Little Downham Parish Council

Full Council Meeting- **December Minutes**

Date: Monday 2nd December 2024 Time: 8pm

Venue: The Village Hall, Little Downham CB6 3ST

Attendees:	**Cllr Parson**	**Cllr Butcher**	**Cllr Scott**	**Cllr Spofforth**	**Cllr Moorhouse**
	Cllr Massey	**Cllr Godsmark**	**Cllr Travers**	**Cllr Winters**	

Members of the Public: 7

Clerk: Mrs Amy Jacklin

Assistant Clerk: Miss Kendle Hanslip

24/63 Welcome

The chairman welcomes everybody to the meeting.

24/64 Apologies

Cllr Waters and Cllr Taylor

24/65 Councillor Declaration of Interest

None

24/66 Public and Press Participation

None

24/67 To receive County Councillor and District Councillor Reports.

Cllr Lorna Dupree

Cllr Dupree had sent her report prior to the meeting.

On 28 November the Government published its Local government finance policy statement 2025 to 2026. This lays out the principles for the funding of principal local authorities for the financial year starting in April. There will be no change to the council tax cap, which will remain at three per cent for core council tax, with a two per cent adult social care precept. The cap for the police precept will be £14, and £5 for fire and rescue authorities. There will be no cap for Combined Authorities, or for town and parish councils. There will be several changes to grant funding. And in 2026/27 the Government plans to 'radically simplify the local government funding landscape'. Local government reorganisation Proposals to review local government arrangements are coming over the horizon yet again. All-purpose unitary councils are likely to replace the two tiers of county and district councils; and we are likely to see more directly elected Mayors in parts of the country which currently do not have them.

Remote meetings consultation I have submitted my own personal response to the Government's consultation on returning to remote meetings. My personal view is that I would be very happy if the Government were to permit meetings online, as this is more efficient, and better for the environment too—and it also enables more people, including those with disabilities or caring commitments, to participate in local democracy.

The County Council's Children & Young People Committee received an update last month on the 'safety valve' agreement it made with the Government in 2023. The agreement was made because of the escalating costs of providing for children and young people with high levels of need to meet their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The agreement included a contribution of £49M from the Government to help repay the council's SEND deficit, with a further £9M to be supplied from the council's reserves. A further £11.3M has been supplied in capital to support new SEND provision in mainstream schools. Two new special schools are to be established in March and Gamlingay delivered directly by the Department of Education. The intention of the agreement is that children with SEND should be supported to remain in mainstream education wherever possible. However, demand continues to outstrip supply, with an increase of over 46 per cent in the number of requests for Education Health & Care Plans in the last five years. This means that the terms of the agreement have not been met and are being renegotiated. Many 'safety valve' councils elsewhere in the country are in the same situation.

Post office provision in Little Downham- The Post Office has announced that it will be opening a new Post Office 'drop and collect' branch at Nisa in Main Street, starting on Friday 10 January at 1:00PM. The branch will offer Post Office services from a handheld device. Operating hours will be Monday to Saturday 7:00AM to 9:00PM, and Sunday 8:00AM to 9:00PM. Services available will be prepaid parcel collect and return, bill payments, and mobile top-up services.

Pension Credit- A reminder that anyone wishing to qualify for a 2024/25 Winter Fuel Payment must apply for Pension Credit by 21 December 2024. Pension Credit information at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/pension-credit

A new, larger Household Recycling Centre at Milton has been given the go-ahead. The modern, split-level facility will be built on the site of the existing centre, and adjacent land, at Butt Lane, Milton, and will include a purpose-built re-use area and more parking for cars and bikes. It will cover a larger area than the current facility, already the busiest in the county, and is designed for easier, more accessible recycling for residents. Work is expected to start on the new facility in autumn 2025 and will take around nine months. This will include the demolition of the existing centre, so while work takes place the site will be temporarily closed and residents directed to their closest alternative sites at Thriplow, Witchford and Bluntisham. To help manage demand and tonnages at those sites, the council will be introducing a temporary online booking system while Milton recycling centre is closed. This will help reduce queues and waiting times and aim to ensure residents can visit the three sites at a time convenient to them.

Flood funding for Internal Drainage Boards The government last month announced that £50M will be distributed to internal drainage boards (IDBs). The funding will help projects to improve, repair or replace IDB assets, including flood barriers, embankments, and maintenance of watercourses. The funding will support projects which reduce risks and impacts from flooding to farmers and rural communities across England. The government has also committed to look at the funding formula for allocating money to proposed flood defences. A consultation will be launched in the new year which will include a review of the existing formula to ensure that the challenges facing businesses and rural and coastal communities are adequately considered when delivering flood protection. I have been advised that the Littleport and Downham IDB has been awarded £744K for temporary pumps and generators in case of issues at its pumping stations.

Packaging fees The Government has published an update on the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)—the 'polluter pays' scheme whereby those responsible for producing and circulating packaging must pay for the cost of its disposal over the course of its life. EPR for packaging fees has been deferred for a year. No EPR packaging fees will be payable in 2024. However, businesses must report their packaging data for 2023 and will be required to pay any related fees in 2025 based on 2024 data. They must also continue to pay any fees due under previous regulations.

Winter preparations-Preparations for winter are well under way with the county council's fleet of 37 gritters and two quad bikes on stand-by to keep the county's roads, paths and cycleways safe for residents in the colder months. The team's annual preparatory 'dry runs' are now complete. The council's salt barns are fully stocked with 10,000 tonnes of rock salt ready for the start of the cold season, and grit bins across Cambridgeshire have been refilled. The council maintains over 108,000 drains across the county, and has been clearing and repairing these where necessary before winter sets in.

Cllr Anna Bailey

Any fly tipping should be reported to ECDC on the portal, there has been a case at Adventurers Drove.

The combined authority is launching the 'Tiger on demand' transport service. Covering this area, no live date yet but expecting it to be late December. There will be two minibuses operating the area. You can make a telephone call or go onto an app and book a ride, you will then be asked to go to a virtual stop to be collected. The app will show all virtual apps. The 3 in Lt Downham are currently along the Main Steet. Cllr Bailey has put in an additional request for an additional four stops to be at Wayhead, Main Drove, Cannon Street and Little Street. If there are mobility issues, they can come to your doorstep. The bus should be able to get to you within 30 minutes of your requested pick-up time.

The Ely Road development site will be putting up fencing around the site, this fencing will include hedgehog holes. Anna has shared information with the site manager on how to support hedgehogs.

ECDC have launched a new set of business grants, £550k in total from Rural England Prosperity fund. To provide business grants of up to £50k for the protection of jobs and creating new jobs ect.

A robust response has been put in from the administration at ECDC that they do not want virtual meetings. These meeting are for local people to attend and debates to be made. This doesn't work virtually and we don't support it.

24/72 The chairman has agreed to move this one agenda item forward due time constraints for the member of the public

1. To discuss quotations for the cemetery maintenance for 2025 RESOLVED Little Downham Parish Council have agreed to take over the maintenance for 2025, the chosen contractor MD Arb LTD have committed to carry out all grass maintenance and any tree work for 2025. Thankyou to Max and his team from MD Arb who will be carrying out this work free of charge. (The only charge to the parish council will be fuel used)
   The cemetery committee would like to meet with MD Arb and the clerk before the 2025 session starts to discuss the schedule and requirements. The clerk will arrange this meeting nearer the time.

24/68 Approval of Minutes

1. To approve minutes for signature from Monday 4th November 2024 RESOLVED to accept the minutes (one abstention due to non-attendance of November meeting)
2. A board of resolution will need to be completed to remove the old clerks from the Lloyds Bank account to close it RESOLVED forms signed by council at meeting.
   The clerk suggests council meeting get moved to the second Monday of the month to allow more time for finances to be completed for month end RESOLVED council agreed unanimously with this suggestion from January 2025. The clerk will publish new full council dates for 2025 on the website.
3. The clerk shared a written report prior to the meeting, no questions regarding this report were asked.

24/69 Financial Matters

1. To consider and approve monthly accounts and reconciliation RESOLVED to accept the monthly accounts and reconciliation up to 30th November 2024.
2. To approve invoices for payment RESOLVED to accept the monthly invoices for December payment.
3. To discuss investing council money into CCLA carried over from November's meeting RESOLVED council have now had time to research CCLA and the intended fund. Council agreed unanimously to invest £70,000 into CCLA which is an same day access account earning approx. 5%.

24/70 Planning Applications

1. 24/01170/FUL -Two storey extension to rear of existing dwelling, external alterations and creation of two storey garage and office/store. Location: The Common Station Road Little Downham Ely Cambridgeshire RESOLVED it was agreed unanimously to SUPPORT this application.

24/71 Progress on Planning Applications (For Information ONLY)

1. 24/00353/FUL Change of use of land from agricultural to vehicle turning area ancillary to existing businesses, including introduction of hardcore surfacing, associated lighting infrastructure, and retention of toilet block and staff room - retrospective. Location: Black Bank Business Centre Black Bank Road Little Downham- Approved
2. 24/00738/FUL Land Northeast Of 1 Seventh Drove Little Downham Cambridgeshire. Description of development: Proposed replacement dwelling- Appeal made to the planning inspectorate.
3. 24/00267/FUL -11 Black Bank Road Little Downham Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 2UA. Description of development: Temporary permission for the siting and use of five container units as offices, and associated works retrospective- Appeal made to the planning inspectorate.

24/72 Council Administration Matters

2. To discuss the possibility of having a village fete for 2025 RESOLVED it was agreed to form a sub-committee of volunteers to start initial discussions. It was agreed for Kendle to design a poster to attract volunteers.

3. To share progress on the gates/fence at Pymoor Social Club- The clerk shared that the steel has been ordered for the fence and gates at Pymoor. As soon as this material has arrived the fabrication will begin. The council will pay the agreed sum of £1999.99 in December to cover half of the costs.

4. To discuss for Kendle to attend a digital IOSH one day course from the British Safety Council **RESOLVED** council agreed to allow Kendle to carry out the training to improve her knowledge around risk assessments and safety at work.

5. To agree for the clerk to apply for the Net Zero grant from ECDC for the pavilion **RESOLVED** council agreed unanimously for the clerk to complete the grant application for a solar energy system for the pavilion.

6. To update council on the progress of the advertisement planning application **RESOLVED** the application has been submitted and is with ECDC for validation.

24/73 Recreational Facilities

1. To share the three quotations for the new children's playpark from Wicksteed, Online Playgrounds and Kompan **RESOLVED** initial quotes have been shared with council with no questions asked at this stage.
2. To agree for the clerk to submit grant applications to ECDC for S106 and improvement grants for the new children's playpark in Little Downham **RESOLVED** council agreed unanimously for the clerk to apply for the grant funding.
3. To discuss quotations for cutting the children's play area hedgerow **RESOLVED** council agreed unanimously to accept MD Arbs Ltd quotation of £710 + VAT.
4. To agree the quotation for the remedial work on the last electrical check in the pavilion **RESOLVED** council agreed unanimously (one abstention) to accept the quotation from James Lee Electrical for £688.37+VAT.
5. To agree the quotation for the remedial work from the Legionella Risk assessment **RESOLVED** for the clerk to obtain one extra quotation. This will be presented at the January meeting.

24/74 Conservation Area

1. To discuss work needed in the orchard to prevent future flooding **RESOLVED** to accept MD Arb quotation to flail bramble hedge back on the south and west side of the orchard to ditch line/ground level and use an excavator to clear ditch creating a shallow gradient to allow a normal drainage process to take place. To clear Southwest corner of brambles and old pruning arisings for a bridge to be built from the Orchard into Pingle Wood. This work will cost £945+ VAT. MD Arb have committed to complete this work before Christmas.

Motion to Exclude the Public and Press

Under the Public Bodes (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

24/75 The Book Café

To discuss the future funding for the book café **RESOLVED** this topic was discussed at length and council have agreed to the book cafés proposal initially. This will be published when the book café has agreed finer points.

Re-Admit General Public

24/76 Date of next meeting

Monday 13th January 2025

****** NOTE Full council meetings will now be held on the second Wednesday of the month******

Close meeting 21.57

Chairman: Cllr D Parson

Clerk and RFO- Mrs Amy Jacklin, 5 Third Drove, Little Downham CB6 2UE

Tel: 07354 468757 **Email**: clerk@littledownhamparishcouncil.gov.uk

Signed: Dale Parson (Chair) ……

Dated:……