

KINGSTON PARISH COUNCIL

www.kingston-pc.gov.uk

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30th November 2023

Minutes of the Kingston Parish Council meeting held on 29th November 2023 at 1900 hours in Kingston Community Pavilion.

Present: Cllr Douglas, Cllr Bewick, Cllr Hoare, Julie O'Donnell (Parish Clerk)

1 member of the public was present.

Minutes

1. Apologies and reasons for absence
Apologies received from Cllr Parnell
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 13th September 2023 Parish Council Meeting to be agreed and signed as a true record.
The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th September were agreed and signed as a true record.
4. Council vote – motion to conduct Agenda item 19 and 20 as a closed session and exclude the public from attendance as confidential employment matters and confidential legal matters are to be discussed.
Resolved: The council agreed to conduct Agenda item 19 and 20 as a closed session and exclude the public from attendance as confidential employment matters and confidential legal matters are to be discussed.
5. **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.

Name

Signed

Date

The meeting was not suspended as the member of public did not wish to speak.

6. Clerk and Councillor reports arising from the minutes of 13th September 2023 not covered elsewhere in the agenda:

For noting -

The Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2023-24 has now been agreed. The Local Government Association has confirmed that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services has reached agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The

new pay rates for local councils have been published and have been agreed with SLCC and ALCC. Employers are encouraged to implement this pay award as swiftly as possible. For all spinal points to 43 the agreed award was a flat rate payment of £1,925. For scale points above that the award was 3.88%

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

7.1. District Councillor Stella Spiteri

Resolved: The report was noted, and no questions were raised.

7.2. County Councillor Sarah Osborne

Resolved: The report was noted, and no questions were raised.

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

- Kingston Action Group

Cllr Hoare circulated the following briefing -

There is a cross-over between the KNRG and the KAG as some people sit on both bodies and some tasks are endorsed by both groups, e.g. the planting of crocus bulbs on St Pancras Green. It is likely that it will be the KAG that will implement some of the actions proposed by the KNRG, e.g. turf stripping and wildflower seed sowing. A patch by the tennis courts having already been approved.

- Nature Recovery Group

The Kington Nature Recovery Group are meeting regularly (c every other month).

They have:

- a) Decided to present KPC with a proposal for St Pancras Green at the January Council meeting.
- b) Instigated a Garden Pledge Scheme, to encourage gardeners to garden with "Nature in Mind"
- c) Seeking to establish surveying and monitoring programmes.
- d) Seeking to establish a mapping programme so examples of wildlife can be registered in a usable and accessible way.

- Pavilion Committee.

The clerk attended the November meeting. Shelaine Siepel has now been voted as Chair of the pavilion committee following the resignation of Terry Krejzl. Shelaine has met with a heating engineer who has advised how to ensure the ASHP is more cost and heat efficient. There should now be no need to use electrical overhead heaters which are very expensive to run.

Shelaine is looking at ways to increase revenue and the use of the pavilion, including grouping bookings together to leave days free where the pavilion can be booked out.

Name

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Date

9. Tennis courts

9.1. The two tennis courts need resurfacing, this was last done over 12 years ago. The parish council holds a reserve amount saved equally by the parish council and Kingston Tennis Club. The courts are not in good condition and need resurfacing as soon as possible. The tennis club has asked that the council contribute an extra £5000 to ensure that both courts can be done this year. The tennis club will contribute the other £5000. It has been confirmed that CIL funds could be used.

The tennis club has asked the council to consider the quotation for the work and agree the resurfacing work.

Resolved: The council unanimously agreed to the resurfacing work to both courts to be carried out as soon as possible. The council unanimously agreed to use funds from EMR Childrens Playpark to make up the deficit of £5000.

9.2. Hedgerow – The Laurel hedgerow surrounding the bottom court is large and contributing to the moss growth on the court. It has now grown very large and needs to be cut back, the tennis club would like to cut it back to more than half its current size.

The clerk has received a quote for £1500. The contractor has confirmed this is a large job and will require at least three workers.

Resolved: The parish council agreed to the full removal of the hedgerow. It has now become very large and will be an expensive ongoing cost to maintain.

Clerk to obtain two further quotes.

The clerk advised that the Tennis Club had mentioned purchasing a black out cover to cover the end of the court. The parish council insists that the cover is purchased to ensure that the houses opposite are shielded from any light for the courts.

9.1. To consider the request to increase the parish council contribution and tennis club contribution to £2000 each per year. This will ensure the resurfacing work can be done when required in 10 years' time.

Resolved: The council unanimously agreed to increase their contribution to £2000 from £1750 in April 2024 and the Clerk will amend the agreement between KPC and KTC to reflect these changes.

However, the council would like to discuss with KTC increasing their % of contribution in future to cover more of the maintenance costs.

Clerk will amend the agreement between KPC and KTC to reflect the changes from April 2024.

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

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

Resolved: Cllr Bewick confirmed that the works are now completed and just need nets on the netball and basketball goals. Cllr Bewick confirmed he would arrange this.

He also commented that owners were allowing their dogs to deposit on the boule court and were not picking up the mess which is very disappointing to see.

Cllr Bewick confirmed he had managed to obtain a £1000 discount due to the initial installation problems which was very good news.

Name

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Date

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

11.1. To note the report from Cllr Bewick regarding the Traffic Steering Group meeting and to approve and accept the Traffic Steering Groups recommendation.

Resolved: The council unanimously agreed with the recommendations made by the TSG and approved the appointment of Ethos as the traffic consultants to assist with the next stage of the project.

12. Village green play area

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

Resolved: The inspection report was noted. The clerk to contact Cllr Fry and ask for an update at the January meeting.

13. Civility & Respect Pledge

The Civility and Respect Pledge is part of a project created and overseen by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), One Voice Wales (OVW), the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and county associations, to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a positive cultural change for the local council sector.

The Civility and Respect Pledge is being introduced to enable councils to demonstrate that they are committed to stand up to poor behaviour, bullying, harassment and intimidation across the sector and to drive through positive changes which support civil and respectful conduct.

Further information can be found here Civility and Respect Project (nalc.gov.uk) on the NALC website.

Council to consider signing up to this pledge.

Resolved: The council unanimously agreed to sign the pledge. The clerk to organise this.

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

Resolved: Nothing much to report. The outcome of the hearing about the proposal to link Kingston with the Footpath Lewes 37, held in August has still not been decided.

The recently resurfaced surface of FP KIN 2, between Wellgreen Lane and Swanborough, at the Wellgreen Lane end has been heavily eroded by the recent heavy rain.

15. Parish Owned Trees

15.1. Apple Trees, The Avenue.

To ratify the decision to purchase 12 staking kits for the apple trees on The Avenue which are leaning over. Cllr Hoare and KAG will complete the work required. The kits are £5.75 plus VAT and 12 are required.

Resolved: The decision to purchase the staking kits was agreed and ratified by the council

15.2. Tree Survey – following the tree survey Cllr Hoare looked at the trees in question and feels a second opinion should be obtained. Council to discuss the findings and agree the next steps.

Resolved: The council agreed for the trees at the entrance to the village green to have the recommended works carried out. The clerk to obtain three quotes.

Cllr Hoare will contact Land Registry to obtain ownership details of the trees in the churchyard which appear on both the councils survey and that of the PCC.

Name

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Date

16. Urban Grass Cutting Options – The parish council only receives two cuts from ESCC for verge cutting. Council to consider this and agree the cutting regime from ESCC for 2024-2025 (previously circulated)

Resolved: The council unanimously agreed to keep the cutting regime the same and only receive two cuts from ESCC.

17. Planning:

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

Resolved: Planning update noted, nothing received since.

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

Action: Clerk to contact AiRs to approve the draft survey and ask that they publish to the parish. Cllr Hoare will arrange printing and distribution of paper surveys. The council will hold two drop-in sessions to enable the community to speak with the clerk or council member regarding the survey. This is likely to take place as one morning and one evening session at the pavilion. The results will then be collated by AiRs and a draft PPS formed for review.

18. Financial Matters

18.1. To approve the Bank reconciliations for October 2023.

Resolved: The bank reconciliation for the current and savings account for October 2023 were approved.

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

Resolved: The accounts payable were approved and authorised. A total of £7343.72 which includes the internal transfer of £4828.24 CIL payment to the savings account agreed and paid by electronic banking for November 2023.

18.3. 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.

18.4. To consider and approve the draft budget subject to any agreed amendments and/or additions.

Resolved: Following discussion the council unanimously agreed to the new budget lines proposed by the clerk and approved the budget next year of £67,585. £9000 of this will be spent from reserves. The running cost of the council has increased to £58,585.

18.5. To approve the precept request if the draft budget is accepted.

Resolved: The draft budget was accepted so the council unanimously agreed the increase of approx. 6.42% to the precept. The precept request to Lewes District Council will be £58,585, an increase of £3535 from last year.

19. Council vote – Confidential employment matters items to be acknowledged and approved (P&C report previously circulated)

Resolved: The council unanimously agreed the recommendations in the confidential report.

Name

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Date

20. Council vote – Confidential legal matters to be acknowledged and agreed (P&C report previously circulated)

Resolved: The council unanimously agreed to continue with the previously agreed recommendation.

- *The next parish council meeting is 17th January 2023 at 7.00pm Kingston Community Pavilion*

Name

Signed

Date