

This isn't permitted. Please can the Council take steps.

- 384/26 To receive a report from PC Marc Evans:** Did not attend this meeting.
- 385/26 To receive a report from Cllr Richard Clewer (Wiltshire Council)**
- Local Plan: motion to be passed in May to withdraw the Local Plan. Likely to go back to square one in regard to housing allocation. This is happening with a number of Councils' Local Plans and housing targets.
 - Parking Charges: The Budget includes Sunday charges and harmonisation of charges. Urge DPC to make representation.
- 386/26 Apologies for Absence:** Cllr Stuart Carter (SC). Reason noted and accepted.
- 387/26 Declarations of Interest**
- i) To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda
GW: Public Toilets a) invoice for cleaning services 397/26 i) and b) quotes 399/26 ii), iii)
DM: Room Hire invoices (March) 397/26 i)
MR: Quotes 399/26 iv) and v)
 - ii) To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any):
None
 - iii) To consider and grant requests for dispensation in accordance with relevant circumstances under Standing Order 13(h), as appropriate: None
- 388/26 Minutes**
- i) **RESOLVED**: the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on **09 March 2026** were approved.
- 389/26 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.
- Public Space Protection Order
Will be dealt with under Agenda 393/26.
- Tree Planting
JB read out the following report which was due to be delivered at Agenda 395/26 ii)
Planting of this tree has been more complex than was first considered when the decision was taken and recorded in previous council minutes, taking into account the physical and environmental aspects of the site. It became clear that consultation with the Environment Agency and those with specialist knowledge of root and branch spread was needed as well as consideration of the public use of the site as a play area, sports area, and memorial ground. We would also like to acknowledge that we have not sufficiently identified the potential impact on neighbours of the site and therefore further consultation is required before planting can go ahead.
- We want to make sure we do this right in order that we do not detract from the real purpose of the tree which is to celebrate the commemoration of the ending of the second World War 80 years ago – something which is truly worthy of celebration and in which the young people of the cadets locally will want to be able to feel proud when the tree is eventually planted.*
- The Council apologises for the inconvenience this delay has had on some of those involved in the plans.*
- Disabled Parking Space
DPC will carry out an initial site assessment before taking forward with Wiltshire Council's Highways Senior Engineer.
- Horses on The Green (The Borough)
DPC will contact the person involved.

390/26 Downton Cuckoo Fair 2026

- i) Agreed that the 2026 Event Risk Assessment and Insurance documents meet requirements *subject to* removal of the reference to tying back the swings in the Play Park
- ii) **RESOLVED:** In accordance with Standing Order 23a, the License to Occupy was executed by two councillors and witnessed by MC as Proper Officer.
- iii) The Licence was executed by two Directors of Downton Cuckoo Fair Limited in accordance with their Memorandum and Articles of Association (2003)
- iv) The Licence shall take effect from 27 April 2026 and continue until 07 May 2026. This period includes reasonable time for setting up and dismantling of temporary structures for the Event which shall be held on Saturday 02 May 2026.
- v) **RESOLVED:** a financial contribution to Downton Cuckoo Fair Limited towards the purchase of ground protection matting was discussed. Contribution discussed varied between £0 to £400.
Eventual motion carried: the lesser of £400 or 50% total cost of matting purchased.
MR requested a formal record of the vote:
Support (5): JB, DM, JS, PR (as the vote was tied, JB, as Chair, had the casting vote and the motion was carried in favour).
Object (4): GW, MR, SJ, GH

391/26 Village Matters

- i) Bus shelter cleaning: Noted the 2026 cleaning schedule
- ii) Play Park Safety Inspections: Noted that the annual RoSPA inspections are underway and will be reported at the 11 May meeting
- iii) Dog Poo Bin Charlton All Saints (Agenda 311/26): addition of this bin to the Idverde Bin Emptying Contract @£4 per empty (per week) was ratified.

392/26 Highways

- i) Parish Steward: list of jobs identified - for when he is next back in the Parish (June)
- ii) Slab Lane: **RESOLVED:** the Parish Council's contribution of £375 to the proposed road safety improvements to Slab Lane was approved
- iii) Gravel Close: To resolve to approve DPC's request to LHFIG to instal 'No Access' signage at Gravel Close: *Deferred* pending modification to the application to show type of sign being requested
- iv) Mesh Pond: MC delivered a report regarding the condition of the Highway (WC owned) and track (privately owned). Cllr Clewer will take forward with WC Highways. In the meantime, SP will report potholes using MyWilts. Otherwise, it falls to the residents to remedy safe vehicle access on the privately owned track to their dwellings.

393/26 Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO)

- i) Noted that the joint PSPO for Downton and Redlynch prohibiting the use of catapults, slingshots, and similar items capable of launching projectiles that could cause harm or damage, was not renewed by Wiltshire Council.
- ii) Noted that since the lapse of the PSPO, there has been a resurgence of this type of anti-social behaviour.
- iii) **RESOLVED:** the joint letter from Downton Parish Council and Redlynch Parish Council asking Wiltshire Council's Public Protection Team to urgently review the situation and take steps to reinstate the PSPO for a further three-year period was approved.

394/26 Planning & Housing

- i) Noted that following Government changes to planning appeal procedure, as from 01 April 2026 DPC must make its comments on planning applications 'appeal ready'.

- 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)
- iv) In light the Wiltshire Council Local Plan being rejected by the inspector based on Housing Targets, agree that DPC will pause review of its Neighbourhood Development Plan pending further information on the Local Plan.

395/26 Memorial Gardens Treeworks

- i) SP delivered a verbal report on felling the diseased Beech Tree
- ii) Oak Tree (Oaks at 80): See report delivered by JB under 389/26

396/26 Children’s Corner or Playground

- i) Noted that a Charity bank account has been opened for Children’s Corner or Playground, for which Downton Parish Council is the sole Trustee
- ii) **RESOLVED:** The transfer of £55 from DPC to the Charity bank account representing rental income from the Scouts and Cadets held in earmarked reserves (Agenda 97/25) was ratified
- iii) **RESOLVED:** payment of £655 Grant awarded by Downton Parish Council to the Charity in relation to HM Land Registry costs to register (first registration) the Charity’s land at Barford Lane (Agenda 243/25) was ratified.

397/26 Finance 1

- i) **RESOLVED:** the Cash Flow Report and payments were approved
GW: abstained from voting, forfeiting his vote on Public Toilets invoice for cleaning services and quotes 399/26 ii) and iii)
DM abstained from voting, forfeiting his vote on the Downton Memorial invoices.
MR: abstained from voting, forfeiting his vote on quotes 399/26 iv) and v)

Payee	Detail	Amount £ (incl vat)	Method
Pennon Water	Water Charges Cemetery (1 st payment)	69.64	DD
PWLB	Loan Repayment	8,652.33	DD
ldverde	Bin emptying (March)	312.74	BACS
ldverde	Grounds Maintenance (March)	1,091.35	BACS
West Mercia Energy	Public Toilets Electricity (Feb)	40.67	BACS
BWP Creative Ltd	Website Hosting 01/04/2026-30/04/2026	30.00	BACS
Downton Cleaning Services	Public Toilets Cleaning (March)	985.00	BACS
Downton Memorial Centre	Room Hire (March)	111.75	BACS
WALC/NALC	Annual Subscription	1,159.10	BACS
South West Councils	Membership 2026/27	666.00	BACS
Susan Parsons	Reimbursement: Plants + compost, Microsoft 365	185.38	BACS
Susan Parsons	Expenses	26.46	BACS
M Camilleri	Expenses: fuel	44.10	BACS

- ii) **RESOLVED:** the Bank Reconciliation prepared by the RFO was signed-off as correct by Members of the Council.

Account Balances

Lloyds Business Account 08 April 2026: £28,194.51
Lloyds Commercial Instant Access Account: 08 April 2026: £67,456.06
Lloyds 95-Day Saver: 08 April 2026: £85,455.12

- iii) **RESOLVED:** the Bank Reconciliation prepared by the RFO and signed-off as correct by Members of the Council was approved
- iv) **RESOLVED:** the Council’s Cyber Insurance Renewal quote covering the period 19 April 2026 - 18 April 2027 was approved

398/26 Finance 2: End of year accounts 2025/26

- i) In accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (Council's with a gross annual income and expenditure greater than £200,000): -
 - a. Expenditure over £500: to note that all items of expenditure have been recorded within Downton Parish Council's published Meeting Minutes and a separate list of payments published on the Council's website (this exceeds requirement)
 - b. Contracts and agreements (>£5,000): **RESOLVED**: the updated 'Details of Contracts' document was approved for publication
 - c. Grants awarded to external organisations: **RESOLVED**: the updated 'Award of Grants by Downton Parish Council' document was approved for publication
- ii) MC delivered a report on 2025/26 Budget to Actual
- iii) MC delivered a report on Earmarked & General Reserves @31 March 2026. Noted operation reserves currently 4.36 months
- iv) **RESOLVED**: the updated Asset Register @31 March 2026 was approved

399/26 Public Toilets Refurbishment

- i) MC delivered a report on scope, budget allocation, and completion timescales:
 - Cubicle Systems + contingency (negotiated down to 5%)
 - Additional refurb costs, subject to quote approval
 - Timescales
- ii) **RESOLVED**: the quote for removing the moss and ivy, and cleaning the gutters and facias was approved. Work to be completed before the scheduled refurbishment completion date of mid-May
- iii) **RESOLVED**: the quote to paint the ceilings was approved. Agree that this work will be carried out and completed before Cubicle Systems onsite (to mitigate costs and to protect the new installation from paint). Therefore, toilets will be closed as from Monday 20 April
- iv) **RESOLVED** the quote to stain the three external doors was approved
- v) **RESOLVED** a max £50 budget was agreed for external doors hardware and signage
- vi) To consider and resolve to approve the quote for an updated Sanitary bin emptying contract: 3x nappy bins (weekly) and 4x slimline bins (26 times p.a.): *deferred* pending receipt of quote which is overdue
- vii) **RESOLVED** the quote for a Legionella Risk Assessment and sample was approved

400/26 Finance 3: S106 Monies

- i) MC reported residual S106 monies. Potential options for use discussed. Decision will be deferred to the 11 May meeting i.e. post Public Toilets installation when all associated costs known and finalised.

401/26 Wiltshire Pensions Fund

- i) Noted that following the 2025 Triennial Valuation and the Funding Strategy Statement being approved, employer contribution rates from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029 have been reduced to 17.7%

402/26 Downton Annual Parish Meeting 27 April 2026

- i) Plans were discussed and agreed
- ii) Notice of the Annual Parish Meeting 2026 (Poster) was approved

403/26 Trustee Appointments, Outside Bodies, Committees, Working Groups

- i) To resolve to approve the updated 3-year Strategy (in accordance with Agenda 379/26): *deferred* to the May meeting
- ii) To receive reports in relation to Trustee Appointments, Outside Bodies, Committees, Working Groups:
JB: attended Millennium Green AGM

GW: Attended Carver Trust AGM. Accounts completed and approved.

404/26 Councillors' Reports

- i) To receive reports from Councillors
SJ: Family Park Run: currently considering the logistics on a way to progress. She'll type-up one pager and circulate to Cllrs

405/26 Correspondence, AOB, urgent matters

- i) JB will attend the Southern Wiltshire Health & Wellbeing Group Teams Meeting taking place on 14 May 2026 12-1pm
- ii) Hosting Dark Skies StarFest 2027 (Cranborne Chase International Dark Sky Reserve) was discussed. Agreed to seek further information.

406/26 RESOLVED: that Agenda items 407/26, 408/26, and 409/26 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.

407/26 Freedom of Information - complaint to the ICO

- i) RESOLVED: the response submitted by the Clerk to the Information Commissioner's Office under delegated authority was unanimously ratified.

408/26 Recruitment for Litter Picker vacancy

RESOLVED: to award the contracts to Stephen O'Bee 01 May 2026 – 31 March 2027, 10 hours/month

409/26 Officers' Annual Performance Reviews

GW and JB delivered a report on MC's and SP's annual performance reviews conducted on 16 March.

500/26 Date of Next Meeting

The **Annual Parish Council Meeting** for **Downton Parish Council** will be held on **Monday 11 May 2026 at 7:00pm in The Downton Memorial Centre (Bonvalot Room).**

Being no further business, JB closed the meeting at 9:59pm.

DRAFT MINUTES TO BE SIGNED AT THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING