



Downton Parish Council

**Minutes of the DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING held on
MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2026 7pm
THE DOWNTON MEMORIAL CENTRE (BONVALOT ROOM)**

Councillors summoned and present: Jane Brentor (Chair) (JB), Gareth Watts (GW), Matt Randall (MR), Stuart Carter (Sc), Judith Snares (JS), and Gary Hawke (GH).

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

WC Councillor present: Cllr Richard Clewer

Members of the public present: Five

MINUTES

610/26 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.

Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) reported that he's stepping down. Salisbury's PAO will take over organisation in Downton; however, 2026 list of areas will not cover outside of the co-op. This doesn't affect the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday Parade whatsoever. He has purchased wreaths for Scouts, Brownies, Cadets. Cllr Carter is taking over as RBL Chairman.

Vegetation growing on The Borough Greens implore action soon.

Traffic chaos following road closure (New Forest fire): expressed concern with problematic signage, HGVs/Coaches travelling through Downton.

Zebra Crossing outside of the co-op: could this be made into a pelican crossing?

Slab Lane speed limit signage: spotted it had been tampered with and raised with the Council.

Downton Society: Noted that The Downton Society has taken the difficult decision to discontinue.

WC Local Plan: what is the status? And what is the impact upon Downton's Neighbourhood Plan?

Footpaths: Maintenance was previously addressed jointly by Downton Society and DPC. What now?

Flower Tubs on The Borough Greens: The Borough Flower Tubs are on the Agenda and would like to offer guidance on how best to plant/maintain flowers which are drought resilient.

611/26 To receive a report from Cllr Richard Clewer (Wiltshire Council)

- Booking system in place for Salisbury Tip
- Car Parking charges in place
- WC Local Plan: Scoping exercise underway. When they start looking at sites, any targets should be evidenced based. Potentially CIL will be going.

612/26 Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Dave Mace (DM), Stephaine Jalland (SJ), and Paul Roberts (PR). Reasons noted and accepted.

613/26 Declarations of Interest

- To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda: GW: Public Toilets cleaning invoice Agenda 628/26 i), GH: Planning Application PL/2026/04804/ PL/2026/05102 and PL/2026/04687 Agenda 618/26 i)
- To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any): None
- To consider and grant requests for dispensation in accordance with relevant circumstances under Standing Order 13(h), as appropriate: None

614/26 Minutes

- RESOLVED:** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on **10 August 2026** were approved. GH and SC abstained from voting, forfeiting their vote, as they did not attend.

615/26 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.

Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO) on behalf of the Council, JB expressed her thanks for all he has done. Remembrance Sunday parade will be discussed under Agenda 626/26.

Vegetation growing on The Borough Greens: this will be discussed under Agenda 622/26.

Traffic chaos following road closure (New Forest fire): Primarily down to vehicles following their sat navs and not the signage – which brought them through Downton and roads unsuitable for coaches and HGVs.

Zebra Crossing outside of the co-op: this has been historically considered and found to be prohibitively too expensive for DPC to bear the cost.

Slab Lane speed limit signage: this will be discussed under Agenda 617/26 iii).

Downton Society: this will be discussed under Agenda 625/26.

WC Local Plan: JB will be attending a WC consultation meeting representing DPC. The impact upon Neighbourhood Development Plans in Downton and across Wiltshire remains uncertain as much continues to change, including from central government.

Footpaths: Tackled by WC Rights of Way Teams, landowners, supported by a DPC Volunteer Workforce.

Flower Tubs on The Borough Greens: this will be discussed under Agenda 625/26

616/26 Village Matters

- i) Parish Steward: list of jobs for 13 & 14 Oct were identified. WC Highways will also be attending soon to tackle potholes in Roman Meadow, Saxon Meadow, Moot Lane.
- ii) Operational Flood Working Group (South) Meeting 19 August 2026: SP delivered a report. PEAS (signs, gel sacs, salt) supplies ordered and will be collected 22 Oct. SP and JB will provide tubs in which to store the salt to protect the bags from nibbling mice.
- iii) WC Freight Action Plan: Noted the new Freight Action Plan consultation which sets out how freight and HGVs should be routed across the county (consultation period runs until 23:59 on 23 Sept 2026). MC to send public consultation comms + link for SP to share on Social Media. MC to also add to the website.

617/26 Highways

- i) LHFIG: SP delivered a report on the various Downton LHFIG initiatives underway following the LHFIG meeting held on 01 September.
With regards to Issue 13-24-59 (parking matter at School Rails), SP will discuss with Rights of Way Team and send photos reflecting the issue to WC Highways.
- ii) Traffic Survey: To note that the Council has requested WC Highways carry out a Traffic Survey on the A338. Waiting for it to be carried out.
- iii) Speed Limit signs: SP reported that following a communication from a member of the public, it was discovered that a national speed limit sign at Slab Lane had been tampered with (30mph sticker overlaid). WC Highways will remedy. However, WC Highways has stressed that tampering could impact people's insurance in the event of an accident.

618/26 Planning & Housing

- i) The applications received were considered and recommendations made to Wiltshire Council Planning Authority (see Planning Schedule).
- ii) Noted planning decisions (see Planning Schedule)
- iii) 100 Moot Lane, Downton:
 - a. ENF/2026/00505: noted that the period of compliance set out in the Planning Inspectorate's Decision Notice (Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/C/24/3355835) has passed the deadline. Agreed that MC will write to WC Enforcement.
 - b. WC Planning Enforcement Officer's response regarding concerns over 'change of use' discussed. The matter continues. Agreed that MC will write back to WC Enforcement cc Cllr Clewer.

619/26 Wiltshire Council Community Governance Review 2026/27

- i) Noted Briefing Note 26-15
- ii) Noted that MC will be attending an informal online session (Teams) with members of the Electoral Review Committee (ERC) on Thurs 17 Sept 10:45-11:15am. Agreed that Member nos. for both Downton and Charlton Wards are appropriate given the no. of electorates and devolved services to DPC. Plus, it's yet unknown if/what housing targets WC will place on the parish. Noted that the current vacant seats, similar to other town and parish council's, represents an operational difficulty.
- iii) It was agreed that DPC will not need to respond separately to WC's questions.

620/26 Play Parks/Areas

- i) Moot Lane: Noted that the zip-wire will be inspected and re-tensioned on 30 Sept 2026 (am)
- ii) Wick Lane: Noted that the existing play equipment has reached the end of its serviceable life and, having regard to the covenant requiring the land to be retained as public open space for community purposes.

RESOLVED:

- a) Seek quotes to remove the existing play equipment (mushrooms, rocker, and stepping post).
- b) Retain the two benches
- c) No further provision of alternative community amenities at this stage

621/26 Public Toilets Refurbishment

- i) MC reported that Cubicle Systems delivered a supply of manufacturer approved cleaning solution for the Polyflor flooring, free of charge. To be passed to the Cleaning Contractor.
- ii) **RESOLVED:** to bring forward the EICR inspection date from Feb 2027 following like-for-like replacement of three fixed hand dryers with new models
- iii) Legionella: SP delivered a report on the 'Responsible Person' training.

RESOLVED:

- budget £150 to purchase a calibrated thermometer. GW abstained from voting; forfeiting his vote.
- JS will act as the Deputy Responsible Person
- SP will prepare HSE compliant paperwork
- Annual testing to be carried out professionally
- iv) In consideration of the procurement compliance Briefing Note
RESOLVED: publication of the Contract Details Notice on the Central Digital Platform (Find a Tender) as soon as reasonably practicable, was approved, in accordance with Section 87(3) of the Procurement Act 2023. This will be done once MC receives Cubicle Systems' PPON no.

622/26 Idverde Contracts: Grounds Maintenance and Bin Emptying

- i) Following a meeting with Idverde's Operational Director, MC delivered a report on:
 - a) disputed invoices (May-Aug) for the Grounds Maintenance and Bin Emptying contracts. The Ops Director has acknowledged that the increases applied were incorrect. He'll arrange for the invoices to be cancelled and new ones issued reflecting the correct agreed increase of 3.3% CPI
 - b) service under-delivery against the Grounds Maintenance Programme of Works. The Ops Director has acknowledged under-delivery; however, the frequency of delivery remains in dispute pending contemporaneous records which match those held by the Council. This means that the Invoices will not be paid until this matter has been resolved. The Ops Director is arranging a site audit to establish quality standards of delivery. MC will accompany the auditors
- ii) MC has written to Idverde's Operational Director reflecting what was discussed and agreed in the meeting.

623/26 Ground Maintenance Contracts 2027/28

- i) In consideration of the Procurement Compliance Briefing Note, to:
 - a) **RESOLVED:** the procurement of two separate fixed 12-month Grounds Maintenance contracts (Barford Lane Cemetery Grounds Maintenance and General Grounds Maintenance) for the period 01 April 2027 to 31 March 2028, with no provision for extension, was approved.
 - b) **RESOLVED:** the Barford Lane Cemetery and General Grounds Maintenance Tender Documents and procurement timetable were approved.
 - c) **RESOLVED:** to use clerk@downtonparishcouncil.gov.uk for the electronic submission of Tenders using the prescribed Tender subject line, with Tender emails not to be opened, previewed, or otherwise accessed before the submission deadline. Following the deadline, all Tenders received shall be opened in succession by the Clerk as part

of a single tender-opening exercise, with the date and time of receipt and opening recorded.

- d) **RESOLVED** the Clerk, Cllr Watts and Cllr Snares are authorised to undertake proportionate preliminary market engagement, including identifying and contacting specialist and regional grounds-maintenance providers to establish market interest and encourage an appropriate field of potential bidders.
- e) **RESOLVED** the draft Communications to be published on DPC's Website and for Social Media from 22 September 2026 were approved.
- f) **RESOLVED** the Clerk is authorised to issue the approved Tender Documents to potential bidders (identified through preliminary market engagement and expressions of interest received in response to the opportunity being locally advertised) from 22 September 2026.
- g) Noted that the Tender Evaluation Panel(s) will be appointed at the Council meeting on 12 October 2026.
- h) **RESOLVED** the Clerk is authorised to administer the procurement in accordance with the approved Tender Documents and timetable, including undertaking any necessary clarification, provided that this does not permit a bidder to improve or materially alter its Tender.

624/26 Heritage and Licensing Policy for the Downton Annual Fairs

- i) To consider and resolve to adopt the Heritage and Licensing Policy for the Downton Annual Fairs, noting that the landowner of the Borough Greens (under Lease to the Council) has been consulted and is supportive in principle of such a Policy. **RESOLVED** that some minor adjustments to the Policy may be made and sent to JB and JS for prior consideration, before full council approval via email.

625/26 The Downton Society

- i) Noted that The Downton Society has taken the difficult decision to discontinue and, as such, will no longer fund and maintain planting in the flower tubs on The Borough (flower tubs owned by the Council).
- ii) To consider and resolve to approve The Downton Society's request that Downton Parish Council adopts the Cuckoo Topiary Sculpture and the Noticeboard by the Tannery as Council assets and: See iii) below.
- iii) Agree appropriate action(s) for i) and ii) above
 - 1) Flower Tubs: For tubs to remain, it will be necessary to establish a volunteer workforce on The Borough to carryout watering. The Council will fund and select drought hardy plants and carry out the planting. Comms to be prepared. Only if a volunteer workforce is established will the Council set a budget for plants and compost in the 2027/28 budget. In parallel, seek sponsorship from local businesses and conduct a 2nd bulb donation scheme Autumn 2026, which proved highly successful in 2024.
 - 2) Cuckoo Topiary Sculpture: *decision deferred* pending MC establishing impact upon the Council's insurance premium.
 - 3) Noticeboard by the Tannery: GW reminded that this is already a Council asset. MC will add it to the Asset Register and add to insurance cover.

626/26 Downton Remembrance Sunday Service & Parade 2026

- i) **RESOLVED**: to make an application to WC Highways to close the B3080 (from the Memorial Gardens (in The Borough) to Church Hatch) from 10-11am on Sunday 08 November 2026 for the Remembrance Day Sunday Service and Parade.
- ii) As the wreaths for the Scouts, Guides, and Brownies have been purchased **RESOLVED**: to approve the purchase of one cat B wreath for Downton Parish Council.
- iii) **RESOLVED**: that JB will lay the Wreath on behalf of the Parish at the Service.

627/26 Downton Parish Council Annual Christmas Tree Event 2026

- i) Noted £979 remains in the 2026/27 budget for this event.
- ii) **RESOLVED:** that DPC will buy and instal a Christmas Tree (min height 20 feet) on Maypole Green.
- iii) **RESOLVED** that the Christmas Tree ‘Switching on the Lights’ will take place on Friday 04 December 2026
- iv) The arrangements for the Christmas Tree event will continue in its previous format.

628/26 Finance

- i) **RESOLVED:** the Cash Flow Report and payments were approved. GW abstained from voting on the Downton Cleaning Services invoice; forfeiting his vote.

Payee	Detail	Amount £ (incl vat)	Method
Staff, HMRC, Wiltshire Pensions	Salaries (+ backpay), Tax & NI, Pensions (Aug)	9,668.65	BACS
IONOS	Email Microsoft 2019	10.80	DD
IONOS	Email Microsoft 2019	10.80	DD
Lloyds	Service Charge	8.50	PAY
EE	Mobile SIM (Admin Officer)	15.75	DD
IONOS	Premium Package	12.08	DD
IONOS	Email Microsoft 2019	10.80	DD
IONOS	Email Microsoft 2019	10.80	DD
S Parsons	Reimbursement Bin (Moot Lane) and Toilet Rolls for Public Toilets	294.02	BACS
West Mercia Energy	Public Toilets Electricity (July)	55.44	BACS
Downton Cleaning Services	Public Toilets Cleaning (Aug) + cost for set of keys for new external doors + credit for DPC purchasing toilet rolls	964.01	BACS
BWP Creative Ltd	Website Hosting 01/10/2026-31/10/2026	30.00	BACS
Downton Memorial Centre	Room Hire (Aug)	37.38	BACS
Cubicle Systems	Balance Payment	6,415.39	BACS
The Playground Inspection Co	Operational Inspections x 4 play parks	360.00	BACS
Sovereign Design Play Systems Ltd	Inspect and re-tension Zip Wire Moot Lane Rec	718.80	BACS
Longford Estate	Rent CAS Play Park	10.00	BACS
Longford Estate	Rent Borough Greens	0.05	BACS
M Camilleri	Expenses: Fuel	32.34	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 10 Sept 2026: £14,181.86

Lloyds Commercial Instant Access Account: 10 Sept 2026: £61,463.17

Lloyds 95-Day Saver: 10 Sept 2026: £86,383.66

- iii) **RESOLVED:** In consideration of the quote received, John K. Murray DMS. FCPFA (Taxation & Accountancy Services) is appointed as the independent and competent auditor to carry out the internal audit on the 2026/27 accounts
- iv) **RESOLVED** the quote to renew the Council’s insurance w.e.f 01 October 2026 was approved
- v) To consider and resolve to approve Bonallack & Bishop Solicitor’s quote to register Council land at Wick Lane and Barford Lane Cemetery with HM Land Registry. *Deferred as MC is seeking clarification on their significant price increase*
- vi) **RESOLVED** a ‘sundry’ budget item for 2026/27 was approved as £200

629/26 Trustee Appointments, Outside Bodies, Committees, Working Groups

- i) Wiltshire Towns Programme: to receive an update and agree to delegate non expenditure actions to the Working Group prior to a further update at the 12 October Meeting.

JB delivered an update on progress to date: application and costs for the Brown signs yet to be clarified, Internal signage audit completed by JB and JS, Graphic Designer to update the signage (outside The Goat) progressing, plans to convert Heritage Phone Box to info point being progressed.

- ii) To receive any other reports
GH: delivered results of the Downton Link Transport Audit. Some data from results: 16,451 miles travelled, 3002 volunteer hours, £114,076 Economic Value. Results will be published on social media.

630/26 Councillors' Reports

- i) To receive reports from Councillors
SC: has received a complaint regarding WC Green Bins as they'd not paid fee (they'd not received an email reminder). Confirmed that Officers have not received notice of this from other members of the public

631/26 RESOLVED: that Agenda items 632/26, 633/26, 634/26, 635/26 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.

632/26 Barford Lane Cemetery Interment Matter

RESOLVED:

- i) Interment of the remains for a pregnancy loss at Barford Lane Cemetery was approved
- ii) In consideration of the circumstances, DPC's fee is waived. Noted that the Funeral Director has already waived their fee.
- iii) To create a separate section at Barford Lane Cemetery specifically for Interment of the remains following a pregnancy loss. SP and MC will identify a suitable location.

633/26 Grounds Maintenance Contract

- i) **RESOLVED:** To wait to receive Idverde's 1) response to MC's letter of 13 September, and 2) Site Audit Report and Action Plan before determining next steps.

634/26 BWSCA

- i) **RESOLVED:** Recommendations made by the BWSCA Working Group were approved.

635/26 Staff Matters

- i) Noted that agreement has been reached on the Local Government Pay Claim 2026/27 covering the year 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.
- ii) **RESOLVED:** the contractual award of backpay for the Clerk & Admin Officer was unanimously approved.

636/26 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Meeting for **Downton Parish Council** will be held on **Monday 12 October 2026 at 7:00pm** in **The Downton Memorial Centre (Bonvalot Room)**.

Being no further business, JB closed the meeting at 10:40pm.

DRAFT MINUTES TO BE SIGNED AT THE NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING