

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Downley Parish Council held on
Tuesday 13th May 2025 at Downley Community Centre.**

Present: Councillors M Lazenby (Chairman presiding), S Arthur-Hewitt, S Biggs (19:53), P Brooks, R Chandarana, C Lenton, A Mann, W Monroe-West, H Shahid, W Steneskog and P Turner.

In attendance:

Four members of the public

Buckinghamshire Councillor H Arthur-Hewitt

Officers: G Tandy (Clerk)

1) Election of Chairman (9032/05/25)

Cllr Lazenby stood unopposed and was duly elected Chairman for the ensuing local government year having signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

2) Election of Vice-Chairman (9033/05/25)

Cllr Steneskog stood unopposed and was duly elected Vice-Chairman for the ensuing local government year.

3) Declarations of Acceptance of office (9034/05/25)

All parties were present and had signed their declarations of acceptance of office.

4) Council Vacancy (9035/05/25)

Council considered co-option to fill the outstanding vacancy following the 1st May elections. There were two applicants for the post Z Ali and S Biggs, their applications, statements and CV's had been circulated to the Council. Z Ali spoke in support of his application. A vote was held and S Biggs was duly elected to the Council.

5) Apologies for absence (9036/05/25)

None

6) Declarations of interest and dispensations (9037/05/25)

Cllrs Biggs and Lenton declared an interest in item 17) a grant request to raise funds for Downley PTA.

7) Minutes (9038/05/25)

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

8) Public participation session (9038/05/25)

A member of the public asked why the bin outside of the allotment had been removed and if it would be replaced. The Clerk is seeking this information from Buckinghamshire Council and suggested that Fly-tipping should be reported on Fixmystreet.

A member of the public reported that they had used Fixmystreet to request that the grass be cut at Park View Crescent off of Coates Lane and had seen this passed to Downley Parish Council. The Clerk explained that he had returned this request to Buckinghamshire Council as the address is outside of the Parish.

The owner of Common Wood and Oaks Wood explained that he has obtained a felling licence from the Forestry Commission and has employed a reputable contractor to thin and manage these woods and that the work will be undertaken in due course.

A member of the public asked if the Parish Council could take over from Buckinghamshire Council responsibility for grass cutting and maintenance of streetlights near his home in Pheasant Drive. He was advised that we could not further extend our coverage of streetlights and that our responsibility ends higher up the hill.

9) Appointment of Committees and membership thereof (9039/05/25)

The following Committees were appointed:

Allotments - Cllrs Biggs, Lazenby and Steneskog

Finance – Cllrs Brooks, R Chandarana, Lazenby, Monroe-West and Steneskog

HR – Cllrs Lazenby, Monroe-West, Steneskog and Turner. Cllrs Turner and Brooks, both put themselves forward for this role. A vote was held and Cllr Turner appointed.

Planning – Cllrs Arthur-Hewitt, Lenton, Mann, Monroe-West and Turner

Downley Parish Action Response Group – Cllrs Arthur-Hewitt, Biggs, Hussain, Lazenby and Steneskog

Environment and Climate Change Group - Cllrs Arthur-Hewitt, Biggs, Hussain, Lazenby and Steneskog

Lighting Representative – to be held over to the next meeting to allow Cllr Brooks time to present her list of streetlights that require painting or renumbering.

10) Appointment of representatives to outside organisations (9040/05/25)

The following appointments were made:

Downley Old School Community Association – Cllr Monroe

Downley Common Preservation Society – Cllr Arthur-Hewitt

Downley Communication Forum – Cllr Steneskog

Downley Day and Concert on the Common – Cllr Biggs

Downley Festival Committee – Cllr Lazenby

Schools Representatives – Cllrs Biggs, Lazenby, Lenton and Steneskog

Sports and Recreation – Cllrs Lazenby

North West Chilterns Community Board – to be carried over to the next meeting.

11) To receive and note the report of Buckinghamshire Councillors (9041/05/25)

Councillor Hazel Arthur-Hewitt had provided her written report which was circulated to the Parish Council in advance of the meeting

12) Councillor Reports (9042/05/25)

Cllr Biggs advised Council that the Downley School PTA Summer Fayre is due on Saturday 7th June and went on to update Council on the calendar for the Up!Downley Festival with Disco Bingo opening the event on 19th June, Family Disco on the 20th, Downley Day on the 21st the 5K on the 22nd and Concert on the Common closing proceedings on the 12th July.

Cllrs Lazenby and Steneskog reported on the activities of the Sandpits Pond working group and explained that the forward plan was to build up the duck island.

13) gov.uk domain name (9043/05/25)

Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to purchase and switch to a gov.uk domain name website and emails within 6 months of this meeting.

14) Staffing/HR Committee (9044/05/25)

Council carried out the annual review of the Staffing/HR Committee terms of reference and **RESOLVED** to continue with these without change.

15) Document Retention Policy (9045/05/25)

Council carried out the annual review of the Document Retention Policy and **RESOLVED** to continue with these without change.

16) Downley Day (9046/05/25)

Council discussed activities around Downley Day and felt that these should be based around CIL monies and how the public thought these could be best used. Cllr Mann was to source flower baskets and these should be used to tie in with the Bucks Best Kept Village Competition.

17) Grants (9047/05/25)

Following the previously declined grant request from Top Notes Choir on behalf of the Thames Valley Air Ambulance and limited by the £100 maximum to bodies operating outside of the pension it was **RESOLVED** to provide a grant of £100 directly to Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

Council considered a request from the Great Downley Dog Walk who held an event to raise funds for the Downley School PTA. Council **RESOLVED** to decline this request as it was felt that it was not a good fit with our grants awarding policy.

18) Invoices (9048/05/25)

Payments made since the last meeting on 8th March 2025 were noted and approved . The schedule of invoices received through April and May still outstanding was considered and authorised.

| Date | Payee | Details | Ex-VAT | VAT | Total |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|----------|------------|
| 24/04/2025 | BT | Cloud voice & broadband | £ 36.07 | £ 7.21 | £ 43.28 |
| 24/04/2025 | Telecoms World | Telephone | £ 12.00 | £ 2.40 | £ 14.40 |
| 25/04/2025 | Buckinghamshire Pension Fund | Staff Pensions | £ 629.58 | £ - | £ 629.58 |
| 25/04/2025 | SSE Energy Solutions | Energy | £ 1,253.90 | £ 62.70 | £ 1,316.60 |
| 28/04/2025 | Staff | Salaries | £ 1,817.30 | £ - | £ 1,817.30 |
| 28/04/2025 | HMRC | Tax and NIC | £ 574.47 | £ - | £ 574.47 |
| 06/05/2025 | Smarty | Mobile 'phone | £ 4.17 | £ 0.83 | £ 5.00 |
| 15/05/2025 | BMKALC | Subscriptions | £ 861.08 | £ - | £ 861.08 |
| 15/05/2025 | Mijan Ltd | Software subscription | £ 132.00 | £ - | £ 132.00 |
| 15/05/2025 | Shield Maintenance | Dog bins x 2 months | £ 260.00 | £ 52.00 | £ 312.00 |
| 15/05/2025 | SparkX Ltd | Street lighting repairs | £ 445.00 | £ 89.00 | £ 534.00 |
| 15/05/2025 | Hunters Solicitors LLP | Professional fees | £ 685.00 | £ 137.00 | £ 822.00 |
| 15/05/2025 | Claritas Accountancy Ltd | Professional fees | £ 25.00 | £ 5.00 | £ 30.00 |
| 15/05/2025 | KAD Gardening Services | Gardening in April | £ 2,890.00 | £ - | £ 2,890.00 |
| | | Totals | £ 9,625.57 | £ 356.14 | £ 9,981.71 |

19) The Clerks Progress Report (9049/05/25)

Noted

20) To note the date and place of the next meeting (9050/05/25)

Tuesday 10th June 2025 at 07:30 p.m. at the Downley Community Centre

21) Closure of the meeting (9051/05/25)

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 09:13 p.m.

Chairman

Date

