**Downham West Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held Monday, 22nd January 2024 at 7.15pm 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

Parish Clerk Mrs S Porter

Member(s) of Public 2

1. **Apologies for absence**

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

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 – Cllr Doyle**

**That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Monday, 27th November 2023 (Items 78-89) 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 7.17pm.

**Reports**

**County Councillor**

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

*28.11.2023 Norfolk County Council Go Digital Funding Programme*

*03.12.2023 Amnesty signage on highways for local businesses and events until 01.01.2024*

*10.12.2023 Conservative Motion Cash Options for Norfolk BBC Radio Breakfast Show Tuesday, 12th December 2023*

*10.01.2021 Parish Report - January 2024*

*15.01.2024 Elizabeth Truss MP - Government’s Rwanda Bill*

*20.01.2024 Norfolk County Council has proposed a balanced budget*

**Borough Councillors**

Borough Cllr Rose had submitted a written report prior to the meeting as follows:

*The provision of more Traveller pitches is under consultation and as far as I know 50 will be in Upwell village but none in the immediate area of Downham West.*

*It looks as if Freebridge Housing Association is getting on with their housing problems but there are still properties and related problems (flooding mainly due to filled in ditches etc.) that I shall be meeting with representatives to seek solutions to. It is uneconomic to refurbish housing which is being sold off to provide funding for new ones, with a certain number of occupied dwellings still to be brought up to a suitable standard.*

*I am trying, with the Chair of the Corporate Performance Panel and relevant Cabinet member, to get more powers for Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) to deal with riparian owners who have neglected their duty of care and filled in ditches and culverts at places such as Three Holes and Lakes End, as the situation will get worse going forward. I had a hold placed on a development south of Squires Drove, as this would exacerbate existing annual flooding along Main Road until drainage problems were resolved. The BCKL&WN is trying to get drainage funding provided by Central Government as 3p in every 7p on the rates goes to IDBs.*

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

**Public Participation**

The members of public did not wish to address the Council.

The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, resumed the meeting at 7.19pm.

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

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

**November 2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bank Reconciliation** | **Community Account (£)** | **Business Account (£)** |  | Reconciliation **Community Account (£)** | |  | Reconciliation **Business Account (£)** | |
| Bank Statement Start Balances | 507.93 | 5,413.77 |  | Bank Statement **01.11.2023** | 507.93 |  | Bank Statement **01.11.2023** | 5,413.77 |
| **Total Opening Bank Balances** |  | **5,921.70** |  | Receipts | 1,500.00 |  | Receipts | - |
|  |  |  |  | Payments Cleared | - 1,933.78 |  | Payments Cleared | - 1,500.00 |
| Unpresented Payments B/F | - | - |  | Bank Statement **30.11.2023** | 74.15 |  | Bank Statement **30.11.2023** | 3,913.77 |
| Unpresented Receipts B/F | - | - |  | Unpresented Payments |  |  | Unpresented Payments |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Opening Balances** | **507.93** | **5,413.77** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Opening Balances** |  | **5,921.70** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receipts | 1,500.00 | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Payments | - 1,933.78 | - 1,500.00 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bank Statement Close Balances | 74.15 | 3,913.77 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Closing Bank Balances** |  | **3,987.92** |  |  | - |  |  | - |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Unpresented Payments | - | - |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |
| Unpresented Receipts | - | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | - |  |  | - |
| **Council Closing Balances** | **74.15** | **3,913.77** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Closing Balances** |  | **3,987.92** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **74.15** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **3,913.77** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Council Total Closing Balances** | **3,987.92** |
|  | | |
| **Earmarked Funds** | | |
| Operating Costs (2 Months) | | 1,750.00 |
| Election Costs | | 954.00 |
| Speed Sign Maintenance | | 500.00 |
| Bus Shelter (fund building for new structure) | | - |
| Transparency Fund Grant | | 112.24 |
| S137 Grants | | 75.00 |
| CIL | | 228.00 |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |  | Council Total Closing Balances | **3,987.92** |  | |  |
| **Total Earmarked Reserves** | | **3,619.24** |  | Council Total Earmarked Reserves | **3,619.24** | Council Remaining Available Precept | | **368.68** |

**December 2023**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bank Reconciliation** | **Community Account (£)** | **Business Account (£)** |  | Reconciliation **Community Account (£)** | |  | Reconciliation **Business Account (£)** | |
| Bank Statement Start Balances | 74.15 | 3,913.77 |  | Bank Statement **01.12.2023** | 74.15 |  | Bank Statement **01.12.2023** | 3,913.77 |
| **Total Opening Bank Balances** |  | **3,987.92** |  | Receipts | 300.00 |  | Receipts | 19.17 |
|  |  |  |  | Payments Cleared | - 34.15 |  | Payments Cleared | - 300.00 |
| Unpresented Payments B/F | - | - |  | Bank Statement **31.12.2023** | 340.00 |  | Bank Statement **31.12.2023** | 3,632.94 |
| Unpresented Receipts B/F | - | - |  | Unpresented Payments |  |  | Unpresented Payments |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Opening Balances** | **74.15** | **3,913.77** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Opening Balances** |  | **3,987.92** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Receipts | 300.00 | 19.17 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Payments | - 34.15 | - 300.00 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bank Statement Close Balances | 340.00 | 3,632.94 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Closing Bank Balances** |  | **3,972.94** |  |  | - |  |  | - |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Unpresented Payments | - | - |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |  | Unpresented Receipts |  |
| Unpresented Receipts | - | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | - |  |  | - |
| **Council Closing Balances** | **340.00** | **3,632.94** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Council Total Closing Balances** |  | **3,972.94** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **340.00** |  | **Council Closing Balance** | **3,632.94** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Council Total Closing Balances** | **3,972.94** |
|  | | |
| **Earmarked Funds** | | |
| Operating Costs (2 Months) | | 1,750.00 |
| Election Costs | | 954.00 |
| Speed Sign Maintenance | | 500.00 |
| Bus Shelter (fund building for new structure) | | - |
| Transparency Fund Grant | | 112.24 |
| S137 Grants | | 75.00 |
| CIL | | 228.00 |
|  | |  |
|  | |  |  | Council Total Closing Balances | **3,972.94** |  | |  |
| **Total Earmarked Reserves** | | **3,619.24** |  | Council Total Earmarked Reserves | **3,619.24** | Council Remaining Available Precept | | **353.70** |

* 1. **Approval of Gov.uk domain registration for emails and the website**

The Clerk had circulated details from Norfolk ALC prior to and with the agenda regarding .gov emails and a .gov website. The Clerk reported that Norfolk ALC had run a scheme in 2023 for fifteen Councils to pilot the Gov.uk domain registration which provided .gov emails and a .gov website. Following the success of this, the scheme was being opened to all Parish and Town Councils, effective from April 2024. The cost for this would be £112.00 + £22.40 VAT (total £134.40) for 2 years(£56.00 + VAT per year) with a Norfolk ALC administration charge of £70.00 per year.

Councillors agreed that the Council should take this up due to it being professional and secure.

The Clerk would contact Norfolk ALC to have this set up in April 2024.

* 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 £** |
| 04.12.2023 | Barclays Bank | Bank Interest | BACS | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 19.17 |
| 19.12.2023 | N Power | Street Lighting Supply Nov 2023 | DD | 32.52 | 1.63 | 34.15 | 0.00 |
| 02.01.2024 | HMRC | VAT Repayment Apr 23 - Nov 23 | BACS | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 1,398.89 |
| 18.01.2024 | N Power | Street Lighting Supply Dec 2023 | DD | 33.73 | 1.69 | 35.42 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | DM Methodist Church | Room Hire 27.11.2023 | BACS | 14.00 | 0.00 | 14.00 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | K&M Lighting Services | Street Lighting Maintenance Dec | BACS | 5.13 | 1.03 | 6.16 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | Clerk | Salary Dec 2023 | BACS | 214.82 | 0.00 | 214.82 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | HMRC | Employer PAYE/NI Dec 2023 | BACS | 53.60 | 0.00 | 53.60 | 0.00 |
| To be paid | K&M Lighting Services | Street Lighting Maintenance Jan | BACS | 5.13 | 1.03 | 6.16 | 0.00 |
| **Totals** | | | | **358.93** | **5.36** | **364.29** | **1,418.06** |

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

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

**All in favour**

1. **Approval of the** **2024/2025 Budget**

A copy of the 2024/2025 draft budget had been circulated prior to the agenda. The Clerk had outlined the budget and highlighted the variances.

In light of the approved Gov.uk scheme at this meeting (Item 4.2), the Clerk would reduce the stationery/room hire budget (as there was £112.00 remaining in the transparency earmarked reserves for stationery), adjust the War Memorial cleaning and maintenance budget (due to the approved reduced services) and add the Gov.uk scheme as a separate budget heading.

Cllr Fox thanked the Clerk for preparing the budget.

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

**That the budget for the financial year 2024/2025 is approved and adopted.**

**All in favour**

1. **Approval of the 2024/2025 Precept**

|  |
| --- |
| *2023/2024 Tax base 96.3 - For a precept of £6,620 this was £68.74 per band D property* |
| **2024/2025 Tax base 99.5 For a precept of £7,500** (increase £880.00 / 13.29%) this equates to: |
| **Band D = £75.38** (9.65% increase on 2023/2024 = £6.63 increase pa / 55p increase pm / 13p increase pw / 2p increase pd) |
| **Band A = £50.25** *(2/3 of Band D)* |
| **Band H = £150.75** *(twice Band D)* |
| Section 137 payments limit for 2024/2025 is £10.81 per elector (235) = maximum £2,540.35 |

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

**That the Precept for the financial year 2024/2025 of £7,500 is approved and adopted.**

**All in favour**

The Clerk would submit the demand to the BCKL&WN and place a copy of the approved budget and precept on the website.

1. **Written reports (as listed on the agenda) regarding Councillor issues and village matters**
   1. **BCKL&WN funding scheme for defibrillators**

The Clerk reported that she had made enquiries in November 2023 with The Factory Shop to get their approval for a defibrillator to be placed outside their premises. Due to written confirmations being required from the landowner, the deadline at that time had lapsed and Norfolk Community Foundation confirmed the project could not proceed.

* 1. **Dog fouling issues, The Lane**

The Clerk reported that residents who had concerns regarding dog fouling issues should report issues to the BCKL&WN. This enabled the BCKL&WN to see how many reports were received relating to a specific area and highlighted the extent of the problem(s). If necessary, the investigating officer could produce signage, carry out leafleting drops and/or attend on site to speak to dog walkers.

The Clerk had obtained A5 sized dog fouling stickers from the BCKL&WN and gave these to the Vice Chairman, Cllr Swaine, for distributing to residents in The Lane to display on their wheelie bins or private land.

* 1. **Damaged bus shelter, A1122 (opposite Waterman’s Way)**

The Clerk reported that she had contacted various companies to enquire which manufacturer had installed the bus shelter on the A1122. All had confirmed the shelter was not theirs.

A short discussion took place and it was agreed for the Chairman, Cllr Pegg, to contact companies in Downham Market to enquire whether they could supply and replace the missing pane of glass on the bus shelter. The Chairman, Cllr Pegg, would attempt to get three quotations from local providers.

1. **Planning Applications and Notices of Decision**
   1. **Planning applications**

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

* 1. **Planning decisions**

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

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

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

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

There was nothing to report to the meeting.

1. **Biodiversity Policy**

A copy of the revised Biodiversity Policy had been circulated with the agenda. Cllr Fox was given a vote of thanks for completing this. Only minor alterations had been made to the policy and these were noted.

The Clerk would update the policy and upload this to the website.

1. **Correspondence**
   1. **For Action/Information**

No correspondence for action or information had been received.

* 1. **Late correspondence**

No late correspondence had been received.

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

Cllr Fox reported that he had attended a meeting with Mr P Farrow, Mapus-Smith & Lemmon, and the Clerk and Deputy Clerk at Downham Market Town Council to discuss the up to date situation regarding the Cemeteries, proposed Cemetery House renovation project and the finances of the Board. The meeting had been positive.

* 1. **Hundred Acre Charity**

There was nothing to report to the meeting.

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

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

**That future meetings of the Council commence at 7.15pm, unless otherwise stated.**

**All in favour**

The Annual Parish Meeting was scheduled to take place on Monday, 18th March 2024 at 7.15pm 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 7.51pm.