

DARENTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 18 October 2023
Jubilee Hall, Waller Park, Wood Lane, Darenth, Kent DA2 7LR

Councillor's Present: I Armitt, T Hicks and D Risely.

In Attendance: E Mote, Parish Clerk.

Visitors: Borough Councillor Denman, three candidates for Lane End Ward vacancy, one member of the public.

The Chairman reminded the Meeting of the protocol regarding the audio and visual recording of proceedings.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that the very sad passing of Councillor Prentice's wife be noted by those present.

184/10/23: TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Weavis, I Gutteridge, T Prentice, K Holmes and S Holmes.

Due to the absence of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Councillor I Armitt, would Chair the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the three Members present formed a quorate for the meeting under the Council's Standing Order 1.2 which states that "No business shall be dealt with unless there is a quorum of three members present. If there is no quorum, the meeting must be adjourned immediately".

185/10/23: TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY OR PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

None received.

186/10/23: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20 September 2023 as Proposed by Councillor Hicks and Seconded by Councillor Risely.

187/10/23: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Chairman confirmed there were no urgent items to be considered.

188/10/23: TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL AUTHORITIES; AGENCIES; COMMITTEES AND PORTFOLIO MEMBERS

(a) **Borough Councillor Report**

Councillor P Denman provided the meeting with a verbal report.

Key topics covered: The new Beat Officer, PC Yates; reporting of unlicensed vehicles; pavement parking; Granted Tree Preservation Order at The Ship; Update on planning status for Doggy Day Care which is currently still awaiting a decision; Wood Lane footpath had been cleared and all waste removed; instigation of a letter to residents of Coombfield Drive warning of the health dangers in fly-tipping garden waste; new waste bin installed at the Hill Rise Playspace with a slide to follow; Ladywood TPO tree work carried out; faulty RADAR gate at Ladywood entrance needs repair; temporary Orchard West structure to be erected from Dartford Borough Council's reserve funds.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Denman for his report.

(b) **Streetlights update**

The Clerk confirmed that she and Councillor Armitt had attended a meeting with Streetlights to determine locations, viability and whether disputed lights in the Fleet Ward (formerly part of Darenth prior to the 2018 Boundary Review) were serving any significant purpose in terms of public safety. It was confirmed that a proposal to conclude the matter be presented at the November meeting of the Council.

(c) **Friends of Darenth Country Park**

The Clerk and Councillor Prentice had attended a meeting on 05 October at the Arrow Riding Centre. Significant points included:

Update from Stuart Shulver, Country Parks Officer:

- 267 volunteer hours
- Welcomed 4 new volunteers
- Grass strimming and raking carried out at Cherry Orchards and East Hill sites
- Woodcraft; Minibeast; Ranger Walk and Bushcraft (Oct half-term) events
- Main work will see coppicing over the Winter months

Update from Valerie Blake, Arrow Riding Centre:

- Projects are ongoing with Encore repainting the main building
- Three first places at the National Championships
- New horse called Rosa for riders wishing to attend the next National Championships
- Small increase in volunteer numbers but more required
- Huge waiting list for new riders
- Dealing with complex needs for lots of riders
- Confirmation of assistance from a professional handler at weekends
- Linking in with Doctors and Nurses from Darent Valley Hospital
- Received SEIB Yard of the Year Award 2023 in association with British Equestrian and Horse & Hound for the Centre's dedication and expertise.

(d) **Borough & Parish Forum**

The Clerk attended the Borough & Parish Forum on 03 October in the absence of Parish Councillor representation following the resignation of Councillor S Oke. A presentation by Acting Inspector Nick Grainger and District Commander Chief Inspector Will Lay, regarding the newly

implemented Neighbourhood Policing Model was given at the Forum. Following confirmation that the new Beat Officer was PC Yates; Members asked the Clerk to seek confirmation of the Beat areas covered under the new model. The Clerk confirmed that the presentation would be shared via the Parish website for public information.

RESOLVED: That all external reports be noted, and any relevant decisions actioned as appropriate.

189/10/23: TO CONSIDER WRITTEN/VERBAL APPLICATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF PARISH COUNCILLOR AND TO CO-OPT A CANDIDATE (BY MEMBER VOTE UNDER EXCLUDED ITEM 198/10/23) TO FILL THE EXISTING VACANCY IN LANE END WARD AS REQUIREMENTS TO HOLD A BY-ELECTION WERE NOT MET

With the requirements to hold a by-election not being met, the Parish Council exercised its power to co-opt a person onto the Council to fill the Lane End Ward vacancy. Members heard verbal Supporting Statements from three candidates who had expressed an interest in joining the Parish Council.

The Clerk confirmed that each candidate was qualified to stand for the position. The Chairman established that a vote would be held under the Exclusion of Press & Public and that the successful candidate would be informed of the results by the Clerk on Thursday 19 October 2023. Following confirmation of the co-option, arrangements would be made to complete the required documentation including a Declaration for the Acceptance of Office. The Chairman requested that all candidate contact details be kept on file for future reference.

RESOLVED: To co-opt a candidate to fill the vacancy for the role of Councillor in the Lane End Ward by way of majority Member vote held under the Exclusion of Press & Public.

190/10/23: TO NOTE UPDATE FROM DIGNITY GROUP HOLDINGS LTD IN RESPECT OF MABLEDON (CREMATORIUM) SITE

Members noted the update from Dignity Group Holdings Ltd and looked forward to receiving further details and a timeframe for commencement of works in respect of the Crematorium.

RESOLVED: To note the update from Dignity Group Holdings Ltd.

191/10/23: TO APPROVE REVISED STANDING ORDERS (NALC MODEL) AND GRANTS & DONATIONS POLICY

- (a) Members were requested to approve revised Standing Orders to follow the recommended NALC Model.
- (b) Members were invited to consider and approve a policy in respect of Grants & Donations together with submission form for applications.

RESOLVED: To agree revised Standing Orders and implementation of new Grants & Donations Policy and Application Form as presented as proposed by Councillor Hicks and Seconded by Councillor Risely.

192/10/23: TO NOTE GROUNDS AND FACILITY REPORTS:

- (a) **Waller Park Annual Playground Inspection Report from The Play Inspection Company**
- (b) **Cleaning & Disinfection Water Certification Tests – Darenth Hall and Jubilee Hall from Primec Ltd**
- (c) **Calorifier Blow Down Test – Waller Park from Primec Ltd**

Having previously received reports in respect of the above, Members noted their content.

RESOLVED: That reports in respect of all Grounds and Facility maintenance be noted.

193/10/23: TO FORMALLY NOTE RECRUITMENT OF NEW FACILITY COORDINATOR FOR DARENTH VILLAGE HALL FOLLOWING THREE-MONTH PROBATIONARY REVIEW

Members formally noted that, following recruitment on 3 July 2023, the new Facility Coordinator had satisfactorily completed the three-month probationary period and had been formally offered and accepted employment with the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: To formally note permanent employment of the Facility Coordinator for Darenth Village Hall.

194/10/23: FINANCE

- (a) **To formally note approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022-23**
Members were asked to note conclusion of audit (Section 3) from external auditor Mazars LLP in respect of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year 2022-23.

RESOLVEVD: To note approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022-23 from the external auditor Mazars LLP.

- (b) **To note the second instalment Precept payment from Dartford Borough Council in the sum of £40,972.00 received on 29 September 2023**

RESOLVED: To note the second Precept payment in the sum of £40,972.00.

- (c) **To agree monthly financial statement as at 30 September 2023.**

RESOLVED: To agree the monthly financial statement as at 30 September 2023.

- (d) **To note budget position as at 30 September 2023.**

RESOLVED: To note budget position as at 30 September 2023.

- (e) **To note annual membership subscription payment of £20.00 to the Darent River Preservation Society (DRiPS).**

RESOLVED: To note annual membership subscription payment of £20.00 to the Darent River Preservation Society (DRiPS).

(f) **Insurance Renewal**

Members acknowledged receipt of the annual renewal documents in respect of the Council's Insurance Policy, noted the introduction of playground cover in the sum of £12,200 and agreed renewal of the Policy at a premium charge of £4,651.55. The Chairman asked the Clerk to approach the Council's insurers in respect of a three-year fixed term.

RESOLVED: That the Policy be renewed at a premium charge of £4,651.55 on 9 November 2023 and the details be noted.

195/10/23: PLANNING

(a) **To consider new applications**

DA/23/01125/FUL – 176 Coombfield Drive DA2 7LH

Erection of first floor side extension.

Observations: *Members noted the details and had no objections to the application.*

DA/23/01032/FUL – The Royal Express Green St Green Rd DA2 8DP

Erection of mansard roof extension with front and rear dormers to allow for the creation of 1 No. one-bedroom one-person self-contained residential unit (C3) and internal alterations to the existing first floor flat.

Observations: *Members noted the details and had no objections to the application.*

DA/23/01124/TPO – Kentwood House Nursing Home DA2 7QT

Application to fell T1 - Ash with decay fungi and to fell T2 - Ash with ash dieback subject to Tree Preservation Order No.2 1985.

Observations: *Members noted the details and had no objections to the application.*

DA/23/01096/FUL – 1 Lunedale Road DA2 6LR

Erection of side extension and garage conversion to convert single dwellinghouse into 2 No. dwellinghouses.

Observations: *Members noted this application which is outside the Parish boundary.*

RESOLVED: That the Clerk submits any comments or observations to the Planning Authority.

(b) **To note recent decisions made by the Planning Authority**

DA/22/00047/FTWR – The Nursery, Green St Green Rd DA2 8DP

Erection of a single storey extension to link main dwelling and pool house and single storey side extension.

*Decision: **APPEAL DISMISSED***

DA/23/00651/FUL – 70 Gore Road DA2 6LY

Erection of a single storey rear extension.

*Decision: **PERMISSION GRANTED***

DA/23/00923/TPO – Ladies Wood Ladywood Road

Application for T1 Sweet Chestnut - Castanea sativa and T2 Oak tree- To crown lift canopy extending over the fence from the woodland - lift to leave to legal requirement of 5 metres above the highway subject to Tree Preservation Order No.6 1971.

*Decision: **CONSENT GRANTED***

DA/23/00907/FUL – St Fiacre Green Street Green Road

Alteration to existing loft and roof to create a two- storey dwelling incorporating double storey rear extension new porch and removal of existing dormers.

*Decision: **REFUSED TO PERMIT***

RESOLVED: To note recent decisions made by the Planning Authority.

(c) **To consider new applications/recent decisions received after agenda publication**

No new applications had been received after agenda publication.

RESOLVED: To note that no recent decisions had been received after agenda publication.

196/10/23: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The proposed date for the next Meeting of the Council was confirmed as Wednesday 15 November 2023.

197/10/23: EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

To consider the **exclusion** of the **press and public** for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1(2).

198/10/23: TO VOTE FOR PREFERRED CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF PARISH COUNCILLOR AND TO CONFIRM A CO-OPTION TO FILL THE EXISTING VACANCY IN LANE END WARD

Members discussed applicant statements and voted for their preferred candidate. Full details of the appointment would be provided to the public.

199/10/23: TO RECEIVE UPDATE REGARDING COUNCIL OWNED LAND

Councillors were in receipt of a desktop study in respect of Council owned land and discussed options accordingly.

RESOLVED: To defer the matter for full discussion regarding the options for the land to the November Meeting of the Parish Council.

200/10/23: TO CONCLUDE MATTERS IN RESPECT OF PARISH STREETLIGHTING

Members resolved to conclude matters in respect of Parish Streetlighting.

RESOLVED: To defer the matter for further discussion and conclusion regarding at the November Meeting of the Parish Council.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting.