

KINGSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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17th September 2023

Minutes of the Kingston Parish Council meeting held on 13th September 2023 at 1900 hours in Kingston Community Pavilion.

Present: Cllr Parnell, Cllr Fry, Cllr Bewick, Cllr Hoare, Cllr Adams

16 members of the public were present.

Minutes

1. Apologies and reasons for absence
Apologies received from Cllr Douglas
2. The Chairman will invite Councillors to declare any interest they may have in the following agenda items.
No interests were declared.
3. Minutes of 12th July 2023 Parish Council Meeting and minutes of 9th August 2023 Extraordinary Parish Council meeting to be agreed and signed as a true record.
The minutes of the 12th July 2023 and the 9th August 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.
4. **Public Forum:** A period not exceeding 30 minutes is available for the public to express a view or ask a question on relevant matters on the following agenda.

Many members of the public wished to speak regarding item 9.1.

All speakers had the same concern and the issues raised are as follows –

- St Pancras Green is a sports field and was set up 60 years ago for the parish by residents who purchased the field as a recreation ground to be enjoyed by the parish.

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- Concerns that the re-naturing will detract from the main use of the field for sports and recreation.
- There is enough nature on the Downs so not clear why further re-naturing is required especially on the green.
- There are other areas which would benefit from re-wilding in the village.
- A path around the green would be a better use of funds.
- Residents felt this had been sprung on them without any discussion or publicity.
- Residents felt this project and KNRG had been set up secretly.
- The wildflower area is far too large and would impact on residents around the green. Queries as to how long the flowers and grass would be allowed to grow.

Members of the KNRG were present and raised the following points –

- KPC had approved the Mapping Project and agreed to the set up of KNRG as a working party of the council. The mapping project had been funded by SDNPA.
- The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.
- Wildflowers will encourage pollinators and insects to the area.
- The village green wildflower area has been a great success and many positive comments have been received regarding the nature site.
- KNRG are hoping that their proposal will enhance the green whilst creating bio-diversity and still allowing the green to be used for sports use.
- All papers are on the website, including minutes of the parish council meetings where the group has been discussed.
- KNRG has its own web page on the parish council website which explains the purpose of the group and details its objectives.
- All meeting discussions have been minuted for transparency.

A member of the public wished to discuss the councils memorial policy. She felt that a single memorial bench was not unreasonable. The council explained that it would be very difficult to manage in the future if many parishioners wanted a bench installed. The parish council owns limited land so space would be compromised. The council did think that there may be alternative options but would need to discuss it fully and investigate the options.

Cllr Parnell suggested agenda item 9.1 be brought forward for discussion. The council unanimously agreed.

The minutes remain in the agenda order.

5. Clerk and Councillor reports arising from the minutes of 12th July and 9th August 2023 not covered elsewhere in the agenda:

Nothing to report

6. Reports from other bodies: Written reports to be taken as read. The council can raise questions.

6.1. District Councillor Stella Spiteri

6.2. County Councillor Sarah Osborne

6.3. Kingston Action Group

Resolved: The reports were read, and contents were noted. No questions were raised.

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7. Report back from meetings attended by councillors on behalf of KPC:

- Kingston Action Group
- Nature Recovery Group
- Pavilion Committee

Cllr Hoare reported that KAG/KNRG has some cross over with future initiatives. They would like to add various statements regarding nature recovery to the PPS to include trees, Wildflower meadows, Lady's Smock bank, Kingston Fields. These statements can be added to the PPS. The clerk confirmed the village green grass contractor has agreed to leave the wildflower area uncut this year as requested by KAG.

Cllr Parnell reported from the Pavilion Committee. Sadly Terry Krejzl, Pavilion Chairman, has decided to step down from the committee due to work commitments. The council would like to thank Terry for his years of dedication and hard work ensuring that the pavilion runs smoothly. The parish council appreciates the substantial work involved.

Cllr Parnell confirmed that the meeting minutes are still outstanding and would be circulated as soon as received. The committee had a productive discussion regarding expenditure and noted that a lot of the expenditure from last year was one off payments, including the replacement bi-fold doors. There were some ideas on how to raise usage and revenue, but these would require further discussion. Changes will be suggested to KPC to the energy contract and broadband supplier for cost saving purposes.

8. Co-option of councillor - To receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and to Co-opt a candidate to fill the existing vacancy. Candidates will be given five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to members, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of KPC. This process will be carried out by adjourning the meeting to allow the candidate to speak. Where the Council wishes to discuss the merits of candidates and their personal attributes the Council will resolve to exclude the members of the press and public.

Action: Following the publication of the agenda the candidate decided to withdraw their application. The council agreed to advertise the position again for a further 4 weeks.

9. Kingston Nature Recovery Group –

9.1. To consider the group's proposal to allow an area of St Pancras Green to be sown with wildflowers.

Action: Following a lengthy discussion the parish council agreed that the initial proposal was very ambitious and would require further work and consultation with the parish. The council felt that the wildflower area and the unmown grass area were much too large for the green at this time. KNRG asked that a smaller area between the pavilion and the tennis court be sown with wildflower seeds this Autumn as a compromise.

The council asked KNRG to scale down the proposal and to include scaled diagrams of the project. This would help KPC with their deliberations and be much easier to envisage the impact on the green. The new proposal would then be reviewed and considered at the November meeting.

Resolved: The council unanimously agreed the following –

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- Unanimous agreement to plant crocus bulbs along the side of Mushroom field, no wider than 3ft.
- To turf strip the sloped edge between the tennis court and pavilion and sow a small area of wildflowers this Autumn.
- KPC will pay £3000 from the previously agreed Saxondown grant for financial year 2023-2024. This will be used to fund the planting at the green.

Note: Following the meeting KPC met with members of KNRG and agreed the exact location and size of the wildflower sowing by the tennis court. KPC are happy this will have no impact on users and will enhance the area.

- 9.2.** KNRG would like a separate mailbox to assist with their projects and running of the group. This would be dedicated to KNRG and run by the group. Council to consider the cost of an extra mailbox at £3.30 plus VAT per month.

Resolved: The parish council unanimously agreed to arrange for the mailbox to be set up.

10. Kingston Pavilion – Expenditure

- 10.1.** To consider the clerk report detailing the options for the energy renewal in March 2024

Resolved: The parish council unanimously agreed to the 1 year fixed contract with SSE (Choice plan) This will then be reviewed in March 2025

- 10.2.** To consider the clerk report detailing the options to change telephone/broadband provider.

Resolved: The parish council unanimously agreed to switch the telephone/broadband provider to Clear Business as detailed in the clerk report.

- 10.3.** To consider the budget of up to £1000 to install a new tapestry produced by parishioners.

Resolved: The parish council unanimously agreed to use the pavilion maintenance fund to cover the costs of this project up to £1000. The cost of this project includes the removal of one of the lights above the door.

11. Saxondown project funds: To receive updates from the project leads.

- 11.1.** To note the report from Cllr Bewick updating on the outdoor sports equipment for St Pancras Green.

Resolved: The report was noted, and no questions were raised. Work has begun and should take three weeks to complete.

Cllr Bewick confirmed that the areas around the equipment will be earthed, and grass seeded. The parish council would like to thank Shelaine Siepel for her support and effort to ensure the project ran smoothly. Shelaine confirmed she has received many positive comments regarding the installation of the new equipment.

12. Village green play area

- 12.1.** To acknowledge receipt of the Play Park Inspection report for August and agree any actions.

Action: The report was noted, and it was agreed that no repairs were required now. However, it was agreed that Cllr Fry will obtain quotes to make the suggested medium risk repairs as detailed in the report. That way the council can work through these without having to pay large sums in one go. It was also mentioned that customers from the pub are often using the benches at the play area and leaving empty glasses in the park. Cllr Fry agreed to contact

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the pub manager and ask that the play area is checked for empty glasses and that these are removed.

13. Traffic and Highways: To receive updates from Cllr Bewick

13.1. To note the report from Cllr Bewick regarding the Traffic Steering Group meeting.

Resolved: The report was noted, and no questions were raised. The TSG are just about to tender for the consultant having interviewed the ones deemed most suitable. Cllr Bewick would like to give a particular mention to Steve Pearce and thank him for his work and efforts with the Traffic Steering Group Project.

14. Rights of Way – to receive any updates from Cllr Adams/Cllr Hoare

Resolved: No updates to receive.

15. Parish Owned Trees – To consider the tree survey and recommendations made within it (Documents previously circulated). Clerk recommends arrangements are made to carry out the work as detailed in the 6 month plan.

Action: The council agreed that the clerk should work through the full report and where there is mention of dead wood/branches the tree should be recorded and a quote should be obtained for the work to remedy this.

The council agreed for the clerk to arrange for the felling of the dead apple tree on The Avenue as soon as possible.

16. Planning:

16.1. To receive a planning update report on ongoing planning applications from Cllr Hoare and to note applications received.

Resolved: Cllr Hoare advised that a new application had been received for Pantiles, Barn Close, Kingston, BN7 3PH. The application was for a replacement of an existing conservatory with one of the same dimensions, removal of a chimney, addition of 3no rooflights to the rear pitch. Cllr Hoare suggested the parish council should not comment on this application. The parish council unanimously agreed.

16.2.PPS – to agree the next steps for forming the Parish Priority Statement.

Action: The parish council unanimously agreed to set up a sub-committee to organise the consultation process and drafting of the PPS. The three councillors involved will be Cllr David Hoare, Cllr Charlotte Parnell, and Cllr Ian Douglas.

Cllr Hoare had met with Tom Warder, from Sussex Community Housing Hub. Tom has offered to help KPC with the survey and consultation process to enable KPC to produce a PPS. Tom has given an estimate of the fee to be £2000. AiRS (Action in Rural Sussex) would conduct the survey, provide the results and draft a PPS. The council agreed this seemed like a good idea however there were reservations regarding cost and how much time/effort should be allocated. It was agreed that Cllr Hoare would contact Tom Warder for a breakdown of fees and discuss the issue further. This would then be presented to the council.

It was agreed that a survey should be produced and perhaps a meeting held where the parish can put forward their thoughts and ideas. Both paper and electronic means should be used to ensure wide participation across the parish. The sub-committee will meet and agree the next steps.

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16.3. Sussex Community Housing Hub – Brief update from Cllr Douglas and Cllr Hoare following their meeting with the Sussex Community Housing Hub.

Resolved: Cllr Hoare explained that the meeting was initially organised to discuss affordable housing however the conversation soon turned to the creation of a PPS which is a priority for the council. Some discussion took place regarding Community Land Trusts but would need further meetings to enable a full report to be presented to the council.

17. Financial Matters

17.1. To approve the Bank reconciliations for August 2023.

Resolved: The bank reconciliations for August were reviewed and approved.

17.2. To approve and authorise accounts payable for September 2023 (as detailed on the payment list).

Resolved: The accounts payable were approved and authorised. A total of £6664.08 agreed and paid by electronic banking for September 2023.

17.3. To acknowledge the RBS reports circulated by the Clerk – Summary Receipts and Payments and Cash and Investment Reconciliation.

Resolved: The parish council acknowledged the reports circulated by the clerk and no questions were raised.

17.4. For the parish council to acknowledge the conclusion of the external audit (PKF Littlejohn LLP) and that there were no advisory notices. (Documents were circulated to the parish council and placed on the website and noticeboard).

Resolved: The council acknowledged the conclusion of the external audit and thanked the clerk for her hard work.

- *The next parish council meeting is 15th November 2023 at 7.00pm Kingston Community Pavilion*

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Signed

Date