**MINUTES OF SANTON DOWNHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY, 21ST NOVEMBER 2022 AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Mr Michael Mackender (Chairman) Mr Andrew Butcher (Vice Chairman)

Mrs Sylvia East (Parish Clerk) Mrs Debbie Cock (Parish Councillor)

Mr Paul Brown (Parish Councillor)

In attendance: Mr Victor Lukanuik (County Councillor) Mr Phil Wittam (District Councillor)

Mr Kim Daplyn (member of the public)

1. The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting
2. Apologies were received from Mrs Landell . Mr Baugh who had intended requesting co-option onto the Parish Council also sent his apologies.
3. The Chairman asked if there were any comments on the Minutes of the previous meeting, there being none the Minutes were signed as a true record
4. The Parish Clerk welcomed Mr Daplyn as a potential co-opted member of the Parish Council and invited him to stay for the meeting with the intention he would give a brief outline of his reasons for joining, following invitation from the Chairman later on in the meeting

**Finances**

1. Copies of the latest bank statement were given to Councillors along with a brief update of where things stood. The balance stands at £12,980.57 following payments still to go through. Work to the Oak Tree opposite the Church £918.00, £200 for the plaque on the Village Sign, £1,800 for the Village Sign, (N.B. Locality Budget paid for all the expenses for the Village Sign) £665.00 second part of the Clerk’s remuneration, £100 for the Inauguration day provisions and £50 for the Poppy Wreath.
2. The Clerk advised budget issues for 2023 need to be considered and asked the Parish Councillors to consider this matter.
3. Precept for 2023/2024 was discussed and it was the consensus of Parish Councillors opinion we should request a rise of 4%.
4. Update on the request for annual contributions towards road maintenance in relation to holiday lets previously discussed took place. The Clerk advised the offers thought to have been agreed had now been backed out of. The Clerk stated this may be a matter of ethics to the Parish Council and individual concern for the village but on the other hand a dip in the ocean as far as the problems over future maintenance of our private roads is concerned. It was agreed the Clerk should write once more and ask for this to be reconsidered. The Parish Council recognised the displeasure of what was considered ‘singling out’ and there was a right to question other properties not paying Council Tax but of course the situation of who did and did not pay Council Tax was beyond the control of the Parish Council. Mrs Cock commented that although a serious issue for the Parish Council we should not become entrenched in this one matter.

**General**

1. The Clerk reported on the problem with the Parish Council and Village Hall websites. There are issues needing to be sorted out and this is ongoing. In the meantime, the Clerk will do her best to deal with any enquiries to the best of her ability.
2. The Village is to have a Carol Service this year on the Village Green. Breckland Brass Band will be playing Christmas Carols and other Christmas music and all are invited along to participate and enjoy. Hopefully the evening will have reasonable weather but alternatively the Carol Service will be in the Village Hall. Everyone is invited to the service, followed by Mulled Wine, Mince Pies and other refreshments in the Village Hall.

SDPC.21.11.22(1)

Posters were given out initially to those present and posters will be displayed very soon within the Village.

 5) The Chairman invited Parish Councillors to report on any issues:

* Mrs Cock asked if going forward the Agenda items on Finance could be dealt with in a block. The Parish Clerk agreed.
* Mr Butcher raised again the issue of a Mobile Phone Mast. Mrs Cock clarified the Church have offered the use of the tower however, the provision of this service has to be something the Service Provider offers and no-one has come forward with an offer.

 6) The Chairman invited our County Councillor and District Councillor to report on any issues.

* Cllr Lukanuik congratulated the Parish Council on the Village Sign, stating he thought it

 ‘magnificent’, well situated and will stand the test of time.

 Cllr Lukanuik reported his disappointment that plans for extra housing in Brandon

 were not progressing and stated there were 460 people on the Housing list but very little

 investment being put into the town. It appears there are no restrictions imposed in the

 Green Road area but it appears no one is interested in pursuing this.

* Cllr Phil Wittam mirrored the comments made by Cllr Lukanuik regarding the village

 sign stating, he felt privileged to have been invited to its inauguration.

 Cllr Wittam went on to report that when Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury amalgamated

 this brought forward anomalies. The need for some levelling of parity has now been

 pushed down the road another year. The most blatant difference is that there is no

 parity in the level of Council Tax and our area is effectively paying more without the

 benefits that Bury St Edmunds has. There was an example given of a plan to build a

 new hub in Western Way, this plan hinged on the NHS taking space however, the

 NHS have pulled out and there is now talk about a new Sports Centre and Swimming

 Pool which it is evident they do not need – it seems the more Bury St Edmunds gets

 The less our area gets.

* Paul Brown asked why Brandon Council is trying to close down the Saturday market. Cllr Lukanuik advised that this market was a West Suffolk initiative and unfortunately many of the traders choose to go to busier markets on a Saturday. Cllrs Lukanuik and Wittam could only advise there was friction also between traders and the shops. They both agreed it was a dire situation.

7) The Chairman invited Mr Daplyn to give his brief:

* Mr Daplyn stated he loves living in the village and now feels he has some spare time and would like to be involved more. The Chairman asked Mr Daplyn if he was willing to pitch in where necessary and Mr Daplyn stated that although roads and trees where not his area of expertise, he would be willing to give a hand wherever necessary.

It was then the consensus of the Parish Council Mr Daplyn should be welcomed as a co-opted Parish Councillor. The Clerk handed Mr Daplyn the required paperwork to be completed and returned to herself.

1. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
* The problem of the overhanging hedge down Marks Lane was discussed. Currently

 there are no tenants in the bungalow but a sign is now up. It was agreed the Clerk

 should write to the Letting Agents, Chilterns advising the Parish Council requires the

 hedge to be trimmed back to the boundary and if they are not willing to undertake

 this the Parish Council will.

SDPC/21.11.22(2)

* The Clerk raised the issue of large vehicles attempting to go over the bridge and the

 fact it seems they do not see the weight restriction sign. The Clerk has written to Highways

 but to date has received no reply. A discussion took place on what could be done to assist

 the households who are so often having to put up with very dangerous situations, in fact one

 house has been damaged. Cllr Lukanuik will see whether he can do anything but did

 make the offer of Locality Budget monies and asked the Clerk to obtain costings. At this point

 where to place a sign was discussed and it was proposed whether offered by Highways or paid

 for by the Parish Council, it should possibly be placed opposite the Tommy Memorial.

1. The date of the next meeting was agreed for 19th December
2. The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

SDPC/21.11.22(3)