**Downham West Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting held Monday, 15th May 2023 at 7.00pm in Room 3, Methodist Church,**

**Paradise Road**

Present: Chairman Cllr R Pegg (re-elected)

Vice Chairman Cllr C Swaine (re-elected)

Councillors Cllr F Daymond

Cllr J Doyle (from Item 30.1)

Cllr J Fox

Parish Clerk Mrs S Porter

Member(s) of Public 0

1. **Election of Chairman of the Council**

The outgoing Chairman asked for nominations for Chairman of the Council.

**Proposed – Cllr Fox Seconded – Cllr Daymond**

**That Cllr Pegg is elected Chairman of Downham West Parish Council for the ensuing year.**

**All in favour**

There being no other nominations, Cllr Pegg was duly elected. Cllr Pegg signed and dated his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and the Clerk countersigned it.

1. **Election of Vice Chairman of the Council**

The Chairman asked for nominations for Vice Chairman of the Council.

**Proposed – Cllr Daymond Seconded – Cllr Fox**

**That Cllr Swaine is elected Vice Chairman of Downham West Parish Council for the ensuing year.**

**All in favour**

There being no other nominations, Cllr Swaine was duly elected. Cllr Swaine signed and dated his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and the Clerk countersigned it.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from County Cllr Dawson (prior commitment), Borough Cllr C Rose (prior meeting) and Borough Cllr V Spikings (prior meeting).

The apologies were accepted.

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

There were no declarations of interest and no requests for dispensation.

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

**Proposed – Cllr Fox Seconded – Chairman, Cllr Pegg**

**That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday, 13th March 2023 (Items 13-22) are approved and signed as a true and accurate record.**

**All in favour**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, duly signed and dated the minutes of the meeting.

1. **Review of Outside Body Representation**
   1. **Downham Market & Downham West Joint Burial Board – Currently Cllrs Daymond, Fox and Pegg**

Cllrs Fox and Pegg were duly reappointed as the representatives for the Downham Market & Downham West Joint Burial Board.

Cllr Daymond reported that he was likely to be appointed as a representative for Downham Market Town Council. It was noted that if he wasn’t, he would be reappointed for this Council instead. The Clerk would add this to the next agenda if required.

**28.2. Hundred Acre Common Charity – Currently Cllrs Daymond and Pegg**

Cllrs Daymond and Pegg were duly reappointed as the representatives for the Hundred Acre Common Charity.

1. **Review of Council policies and procedures (circulated with agenda and available to view on the website)**

Councillors agreed to review the Council policies en bloc (Items 29.1 – 29.13).

**29.1. Standing Orders**

**29.2. Financial Regulations**

**29.3. Powers & Duties & S137 LGA Summary 1972**

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) agrees the appropriate sum for the purpose of Section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972. The Clerk had amended the annual statutory limit for 2022/2023 to £8.82. The Powers and Duties were approved with no further amendments required.

**29.4. Compliments & Complaints**

**29.5. Equal Opportunities**

**29.6. General Data Protection Rules (GDPR)**

**29.7. Freedom of Information Model Publication Scheme**

**29.8. Press & Social Media**

**29.9. Recording at Meetings**

**29.10. Risk Assessment – Parish Council**

**29.11. S137 Grants & Donations**

**29.12. Unreasonably Persistent and/or Vexatious Complaints**

**29.13.** **Website Accessibility Statement**

All policies were reviewed with no amendments required.

**29.14. Asset Register**

The Clerk had updated the Asset Register for the year ending 2022/2023 and circulated this with the agenda.

**29.15. Existing Contracts and Direct Debits**

The existing contracts and current direct debit Creditors had been reviewed by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda.

**29.16. Code of Conduct – reminder**

Councillors noted their obligations in regards to the Code of Conduct.

**29.17. Councillors’ Register of Members’ Disclosable Interests**

As newly elected Members, Councillors had each completed a new Register of Members’ Disclosable Interests.

Councillors reviewed and noted the procedures as detailed (Items 29.14 – 29.17).

**Proposed – Chairman, Cllr Pegg Seconded – Cllr Fox**

**That the policies and procedures as detailed above are approved.**

**All in favour**

The Clerk would update with the website with the revised Council policies.

1. **Co-option of applicant for the position of Councillor**

Mr John Doyle had verbally submitted his interest for the position of Councillor.

**Proposed – Chairman, Cllr Pegg Seconded – Cllr Daymond**

**That Mr John Doyle is co-opted as Parish Councillor to Downham West Parish Council.**

**All in favour**

In the presence of the Council and in accordance with legislation of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 83, Mr Doyle duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

* 1. **Dispensation**

In order to participate and vote on matters at this meeting and under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, Sections 31-33, Cllr Doyle duly signed his Dispensation Request and this was put to the Council.

**Proposed – Chairman, Cllr Pegg Seconded – Cllr Daymond**

**That Cllr Doyle is granted a dispensation until the end of his term in May 2027, or resignation, whichever is the sooner, to enable him to take part in Council business where this would otherwise be prohibited because he has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.**

**All in favour**

**PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, adjourned the meeting at 7.21pm.

**Reports**

**County Councillor**

County Cllr Dawson had reported items to the Council by email since the last Parish Council meeting as follows:

*17.03.2023 Children’s Services update*

*19.03.2023 Infrastructure & Development Committee Cllr Dawson’s representation at County Hall*

*02.04.2023 Norfolk Lieutenancy Newsletter Celebrating the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort*

*02.04.2023 Highways updates for Cllr Dawson’s ward villages*

*12.04.2023 Norse Catering do not supply any Halal meat or products into any NCC schools*

## *12.04.2023 Annual report for Marshland South Division*

*26.04.2023 Norfolk’s annual road surface dressing work now underway*

*05.05.2023 Trading Standards solar panel cold call alerts and Adverse Weather and Health Plan launch*

*06.05.2023 Investigating the demographic of the Fens of West Norfolk*

*12.05.2023 Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates*

*13.05.2023 Council Tax matters; identifying the Adult Social Precept etc.*

Cllr Fox wished to commend Cllr Dawson for his commitment and continual emails and reports, which provided up to date information regarding ongoing matters relating to the parish and Norfolk as a whole.

**Borough Councillors**

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

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

**Public Participation**

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, resumed the meeting at 7.22pm.

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

The Clerk had circulated the bank reconciliations, periods ending March 2023 and April 2023, current bank account statements and finance summary with the agenda. The bank balances were as follows:

**March 2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bank Reconciliation** | **Community Account (£)** | **Business Account (£)** |  | Reconciliation **Community Account (£)** | |  | Reconciliation **Business Account (£)** | |
| Bank Statement Start Balances | 773.17 | 3,177.81 |  | Bank Statement **01.03.2023** | 773.17 |  | Bank Statement **01.03.2023** | 3,177.81 |
| **Total Opening Bank Balances** |  | **3,950.98** |  | Receipts | 300.00 |  | Receipts | 4.17 |
|  |  |  |  | Payments Cleared | - 803.58 |  | Payments Cleared | 300.00 |
| Unpresented Payments B/F | - | - |  | Bank Statement **31.03.2023** | 269.59 |  | Bank Statement **31.03.2023** | 2,881.98 |
| Unpresented Receipts B/F | - | - |  | Unpresented Payments |  |  | Unpresented Payments |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Opening Balances** | **773.17** | **3,177.81** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Opening Balances** |  | **3,950.98** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receipts | 300.00 | 4.17 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Payments | - 803.58 | - 300.00 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bank Statement Close Balances | 269.59 | 2,881.98 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Closing Bank Balances** |  | **3,151.57** |  |  | - |  |  | - |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Unpresented Payments | - | - |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |
| Unpresented Receipts | - | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | - |  |  | - |
| **Council Closing Balances** | **269.59** | **2,881.98** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Closing Balances** |  | **3,151.57** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **269.59** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **2,881.98** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Council Total Closing Balances** | **3,151.57** |
|  | | |
| **Earmarked Funds** | | |
| Operating Costs (2 Months) | | 1,000.00 |
| Election Costs | | 800.00 |
| Speed Sign Maintenance | | 500.00 |
| Bus Shelter (fund building for new structure) | | 200.00 |
| Transparency Fund Grant | | 112.24 |
| S137 Grants | | 75.00 |
| CIL | | - |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |  | Council Total Closing Balances | **3,151.57** |  | |  |
| **Total Earmarked Reserves** | | **2,687.24** |  | Council Total Earmarked Reserves | **2,687.24** | Council Remaining Available Precept | | **464.33** |

**April 2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bank Reconciliation** | **Community Account (£)** | **Business Account (£)** |  | Reconciliation **Community Account (£)** | |  | Reconciliation **Business Account (£)** | |
| Bank Statement Start Balances | 269.59 | 2,881.98 |  | Bank Statement **01.04.2023** | 269.59 |  | Bank Statement **01.04.2023** | 2,881.98 |
| **Total Opening Bank Balances** |  | **3,151.57** |  | Receipts | 6,848.00 |  | Receipts | 6,000.00 |
|  |  |  |  | Payments Cleared | - 6,027.75 |  | Payments Cleared | - |
| Unpresented Payments B/F | - | - |  | Bank Statement **30.04.2023** | 1,089.84 |  | Bank Statement **30.04.2023** | 8,881.98 |
| Unpresented Receipts B/F | - | - |  | Unpresented Payments |  |  | Unpresented Payments |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Opening Balances** | **269.59** | **2,881.98** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Opening Balances** |  | **3,151.57** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receipts | 6,848.00 | 6,000.00 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Payments | - 6,027.75 | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bank Statement Close Balances | 1,089.84 | 8,881.98 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Closing Bank Balances** |  | **9,971.82** |  |  | - |  |  | - |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Unpresented Payments | - | - |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |
| Unpresented Receipts | - | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | - |  |  | - |
| **Council Closing Balances** | **1,089.84** | **8,881.98** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Closing Balances** |  | **9,971.82** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **1,089.84** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **8,881.98** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Council Total Closing Balances** | **9,971.82** |
|  | | |
| **Earmarked Funds** | | |
| Operating Costs (2 Months) | | 1,750.00 |
| Election Costs | | 1,000.00 |
| Speed Sign Maintenance | | 500.00 |
| Bus Shelter (fund building for new structure) | | 200.00 |
| Transparency Fund Grant | | 112.24 |
| S137 Grants | | 100.00 |
| CIL | | 228.00 |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |  | Council Total Closing Balances | **9,971.82** |  | |  |
| **Total Earmarked Reserves** | | **3,890.24** |  | Council Total Earmarked Reserves | **3,890.24** | Council Remaining Available Precept | | **6,031.60** |

* 1. **CIL Levy Payment**

The Clerk reported that the Council had received a CIL payment from the BCKL&WN for £228.00 and noted that as the Council was holding reserves of £200.00 as part payment for the bus shelter renovation project, part of this levy could potentially be utilised towards this. Councillors agreed.

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

**That the CIL payment received be utilised up to £200.00 as the Parish Council’s part funding towards the bus shelter renovation.**

**All in favour**

* 1. **Annual Insurance Renewal**

The Clerk had circulated details of the annual insurance renewal premium with BHIB Insurance due 1st June 2023 with the agenda. The premium due was £502.31 (2022/2023 premium was £466.73 – LTA expires 2024).

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

**That the Council approves the annual insurance renewal with BHIB Insurance due 1st June 2023 at a premium of £502.31.**

**All in favour**

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

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 £** |
| **2022/2023** | | | | | | | |
| 17.03.2023 | N Power | Street Lighting Supply Feb 2022 | DD | 13.03 | 0.65 | 13.68 | 0.00 |
| 31.03.2023 | Clerk | Salary March 2023 | BACS | 200.88 | 0.00 | 200.88 | 0.00 |
| 31.03.2023 | HMRC | Employer PAYE/NI March 2023 | BACS | 50.20 | 0.00 | 50.20 | 0.00 |
| **2023/2024** | | | | | | | |
| 11.04.2023 | Westcotec | Street Lighting Mar 2023 | DD | 10.55 | 2.11 | 12.66 | 0.00 |
| 12..04.2023 | BCKL&WN | Precept | BACS | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 6,620.00 |
| 19.04.2023 | N Power | Street Lighting Supply Mar 2023 | DD | 14.37 | 0.72 | 15.09 | 0.00 |
| 27.04.2023 | BCKL&WN | CIL Levy | BACS | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 228.00 |
| 02.05.2023 | HMRC | VAT Repay Jul 2021-Mar 2023 | BACS | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 265.28 |
| 09.05.2023 | Westcotec | Street Lighting Apr 2023 | DD | 10.55 | 2.11 | 12.66 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Porter (Stationery Shop) | 13 packs 12-part folder dividers | BACS | 9.99 | 0.00 | 9.99 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Norfolk ALC | Annual Membership | BACS | 192.81 | 0.00 | 192.81 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | DM Methodist Church | Room Hire 13.03.2023 | BACS | 14.00 | 0.00 | 14.00 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Clerk | Salary April 2023 | BACS | 200.88 | 0.00 | 200.88 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | HMRC | Employer PAYE/NI April 2023 | BACS | 50.20 | 0.00 | 50.20 | 0.00 |
| **Late Bills / Receipts (Received after Agenda advertised)** | | | | | | | |
| To be paid | BHIB Ltd | Annual Insurance | BACS | 502.31 | 0.00 | 502.31 | 0.00 |
| **Totals** | | | | **1,269.77** | **5.59** | **1,275.36** | **7,113.28** |

**Proposed – Chairman, Cllr Pegg Seconded – Cllr Doyle**

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

**All in favour**

1. **Written reports (as listed on the agenda) regarding Councillor issues and village matters**
   1. **BCKL&WN funding scheme of £1,000 towards a defibrillator**

The Vice Chairman, Cllr Swaine, reported that he had recently spoken to the Lock Keeper to enquire whether Middle Level Commissioners and/or the Environment Agency might consider having a defibrillator placed on Lock House, The Lane. The Lock Keeper had agreed that this would be a good idea, particularly as they were looking to upgrade their lighting system, when the installation of this could be carried out at the same time.

The Vice Chairman, Cllr Swaine, confirmed that he would next approach the Middle Level Commissioners Manager, who deals with Licences, to ascertain whether a licence would be permitted for this. The Vice Chairman, Cllr Swaine, would report back at the next meeting.

1. **Planning Applications**
   1. **Planning applications**
      1. **22/02278/F – Tall Trees, Downham Road, Salters Lode – Retrospective change of use of land to residential, erection of bungalow, retention of areas of permeable hardstanding, works to access – comments by 1st June 2023**

The Parish Council refuses this application for the following reasons:

1. No drawings have been provided with this application and Councillors find it impossible to comment on the proposed development when no such documents exist on the planning portal.  Furthermore, this new application cannot be classed as ‘retrospective’ when the former planning application was rejected outright by the BCKL&WN and the Planning Inspectorate at Appeal.
2. The site is located in open countryside on the outskirts of Salters Lode. There is a dwelling to the south of the site and a further dwelling to the rear, but the site is not within any settlement boundary. The site is therefore in a location where Policy DM2 of the Policies Plan indicates that new development will be more restricted. It is also not identified in other policies within the Local Plan as being a suitable site in a rural area for residential dwellings.
3. The character of the area surrounding the site comprises typical flat fenland rural landscape that extends for some distance to the north, south and west of the site. The majority of this landscape comprises open fields with, typically, only isolated dwellings and farm buildings being present. The hardstanding surface, regardless of it being permeable or not, contributes to an undesirable environment, which is out of character with and has an adverse impact on the locality.  The site should be retained for arable use only.
4. Works access to the site must not be permitted.  The substandard construction of this site would be detrimental to highway safety and the vehicular movements associated with the use of the access would lead to conflict and be a danger and inconvenience to users of the adjoining public highway.
   1. **Planning decisions**
      1. **22/00357/FM – Grantham To Bexwell Pipeline Scheme – Hybrid Planning Application for the proposed Grantham to Bexwell Pipeline Scheme with full planning consent sought for 95 kilometres of pipeline and 4 kilometre spur, and outline consent for associated above ground infrastructure at Elton and Welby Heath with all matters reserved except for access**

Application Permitted (Delegated Decision).

* 1. **Late planning applications and notices of decision**

No late planning applications or notices of decision had been received from the BCKL&WN.

* 1. **Planning enforcements, appeals and other notifications**

There was nothing to report to the meeting.

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

No correspondence for action or information had been received.

* 1. **Late correspondence**

No late correspondence had been received.

1. **Parish Partnership Scheme 2023/2024**

The Clerk reported that the bus shelter renovation project had been completed by Centaurus Construction Services. Councillors agreed that the structure looked very nice and the work carried out had been of a good standard.

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

Cllr Fox, in his capacity as the Downham Market & Downham West Joint Burial Board Chairman, provided the following report:

The Joint Burial Board met on Wednesday 19th April 2023. The meeting started at Rouses Lane Cemetery.

The Cemetery was inspected as well as the current condition of the allotment area. The northern section of the allotments has apparently been vacated by the Allotment Group.

* The ten free trees that were nothing more than slender twigs didn’t thrive during the last hot summer but have since shown signs of developing. Whilst the majority of the trees are looking well there are one or two which are not so good. We have a few oak tree saplings and it was agreed that these should be planted in various spaces around the Rouses Lane Cemetery including into the area that is being vacated by the Allotment Group.
* It appears that some horses have broken through the fence to the west of the Cemetery. The fence will therefore be repaired.
* A gentleman has offered to repaint the Cemetery Gates, benches and tap surrounds.

The remainder of the meeting was held at the Administrators office.

* It was noted that, in King’s Walk Cemetery, the roof tiles on the North Chapel have been replaced and the carrstone walls repaired.
* The bench that was stolen from Churchside Cemetery has been replaced with a refurbished bench that was in store.

Cemetery House remains empty but we do not have sufficient funds to bring it up to standard. The Administrators have enquired about Bank Loans for this but none of the banks are interested in loans to the Burial Board. The Public Loans Board was approached and advised that we apply to the Levelling Up Department at the Treasury. As the Burial Board is funded by two councils it was advised that one of these councils be asked to apply for the loan of £30,000. It was felt that Downham West Parish Council may be willing to apply for this loan. When the loan is received then work can begin on the property and Mr Tombleson would be asked to project manage the work.

* Some ‘bird sown’ trees are growing along the wall between King’s Walk Cemetery and The Towers. These will be removed.

The election of Officers for the Burial Board saw John Fox return as Chairman and Steve Nunn as Vice Chairman.

The Burial Board has been approached by the Commonwealth War Graves Commissions to place a sign at the entry to the Churchside Cemetery indicating that War Graves can be found within the Cemetery. This sign will be placed on the pillar at the entrance to the Cemetery.

Cllr Fox enquired whether the Council would approve the Clerk contacting the Levelling Up Department on behalf of the Joint Burial Board in order to provide a facility for a loan. Councillors unanimously agreed this by a show of hands. Cllr Fox confirmed that the administrator would be in contact with the Clerk in the coming weeks.

The Clerk would add this item to the agenda for formal approval at the next meeting.

* 1. **Hundred Acre Charity**

Cllr Daymond and Cllr Pegg reported that a meeting had been held in February 2023 and the next one would be taking place in July 2023, which included a site visit beforehand. Cllr Pegg reported that a member of the Hundred Acre Charity was looking into the continual Barclays issues that were preventing changes to the current bank accounts taking place.

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, 19th June 2023 at 7.00pm in Room 3, Methodist Church, Paradise Road, followed by the Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.38pm.