**Downham West Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held Monday, 19th June 2023 at 7.00pm in Room 3, Methodist Church,**

**Paradise Road**

Present: Chairman Cllr R Pegg

Vice Chairman Cllr C Swaine

Councillors Cllr F Daymond

Cllr J Doyle

Cllr J Fox

Borough Councillor Cllr C Rose

Parish Clerk Mrs S Porter

Member(s) of Public 0

1. **Apologies for absence**

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

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

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, declared a Personal Interest in Item 44.1.1 for the Planning Application 23/00879/F – Appletree Cottage, The Lane, Salters Lode, as he was an acquaintance of the applicants.

There were no requests for dispensation.

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

**Proposed – Cllr Fox Seconded – Cllr Doyle**

**That the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Monday, 15th May 2023 (Items 23-37) 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.

**PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, adjourned the meeting at 7.06pm.

**Reports**

**County Councillor**

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

*19.05.2023 NCC Press Releases*

*06.06.2023 Low Traffic Neighbourhoods - Nutrient Neutrality situation requires urgent attention*

## *08.06.2023 NCC Procurement Opportunity for small businesses*

## *10.06.2023 Road closure on A1122 Wisbech Road Outwell for Surface Dressing works June 2023*

## *13.06.2023 New hosts sought for Ukrainian families across Norfolk*

**Borough Councillors**

Borough Cllr Rose reported that following the Elections, training sessions for Members were continuing.

The Upwell Health Centre car park, which had continually flooded in the past, had now been repaired; the drains had been unblocked and new channels had been installed in the car park to disperse the water.

On Thursday, 25th May 2023, the Government announced that The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King’s Lynn NHS Foundation Trust (QEH) had been added to its New Hospital Programme.

The next Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel (SNAP) Priority Setting meeting for the Downham Market, Watlington and Terrington areas was being held in Watlington Village Hall on Tuesday, 25th July 2023 at 7.00pm. The hybrid attendance link was: [Click here to join the meeting](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/ap/t-59584e83/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fteams.microsoft.com%2Fl%2Fmeetup-join%2F19%253ameeting_ZWQ4NTBjZjktYzkzYi00M2Y0LWEzYmQtOWNiNGRjNGE2MGYz%2540thread.v2%2F0%3Fcontext%3D%257b%2522Tid%2522%253a%252263c6bc72-b093-42db-bf8a-14e2a998e211%2522%252c%2522Oid%2522%253a%2522811b44d1-db05-4e02-a251-2546b1a5e289%2522%257d&data=05%7C01%7CDaisy.WOODWARD-SMITH%40norfolk.police.uk%7C62ec15b36fec4e5c540108dacc897d78%7C63c6bc72b09342dbbf8a14e2a998e211%7C0%7C0%7C638047188132550104%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=kX8ZjY7gZVpS3szVjxAkIuSI3waG8AjlZzYwo%2F1ZREM%3D&reserved=0).

The Vice Chairman, Cllr Swaine, enquired whether speed gun patrols could take place in Downham West. This was noted.

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

**Bridge for Heroes HM Armed Forces Veterans Charity**

Mr Karl Anthony, Communications and Marketing for the Bridge for Heroes Charity, was not present at the meeting.

**Public Participation**

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, resumed the meeting at 7.08pm.

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

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

**May 2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bank Reconciliation** | **Community Account (£)** | **Business Account (£)** |  | Reconciliation **Community Account (£)** | |  | Reconciliation **Business Account (£)** | |
| Bank Statement Start Balances | 1,089.84 | 8,881.98 |  | Bank Statement **01.05.2023** | 1,089.84 |  | Bank Statement **01.05.2023** | 8,881.98 |
| **Total Opening Bank Balances** |  | **9,971.82** |  | Receipts | 265.28 |  | Receipts | - |
|  |  |  |  | Payments Cleared | - 1,003.58 |  | Payments Cleared | - |
| Unpresented Payments B/F | - | - |  | Bank Statement **31.05.2023** | 351.54 |  | Bank Statement **31.05.2023** | 8,881.98 |
| Unpresented Receipts B/F | - | - |  | Unpresented Payments |  |  | Unpresented Payments |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Opening Balances** | **1,089.84** | **8,881.98** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Opening Balances** |  | **9,971.82** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receipts | 265.28 | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Payments | - 1,003.58 | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bank Statement Close Balances | 351.54 | 8,881.98 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Closing Bank Balances** |  | **9,233.52** |  |  | - |  |  | - |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Unpresented Payments | - | - |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |
| Unpresented Receipts | - | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | - |  |  | - |
| **Council Closing Balances** | **351.54** | **8,881.98** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Closing Balances** |  | **9,233.52** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **351.54** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **8,881.98** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Council Total Closing Balances** | **9,233.52** |
|  | | |
| **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 | **9,233.52** |  | |  |
| **Total Earmarked Reserves** | | **3,890.24** |  | Council Total Earmarked Reserves | **3,890.24** | Council Remaining Available Precept | | **5,343.28** |

* 1. **Westcotec street lighting contract termination**

The Clerk had circulated a letter from Westcotec dated 2nd June 2023 prior to the meeting and with the agenda. Westcotec Ltd had given 3 months’ notice to Parish and Town Councils to confirm that their maintenance of street lighting would cease on 31st August 2023.

The Clerk advised that she had made initial enquiries with another street lighting contractor to see if they would be prepared to tender for the contract; they confirmed they would.

Councillors agreed for the Clerk to seek tenders for the street lighting contract.

* 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 £** |
| 25.05.2023 | N Power | Street Lighting Supply Apr 2023 | DD | 19.74 | 0.99 | 20.73 | 0.00 |
| 05.06.2023 | BCKL&WN | CIL funding for Bus Shelter | BACS | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2,570.00 |
| 05.06.2023 | Barclays Bank | Bank Interest | BACS | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 13.76 |
| 17.06.2023 | N Power | Street Lighting Supply Apr 2023 | DD | 18.42 | 0.92 | 19.34 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Holly Landscapes | War Mem & Shelter Clean Mar | BACS | 44.56 | 8.91 | 53.47 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Holly Landscapes | War Mem & Shelter Clean Apr | BACS | 44.56 | 8.91 | 53.47 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Mr J Cross | Internal Audit | BACS | 35.00 | 0.00 | 35.00 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Clerk | Salary May 2023 | BACS | 200.88 | 0.00 | 200.88 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | HMRC | Employer PAYE/NI May 2023 | BACS | 50.20 | 0.00 | 50.20 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Mr P Akers | Bus Shelter clean year charge | BACS | 35.00 | 0.00 | 35.00 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | DM Methodist Church | Room Hire 15.05.2023 | BACS | 14.00 | 0.00 | 14.00 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Centaurus Construction | Bus Shelter renovation | BACS | 6,375.00 | 1,275.00 | 7,650.00 | 0.00 |
| **Late Bills / Receipts (Received after Agenda advertised)** | | | | | | | |
| 19.06.2023 | Norfolk County County | Parish Partnership Scheme | BACS | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3,187.50 |
| **Totals** | | | | **6,837.36** | **1,294.73** | **8,132.09** | **5,771.26** |

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

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

**All in favour**

1. **Annual Governance for the Accounts 2022/2023**
   1. **Internal Audit Report 2022/2023**

The Clerk had circulated the Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/2023, prepared by Mr John Cross, with the agenda. The Internal Audit had been carried out on Friday, 12th May 2023. All accounts, records, supporting documents and safeguards were found to be efficiently maintained and in place.

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

**That the Council approves the Internal Audit for the financial year 2022/2023.**

**All in favour**

* 1. **Certificate of Exemption 2022/2023**

The Clerk confirmed that the higher of the authority’s gross income or gross annual expenditure for 2022/2023 did not exceed £25,000. The exact figures were as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Annual gross income 2022/2023 | **£6,210** |
| Annual gross expenditure 2022/2023 | **£5,870** |

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

**That this Council certifies itself as exempt from the limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.**

**All in favour**

The Clerk and the Chairman, Cllr Pegg, duly signed the Certificate of Exemption of the Annual Return 2021/2022 at a future date. The Clerk would record the Minute References upon completion of the minutes of this meeting.

* 1. **Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023 (Section 1 Annual Return)**

The Annual Governance Statement was a means to inform ratepayers how the public accountability framework operated and to ensure there was a sound system of internal control taking place. The Clerk confirmed that the Council was expected to make representations and assertions, to the best of their knowledge and belief, in nine statements of assurance detailed in Section 1 of the Annual Return. The Clerk read the statements in Section 1 and requested that Councillors answer yes, no or not applicable to the following declarations:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Declaration** | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** | **Yes means that the Council:** |
| 1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements. | **Yes** |  |  | prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations. |
| 1. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness. | **Yes** |  |  | made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge. |
| 1. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this smaller authority to conduct its business or manage its finances. | **Yes** |  |  | has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so. |
| 1. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors’ rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. | **Yes** |  |  | during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority’s accounts. |
| 1. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required. | **Yes** |  |  | considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly. |
| 1. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems. | **Yes** |  |  | arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority. |
| 1. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit. | **Yes** |  |  | responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. |
| 1. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements. | **Yes** |  |  | disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant. |
| 1. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit. |  |  | **N/A** | has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts. |

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

**That the Council approves the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 Annual Return) for the financial year 2022/2023 as detailed.**

**All in favour**

The Clerk and the Chairman, Cllr Pegg, duly signed Section 1 of the Annual Return 2022/2023. The Clerk would record the Minute References upon completion of the minutes of this meeting.

* 1. **Accounting Statements 2022/2023 (Section 2 Annual Return)**

The Clerk had circulated a copy of the Accounting Statements for the financial year 2022/2023 with the agenda. The Accounting Statements were a means of presenting the financial position of this Council and properly presenting its receipts and payments. The accounting statements were as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 2** | **2021/22 £** | **2022/23 £** | **Variance (+/1) £** | **Detailed explanation of variance +/- 15% (for each reason noted monetary values to nearest £10 are included)** |
| **1** Balances Brought Forward | 11,401 | 2,985 | -8,416 (-74%) | In 2021/2022 the Council paid 8,150 under the Parish Partnership Scheme (PPS). In 2022/2023 the Council did not undertake a PPS. |
| **2** (+) Precept or Rates and Levies | 6,000 | 6,200 | 200 (3%) | 3.33% precept rise. |
| **3** (+) Total Other Receipts | 8,689 | 10 | -8,679 (-100%) | In 2021/2022 the Council received 8,150 under the Parish Partnership Scheme (PPS). In 2022/2023 the Council did not undertake a PPS. In 2021/2022 a VAT reclaim was received for 475. In 2022/2023 no VAT reclaim was received. |
| **4** (-) Staff Costs | 2,805 | 3,013 | 208 (7%) | Clerk's Spinal Point inflation rise. |
| **5** (-) Loan Interest/Capital Repayments | 0 | 0 | 0 (0%) | N/A |
| **6** (-) All Other Payments | 20,300 | 3,030 | -17,270 (-85%) | Parish Partnership Scheme 16,300 and street light conversion 1,260 |
| **7** (=) Balances Carried Forward | 2,985 | 3,152 | 167 (6%) | Earmarked Reserves are 2,687. Precept balance remaining 465. Box 7 remains less than twice Box 2. |
| **8** Total Value of Cash & Short Term Investments | 2,985 | 3,152 | 167 (6%) | AS ABOVE - 2 large projects carried out this year. Earmarked Reserves 2,667. Precept balance remaining 313. Box 7 remains less than twice Box 2. |
| **9** Total Fixed Assets Plus Long Terms Investments & Assets | 33,686 | 33,908 | 222 (1%) | Commemorative plaques and posts purchased for Covid and Queen. |
| **10** Total Borrowings | 0 | 0 | 0 (0%) | N/A |
| **11a** (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable) | | | NO | The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. |
| **11b** (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable) | | | N/A | The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions. |

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

**That the Council approves the Accounting Statements (Section 2 Annual Return) for the financial year 2022/2023 as detailed.**

**All in favour**

The Clerk and the Chairman, Cllr Pegg, duly signed Section 2 of the Annual Return 2022/2023. The Clerk would record the Minute References upon completion of the minutes of this meeting.

* 1. **Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors’ Rights**

The Clerk had circulated a copy of the Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors’ Rights for the financial year 2022/2023 with the agenda. The Council had a duty to inform the electorate of a 30 working day period during which electors’ rights may be exercised. The inspection period had to include the first 10 working days of July. The dates would be as follows:

**The dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights are as follows:**

Dated **Tuesday, 20th June 2023**

Commencing on **Wednesday, 21st June 2023**

And ending on **Tuesday, 1st August 2023**

**Proposed – Cllr Doyle Seconded – Cllr Fox**

**That the Council approves the Notice of Appointment of Date for the Exercise of Electors’ Rights for the financial year 2022/2023 as detailed.**

**All in favour**

The Clerk would advertise the Annual Return 2022/2023 and supporting accounting documents on the website and Council noticeboard.

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 spoken to the Middle Level Commissioner Navigation Officer regarding the possibility of housing a defibrillator in the vicinity of the Salters Lode lock enclosure, either on the Lock Keeper’s house or the adjacent lock enclosure fencing. This location was lit during darkness and mains power was available. The house was occupied and the lock manned during operation, which should provide protection against theft or vandalism of the unit.

The proposed location would be a main central hub for the largest centre of population of the parish and would also be within the amenity area of the narrowboats and anglers.

The Navigation Officer agreed that this location would be a good idea, subject to agreement on the exact position.

It was noted that Middle Level Commissioners may contract their own electrician to install the defibrillator, which would save added costs to the Council, although this had not yet been discussed.

London Hearts, the sole supplier of the defibrillators under the BCKL&WN grant scheme, do not provide prices on their website but state they provide the Mindray C1a Defibrillator, which can be seen online for £999.99. Replacement batteries, with a 5-year life, are around £280.00, replacement pads, with a 3-year life or after usage are around £70.00 and heated lockable cabinets cost approximately £500.00.

Cllr Daymond suggested that the Great Ouse Boat Association and other local boating/lock organisations may help fund this project. Cllr Daymond would confirm the details to the Clerk following the meeting.

The Clerk noted that County Cllr Dawson had expressed an interest in this project and may be willing to part-fund it via his annual Local Member Fund.

Councillors noted that the defibrillator would require a Guardian to check it on a weekly/fortnightly basis and be the point of contact for call outs when the unit had been used. This was noted.

1. **Planning Applications**
   1. **Planning applications**
      1. **23/00879/F – Appletree Cottage, The Lane, Salters Lode – Retrospective change of use of annexe to create independent new home and associated works to create residential curtilage (part retrospective) – Comments by 16th June 2023**

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

No objections (The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, abstained from the show of hands).

* 1. **Planning decisions**

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

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

Late Planning Application

**23/00879/F (Amendment) – Appletree Cottage, The Lane, Salters Lode – Retrospective change of use of annexe to create independent new home and associated works to create residential curtilage (part retrospective) – Comments by 6th July 2023**

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, declared a Personal Interest in this application, as he was an acquaintance of the applicants.

No objections (The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, abstained from the show of hands).

Late Planning Decisions

**22/01831/F – Old Gym, Downham Road, Salters Lode – Continued commercial use of swimming pool**

Application Permitted (Delegated Decision).

* 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**

A1122 speeding traffic

The Clerk had received an email from a local resident regarding speeding on the A1122. This had been circulated prior to the agenda. Following a recent fatality on the A1122, the resident had enquired whether the current 40mph speed limit could be changed to 30mph and/or if a Community Speedwatch Scheme could be set up.

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, reported that the accident had been caused by a driver who had been drinking all day and had caused a head-on collision with a motorist by swerving onto the wrong side of the road and killing the said passenger of that vehicle.

The Clerk reported that a minimum of six members were required for a Speedwatch Scheme and those members would then need to be trained by Norfolk Constabulary. It was noted that the resident had confirmed she would look into setting this up.

The Clerk had circulated the email to County Cllr Dawson to respond to her directly.

1. **Reports from Outside Bodies**
   1. **Downham Market & Downham West Joint Burial Board**
      1. **Levelling Up Loan for Cemetery House renovation**

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. Cllr Fox confirmed that Mr P Farrow at Mapus-Smith & Lemmon, the administrator for the Joint Burial Board, would complete the work for this application and contact the Clerk when it was ready for the £30,000 loan to be applied for.

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

**That the Council approves the Clerk contacting the Levelling Up Department on behalf of the Joint Burial Board in order to provide the facility for a loan to enable Cemetery House, Downham Market, to be renovated.**

**All in favour**

* 1. **Hundred Acre Charity**

There was nothing to report to 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, 24th July 2023 at 7.00pm in Room 3, Methodist Church, Paradise Road.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.03pm.