

KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Kingston Seymour Parish Council held on
Wednesday 9th September 2020 at 19.30
In All Saints Church, Kingston Seymour

Councillors Present:

Mike Sewell (MS) Chairman
Bryony Cole (BC)
Ian Wariner (IW)

Richard Barber (RB)
Paul Cox (PC)

Zoe Bartlett (ZB)
Fred Malton (FM)

In attendance:

Steve Dixon (SD) Clerk & RFO

Rev Fran Binding

1 Member of the Public

The meeting was held in a COVID-19 secure location, a risk assessment had been undertaken and strict safety protocols were followed.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from District Councillors Wendy Griggs and Steve Bridger, NSC Liaison Carolyn Hills and the Police team.

2. To record declarations of interest in items on the agenda

None

3. Members of the public are invited to address the council

There were no request to address the Council.

4. To confirm the minutes of the following meeting:

Meeting – 15th July 2020

Confirmed as a true record. Proposed by ZB, seconded by BC and supported unanimously.

5. Police and Neighbourhood Watch

The Police team (that cover Yatton, Kenn, Claverham and KS) provided a note that indicated that Anti Social Behaviour by younger people was currently a big issue – exacerbated by the long nights and schools being out. There had been a small number of burglaries and thefts and to help combat this, a cycle marking session has been arranged and advice about cycle security has been placed on our website.

There had been no incidents reported separately by the Neighbourhood Watch team.

6. Infrastructure. To receive updates and to agree the next actions.

6.1 Tutshill Sluice Access Route

The Project Manager has advised that the project is still on track for a start on site in March 2021. The bridge is not yet out to tender but the design has been changed to a single span steel construction which is favoured by the Environment Agency. Other contracts will be let in November. The route will share with the Coastal Path across the sluice and for a short distance on the north bank. South of the sluice, the Coastal Path will share with the route as far as Wick Road.

6.2 Coastal Footpath

There has been no progress since Natural England passed their comments on the objections to the Planning Inspectorate. The Inspectorate is now in complete charge of the timetable although we understand that an inspector has not yet been appointed.

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6.3 Roads

The Clerk noted that Lampley Road had been surfaced dressed in late August. A meeting between NSC and contractors is to be held on Friday 11th to ensure that the specifications for the road markings down Lampley Road and around the Triangle are clear. MS will attend.

In discussion, Councillors felt that the surface was poorly laid and that sufficient attention had not been paid to the filling of pot holes before the surface was dressed. A concern was expressed that public money was being wasted because the road markings had only recently been done and now they had been covered again. The Clerk explained that he had been trying to make NSC sequence the events properly but they had decided that the repainting of the lines – which had been done at the expense of the contractor who had failed to do them properly in September 2019 – should go ahead when it had.

It was proposed by PC, seconded by ZB and supported unanimously that we should write to NSC Highways expressing our range of concerns over this matter.

Action: Clerk to draft a letter for agreement by MS before despatch.

6.4 Public Rights of Way Review

The Clerk thanked RB, IW and BC for walking many of the routes and providing feedback, all of which would enable the return to be completed to NSC.

It was noted that paths 2 and 6 had been severed by the M5. Nevertheless, they were still used and we had no wish to see them removed from the portfolio but that they may be considered the lowest of our priorities. The remaining paths all provide a valuable resource for the village and some signage improvements will be recommended. There is some doubt about whether the route under the motorway at Phipps Bridge is usable.

Actions: Clerk to complete the NSC survey, highlight the identified inadequacies and enquire about the route under the motorway at Phipps Bridge.

A suggestion for a new footpath had been received from a member of the public but after enquiry, it was established that the affected landowners were not supportive. The proposal was discussed and it was not considered to add a great value to the village. Given the lack of support from the local landowners it was proposed by RB, seconded by PC and supported unanimously that the Parish Council did not support the proposal. .

Action: Clerk to write and advise the suggestor of the Council's position.

7. Services, Resilience & Community

7.1 Village Maintenance & Environment

7.1.1 Village Maintenance Workpackage A

RB reported that he and the Clerk had refined the work proposed into two smaller packages. The first of these (now termed as Workpackage A) could be “machine cut” and this had been offered to Anthony Harris who had quoted a cost of £90 + VAT per cut. Two cuts a year was felt appropriate. It was proposed by RB, seconded by PC and carried unanimously that this work should be offered to Anthony Harris.

Action: Clerk to work with RB and agree the final details with the contractor

RB advised that he and the clerk would work together to agree the remaining Workpackage and identify potential contractors.

Action: RB & the clerk to finalise requirements and identify potential contractors.

7.1.2 Community Composting

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RB advised that NSC was keen on establishing local composting facilities as a possible amelioration against their proposed green bin charge. After discussion, it was decided that with no suitable land available and the costs and practical difficulties that would arise if there was, that the Parish Council could not support this initiative at this time.

7.2 Community Amenities

7.2.1 Village Sports and Cricket Field

PC advised that the field previously used for the village cricket match and sports day was no longer available at that unless an alternative was found, this long standing annual event would not be able to take place in 2021. He also reflected that there was no amenity in the village for children to simply “kick a ball”.

MS advised that he had recently become aware of the name of the Church’s land agent and whilst direct enquiries in January this year had simply revealed that the land was on long term agricultural tenancies and not for sale, he felt that an approach was worthwhile to see if an accommodation of some description was available to the benefit of all parties.

Action: MS to approach the Church’ land agent.

7.2.2 Community Space

RB had asked that this item be on the Agenda but it was agreed that this was in the same space as item 7.2.1. No separate action.

8. Administration

8.1 Council Standing Orders Review

The current Standing Orders had been adopted in September 2018 to be in alignment with the NALC recommendations. Those recommendations had not changed so the Clerk suggested that these Standing Orders be readopted.

It was proposed by FM, seconded by BC and agreed unanimously that the Standing Orders be readopted for a further year.

Action: Clerk to place the re-adopted policy on the website

8.2 Council policy on planning regulations

RB enquired on the Parish Council’s stance with regard to observed developments that might require planning permission. After discussion, it was noted that NSC were the final arbiters of planning matters and that the Parish Council was consulted for comment on “Material Considerations”. The Parish Council policy had been to politely advise residents should it be considered that a development would need planning permission. It was also the Council’s policy that if anyone raised an objection with a Councillor, that they must do so in writing so that the Council could make appropriate enquiries with NSC. No anonymous or unwritten “grumbles” would be taken forward. The parish council policy will be circulated to all councillors so this can be reviewed at the next meeting

Action: Clerk to establish where this policy is written down and to publish it for the benefit of all Councillors for further review

8.3 Website Accessibility

The clerk advised that on Wednesday 23rd September the Council’s website must comply with the “Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018” which are drawn to ensure that public body websites are accessible for people with different abilities such as impaired vision or hearing, motor difficulties etc. Broadly speaking, our website – because it is of relatively new construction – will be compliant.

Actions: Clerk to ensure that testing is complete and the necessary statement is in place by the due date. Clerk to update the next meeting with actions and costs where he believes that technical changes need to be commissioned.

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9. Finance

9.1 To receive the current Financial Report.

The Clerk advised that the Council had now received both parts of the annual precept and that after all commitments to date had been met, the Council would have a current balance of £10.7k and Reserves of £7.1k.

Cheques over £100 had been issued to A C Harris for £762 for the hedge and verge works (VAT of £127 will be reclaimed later in the financial year) and to the clerk for his monthly net salary with back pay following the nationally agreed pay rise from April (£378).

Some headroom was beginning to emerge in the budget and it was agreed that £2,500 would be earmarked for future work that may become necessary on the War Memorial

Action: Clerk to open a separate account to place these funds into

The Clerk mentioned that the church wardens had approached the Council with a request for funding to support the removal of dangerous trees in the churchyard. The Clerk advised that such a decision should be an Agenda item as it could represent a change to the agreed budget and that members of the public may wish to express a view. Legally, the Council is permitted to support the maintenance of the graveyard but not any other matters relating to the fabric of the building.

Action: Clerk to place this request on the Agenda for the November meeting and advise the church wardens accordingly.

9.2 Clerk Remuneration

The Clerk had provided an update on the national pay award and change to the scale structure which meant that the scale point maximum in his own contract was now potentially at a higher level than Council would wish.

It was proposed by IW, seconded by FM and supported unanimously that a) the NALC pay scales would be adopted and back pay (from April) paid and b) that the maximum scale point in the Clerk's contract should be reduced from 25 to the new equivalent of 17. The Clerk is now at Point 14. This cap will control Council costs going forward and agreement to an increment above level 17 can only be made by the whole Council.

Action: Clerk to note this resolution in the Personnel File.

10. Annual Parish Meeting 2020

The Clerk had established that the Friends and the Village Hall were making separate arrangements for their Annual Meetings this year and, given that we are outside the period prescribed for ours (COVID law permits that one is not held in 2020), newly announced restrictions and the passage of time, it was agreed that an Annual Parish Meeting of the Council would not take place this year.

11. Bristol Airport Planning Appeal

RB reported that the PCAA are to take up a section 6 representation on the forthcoming appeal against the refusal of Bristol Airport's planning request and that some professional resources had been secured at cost only. The PCAA is appealing for member parishes to make a contribution towards the costs of defending against the appeal.

In discussion, concern was expressed about whether the Council's constitution would permit such financial support being given but some felt that the Parish Council needed to be seen to contribute to this endeavour. A vote on whether the Council was minded to support the appeal was carried by a small majority.

Action: Clerk to check the constitution to see whether support could be given. Clerk to place on the Agenda for the next meeting to specifically discuss this.

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12. NSC Local Plan 2038 – Challenges Consultation

Councillors had received and read the papers and were aware of the questions being asked. After discussion, it was agreed that the Parish Council would not make a collective response. Proposed by FM, seconded by BC and supported unanimously.

Action: Clerk to advise the Executive Member.

13. External Influences

RB reported that there had been no PCAA meetings but that one was scheduled for later in September. PC reported from the Village Hall meeting that the hall will remain closed for at least four more weeks whilst electrical work is completed. The hall was being redecorated, the floor in the main hall had been fully restored and LED lighting installed. Pc conveyed that the Village Hall Committee had asked if the Parish Council will fund the Christmas tree this year.

Action: Clerk to place on the Agenda for the next meeting

MS reported that he would attend the forthcoming ALCA AGM which is to be held remotely.

14. To receive information about recent correspondence

The Clerk advised that there had been nothing new that hadn't been issued or covered on the agenda.

15. To agree the date for and any items to be placed on the next regular meeting Agenda

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Thursday 12th November and is most likely to take place on Zoom.

The usual Agenda topics will be supplemented by the results of enquiries and the specific actions mentioned above.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21.35.

Steve Dixon

Steve Dixon,

Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, 11th September 2020