**MINUTES OF SANTON DOWNHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY 6th NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

Present: Mr Michael Mackender (Chairman) Mr Adrian Baugh (Parish Councillor)

Mrs Sylvia East (Parish Clerk) Mr Paul Brown (Parish Councillor)

Mr Andrew Butcher (Vice Chairman) Mrs Debbie Cock (Parish Councillor)

Mrs Ann Landells(Parish Councillor)

In attendance: Cllrs Victor Lukannuik (County Councillor) Phil Wittam (District Councillor)

and Jools Savage (District Councillor)

Members of the public: Mr Duncan Slade (Forestry England)

1. Chairmans Welcome
2. Apologies received from Mr Kim Daplyn (Parish Councillor)
3. Declaration of Interest there were none

4) Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 2nd October were signed as a true record

5) **Parish Clerk’s Report**

**Financial**

* A copy of the recent Bank Statement was given to all Councillors. Following the payment of a Grit Bin, SALC Membership and the 2nd part of the Parish Clerk’s salary and expenses, we will have £12,902.66 in the account.
* The Precept for 2024/2025 was discussed and it was eventually agreed we had no option but to ask for a rise since we need to think ahead with the roads and trees. It was agreed we would ask for a 5% rise. This was passed by all present.

**General**

* Update on the Oak situation. The Planning Application to carry out a small pollard was put into effect so we now have six weeks to await a response.
* The Parish Clerk will attempt to contact our local Police to ask if they still have some form of village/Police assistance . The cost of handguns if we were to go down the road of doing this ourselves is in the region of £210. The Parish Clerk said she would in the meantime get in touch with a known resident of Weeting and see if he is able to give any advice since Weeting did carry out a volunteer workforce to check for speeding.

**Parish Councillors Reports**

* Paul Brown raised the issue of the track at the back of the row of houses he resides in. Stated there are ruts and this is pushing cars over to the grassed verge. He suggested the Parish Council might purchase planing and that he was willing to collect and carry out this work. The Chairman stated he would look into this.
* Andrew Butcher advised the road at the top of the village green is, in places cracking and detaching. The Chairman again suggested this needs to be looked at.

**County and District Councillors Reports**

* Cllr Savage reported some bad attitude by moss collectors and Mr Slade said he would pass this matter onto the Forestry Office. Mr Slade advised this collection of moss has been happening for some 20 years and until now there were many people collecting the moss but this will now be

licenced and only 3 or 4 will have a licence to collect the moss. Questions were asked as to what this is used for and Mr Slade advised for wreaths etc. Cllr Lukanuik thanked Cllr Savage for raising this issue and asked if the harvesting is sustainable. Mr Slade yes and stressed the moss

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collections are monitored and that the moss is resilient . When asked how many times this collection takes place, Mr Slade advised peak time September onto December and then another peak at around January/February for Easter. The difference between the collection of moss as opposed to mushrooms was discussed and Mr Slade said that if they could licence mushroom picking the Forestry would. This however, would be more difficult to police.

* Cllr Savage again raised the problem of the bridle path near the bridge and asked whether a sign could be put up saying it is impassable. Mr Slade advised this issue lies with Norfolk County Council. It was suggested letters being sent to NCC advising that the route is impassable and that horses are going into the river .

**Chairmans Report**

* Signed the cheque for the 2nd half of the Parish Clerk’s salary and expenses.
* Commented that this is the time for the new planting to take place on the allotted space on the village green. The Parish Clerk advised she had passed on the information the funds were now available to those involved.
* A request had been received from the Hall Sub Committee to use the village greens for parking on the 25th November for the Table Top and Sunday, 26th November for the 10k run. It was agreed as long as the events were properly monitored and where necessary cordoned off this was fine but care needed to be taken of the area created for planting of wild seeds and also that cars were parked sensibly and not in any way to cause distress to the residents. It was stated the car parking would need to be properly marshalled.
* A request had been received to have a mirror installed over the other side of the old Post Office as vehicles coming onto the main road from Marks Lane have poor visibility. It was agreed a mirror would be purchased and installed.
* A suggestion had been put forward re the possibility of having some outside exercise facilities and the consensus was this fell into the same consideration as a child’s play area. It was agreed by all we cannot go down this path as the costs of producing these facilities are high and then there is the continuation of repairs, maintenance not to overlook the public liability issues. We are simply too small a village to consider these issues.

**Any Other Business**

* The Parish Clerk asked Mr Slade if he could get something done about the vegetation around the Forestry Public Toilets. He said he would pass this onto the correct department.
* The Chairman advised Mr Slade we are once again losing width of road from the old Post Office to Hall Drive and would it be possible if Forestry could cut back as in the past.Again Mr Slade advised he would pass this on.
* The Chairman asked Cllr Lukanuik about the solar panels on the Brandon Sports Hall as to how these would have been financed. Cllr Lukanuik commented that these were put up prior to the refurbishment but would have been paid for by West Suffolk Council.
* Cllr Lukanuik advised he was still pushing on the Green Road issue but nothing appears to be happening
* The Chairman asked Mrs Cock about the Armistice Sunday service usually around Tommy. Mrs Cock advised that as there was no permanent Vicar it would need to be a different service this year and would be carried out in the Church. The Chairman advised he would lay the Parish Council wreath as he does every year.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 18th November 2023 at the usual time of 7.00 pm

**Meeting Closed**

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

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