

DUNKIRK PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting **Dunkirk Village Hall** **19.30 Monday 16th December 2019**

Present: Councillors Jeff Tutt (Chair), Dan Brice, Julie Coleman (Vice-Chair), Peter Demery, Stephen Hitch and Kevin Kemp.

In attendance: Cllr Andrew Bowles (KCC), Richard Bartley (Clerk, after Item 2).

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

For transparency Cllr Kemp made a voluntary declaration as the owner of the Red Lion and applicant in 19/504399/FULL. Cllr Tutt considered that as the Council had made its decision and the matter rests with Swale BC there was no pecuniary interest to declare. No other interests were disclosed, and no requests for dispensations received.

2. APOLOGIES

Cllr Alastair Gould (Swale BC) sent his apologies (work commitments).

RESOLVED: That Cllr Gould's apologies be noted.

3. Appointment of Clerk and RFO

Cllrs Tutt and Coleman welcomed Richard Bartley to the meeting and introduced him to each councillor as the new clerk and RFO. Upon signing a contract of employment and a receipt for the laptop at this point in the meeting, he started work. Cllr Tutt counter signed for the Council.

4. APPROVE MINUTES 18th NOVEMBER 2019

RESOLVED: that the minutes 18th November 2019 be signed as a true record.
Proposed: Cllr Kemp. Seconded: Cllr Coleman. Agreed unanimously.

APPROVE MINUTES 2nd DECEMBER 2019

RESOLVED: that the minutes 2nd December be signed as a true record.
Proposed: Cllr Demery. Seconded: Cllr Coleman. Agreed unanimously.

Action: Cllr Tutt to scan the signed minutes and post them on the website.

4. a Apsley Trust update

Cllr Coleman reported her understanding that the names of three local people have been put forward to Rev'd Jean Burrows for consideration.

5. MATTERS FOR PUBLIC CONCERN

5. a. Highways: A third road traffic collision (RTC) was reported at Goddens Corner. This incident occurred recently when the road was icy. The road surface and lack of warning signage were considered to be contributory factors.

A large pothole between Jezzards Lane and the railway bridge had been reported.

The impact of the 16 week programme of roadworks at Brenley Corner was discussed and the need and financial justification for the toucan crossing was questioned. It was considered that very few pedestrians would use the crossing once completed and the historic crash record at the junction had not involved pedestrians. The construction works require the road to be closed overnight. It was reported that Highways England's contractors are not reopening the road at 06.00, as they are required to do by the conditions attached to the TRO. This is causing delays to

morning traffic and long queues are forming.

Action: Cllr Tutt to collate reports from other councillors that Highways England's contractors are not reopening the road at 06.00, as required by the TRO conditions.

Cllr Kemp reported that Highways England has asked to install fast charging points in the Red Lion car park. This enquiry was apparently not co-ordinated with Swale BC's EV charging initiative, and the proposed location of this facility on London Road was considered likely to divert EV traffic from the A2 through Dunkirk. There had been no local consultation about this EV charging initiative, or its potential impact on traffic.

Action: Cllr Tutt to check the reports with Swale BC, KCC and Highways England.

Increasing traffic on rural lanes was a concern. A report has been received from a member of the public about Christmas tree sales on the Moths Field site, and this was associated with an increasing use of the land for other retail sales purposes.

Action: Cllr Coleman to pass on the report that there is a possible unlawful use of the land to Swale BC Planning Enforcement officers.

5.b. Footpaths: the decision by KCC PROW to add Staple Street Road to the definitive maps was welcomed. It was reported that recent hedge cuttings are blocking the ditch.

Action: Cllr Brice to respond to investigate and clear the blockage, if appropriate.

5.c Mast site: The loss of lighting on the mast was a concern. The owner Woodland had responded and may be willing to replace the lights, but would not consider this before next year. Members of the public have expressed their safety concerns about the unlit mast and the increased risk of collision with low and night flying military aircraft and helicopters, especially as the CAA does not control military flight paths. It was noted that the owner's maintenance obligations under the mast's Grade II listed status has no leverage on lighting.

Action: Cllr Tutt to write to Helen Whately MP to stress the public safety concerns, and ask for her assistance with the reinstatement of lighting on the mast.

5.d TPO matters: Grave concern was expressed regarding the outstanding TPO case at Brotherhood Wood. All parties agree that this matter is urgent and a high priority case, but there is a resource constraint. It was proposed that the Council should write to both ward members formally and request that Swale BC increases its budget for tree officer time in 2020/21. Clearly the present resource of one tree officer, who is only employed for one day a week, is inadequate for the workload.

Action: Cllr Tutt to write to the ward members to press a request that Swale BC's budget be increased in 2020/21 to fund additional tree officer time.

5.e Street lighting: The expired electricity supply contract for street lighting remained unresolved, despite the best efforts of Cllrs Coleman and Tutt. They were continuing to chase different EDF departments, but they were being extremely unhelpful and uncommunicative. Alternative suppliers were being sought to quote for a new electricity supply contract. The purpose of two unused plans on the account was confusing for prospective suppliers, and had been challenged repeatedly, but EDF was not forthcoming with reasons for retaining these unused plans. EDF would not issue an invoice for November, so the account was now overdue. Nor would EDF provide clarity or justify the quoted rates per unit, but had instead placed the Council on a penalty rate tariff. EDF ventured that this penalty tariff situation could be resolved when the Council renewed the supply contract. IEDF were aware that the Council's recent investment in converting half of the parish streetlights to LED would reduce the electricity consumption of these fittings by about two thirds, and this would justify a reduced cost.

However, in response EDF was seeking to pressure the Council into accepting a higher contract sum per unit for 2020/22. All concurred that this situation was unacceptable.

Action: Cllrs Coleman and Tutt to continue to resolve the EDF account issues, chase outstanding invoices and obtain fresh quotes for the replacement contract.

Cllr Bowles left the meeting at 20.10 to attend another meeting in Oare.

5.f Parking issues: Cllr Brice had received a request to provide new parking bay markings in St Pauls Road to resolve a parking issue for residents. It was noted that the JTB meeting

scheduled for November had been postponed until January.

Action: Cllr Tutt to a). contact Mike Knowles with a request for additional parking bay markings, and b). to check the date of the JTB meeting that had been postponed to January and whether there was now sufficient lead time to allow inclusion of this item on the JTB agenda.

5. g. **Crime update:** it was reported that diesel had been stolen from two cars parked at Brenley Lane. A lorry parked in a secure compound in Dunkirk had been broken into and had its diesel stolen. These fuel thefts were reported to the police. It was considered that proper parking arrangements were needed at Brenley Lane as the location invited crime. This was a further matter for the Swale JTB to consider.

6. **Planning**

6. a. **To receive decisions**

No decisions were received.

6. b. **To consider applications**

19/505953/LDCEX land east of Courtenay House, London Road, Dunkirk ME13 9LF Lawful Development Certificate (Existing) to establish the existing use of land as a residential garden in association with Flat A Courtenay House.

Before discussing the application it was noted that the application site was currently subject to an enforcement case, and it has a complex and contentious planning history. Papers were tabled and neighbour comments noted. The previous grounds for objection were revisited. Most significantly, that the previous appeal decision by PINS in 2017 had not validated the claim of residential use on the application site. The loss of the open aspect and trees and the impact on the Area of Great Landscape Value and the impact on the settings of the Old School and Courtenay House were considered, along with the case for a local designation of Courtenay House as a heritage asset, based on the Planning Inspector's remarks.

RESOLVED: to object, as the application is contrary to planning policy, and on the planning grounds stated in the previous appeal decision letter relating to the site.

Proposed: Cllr Coleman. Seconded: Cllr Tutt.

Votes: For: 4 votes. Against 2 votes. Abstentions: 0 vote. Carried

Action: Cllr Tutt to write a letter of objection and quote from the Planning Inspector's report.

19/506086/TPOA Victory Wood, Dargate Road, Hernhill ME13 9HB

1c Marked stem to cut. Small oak stem to be cut as overhanging path, approx. 8cm dbh, 5-6m. Leave deadwood away from path. 1d Marked stem to cut. Small sweet chestnut stem to be cut as overhanging path, approx 8cm dbh, 5-6m. Leave deadwood away from path 2 Unmarked small birch stem leaning out high across the road, 4-5cm dbh, 6-8m, worth snipping off if still there, as likely to break off at some point. All of these small trees fall within an ancient woodland compartment with an adequate level of natural regeneration of oak, hornbeam, sweet chestnut, birch and wild service where full trees have been felled restocking will be by natural regeneration

RESOLVED: to support the application in the interests of public safety as the trees overhang a PROW, to encourage natural regeneration, and the retention of dead wood on the ground accords with sound conservation management practice.

Proposed: Cllr Tutt. Seconded: Cllr Brice. Agreed unanimously.

Action: Cllr Coleman was authorised to respond.

19/503137/FULL Berkeley House, Canterbury Road, Dunkirk ME13 9LE

Demolition of the existing detached chalet-style dwelling house and its associated outdoor swimming pool and pool house; revitalisation of the existing landscape, foliage and diverse woodland; and the construction of a new residential apartment building consisting of 9no. apartments and 1no. holiday let with a rear green-roofed car barn set into the hillside, associated secure storage and other surrounding landscaping works. No plans have been lodged since September.

RESOLVED: to defer a decision pending the arrival of new or revised plans.

Action: the clerk to monitor and circulate any new or revised plans to councillors.

6. c. **Planning enforcement**

RESOLVED: to note the situation and continue to monitor developments

Action: the clerk to keep councillors informed about progress with the Crown Court case, which remains scheduled to be heard in March 2020.

7. FINANCE

7 a. To receive a Finance report

Cllr Tutt presented the Finance Report. In summary, the current account balance at 30/11/19 was £10,264.79. The deposit account balance at 30/11/19 was £ 9,603.83

The combined total of funds was therefore £19,868.62.

The income received in November was bank interest on the Reserve Account of £1.53

Outgoings during November, as approved at the previous meeting, amounted to a total of £ 485.34. It was noted that cheque no.1426 G. Doy for grass cutting £66.00 was not cashed.

Cllr Tutt drew attention to the need to amend the signatories and addresses held by Nat West Bank as statements were still going to the former clerk's address, and this was causing delay.

7 b. To approve payments

The following two accounts were presented for approval:

Payee	Description	Amount	VAT	Total
Mark Bradley	Invoice 0512 Cleaning War Memorial	35.00	7.00	£42.00
G. Doy 30.11.2019	Grass Cutting	£66.00	-	£66.00
Prime One Maintenance	Streetlight maintenance November to 28/12/2019 (No invoice received)			
EDF (paid by DDR)	Streetlight electricity (October) (No invoice received (see minute 5.e) above) To follow: Awaiting new contracts			
TOTAL				£108.00

RESOLVED: that the two payments listed above be approved.

Proposed: Cllr Tutt. Seconded: Cllr Coleman. Agreed unanimously.

Action: Cllr Tutt to scan and post cheques

Action: Cllr Tutt and the clerk to meet and change the postal address for bank statements.

7. c. Budget and Precept 2020/21

7. d.

To consider the draft core budget, and precept

Cllr Tutt presented a first draft of the budget for 2020/21 and a range of options for the precept. Members discussed the budget line by line and raised a number of additional items that could be factored in, and possible areas where further savings could be made. These items included the street light replacement programme, insurance cover, and the need to allow for additional mowing costs and a clerk for the whole year. A number of possible projects were proposed, including the provision of a village entrance sign, an information board, bollards, and sports equipment.

There were several significant unknown costs ahead, arising notably from the end of the electricity supply contract in October (see minute 5.e) above), the end of the three year insurance contract in January 2020, and the requirement for a new website. The subscription for KALC would increase because KALC members agreed at the November AGM to employ a fifth full time member staff with responsibility for councillor training and development. Further work was necessary to establish a robust budget.

As a starting point, members agreed that an allowance for inflation in base costs was necessary and that a 1.99% increase was acceptable. It was noted that a 1.99% percentage increase for inflation would amount to approximately 1p per week per Band D household when added to the precept. The need to either renew or replace the Council's insurance cover was pressing. For budget certainty, it was proposed to extend the existing policy by one further year and to obtain quotes from other companies in autumn 2020.

RESOLVED: to authorise Cllr Tutt and the clerk to review the budget and precept and to obtain further information on the unknown and additional costs for further consideration at the 6th January meeting.

Proposed: Cllr Coleman. Seconded: Cllr Demery. Agreed unanimously.

Action: Cllr Tutt and the clerk to meet and review the budget and precept and to complete this work before Swale BC's deadline 15th January.

RESOLVED: to authorise Cllr Kemp to review insurance companies and options in 2020.

Proposed: Cllr Tutt. Seconded: Cllr Coleman. Agreed unanimously.

Action: Cllr Kemp to keep insurance and policy cover options under review in 2020

Action: Clerk to add a review of insurance to the September 2020 agenda.

8. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Tutt reported that the Neighbourhood Plan Group holds project funds of £2K.

9. Correspondence

The Pensions Regulator has sent a reminder regarding the re-enrollment deadline.

Action: Clerk to reply to Pensions Regulator by the 31st December deadline

10. Matters not on the agenda (for information)

Cllr Brice outlined the case for a new bollard to be installed at the junction of Staple Street and Draw Road and asked for this matter to be considered at the January meeting.

Lorry Watch volunteers were needed to build TRO evidence to restrict 7.5 ton lorry access.

Cllr Tutt confirmed that there would be a meeting to discuss the TRO with KCC Highways at 10.30 Wednesday 8th January and that Hernhill and Boughton-under Blean PCs were invited.

Date of next meeting

Planning Committee Monday 6th January 2020

Full Council Monday 20th January 2020

RESOLVED: to note.

CLOSE OF MEETING 21.33

Cllr Tutt wished councillors a Merry Christmas and tabled mince pies before closing the meeting.

DRAFT

Richard Bartley

Clerk, Dunkirk Parish Council

20th January 2020

Signed.....