

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 7.45pm at Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School

Present – Cllr. David Hall (Chairman), Cllr. Nick Frost (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Clare Paul, Cllr. Matthew Miller, Cllr. Dale Spree, Cllr. Mike Stanton (District and County Councillor)

In attendance – Kelly de Silva (Clerk) and thirteen members of the public

140. Preliminaries

Chairmans welcome

Cllr. Hall welcomes the Councillors and members of the public to the meeting with an explanation of Parish Council meeting etiquette, fire evacuation procedures and domestics.

Apologies for absence – Cllr. Peter Loxston, Cllr. Paul Carpenter, Cllr. Ginnine Herridge, Cllr. Nick Pearce, Mark Harvey

Approve and sign minutes of the previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd November 2022 were agreed by all to be accurate and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of interests and dispensations – Cllr. Miller declares an interest in Minute 141 planning application 22/02520/COL and will abstain from any vote.

Questions and comments from the public – Two members of the public are present to object to planning application 22/0252/COL. They inform a full outline of their objections to the planning application has been submitted to the SSDC planning portal.

The Chair of the Recreation Ground is present regarding the 23/24 precept allocation request for the rec. They inform it is financially frightening times with costs increasing exponentially. They inform the costs for electricity alone for the community centre could increase to £2000 per month.

The Chair, deputy chair and treasurer of the community shop are present regarding the 23/24 precept allocation. They express their gratitude to the PC for the continued support of the shop.

Cllr. Hall informs the precept is a levy on the Parish by the PC as the precepting authority. Any allocation is considered a grant. The budget and precept will not be finalised at this meeting. There will be a period of consideration before being finalised in January.

A representative of the speed action group is present to offer an update. They report 467 surveys have been distributed by the group to each household within the Parish. They have received a response rate of 38 combined with another communication on the matter from a resident.

They report the consensus of those who responded is that there is a speeding issue across the Parish. A portfolio is planned to present to the Parish Council in the new year.

A member of the East Lambrook School Rooms committee is present to request the PC consider a grant application for the project. They explain the school rooms is a small venue with big opportunities. They express gratitude to the PC for a grant of £1000 towards the first phase. Once phase one of the works is completed; their reserve pot will be zero. It will be phase two which will require further funding and support.

The applicant for planning application 22/0732/LBC is present to answer any questions.

1 Signed by the Chair

Date.....

141. Planning

22/02894/FUL - Rainbow Place, Stembridge, Martock, Somerset. TA12 6BL –

Development of 3 detached dwellings on land to the south

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council agreed the following response:

The PC support the application although considerations should be made to ensure adequate drainage is in place to mitigate water runoff in an area that is already prone to surface flooding. The current roof elevation should allow for the installation of solar panels without them impacting the street view in a rural area.

22/02520/COL - New Cross Farmhouse. New Cross, South Petherton, Somerset. TA13

5HD - Certificate of lawfulness Application for the existing use of the dwelling for wellness classes/workshops

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council agreed the following response:

The PC acknowledge the comments from residents submitted on the application and have no further comments.

22/03061/HOU - Wittering's Barn. South Hay Farm, South Petherton, Somerset. TA13

5HQ - First Floor extension and alterations to rear kitchen with minor internal alterations

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council agreed the following response:

The PC support this planning application and have no further comments

22/03081/HOU - Town Furlong. Folly Road, Kingsbury Episcopi, Martock, Somerset.

TA12 6BH - Demolition of existing single storey extension and erection of new two storey extension to the rear, single storey extension to the side and the rear together with associated internal alterations

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council agreed the following response:

The PC support this planning application and have no further comments

22/0732/LBC – Dudmoor Corner. Dudmoor, Kingsbury Episcopi, Martock, Somerset.

TA12 6AT – Repointing of gable end and crack repair to front elevation using Helibar system

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council agreed the following response:

The PC support this planning application and have no further comments

142. District Councillor and County Councillor reports

Cllr. Hall thanks the District and County Councillors for the circulation of their report and wishes to draw attention to the financial situation. Cllr. Stanton reports everybody is feeling the financial pinch with costs increasing at a disproportionate extent. Cllr. Stanton expresses concern over funding for adult social services; with an increasingly elderly population and less money available to provide care and services.

Cllr. Stanton reports the bridge on Footpath 17/55 has now been closed after close monitoring. Cllr. Stanton informs the footpath officer has informed due to the Christmas holidays, quotes from contractors have been delayed and are expected by 13th January 2023. The works should be completed within 6 months; but it is difficult to offer an exact completion date. Cllr. Hall thanks Cllr. Stanton for his continued assistance and support with the remedial action required on this bridge and on 17/44 footpath bridge.

Cllr. Frost enquires if there has been any progress with the Phosphate credit proposal. Cllr. Stanton responds it is happening – details of the proposals are available on the SSDC website. Cllr. Stanton explains both Somerset West & Taunton and SSDC have progressed with an agreement with NTrack for phosphate mitigation which has presented a number of legalities requiring finalisation. The proposal is likely to have a significant impact on housing developers, but no actual costings are known.

Cllr. Hall enquires if there is any update on the progression of small improvement schemes. Cllr. Stanton responds there is liable to be no budget for the next 5 years for these due to the current financial constraints.

Cllr. Miller asks if a small improvement road safety project were to be considered could the

Parish Council independently finance it. Cllr. Stanton responds any statutory highways work would be the responsibility of SCC Highways authority. Cllr. Paul informs some signage and works can potentially be funded by the PC but need the approval of Highways before commencing, but highways schemes do need to be completed by the Highways Authority.

143. Co-option for the Parish Councillor Vacancy

The Clerk reports there has been applications from four candidates circulated to the PC for consideration. These are Mark Harvey, Ian Stanton, Neil Baldock and Carol Mason.

The Clerk explains the procedure for the co-option process.

The Parish Council propose all applicants are considered for the post – all agree.

The Parish Council resolve to hold the vote by a paper ballot – all agree.

the Parish.

Ms. Mason responds she has been on the PC in the past, initiated the community shop and has been an active member of the shop committee since.

Ms. Mason informs they are community minded, has business knowledge and acknowledges the balanced needs and benefits for the community. Ms. Mason informs the community has not come back together post covid; groups work hard but overlap. By channelling this energy and enthusiasm, community work could progress more efficiently.

Mr. Baldock responds he is enthusiastic and eager to be considered for the role. Mr. Baldock has lived in the Parish for just over 12 months and wishes to embrace and participate in community life and do something for the community to play their part.

The Clerk distributes paper for the ballot and explains the successful candidate must have an absolute majority. After the first round if an absolute majority is not reached, the process continues until a majority is reached. The Chairman has a casting vote in the event of a tie between candidates.

After two rounds of voting, the vote comes to a casting vote from the Chair as no majority is reached. Cllr. Hall's casting vote is for Ms. Carol Mason.

Cllr. Hall thanks all the candidates for standing for the position.

The Parish Council resolve Ms. Mason may sign the declaration of office and join the meeting. The Clerk reads the declaration which is duly signed and Cllr. Mason joins the meeting.

144. Civility and Respect Pledge

The Parish Council agree unanimously (proposed by Cllr. Paul, seconded by Cllr. Miller) to pass a resolution to sign the civility and respect pledge by agreeing to adhere to the following statements:

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council will:

- Treat all councillors, clerk and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their role.
- Put in place a training programme for councillors and staff.
- Sign up to Code of Conduct for councillors.
- Have in place good governance arrangements in place including, staff contracts, and Dignity at Work Policy. Commit to seek professional help at initial stages should civility and respect issues arise. Commit to calling out bullying and harassment when if and when it happens.
- Continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to being a role model / champion council e.g., via Local Council Award Scheme.
- Support the continued lobbying for the change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council is the 814th Council in England and Wales to sign the pledge.

145. PC meeting location change

Cllr. Paul requests this item is finalise.

Cllr. Miller informs the current venue is not welcoming and is not fully accessible to the whole community, with facilities not up to standard and inadequate. Cllr. Miller reports St Martins Church room is ready and available with adequate adult seating arrangements.

Cllr. Hall informs he understands Cllr. Millers' sentiments with the small chairs not being ideal, but states the venue is warm and accessible.

Cllr. Hall proposes the PC meeting venue is reviewed in February ahead of the new fiscal year.

Cllr. Hall offers to speak to the school to discuss alternative seating arrangements.

The Clerk will investigate the possibility of acquiring adult size chairs at no cost.

Cllr. Miller will obtain costings and availability for the Church Rooms.

Cllr. Spree reports that the Church Rooms is not as accessible as the school for those with difficulties walking. Cllr. Frost adds that when the PC meetings were held in the Church Rooms during the pandemic, the bells were an interruption to the proceedings.

146. Emergency community contacts

The Clerk reports the Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Unit are developing a database of Somerset Emergency Community Contacts who can be used as a first point of contact when an emergency is happening in a local area.

The Somerset Local Authorities civil contingencies partnership wish to invite Parish Councils to nominate up to 3 trusted people to act as a SECC contact. The main role of a SECC is:

To be a first point of contact during emergencies

To liaison with Parish/Town Councils

Be able to liaise with local residents with identified roles, i.e. Neighbourhood watch, flood wardens, village agents

Be able to identify and pass information about vulnerable residents

Identify severe and dangerous road conditions restricting transport

Gathering, receiving and passing information from and to community

To have good communications via access to phones, email and internet

Be available to contact within the parish.

It is agreed the SECC contacts for Kingsbury Episcopi would be Cllr. Clare Paul, Cllr. Nick Frost and Cllr. Carol Mason.

Clerk to update the registration form

147. Digital communications / Parish Council website

Cllr. Miller reports that Cllr. Herridge has almost finished setting up the initial site. It has some good features for information and services. Uploading information can be done immediately in the event of an emergency, flooding, or road closure.

Cllr. Hall thanks Cllr. Miller and Cllr. Herridge for their work and requests thought is given to how the new website will be launched as this will be a significant step in the PC communicating electronically and effectively within the community.

The Clerk asks if the PC would support setting up a Facebook page as this is a quick and effective way of sharing posts and information with the community. All agree.

148. Budget and Precept planning

Cllr. Hall reiterates the budget and precept will not be agreed until the January PC meeting, but further discussions will happen over the grant distribution of the precept. The tax base figures have not yet been distributed by SSDC – this should be circulated in the coming days.

Cllr. Hall informs it is a challenging time financially for everyone with all costs increasing. The Parish Council is no exception – we are a PC that serves all Parishioners with the provision of local services. Cllr. Hall explains the current precept is average compared to nationwide figures; but in comparison to similar sized local Parishes the precept is already considerably

higher. Cllr. Hall informs personally he could not raise the precept higher than the rate of inflation, and the PC should consider this.

The Clerk reports after contacting 19 local groups to ascertain if PC grant provision was possibly required, 6 submissions were received from the following:

May Festival - £1674.00

Parrett Talk - £500.00

Community Shop - £10,000

Recreation Ground - £9,000

East Lambrook School Room - £7,500

Sub total of £28,674

Kingsbury Episcopi Primary school up to £60,000 for work on the outside area.

The Clerk informs this with the day to day costs of the PC would equate to a precept of £60,000 which would be a 50% increase per Band D property which is hard to justify during a cost of living crisis.

Cllr. Paul states the PC do not have the money – it is not appropriate at this moment in time to be increasing the precept – the PC should work within the means of the precept as it currently stands at £40,000. Cllr. Paul continues it would be ideal to assist all groups with funding, but prudent financial planning is required.

Cllr. Miller agrees it would not be appropriate to raise the precept in the current financial climate. It is heart breaking to not have a large pot of money to distribute to local causes which do amazing things for our community.

The Clerk informs the PC of the initial recommended distribution to keep the precept at its current rate.

The Burial Ground - £5000 – this is a sinking fund as in the future the PC will be required to purchase further ground for the interment of Parishioners. There is currently £29,080 in this sub account.

General Admin costs (day to day running of the PC) - £19,000

Grants- £2000

Recreation Ground - £8000

The community shop - £6000.

The Clerk reports the community shop were informed in March 2022 by the Chair at the time *“that initially the PC precepted monies to the shop to assist with the setting up costs, and although the PC should support it as a valuable asset to the Parish, the shop should not be relying on the PC each year, especially as the shop returns a lump sum to the recreation ground each year as the shop only pays £500 a year for rent.”*

Cllr. Hall recommends the PC review the applications submitted on their merits prior to the January meeting. Cllr. Hall recommends the Clerk and Chair prepare a suggestion on allocations based on a 5% increase on the precept to be discussed at the January meeting. Cllr. Hall requests all Parish Councillors are present at the January meeting. Cllr. Hall informs there is no right answer – it is a reality of life, that all costs are rising. It is inevitable difficult financial decisions will be required in the new year and there is a requirement to make sure the PC are not underproviding.

149. Grant application from Langport Area CIO - £1000

It is agreed that although the work of the CIO is commendable and in the past the PC has supported these initiatives in neighbouring Parishes; due to the financial constraints the PC is unable to provide grant funding at this time due to funding focuses that are required within our Parish.

150. Wildlife group update

In the absence of Cllr. Loxston there is no update.

151. St. Martins Exploratory Garden

Cllr. Miller reports it is planned for the PC to take on the closed Churchyard as caretakers of the grounds. Some of the walkways may require repair work and it is proposed to make the grounds into an exploratory garden community space in conjunction with the diocese. Cllr. Miller informs last month he met with the nature director with a further meeting planned with the building and planning director with the diocese. There are no presentations yet, as the Church will need to approve any plans first, but there is an appetite to work together to transform the space into a community asset for everyone.

152. Lock up update

Cllr. Hall reports the lock up has been decorated for Christmas by Cllr. Miller and Cllr. Jefferey. Cllr. Hall expresses the gratitude of the PC for their work. Cllr. Miller reports Cllr. Jefferey is still working behind the scenes on the PC acquisition of the lock up.

153. Churchyard update

The Clerk reports there has been no update from the Church since October. There was also no submission from the Church with regards to ascertaining if any grant funding which may be required in the 23/24 fiscal year.

154. Footpaths and bridleways

The Clerk reports the footpath closure on Footpath 17/44 is still in place whilst works commence on the bridge. The bridge on Footpath 17/55 at Mid Lambrook is now also closed due to the deterioration of the Bridge. Signs are installed on the site, but the initial 21-day emergency closure order could be extended up to 6 months. There are two alternative diversion routes in place. SCC report as the bridge is now closed it will be treated as a priority but due to availability of work teams and materials SCC cannot give a date for the works to commence.

155. Highway matters

Cllr. Paul reports there is an enormous pothole on Lower Burrow leaking water. Cllr. Paul informs it has been reported via the SCC reporting app and fix my street. The Clerk agrees to report it too.

Cllr. Mason informs of several potholes on the Burrow Hill Road. The Clerk informs these can be reported directly to SCC on the website. The more people who do this, the higher the likelihood of being repaired quicker.

If you notice an issue on a public right of way such as a footpath, bridle path, restricted byways, or byways open to all traffic, this can be reported directly to Somerset County Council by the website links below.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

<https://roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map>

156. Flooding

Cllr. Hall reports there has been surface flooding on Little Lane. The Clerk will report this via the SCC reporting app.

157. Kingsbury Mayfair update

In the absence of Cllr. Carpenter there is no update

158. Neighbourhood Plan

Nothing to report

159. Financial matters

Cheques

Mrs K de Silva	Clerk Salary – November	£418.50
Mrs K de Silva	Clerks' expenses Book of Stamps - £7.65 Large letter postage - £1.45 Printer Ink - £16.00	£25.10
Matthew Miller	Reimbursement for Xmas decs for the lock up (Min 129)	£312.79
Pauline Warren	Re-imburement from the wildlife group subaccount for Parrett Talk insert	£26.57
SSDC	Parish Ranger fee October	£192.07
Netwise	Website package, annual hosting, support, and maintenance, 1 year domain registration	£1138.80
Mrs Sally Brookes	Annual payment for the Burial Ground maintenance	£1600.00
	Total	£3713.83

Cllr. Frost proposes all payments are made, Cllr. Spree seconds the motion; all in favour.

160. Other items for discussion

Noting to report

161. Date and Time of the next meeting

Wednesday 4th January 2022 at 7.30pm at Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School.

With no further business to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.10pm

Kelly de Silva
Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Clerk
10 Bay Hill, Ilminster, Somerset. TA19 0AT.
07701 053 903

7 Signed by the Chair

Date.....