**MINUTES OF SANTON DOWNHAM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY 18 DECEMBER 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

**Present:** Mr Michael Mackender (Chairman) Mr Adrian Baugh (Parish Councillor) Mr Andrew Butcher, (Vice Chairman) Mr Paul Brown (Parish Councillor)

Mrs Sylvia East (Parish Clerk) Mr Kim Daplyn (Parish Councillor)

**In attendance**: Cllr Victor Lukanuik (County Councillor)

**Members of the public**: Mrs Christine Field, Mr Ian & Mrs Jayne Harper

1. **Chairmans Welcome**
2. The Floor was opened to the general public . Mrs Field advised she was acting as a representative for Ms Sayer. It was agreed she would be able to make representation when the matter was reached on the Agenda. Mr and Mrs Harper were asked if they would like to respond to an issue of speeding on our village roads. It was noted it was intended discussing the general matter of speed but this had been omitted from the Agenda. However, since this was a general concern of the village and since Mr & Mrs Harper were in attendance, it was agreed the matter should be discussed. Mr Harper mentioned there is an official Bus Stop outside of their house which is no longer in use, presumably because it is too dangerous to actually stop there. There also have been numerous accidents in this area and because of this it was questioned why we cannot have a 20 or 30 mph speed limit from this junction right through the village and possibly even upto the junction re-joining the B1107 to Brandon? Cllr. Lukanuik said he would see if he could find funding for a case to be put forward, but warned this was a long winded issue and could take upto 2 years. The cost would likely be between £5-£10k. We would have to make a strong case for such a change of speed and there is no guarantee of this being enforced. However, Cllr Lukanuik agreed this is a dangerous junction. Mr Daplyn added the traffic needs slowing down at this junction especially given the additional flow of traffic accessing and exiting Little Lodge.

Cllr Lukanuik agreed he would do his best.

1. **Apologies**  these were received from Mrs Ann Landells and Mrs Debbie Cock
2. **Declaration of Interest** there were none

5**) Minutes** of the last meeting held on Monday, 6th November were signed as a true record

6) **Parish Clerk’s Report**

**Financial**

* The Clerk advised the balance stands at £12,770.66 and a copy of the latest Statement was given to all Parish Councillors. Payments outgoing since the previous Statement were £137.54 for SALC subscription, £260.22 for a Grit Bin (although it was noted the Bank had in fact shown £200.22), £783.00 second half Clerk Salary and expenses, £300 to Mary Pritchard for the purchase of trees for the Village Green.

**The Oak**

* Mrs Field on behalf of Ms Sayer restated Ms Sayer had not raised a request for any work to this tree and reiterated Ms Sayer did not believe she had any responsibility for the Oak’s maintenance.

Mrs Field quoted the Clerk having stated in the October meeting she was seeking legal advice.

The Clerk clarified she had not mentioned seeking legal advice only that she would do more research on the matter and in fact none of this was conclusive. The Clerk stated she could not seek legal advice without seeking the permission of the Parish Council for such an expense, which has not been raised. The Clerk questioned the sense in spending valuable financial resources on this matter and suggested on this particular issue it would possibly be correct to accept Parish Council

responsibility. This of course is not a decision the Clerk can make and must be dealt with by a vote between the Parish Councillors. In an attempt to make the overall situation clearer to all

the Clerk had been advised by the Tree Officer of his decision to place a TPO on the tree. However,

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there had been some misinterpretation between departments and in fact the Planning approval was received for a minor cut back of no more than 3 metres. Following on from this the Clerk had asked for two Arborists to give quotations. At this point the Clerk passed on the matter for the Chairman to take forward. The Chairman advised two quotations had been received, one for £1,050 and another for £400. Whilst discussing the matter with one of the Arborists the Chairman advised his reaction had been similar to that of the Tree Officer in that he stated this tree to a perfectly healthy specimen, clearly located within a forestry village with many houses having trees overhanging into their gardens so why was the Parish Council even considering having the tree cut back at all.? The conclusion reached by this Arborist was if any pruning were to be considered, this should be limited as he strongly considered too heavy a cut back would affect the ongoing health of this tree. The Clerk advised the Tree Officer had made a clear statement he would be taking an interest in this and indeed all of the village owned trees and therefore it is important whatever we agreed to do we must take even more care in future. The Chairman made the comment if at this point the Council chose to have what amounts to only a small pruning of these branches and we chose the £400 quotation, this would effectively wipe out almost all of the last four years rent on the land. It seemed an impasse was met at this point and the Chairman asked for the matter to be put forward to the next meeting, giving the Parish Council more time to consider both the issue of whether to prune or not to prune and also the overriding issue of maintenance responsibility. This is a brief version of a lengthy discussion and the bottom line will be this matter should be considered carefully by the Parish Council in its totality and a vote will take place at the next meeting.

Grit Bins

* The Parish Clerk advised on the lengthy attempt to obtain an answer as to whether or not grit would be dropped into our new grit bin, which we are not able to site until such time as we actually obtain permission . We have received an answer to our application and now await the permission to be granted.

**7. Parish Councillors Reports**

* Andrew Butcher referred to the gypsies camping on the village green over the summer and suggested we should have a sign put up possibly referring to the law on such overnight camping. The consensus of opinion was a sign should be erected and the Parish Clerk will take this onboard.

8.**County and District Councillors Report**

* Cllr Lukanuik gave thanks for the kind invitation to attend the Christmas Carol Service in the Village Hall and advised all Councillors invited along with their guests had been very impressed yet again and thoroughly enjoyed the evening.
* The matter of the Green Road hedge cutting was raised again and C|lr Lukanuik said he has been chasing this but will do so again.
* The Parish Clerk raised the matter of the problems on the junction near the Forestry Office and

The house on the corner that is quite regularly hit by large vehicles . The work has been agreed with Highways months ago but still remains outstanding Cllr Lukanuik advised there is a shortage of staff which has likely held this and many other works up but he will chase this matter.

9.**Chairman’s Report**

* The Chairman advised he and Michael Finch had erected the road safety mirror opposite the Old Post Office and also re-installed the Village Hall sign.
* The problem of the overhanging vegetation surrounding the forestry public toilets remains an issue that requires sorting out with the Forestry.
* The issue raised by Mr Brown at the previous meeting was shelved as it had been agreed the track behind these houses in fact is recorded in the Deeds as being the responsibility of the householders concerned.

**Date of Next Meeting – Monday, 22nd January 2024 at 7.00 pm**

**Meeting Closed at 8.05 pm**

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