**Downham West Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Council meeting held Monday, 30th November 2020 at 7.00pm virtually via Zoom**

Present: Chairman Cllr R Pegg

Vice Chairman Cllr C Swaine

Councillors Cllr F Daymond (by telephone)

Cllr J Doyle

Borough Councillors Cllr C Rose

Cllr V Spikings

Parish Clerk Mrs S Porter

Member(s) of Public 0

1. **Declarations of interest and requests for dispensation**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, declared a Personal Interest in Item 71.3, Bills for Payment, as this related to an invoice for the Royal British Region Downham Branch, to which he is the Chairman of.

There were no requests for dispensation.

1. **Apologies for absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

1. **Approval of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting**

**Proposed – Cllr Doyle Seconded – Cllr Daymond**

**That the minutes of the Council Meeting held virtually on Monday, 19th October 2020 (items 53-64) are approved and signed as a true and accurate record.**

**All in favour**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, would duly sign and date the minutes of the meeting at a future date.

1. **Update on Previous Minutes**

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

1. **Councillors’ Issues**

There were no Councillor issues to report to this meeting.

**PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, adjourned the meeting at 7.09pm.

**Reports**

**County Councillor**

County Cllr Humphrey was not present at the meeting and no prior written report had been received.

**Borough Councillors**

Borough Cllr Rose reported that a Full Council meeting was being held on Thursday, 3rd December 2020.

Borough Cllr Spikings reported that COVID-19 cases were starting to fall in West Norfolk, following a significant rise of cases during November 2020.

**Public Participation**

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, resumed the meeting at 7.13pm.

1. **Notice of Conclusion of Audit for the Annual Governance & Accountability Return**

The Certificate of Exemption for the Annual Return from PKF Littlejohn LLP had been completed. The Notice of Conclusion of Audit for the Annual Governance & Accountability Return had been displayed on the Council notice board and website. This was noted.

1. **Finance**
   1. **Bank Reconciliation**

The Clerk reported that she had reduced the earmarked reserves held in the Parish Partnership 2020/2021 (VAS Sign) fund from £5,270.00 to £2,270.00, as the scheme had been rejected by Norfolk County Council. These funds would be utilised for the street lights conversion and the Clerk had amended the name of this budget item to Street Lights LED Conversion.

This was noted and agreed.

The Clerk had circulated the bank reconciliation, period ending October 2020, current bank account statements and finance summary, with the agenda. The bank balances were as follows:

**October 2020**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bank Reconciliation** | **Community Account (£)** | **Business Account (£)** |  | Reconciliation **Community Account (£)** | |  | Reconciliation **Business Account (£)** | |
| Bank Statement Start Balances | 1,174.14 | 12,971.05 |  | Bank Statement **01.10.2020** | 1,174.14 |  | Bank Statement **01.10.2020** | 12,971.05 |
| **Total Opening Bank Balances** |  | **14,145.19** |  | Receipts | 24.33 |  | Receipts | - |
|  |  |  |  | Payments Cleared | - 356.83 |  | Payments Cleared | - |
| Unpresented Cheques B/F | - | - |  | Bank Statement **31.10.2020** | 841.64 |  | Bank Statement **31.10.2020** | 12,971.05 |
| Unpresented Receipts B/F | - | - |  | Unpresented Cheques |  |  | Unpresented Cheques |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Opening Balances** | **1,174.14** | **12,971.05** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Opening Balances** |  | **14,145.19** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receipts | 24.33 | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Payments | - 356.83 | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bank Statement Close Balances | 841.64 | 12,971.05 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Closing Bank Balances** |  | **13,812.69** |  |  | - |  |  | - |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Unpresented Cheques | - | - |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |
| Unpresented Receipts | - | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | - |  |  | - |
| **Council Closing Balances** | **841.64** | **12,971.05** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Closing Balances** |  | **13,812.69** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **841.64** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **12,971.05** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Council Total Closing Balances** | **13,812.69** |
|  | | |
| **Earmarked Funds** | | |
| Operating Costs (6 Months) | | 3,000.00 |
| Election Costs (4 Year to £1000) Year 3 | | 1,000.00 |
| Street Lights LED Conversion | | 2,270.00 |
| Speed Sign Maintenance | | 500.00 |
| Bus Shelter (fund building for new structure) | | 1,500.00 |
| Transparency Fund Grant | | 230.07 |
| S137 Grants (Poppy Wreath) | | 30.00 |
| CIL | | 1,374.29 |
|  | |  |  | Council Total Closing Balances | **13,812.69** |  | |  |
| **Total Earmarked Reserves** | | **9,904.36** |  | Council Total Earmarked Reserves | **9,904.36** | Council Remaining Available Precept | | **3,908.33** |

* 1. **Noticeboards (deferred from February meeting)**

This item would be deferred until the COVID-19 restrictions were more stable. The Clerk would leave this item on the agenda until it could be dealt with.

* 1. **Approval of finances and payments to be made**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, had declared a Personal Interest in this item.

The Clerk had circulated the payments and receipts made since the last meeting and presented the late bills to the meeting:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Payee** | **Description** | **Transaction** | **Net £** | **VAT £** | **Gross £** | **Receipt £** |
| 06.11.2020 | Westotec | Street Lighting Oct 2020 | DD | 10.55 | 2.11 | 12.66 | 0.00 |
| 12.11.2020 | E-On | Street Lighting Supply Oct 2020 | DD | 37.14 | 1.86 | 39.00 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Holly Landscapes | War Mem & Bus Shelter Clean Oct | BACS | 38.75 | 7.75 | 46.50 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | DM&DW Joint Burial | Burial precept | BACS | 550.00 | 0.00 | 550.00 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Clerk | Salary Oct 2020 | BACS | 183.58 | 0.00 | 183.58 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | HMRC | Employer PAYE/NI Oct 2020 | BACS | 46.00 | 0.00 | 46.00 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Sara Porter (RBL) | Remembrance Wreath | BACS | 30.00 | 0.00 | 30.00 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Clerk | Salary Nov 2020 | BACS | 183.78 | 0.00 | 183.78 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | HMRC | Employer PAYE/NI Nov 2020 | BACS | 45.80 | 0.00 | 45.80 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Westotec | Street Lighting Oct 2020 | DD | 10.55 | 2.11 | 12.66 | 0.00 |
| **Totals this month** | | | | **1,136.15** | **13.83** | **1,149.98** | **0.00** |

**Proposed – Cllr Daymond Seconded – Vice Chairman, Cllr Swaine**

**That the payment of bills are approved in accordance with the schedule.**

**For – 3 Against – 0 Abstentions – 1 (Declared Interest)**

1. **Norfolk ALC Area Meetings**

The Clerk reported that nominations from all Member Councils of Norfolk ALC had been requested. Norfolk ALC had recently become a cooperative organisation and was inviting a representative from each Council to attend their virtual meetings and give an input, receive updates and stand for/vote on behalf of their Council in elections to the Board.  Nominations had been required to be provided to the County Officer by Friday, 20th November 2020, but the Clerk felt it valuable to enquire whether any Councillor wished to be considered.

A short discussion took place and Councillors felt that due to other voluntary commitments outside their Council duties, it would not be possible to take on further obligations.

1. **2021 Meeting Dates**

The Clerk reported that the meeting dates would be subject to the availability of the Town Hall or other premises. This was noted. The 2021 meeting dates were agreed as follows:

January 25

February -

March 08

April 19 **Annual Parish Meeting** and Ordinary Council meeting

May 24 **Annual Meeting** (must be held within 14 days of elections) and Ordinary Council meeting

June -

July 12

August -

September 27

October -

November 15 Includes budget meeting

December -

The Clerk would update the website.

1. **General correspondence**
   1. **For Action/Information**

No correspondence for action/information had been received.

* 1. **Late correspondence**

No late correspondence had been received.

1. **Planning**
   1. **Planning applications**
      1. **20/01632/F – Orchard Farm, Lady Drove, Barroway Drove – Conversion of barn into 2-storey 3-bed dwelling (comments by 9th December 2020)**

The Council does not object to the overall proposed development but feels the following matters must be addressed prior to permission being given:

1. The current access is unsafe. The site stands on a busy road with no footpaths and the proposed development is premature until such time as adequate and safe pedestrian access can be provided to the site.
2. The proposed site is located within an area with inadequate local infrastructure and this is considered to be contrary to the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework for Delivering Sustainable Development.
3. The proposed development, if permitted, may create a precedent for similar proposals, and given the matters raised above, would deem further developments of this nature to be inappropriate in this area.

* 1. **Planning decisions**

No planning decisions had been received from the BCKL&WN.

* 1. **Planning enforcements, appeals and other notifications (for information only and not for discussion during the public open meeting)**

No planning enforcements, appeals or other notifications had been received from the BCKL&WN.

* 1. **Late planning applications / planning decisions**

Late Planning Decision

**20/01555/F – Kohima, Downham Road, Salters Lode – Extension and alterations to dwelling**

Application permitted (delegated decision).

1. **Reports from Outside Bodies**
   1. **Downham Market & Downham West Joint Burial Board**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, reported that the Downham Market & Downham West Joint Burial Board members had recently held a meeting on site. An inspection of the Cemetery showed that all was in good order, although it did highlight that some headstones at the rear of the site had been inscribed without permission or imbursement.

A tenant who was previously renting the old property on site had moved out but in order to bring the building to a habitable condition, would cost in the region of £25,000, and this had been put on hold due to the high cost. The management team was continuing to do a good job.

* 1. **Hundred Acre Charity**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, reported that this charity commenced 112 years ago for the provision of fuel for the benefit of poorer inhabitants in the three parishes of Downham Market/Downham West, Stow Bardolph and Wimbotsham. The whole site was rented out, mainly to farmers, and one field was currently flooding and would need to be sorted at a cost of £6,000, for which there were earmarked reserves to fund this. Every year, each branch received a dividend, which was then distributed to those in need within the parishes. This year, the Downham Market and Downham West branch had agreed to pay some of its funds to the local food bank.

1. **Ongoing matters**
   1. **Council archives**

The Vice Chairman, Cllr Swaine, was collating the archived records and would continue to do so over the next few months.

1. **Parish Partnership Scheme 2021/2022 – to consider scheme(s) for submission (bids to be submitted by Friday, 4th December 2020)**

The Clerk had obtained a quotation from Highways for a trod leading from the Lady Drove give way sign to Downham Bridge. This scheme had been estimated by Highways, to be split 50/50 with Norfolk County Council, as follows:

Scheme total surface dressed £15,000.00 + £3,000.00 VAT (total £18,000.00).

Parish Council and Norfolk County Council 50/50 contribution (£7,500.00 + £1,500.00 VAT (total £9,000.00).

Scheme total asphalt surface £16,300.00 + £3,260.00 VAT (total £19,560.00).

Parish Council and Norfolk County Council 50/50 contribution (£8,150.00 + £1,630.00 VAT (total £9,780.00).

The Clerk reported that the Council had earmarked reserves in CIL of £1,374.29. She had emailed the BCKL&WN to investigate whether this could be used against this scheme and was awaiting a response. The Council also had earmarked reserves of £1,500.00 for a new bus shelter, excess earmarked funds of £765.00 which would be available following the street lighting LED conversion this year, and £1,000.00 could be utilised from the earmarked Operating Costs, if required. The Clerk confirmed that if these earmarked reserves were vired for the Parish Partnership Scheme (total £4,639.29), the precept could then be raised gently in coming years to build these funds up again, as there had been no Parish Council precept increases imposed on the ratepayers for the past few years.

A discussion took place and Councillors agreed that although this was an expensive scheme, it would be extremely worthwhile having, due to the safety aspect of pedestrians currently having to walk on the busy road. Councillors agreed that the trod should be asphalt.

**Proposed – Chairman, Cllr Pegg Seconded – Vice Chairman, Cllr Swaine**

**That the Council agrees to submit a bid for £16,300.00 + £3,260.00 VAT (total £19,560.00) (split 50/50 between the Parish Council and Norfolk County Council) for an asphalt trod from the Lady Drove give way sign to Downham Bridge for the 2021/2022 Parish Partnership Scheme and that the bid is sent to Norfolk County Council by the Clerk by 4th December 2020.**

**All in favour**

The Clerk would submit the application to Norfolk County Council.

1. **Draft Budget 2021/2022**

The Clerk had circulated a copy of the budget with the agenda and the items were each considered and agreed. The Clerk reported the following:

**Actual To End November 2020 (9 months)**

2020/2021 Precept Balance Remaining (at **30.11.2020**) £2,788.35

2020/2021 Earmarked Reserves (at **30.11.2020**) £9,874.36

2020/2021 Bank Total Balances (at **30.11.2020**) **£12,662.71**

**Actual To End November 2020 (9 months)**

2020/2021 Total Income (at **30.11.2020**) £7,329.90

2020/2021 Total Net Expenditure (at **30.11.2020**) - £4,109.62

2020/2021 Total Surplus/Deficit (at **30.11.2020**) **£3,220.28**

**Projected To End March 2021 (12 months)**

2020/2021 Total Income (at **31.03.2020**) £7,268.00

2020/2021 Total Expenditure (at **31.03.2020**) - £7,267.00

2020/2021 Total Surplus/Deficit (at **31.03.2020**) **£1.00**

**Proposed Draft Budget 2021/2022**

**Proposed 2021/2022** Budget Income £22,365.00

**Proposed 2021/2022** Budget Expenditure - £18,130.00

**Projected 2021/2022** Total Surplus/Deficit (at **31.03.2021**) **£4,235.00**

In view of the projected surplus end balance, the Clerk reported that £4,235.00 would be earmarked for the Parish Partnership Scheme. The Clerk noted that the Tax Base had decreased from 94.5 to 93.6 this year, due to the unprecedented pandemic, and would therefore result in a lesser increase than the Council would have liked.

Councillors agreed that a small increase should be imposed in the ensuing year. It was therefore agreed to increase the precept by £190.00 from £5,810.00 (2020/2021 budget) to £6,000.00. This would be a precept increase of 3.27% with a Band D increase of 4.27% (2021/2022 budget).

The final draft budget and precept would be presented for formal approval at the January 2021 meeting.

The Clerk would circulate the draft precept and budget following this meeting.

1. **To record the date and time of the next Full Council meeting**

The next meeting of the Council would be taking place on Monday, 25th January 2021 at 7.00pm by Zoom.

1. **Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 S1)**
   1. **Clerk – matters for discussion**

There were no confidential matters to consider at this meeting.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.18pm.