



Downley Community Centre

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Downley Parish Council held on Tuesday 8th June 2021 at 7pm

Present: Councillors M Lazenby (Chairman presiding), S Biggs, R Bowden,
P Brooks K Chandarana, A Lenard, A Mann, W Monroe-West, W Steneskog and T Snaith

In Attendance: Buckinghamshire Councillors M Hussain, M Smith, P Turner & 5 members of the Public

Officers: G Tandy (Clerk)

1) Apologies for absence (8349/06//21)

Apologies were received from Councillor Ahmed who remains overseas & is currently unable to return to the UK. For the benefit of the assembly the Council introduced themselves.

2) Declarations of Interest (8350/06/21)

None.

3) Public participation session (8351/06/21)

Questions & comments were invited from the public on any agenda item affecting the Parish. A resident offered his congratulations to Councillors Ahmed and Snaith on their election to Downley Parish Council, stating there was a great interest in the Parish that their coming on board had prevented other great local contributors from being re-elected. The resident wanted to know three things:

- i) What motivated them to stand for the Parish Council when they do not live in the Parish?
- ii) How much do they know about the Parish & community?
- iii) What is it that they hoped to bring to Downley Parish Council that would enrich us?

Councillor Snaith answered by saying that you never know when you stand if you are going to be elected or not. He had often thought of standing as a Parish Councillor and, having stood for the Unitary, thought he would also stand for the Parish Council and have a good understanding of the area. As far as understanding Downley, having been a Councillor in the past and a former Mayor of High Wycombe he does get involved in the community and said that the people of Downley have been incredibly supportive of them and that he had very strong links with Downley. Councillor Snaith is involved with Santa's Sleigh across Wycombe. He reminded all of the track record he had built up over the last 12-18 months. He had retired in January and now had spare capacity to become involved in other initiatives, a couple of which were on the agenda for tonight.

Another resident commented on the wooden structure at the Bricklayers Arms asking if it was in keeping with the conservation area & if it had gone through planning. Also if the music that they were playing was passed by planning & if the food that they were serving outside was passed by planning.

Buckinghamshire Councillor Paul Turner responded that these matters had been reported to enforcement who are investigating.

There were no further questions from the public.

4) Minutes (8352/06/21)

The minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 18th May 2021 were presented for adoption. Councillor Bowden commented that the Locum Clerk had previously provided a progress report showing what work was outstanding/had been completed and requested that this be reinstated to prevent Council from forgetting who was responsible for completion of tasks.

Councillor Bowden also requested that Council should have sight of the agenda several days before it goes on to the notice boards, thereby allowing time for any missing items to be added for consideration. The Clerk agreed to provide a progress report and to produce the agenda in a more timely manner.

Councillor Mann pointed out that at the meeting of the 18th May Council had discussed flooding at the allotments and that she had suggested purchasing a lock for the tap but this was not mentioned in the minutes. Councillor Lazenby reported that the flood seemed to have been caused by someone accidentally leaving the tap running and that a lock would not have resolved this.

It was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2021 be received, approved, adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.**

5) Reports from Buckinghamshire Councillors (8353/06/21)

Councillor Paul Turner provided his report:

Since the last Downley Parish Council meeting, Buckinghamshire Council has held it's AGM and appointments to the Cabinet, committees and outside bodies have been confirmed. A full list can be found on the Buckinghamshire website

Communities encouraged to Walk and Talk

The Active Communities pilot which is running in West Wycombe, Booker, Cressex & Castlefield, Abbey and Aylesbury North West began last month. It promotes the benefits that even small amounts of movement and exercise can have on our physical and mental health.

The Walk and Talk campaign which launched this week forms part of the Active Communities initiative. There are many ways we can make talking to each other more active:

To sit alongside the scheme a range of Active Park Walks have been created including Desborough Recreation Ground in Wycombe.

Helping Hand service continues to support families in Buckinghamshire during the May half-term break

Buckinghamshire Council continued to help families with children and young people eligible for free school meals with a food voucher last week during the May half-term holiday.

Funded by the Government's Local Support Grant, we are providing a £15 digital food voucher which can be used at Asda, Morrisons, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Marks and Spencer Food or Aldi.

The council sent a letter to relevant parents and carers, via schools, to give them the details of how to claim and activate the £15 digital food voucher.

Getting involved in designing future developments in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council has been selected as one of 14 pilot areas to help the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) test the use of Design Codes in the planning process.

As part of the testing programme, the Council will be working with residents and stakeholders to develop a new Design Code for Buckinghamshire.

The next steps will be to fully engage with local people so we can better understand the needs and aspirations of those who will be most affected by new development. This will involve a wide-ranging public awareness campaign, including stakeholder workshops and a dedicated website, enabling us to work with our local communities to create new places in Buckinghamshire that meet the environmental, health and aesthetic needs and expectations for our communities to live, work and thrive.”

For further details on how to get involved in the new Design Code, look out for updates on our social media channels @BucksCouncil and on this website as the project develops.

Councillor Melanie Smith presented an oral report covering the work that she had been conducting in the Parish recently and gave examples of her helping a resident in Pheasant Drive regarding a dispute over a neighbour’s planning application and mentioned her involvement with the Education Service regarding children with special educational needs, together with her support of a resident who was facing antisocial behaviour from a neighbour. Councillor Smith went on to explain that she was progressing the controversial proposal of a doctor’s surgery in Downley.

Councillor Maz Hussain also made a brief oral report paying tribute to the victim of a recent hit & run incident.

There followed a conversation between Councillors concerning speeding & parking through Downley.

Councillor Hussain left the meeting at 07:35 pm.

6) Comments on Planning Applications (8354/06/21)

21/06428/FUL 11 Southfield Road

Construction of a single storey rear extension **No objections**

21/06346/FUL 123 Littleworth Road Downley

Construction of first floor rear/side extension & replacement of upper rear flat roof with gable roof. **Objections**

21/06400/CTREE Kimberley Downley Common Downley

Pollard back 1 x Willow to original pollarding point & remove all ivy **No objections**

21/06395/FUL 50 Southfield Road High Wycombe

Construction of a single storey rear & side extension & front porch extension **No objections**

21/06497/CTREE Peterley Moor Lane Downley

Remove 3 x Birch **No objections**

21/06556/HPDN 22 Red Kite Way High Wycombe

Notification of proposed single storey rear extension; Depth extending from the original rear wall of 5.60 metres, a maximum height of 3.28 metres and an eaves height of 3.0 metres **Not within the Parish**

21/06596/CLP 119 Littleworth Road Downley

Certificate of lawfulness for proposed x 1 rear dormer and 1 x rooflight to rear in connection with loft conversion **No objections**

21/06595/FUL 119 Littleworth Road Downley

Householder application for construction of single storey side/rear extension and first floor side extension **Downley Parish Council has no comments to make other than the neighbour's objections should be noted**

21/06530/FUL |The Timber Barn Plomer Green Lane Downley

Householder application for conversion of attached garage to habitable accommodation, creation of a home office with external staircase above detached garage, insertion of 1 x rooflight and construction of shed to rear **No objections**

21/06528/LBC The Timber Barn Plomer Green Lane Downley

Listed building application for conversion of attached garage to habitable accommodation, creation of a home office with external staircase above detached garage and insertion of 1x rooflight and construction of shed to rear **No objections**

21/06640/CTREE Diamond Cottage Moor Lane Downley

Reduce in height by 2.5m and 0.5m in width x 1 group of Holly,Hawthorne and plums **No objections**

7) The **Decisions Notices** made by The Buckinghamshire Council in respect of the following Planning Applications set out below were noted (8355/06/21)

21/05763/FUL 83 Westover Road High Wycombe

Construction of single storey side and rear extension following demolition of existing garage, alterations to existing driveway and associated external alterations.

Application Permitted

21/05433/FUL 33 Talbot Avenue High Wycombe

Construction of part single, part two storey side extension, internal alterations and driveway alterations to create additional parking spaces

Application Permitted

21/05818/CLP 11 Southfield Road High Wycombe

Certificate of lawfulness for proposed single storey detached outbuilding to rear

Grant Certificate - Proposed Development

21/05779 Hill Cottage Plomer Hill High Wycombe

Application for approval of details subject to Conditions 3 (Approval of Building Materials), 4 (Approval of Surfacing Materials), 11 (Landscape Plan), 14 (Boundary Treatment) of planning ref: 20/07438/FUL

Permit - detail Reserved by Condition

21/05774/CLP 2 Partridge Way High Wycombe

Certificate of lawfulness for proposed construction of front porch, alterations to existing first floor flank window and garage conversion with associated internal and external alterations including raising of existing garage roof height

Grant Certificate - Proposed Development

21/05715/PNP30 1A Chapel Street Downley

Prior notification application (Part 3, Class O) for change of use of existing building falling within Class E use (Offices) to Class C3 use (Dwelling houses) to create residential dwelling

Application Refused

21/05732/FUL 47 Talbot Avenue High Wycombe

Householder application for single storey side/rear extension, front porch, balcony to rear and external alterations (alternative scheme to PP 20/05658/FUL)

Application Permitted

21/05860/FUL 41 Commonsides Downley

Householder application for construction of oak gazebo

Application Permitted

20/08500/FUL 21 Southfield Road High Wycombe

Householder application for excavation of front for the extension of driveway and extended vehicle cross over (retrospective) **Application Permitted**

21/05959/FUL 10 Old Farm Road Downley

Householder application for construction of single storey front extension and single storey rear extension

Application Permitted

21/05369/CTREE 19 Commonsides Downley

Remove Pear Tree and Plum Tree to ground level and prune overhanging branches of Leylandii at rear fence line of 18 Commonsides

Not to make a Tree Preservation Order

Councillor Brooks felt it appropriate that planning applications should be circulated to all Councillors in advance of the planning meeting to allow all to have the opportunity to have an input.

It was also recognised that training would be beneficial for the Planning Committee.

8) Formation of a Road Safety Committee (8356/06/21)

Councillor Snaith delivered an oral report suggesting the formation of a Road Safety Committee, this being based upon the suggestions of Councillor Ahmed. Councillor Snaith pointed out that there are roads in Downley that are particularly troubled by speeding motorists and that measures taken previously to address this issue have not always worked. Downley Parish Council owns two Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) which capture data and act as a deterrent for speeding motorists. The data collected can be used to support a case to Buckinghamshire Council for traffic calming. Councillor Snaith made mention of the Disraeli Action for Road Safety Group (DARS) and suggested that we create a Road Safety Committee in conjunction with DARS to combine our efforts.

Councillor Monroe-West explained that we have had a Road Safety Action Group that has looked at, for example, a one-way system and that the SID units are actively deployed. She pointed out that for Downley any funding would need to be match funded from the precept, while the position for Disraeli which lacks a Parish Council would be completely different. While it is laudable that we work on road safety, Buckinghamshire Council has a list of 10 roads within Buckinghamshire that are prioritised for funding, none of which are in Downley. Councillor Monroe-West stated that she, together with the Parish Council as a whole, have been very heavily involved with Road Safety and that we manage what we do very well, consequently, she questioned the need for another committee.

Councillor Lenard recognised that this was a really hot issue for residents suggesting that we should try for a limited time period, such as a year, to see if we could come up with anything new. Councillor Mann commented on the effectiveness of the SIDs in correcting the speed of those who are marginally over the speed limit. Councillor Steneskog suggested that as we move away from Covid restrictions it would become easier for us to resurrect the programme of deploying the SIDs throughout the Parish which existed pre-Covid and stated that rather than form another Committee, the issue should remain with full Council as we all have an interest and something to contribute on this topic. Councillor Steneskog argued that it was important that we proactively reinstate the schedule of activity that existed previously and that we consider the data collected and discuss in full Council on at least a quarterly basis.

Councillor Lazenby emphasised that speed issues, and Road Safety issues are always on our list of priorities year after year.

It was agreed that the Clerk should email all Councillors prior to our next full Council meeting in July and request their list of priorities for the forthcoming year.

The cost of various road safety and traffic calming measures was discussed with Councillor Lazenby explaining that the basic cost of a zebra crossing was in the region of £80,000 . Councillor Monroe-West pointed out that elsewhere in Loudwater at the retail park where chicanes had been built, these had been part-funded by the developers and as we had no large-scale development in Downley we would not be beneficiaries of this funding. Councillor Snaith pointed out that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) might be of benefit to us as an additional resource, this being funding from developers across the whole area that is pooled together and can then be used to support particular activities. Councillor Paul Turner explained that CIL is a general fund but is designed to be used in the area where the development happens, pointing out that communities that suffer huge developments would not look kindly upon others taking their funding. Councillor Biggs, accepting that we publish speed watch data on our website, pointed out that we should do more and publicise the work we are doing, together with the cost of measures through our Facebook page.

It was RESOLVED not to form a Road Safety Committee, that Road Safety issues should be discussed in full Council.

9) Formation and membership of an Environment/Climate Change Committee (8357/06/21)

Councillor Snaith presented an oral report explaining that Parish Councils can play a substantial role in the reduction of climate change. Parish councils can work with local schools and businesses to create small steps suggesting shopping local, repair shops, creation of green corridors. Councillor Snaith suggested that we have a body looking at ideas that we can then introduce and recommend to the community to adopt.

Councillor Biggs asked for examples of actions other Parish and Town Councils had successfully implemented to give an idea of what we could realistically achieve. Councillor Mann suggested that we use Facebook to encourage the Community to come on board. Councillor Lazenby suggested involving schools and Playgroups and that the school's representatives could liaise with the schools to ascertain what was being done.

Councillor Steneskog suggested that a working party should be set up, involving the community. Councillor Chandarana felt that the first questions such a group should pose should be to define our aims and ambitions.

It was RESOLVED that a working party be formed and that its initial membership should consist of Councillors Ahmed, Biggs, Lazenby, Lenard, Snaith and Steneskog.

10) Annual Accounts (8358/06/21)

Councillor Bowden pointed out that while the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021 showed us to have a substantial bank balance, it was important to note that the year 2021/2022 would be financially tight for the council. We were operating with a reduced precept as we wanted to reduce residents Council Tax and a substantial proportion of our bank funds were earmarked for the ongoing lighting project.

The annual accounts which had been circulated with the agenda were noted and approved.

11) Allotments Skip (8359/06/21)

The Clerk delivered an oral report explaining that the Council have previously provided a skip for the use of the allotment holders though this had not been done for a considerable time. There was now a build-up of refuse at the allotment and an appetite among allotment holders for a skip to be provided.

It was RESOLVED that a skip should be provided for the benefit of the allotment holders.

12) Website, IT Support, Cloud Storage and Email (8360/06/21)

Councillor Steneskog delivered a report compiled by herself and Councillor Lazenby, noting that we have fallen behind the times regarding our online presence and that website accessibility is still not in place on the current website. Further we have recently experienced a problem with our laptop settings resulting in the Clerk being locked out of the system for several hours before this was resolved. Councillors have experienced frustration with their DPC emails being unable to choose their own passwords and in some instances been unable to set up email access across all their own devices. Councillor Bowden has previously requested that we look at cloud storage and its usage. Councillor Brooks has highlighted her concerns about our website in a recent email to Council.

Councillor Steneskog recommended that we sign up with Edge IT Systems Ltd, Councils current finance software provider and that we overhaul and rebrand our current website with ad-hoc assistance from Ann Warne, a local web designer who initially built the website.

While Councillor Brooks had recommended some specialist Parish Council web designs, Councillors Steneskog and Lazenby suggested that it would be beneficial to manage the website ourselves without the need for a middleman. Furthermore in March this year DPC paid for website hosting for the coming year and it makes no sense to switch provider at this time. She further proposed that the above be reviewed on an annual basis by the online working group.

Councillor Brooks expressed her vehement opposition. She felt that while Edge produce software packages to help with council administration, we need a proper, up-to-date fully compliant website and that if we had such a website, it would have emails attached to it and we would not need to waste elector's money on IT support.

Councillor Bowden countered that our existing website was perfectly adequate and performed exactly as intended albeit that the accessibility aspect needed resolving. He stated that we did not have a budget to change the website this year. He explained that he was in the process of training the new Clerk to maintain and update the website and that we did not need to pay a third party to do this. He pointed out that emails are included with the current set-up and are on the host website.

Councillor Steneskog re-emphasised the proposal to update our existing website and review it on an annual basis and that as we have recently paid for the year's hosting, there was no point in changing to a new provider now, thereby wasting elector's money.

Councillor Lazenby suggested that we should wait for revised figures from Edge re their up-to-date email package, meet with Ann Warne and report back to Council following this. Councillors Steneskog and Bowden agreed that the training of the Clerk on the website should continue in order that he is able to load updates.

Councillor Lazenby stated that rather than shut down the existing website and spend large sums on a new site we should tidy up and continue with the existing site and revisit it subsequently. Councillor Snaith stated that the existing site was robust, mobile friendly and did everything you needed it to do. He said that it could be sorted out without going into big costs.

It was RESOLVED to keep the existing website, carry out work to bring it up to date and make it more visually appealing, as well as resolving the accessibility issues.

Councillor Brooks wanted it noted in the minutes that she voted against this proposal.

13) Childrens Football on Mannings Field (8361/06/21)

The Clerk presented an oral report following an application from a resident requesting to hold two football sessions a week on the pitches at Mannings Field. The sessions would cater for up to 14 children aged 8 and would run for an hour at 6:1 pm to 7:15pm on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. We would charge a fee of £10.00 per session.

It was RESOLVED that these sessions be allowed as set out above.

14) Future Meetings (8362/06/21)

It was RESOLVED that future meetings of the Downley Parish Council be held at the Downley Community Centre on the second Tuesday of each month with a start time of 7:30pm.

The Clerk was asked to update the Downley Village News with this information.

15) Wycombe District Association of Local Councils (8363/06/21)

Councillor Brooks spoke explaining that this was a forum for local councils, enabling councillors to discuss common themes.

The Clerk was asked to obtain further information from NALC together with a copy of their recent minutes to give Council an idea of their activities with a view to us sending representatives to future meetings.

16) Clerks SLCC Membership (8364/06/21)

Councillor Lenard spoke on behalf of the Staffing/HR Committee and presented a case for the Parish Council to pay the Clerk's membership fees of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Following which **It was RESOLVED that the Parish Council would pay the Clerks SLCC membership fees.**

17) Employee Pensions (8365/06/21)

Councillor Lenard spoke on behalf of the Staffing/HR Committee and explained that as an employer the Parish Council is obliged to provide a pension for its employees and that best practise would be to provide the Local Government Pension Scheme. **It was RESOLVED that the Parish Clerk be enrolled in the Local Government Pension Scheme.**

18) Payment of Invoices ((8366/06/21)

The Council received and approved the schedule of payments as set out hereunder:

Frequency	Chq. No.	Payee	Amount	Details
M	1973	Telecoms World	£12.06	Phone Line 01494 257711 - April
M	1974	TBS Hygiene	£270.00	Dog bin emptying March
M	1975	G Tandy	£1651.20	Salary May
M	1976	HMRC	£462.78	Tax and NIC May
M	1977	Claritas Accountancy	£30.00	Payroll fee May
One off	1978	C Knapman	19.99	Litter Picker
M	1979	M Kennedy	£147.45	Consultancy May
One off	1980	M Dean	£123.00	Litter pickers x 10
A	1981	Claritas Accountancy	240.00	Independent review of accounts YE 31/03/21
		TOTAL	£2956.48	

19) Date and place of next meeting ((8367/06/21)

It was agreed that the next ordinary meeting of the Downley Parish Council would be on Tuesday 13th July at 7:30pm at The Downley Community Centre.

20) Closure of the meeting ((8368/06/21)

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 09:36 pm

Chairman.....

Date.....