

Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 7.30pm at Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School

Present – Cllr. David Hall (Chairman), Cllr. Nick Frost (Vice-Chair), Cllr. Peter Loxston, Cllr. Matthew Miller, Cllr. Carol Mason, Cllr. Richard Wilkins, (County Councillor), Cllr. Mike Stanton (District Councillor)

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

204. 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. Ginnine Herridge, Cllr. Nick Pearce, Cllr. Richard Wilkins (County Councillor)

Approve and sign minutes of the previous meeting – The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 1st February 2022 were agreed by all to be accurate and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of interests and dispensations – None

Questions and comments from the public – SP reports there will be a community litter pick in Kingsbury Episcopi on Saturday 18th March and in East Lambrook on Sunday 19th March – further details can be found in the noticeboards.

SP informs the agenda for this meeting and minutes are not yet up to date on the new PC website.

Clerk to re-send to Cllr. Herridge for publication

Cllr. Frost informs he has recently attended a Westmoor features group meeting regarding the scheduled works at Midelney pumping station and spillway. Cllr. Frost informs the footpath at Midelney will be closed during the works.

Cllr. Frost reports he has participated in a meeting to discuss noise mitigation and expected behaviour with 'Barewest' regarding a planned event in Thorney during the first week in September 2023. Cllr. Frost informs the group have been proactive in discussions and will contribute to fundraising for local causes.

If you are aware of a local group or worthy cause which is looking for funding contributions, please contact Cllr. Frost directly.

205. Planning

23/00398/TCA The Bristers. The Triangle, Kingsbury Episcopi, Martock, Somerset. TA12

6AZ – Notification of intent to fell No.1 tree within a conservation area

The PC agreed to no comment on the application.

23/00199/FUL Sunrise. Stembridge, Kingsbury Episcopi, Martock, Somerset. TA12 6BW

– Erection of a replacement dwelling

The PC agreed to no comment on the application.

Unapproved signage within the Parish

Cllr. Miller reports there has been permanent signage erected in the Parish in several locations. The reported signage exceeds the size as set out in the SSDC guidelines. Cllr. Miller states KE is a small rural village and signage should comply with the guidelines and surroundings.

1 Signed by the Chair

Date.....

It is agreed for the PC to write to the businesses to request compliance with signage policies.
Clerk to write to the businesses to request signs comply

206. District and County Councillor report

Cllr. Hall asks for an update on the considerable amount of road closures throughout the Parish recently. Cllr. Stanton responds some of the road closures have been for necessary repairs and utility works – although there has been some indiscipline regarding a number of the road closures and diversions.

Cllr. Stanton reports there has been two full council meetings to agree the central budget and constitution for the Unitary Council. This has been a huge undertaking which has now been agreed ahead of the new council vesting day.

Discussions are ongoing regarding planning committees.

Cllr. Frost asks if there is any progress on the phosphate topic. Cllr. Stanton responds the official solutions are sewage treatment plants or buying phosphate credits to mitigate phosphate levels. Cllr. Stanton informs phosphate credits are only just starting to work but this solution has implications as it is an expensive and a complexed process.

Cllr. Miller enquires about the devolution of assets from District to PC's. Cllr. Miller refers to a correspondence circulated to the PC regarding a parcel of land within the Parish and ownership of the land. Cllr. Miller informs the Clerk has made extensive enquiries to District to obtain an asset register of SSDC maintained assets throughout the Parish but to no avail. Cllr. Stanton requests to be copied into the requests sent to SSDC.

Clerk to forward communications to Cllr. Stanton regarding devolution of assets and requests for a SSDC register of assets within the Parish.

207. Co-option for the casual vacancy on the Parish Council

The Clerk reports there have been several enquiries regarding the current vacancy, but only one application was formally submitted by Mr. Neil Baldock. The Clerk informs the PC can either re-advertise the vacancy or consider the applicant who is present.

Cllr. Hall informs Mr. Baldock has previously applied for a PC casual vacancy and regularly attends PC meetings.

Cllr. Paul proposes the casual vacancy is filled by the co-option of Mr. Baldock, Cllr. Miller seconds the motion; all in favour. MOTION CARRIED.

Cllr. Baldock is invited to join the meeting. Cllr. Baldock reads and signs the declaration of acceptance of office.

Cllr. Baldock to return the register of interests to the Clerk within 28 days.

208. Appointment of an internal auditor AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

The Clerk reports ahead of the AGAR being submitted to the external auditors PKF Littlejohn, an internal auditor is required to be appointed. Historically, this has been CP.

All agree to ask CP if they would be willing to complete the 2022/23 internal audit.

Clerk to contact CP.

209. Review of PC meeting location and dates

The Clerk informs that further to the kind offer from the Community Centre of a space to hold PC meetings, Cllr. Pearce and the Clerk have investigated possible dates and times available at the venue. Unfortunately, there is no availability for the dates or times proposed unless the PC meetings were to commence at a later time of 8pm.

Cllr. Miller suggests the current venue at the school is not conducive, acceptable, or comfortable.

A discussion ensues on different venues within the Parish and the possibility of acquiring/storing adult sized chairs at the school. SP informed this option had been explored in the past and the school did not have adequate storage space to offer.

Cllr. Hall recommends the PC will work within the current venue as it is available, free of charge and in a central location until a viable alternative has been found.

210. Annual Parish Meeting

The Clerk informs there is no availability at the Community Centre on the dates proposed at the March PC meeting. The Clerk enquires if the St Martins church room would be a viable option. All agree for the Clerk to contact the Church rooms.

The Clerk informs although enquiries have been made to possible guest speakers for the APM no responses have yet been received.

211. Digital communications / Parish Council website

Cllr. Miller acknowledges the comments made during the public question time regarding the publication of minutes and agendas. Cllr. Miller explains the division of labour with regards to the website informing Cllr. Herridge is responsible for the uploading of agendas, minutes, and PC documents with Cllr. Miller focusing on notices and events.

Cllr. Miller informs there has been some teething issues with the set up of the new Parish Councillor email addresses. Cllr. Miller will again attempt to set up the email addresses for those not yet activated but informs the importance of activating the addresses immediately as it is a time consuming exercise to keep repeating.

212. Wildlife Group update

Cllr. Loxston informs the Wildlife insurance has now been sourced with the Clerk waiting for the paperwork and policy to be received.

Cllr. Loxston informs the group are building relations with the school and work is ongoing for displays for the May Festival.

Cllr. Miller suggests a 'bat watch' event similar to those held at Hestercombe may be worth considering by the group. Cllr. Loxston will feedback this suggestion back to the group.

213. St Martins Churchyard / Exploratory Garden update

Cllr. Miller informs an initial proposed plan for the project has been circulated to the PC for comment and consideration.

Cllr. Mason and Cllr. Loxston congratulate Cllr. Miller on an excellent plan submitted.

Cllr. Miller proposes the PC approve for Cllr. Miller to go to tender with acquiring three quotes from architects for the next stage of the project. Cllr. Hall seconds the motion; all in favour – MOTION CARRIED.

Cllr. Hall requests a visit is organised for the Parish Councillors to visit the site.

Cllr. Frost suggests the plan is presented to the community at the Annual Parish Meeting (APM). Cllr. Miller agrees citing the project will be a 3-5 year plan that will include local groups and stakeholders with fundraising efforts to accompany the funds allocated by the PC within the 23/24 budget.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

The Clerk has the paperwork that is required to be filled in and signed by the PCC for the transfer of the Churchyard to the PC. The Clerk informs once this internal documentation has been completed the transferral can be completed. Cllr. Miller will hand the documents to the PCC.

214. Lock up update

The Clerk informs there has been no update from the Land Registry yet.

A discussion ensues regarding the key to the lock up as there is only one and it is a very specialised key. Cllr. Loxston offers to forge a second key as a back-up – all agree.

215. SID update

SP reports the figures are similar with vehicles travelling between 30-40mph on the Thorney Road. SP informs the figures are being submitted to the local Speedwatch groups.

216. Somerset Council Statement of Community Involvement consultation

It is agreed that Parish Councillors will comment on the consultation independently.

217. Footpath and Bridleways

The Clerk informs there has been no further update on the scheduled works on Footpaths 17/44 and 17/55.

Cllr. Loxston informs two Parishioners have reported significant issues with dog fouling bags dumped on the Pulpitts Way - with 14 dog waste bags dumped at the entrance to the path.

Cllr. Loxston asks if the PC could consider the installation of a dog waste bin in this area.

Cllr. Spree informs this is an issue throughout the Parish which needs addressing.

Clerk to add the item to the next agenda

Cllr. Paul informs there are concerns regarding the cost implications of installing and emptying dog bins. It is visible in other Parishes that authorities do not collect the waste when they should which results in full and overflowing bins creating further problems.

Cllr. Paul suggests the PC consider designing temporary signage to engage the community in a concerted effort to combat the issue of dog fouling within the Parish.

Cllr. Miller informs he is not in favour of temporary signage as it is a temporary solution and requests the PC consider allocating money in the next budget for the installation of more dog bins.

Cllr. Loxston states the issue is unpleasant, unnecessary, irresponsible and a health concern.

Cllr. Loxston recommends articles informing and explaining the issues are included in local publications and on the PC website educating people on the hazards of dog waste and the cost implications of providing more bins.

Cllr. Hall informs the PC need to consider all of the suggestions and if there is demand from the Parishioners for more dog waste bins then this should be considered.

218. Highway matters

The Clerk reports a formal letter of concern has been sent to SCC Highways and to the District & County Councillors raising concerns over the potholes and highway maintenance issues throughout the Parish. A response is yet to be received.

The Clerk informs there has been little in the way of responses from County or District recently and can only conclude this is due to efforts being diverted into the vesting day of the Unitary authority.

Cllr Paul informs the issues with receiving responses from local authorities is not just with PC's and Clerks -it extends to MP's too as the amalgamation of the authorities takes place.

Parishioners are urged to continue to report road defects such as potholes, blocked drains/gullies and verge damage to assist with building a robust case for repairs directly at;

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

or

<https://www.fixmystreet.com/>

219. Floods

The Clerk reports there has been ongoing communications with Highways, the internal drainage board, and the flood co-ordinators regarding the Gawbridge culvert. The latest response in an effort to resolve the issues is as follows;

"It is proposed to install a trash screen on the inlet to the road culvert where Kingsbury Rhyne flows under Hawthorn Hill, together with repairs to the edge of carriageway and headwalls for the culvert. Reinforcement work will be undertaken approximately 100 metres downstream of the road culvert where the water flow on Kingsbury Rhyne has the potential to undermine the verge and carriageway.

The silt in the section of the Rhyne downstream from the road culvert outflow to the field entrance will be removed during the IDB annual maintenance programme to improve the flow of the water as it emerges from the road culvert.

Considering the cost of work on the road culvert together with the proposed reinforcement of the bank of the Rhyne, the earliest date for the work would be the 24/25 County Highway Financial Programme, but that date could not be guaranteed."

Cllr. Frost thanks the Clerk for the work done on this with Cllr. Carpenter stating although it is not the best news, at least the maintenance is now included on the work schedule.

220. Kingsbury May Festival update

Cllr. Carpenter informs although he is no longer on the May Festival committee; he is still an active member. Cllr. Carpenter reports on behalf of the committee that all preparations and plans are going well for the event on 1st May.

Cllr. Carpenter reports the PC has previously agreed a payment towards to the toilets following the precedent set of previous years. The treasurer of the May Festival committee requests if a large payment of £1200 made to the contractors who organise the parking for the event could be paid via the PC to save the group paying the additional VAT saving approximately £240 in expenditure, with the May festival paying the net cost.

Cllr. Hall informs reclaiming the VAT would be inline with standard accounting practice for village events everywhere. Cllr. Frost proposes the invoice is paid by the PC with the May Festival paying the net cost, all agree – MOTION CARRIED.

Cllr. Carpenter thanks the PC on behalf of the May Festival Committee. This along with the PC support in paying for the toilets will save the May Festival in excess of £500.

Cllr. Miller enquires about the road closures for the festival. Cllr. Carpenter agrees to discuss the road closures with the committee and respond to Cllr. Miller's queries in due course.

221. Neighbourhood plan

Nothing to report

222. Giffords Orchard

Item discussed during Minute 206

223. Financial matters

Cheques

Mrs K de Silva	Clerk salary – February	£418.50
Mrs K de Silva	Clerks' expenses- Printer Ink	£16.00
RHS Groups insurance	Wildlife group insurance	£90.00
SSDC	Parish Ranger January	£192.07
B. Irvine	Wildlife Group – re- imbursement	£26.37
	Total	£742.94

Cllr. Paul proposes all payments are made, Cllr. Frost seconds the motion; all in favour – MOTION CARRIED

Cllr. Miller asks the Clerk for an update on online banking.
The Clerk reports no further progress has been made on this.

The Clerk informs the PC that it is with great sadness that she has handed her notice in to the Chair with immediate effect on 28th February 2023 so this issue should be resolved by her successor.

The Clerk explains the decision to leave the PC was not an easy one and is solely due to

5 Signed by the Chair

Date.....

needing fulltime employment for the financial security of her family.
The PC express their thanks to the Clerk for her time with the PC and understand the position of the Clerk.

If you are interested in the post of being a Clerk/RFO for Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council it is a varied and interesting role, part-time, home based with flexible working of 29 hours per month. Applicants must be available for the PC meetings held on the 1st Wednesday of the month. For further information please contact the Clerk or the Chairman Cllr. David Hall. Please send a CV with a covering letter to kingsbury-episcopi.pc@hotmail.com

224. Other items for discussion

Cllr. Carpenter reports there will be a big Sunday lunch at 12pm on 7th May at St Martins Church rooms to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III. There will be a competition for the best crown. For more information please see the latest edition of the Parrett Talk or contact Sally Brooks.

Cllr. Carpenter informs the organisers of the event would like to make a grant application to the PC coronation fund for £250.

Cllr Carpenter to request a grant application form is submitted ahead of the next PC meeting.

225. Date and Time of the next meeting

Wednesday 5th April 2023 at 7.30 pm at Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School

With no further business to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.00pm

Please e-mail any items for the agenda to the Clerk: kingsbury-episcopi.pc@hotmail.com or clerk@kingsburyepiscopi.org.uk

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