

KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Kingston Seymour Parish Council on Tuesday 13th January 2015 at 7.30pm in the meeting room, Village Hall

Declarations of Interest: None .

Public Participation Time: None

Present:

Councillors Pete Harris (vice-chairman, in the chair), John Harris, Fred Malton, Mike Sewell (from 8pm), Bryan Thomas and Mike Wallis. Leonie Allday, Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

North Somerset Councillor Tony Moulin; Carolyn Hills, NSC, Parish Council Liaison Officer

2. Minutes of meetings:

(i) Bi-monthly meeting 10th September 2014

These were agreed to be a true record of the meeting and were signed by the vice-chairman.

(ii) Planning meeting 2nd January 2015

These had not yet been finalised and would be signed off at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

3. Community Resilience and Police Report

The Clerk reported that she had received an e-mail from PC Morris letting her know that there had been some changes to the Beat boundaries and that Kingston Seymour and Kenn would now fall under the Clevedon team. She had sent the agenda and details of meeting dates for the whole year to the Clevedon Team but had not heard anything from them. It was noted that this was a larger team than the Yatton one and councillors asked the Clerk to request that a PC or PCSO be given specific responsibility for Kingston Seymour, in the interest of continuity. MW was particularly concerned at the lack of follow-up after incidents had been reported.

JH said that he had contacted the Chairman to ask if Community Resilience could be included on the agenda but it had been decided to hold it over to the next meeting on account of the volume of items on this agenda, which included the Budget.

JH had also enquired whether the Clerk had succeeded in registering an interest in the EA's community PLP programme. She had tried twice and met with problems at the same stage each time. She could find nothing about the current programme on the EA or defra websites (both of which default to .gov), although there was plenty of information regarding the 2009-11 pilot schemes and their evaluation. JH had made some enquiries through his own network and passed on the name of someone (Ed Lockington) who had promised to contact either him or the Clerk.

JH said that he had been informed that the programme was still open but warned that there was a long waiting list (to 2017). However it was suggested that if registration was successful this might be an appropriate topic for the Annual Parish Meeting.

JH reported on the meeting of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee that he had attended the previous day. Subject to planning consent, which was understood to be imminent, the Congresbury Yeo works would begin in April with the removal of hedgerows; the whole project was due to be completed by October. He also reported that technical developments meant that EA flood warnings would be both more accurate and more focused in future.

Action: Clerk

4. Infrastructure

(i) Roads and footpaths:

- update on actions subsequent to discussion with John Painter, NSC

The Clerk apologized that she had not managed to contact John Painter. FM indicated that even if the results of the proposed survey did not make a case for a speed restriction, the Parish Council could still apply for one. The process was similar to a planning application and there would have to be consultation in the community to demonstrate support. In this event the Parish Council would probably have to pay for the cost to NSC of drawing up the necessary documentation and advertising, as well as the hardware (signs etc); this could come to several thousand pounds. Councillors were interested to hear that this was an option but wanted clarification of the status such a speed restriction would then have and whether it could be enforced. The Clerk said that she would speak to PC and either he or she would seek confirmation of costs and clarification re enforcement from John Painter.

PH suggested that in the meantime NSC be asked to re-paint the white lines at the Triangle as they were now very faint.

Action: PC and / or Clerk

- response to NSC's letter in reply to joint local councils letter re verge-cutting etc

It was agreed that it was disappointing that the specific concerns of Kingston Seymour PC had not been addressed; the Clerk would follow this up with another letter.

Action: Clerk

(ii) Registration of land at Triangle as Commons

FM had obtained and completed the forms as far as he was able. Some additional supporting evidence of an anecdotal nature was required to support the case that the Council has taken responsibility for this land for many years. It was suggested that Bob Ford could be approached. It was also necessary for someone to make the formal Declaration on behalf of the Council; it was proposed (JH, seconded BT) and unanimously agreed that the Clerk should do this.

Action: FM, Clerk

(iii) Phone box

The book, DVD and toy swap continued to be well-used. The phone box would be painted when the weather improved.

Action: MS / PH

(iv) Aspen trees in Lampley Road

FM reported that further investigation had established that the trees did not appear to be diseased and were the responsibility of NSC. He saw no reason for any action beyond any necessary cutting back or tidying. He would be seeing John Vanderplank to let him know this.

Action: FM

At this stage the vice-chairman permitted the discussion of an additional urgent item raised by BT:

(v) Erection of gates at entrance to Rust Lane

It was noted that high and unsightly metal gates and fencing had been erected at the Lampley Road end of Rust Lane; these were usually locked and thus prevented access to a track which had been used by walkers and riders for many years and part of which was a PROW. This was said to be in response to problems with fly-tipping and other abuses, but also to an approach by Mike Grimshaw concerning the aspiration to extend the Strawberry Line; this had unfortunately been perceived as inflammatory and was thus counter-productive. MS said that he had asked the Clerk to report this to Yatton PC; their Clerk had said that he would alert the PROW officers at NSC. It was known that Kenn PC was also taking the matter up and that an application was being prepared by a group of residents for the creation of a permanent PROW along the whole length of the lane, which although a private farm track had been used with the permission of the four landowners by riders, walkers and cyclists for several decades. MS regretted the loss of a safe route to Kenn Moor but JH reminded the Council that the landowners were entirely within their rights to prevent access, albeit not to the section already designated a PROW. FM said that he had spoken to the landowner who had erected the gates; he thought that they would be replaced with less obtrusive ones in due course.

The situation would be monitored.

Action: all

5. Services

(i) Website report

No report had been provided. JH expressed concerned at this and asked that the Clerk raise this with the web manager. The Clerk reported that the web manager had some concerns about the arrangements for business listings and wanted to clarify and perhaps alter these; the Clerk would arrange to meet her.

Action: Clerk

6. Finance & Administration

(i) Routine payments

The Clerk reported that the balance on the current account was £5127.26 and that per cash book £5023.61. The difference of £103.65 was represented by two unrepresented cheques. No monies had been received since the last meeting.

Cheques had been issued since the last meeting as follows: KSA £66.25 (PO grant 1 qtr to 31.12.14); SLCC £103 (annual subscription 2015); Fleur £50 (Remembrance wreath); Clerk £375.05 (salary Sept ex PAYE, plus non-consolidated payment pro rata as per NJC settlement); HMRC £20.00 (PAYE due LA); Sylvia Stokes £38.40 (web manager remuneration); HMRC £9.60 (PAYE due SS)

Payments now due were as follows: Somerset Web Services £24 (renewal of domain name 2 years to 18.01.17); Clerk £359.05 (salary Dec calculated as below, ex PAYE); HMRC £16.00 (PAYE due Clerk); Clerk £13.40 (expenses); Sylvia Stokes £38.40 (web manager remuneration 4 weeks); HMRC £9.60 (PAYE due SS).

The balance on the Business Reserve Account stood at £3625.16.

It was noted that the new NJC pay scales had been issued and it was proposed (JH, seconded MS) and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council should pay the clerk according to these as in the past. The award was for 2% over 2 years 2014-16, ie 1% pa, plus a non-consolidated amount of £100 pro rata (£20 in this instance), which had been payable in December 2014.

It was proposed (FM, seconded MS) and unanimously agreed that the payments due as listed above should be made.

Action: Clerk

(ii) BUDGET 2015-16

The Clerk had circulated the budget papers prior to the meeting. The Council's finances were healthy; some Budget headings had been underspent and it would be possible to make a transfer of £1500 to the Business Reserve Account. Although the precept for the next financial year could theoretically be reduced, the Clerk proposed that it be maintained; expenditure was likely to be higher next year and the council should be aware of the possibility that in the future local council precepts might be capped: the Government was currently consulting on capping arrangements.

After a considerable amount of discussion, mostly relating to the amount which might be required as a Parish Council contribution should North Somerset Council decide to introduce a speed limit or other traffic calming measure such as advisory LED signage, it was decided to raise the precept in order to be able to accommodate such expenditure, or any necessary expenditure resulting from the withdrawal of other services currently provided by NSC, and / or to provide a hedge against possible future capping. After two failed resolutions, it was proposed (BT, seconded FM) and agreed by a majority that the precept should be raised by £1500 to £10,700. The Clerk would advise NSC accordingly.

It was then proposed (MS, seconded FM) and unanimously agreed that the Budget as amended should be approved.

Action: Clerk

(iii) Financial Regulations

The Clerk was thanked for her work in reviewing and adapting the new model regulations. After a brief discussion it was proposed (MS, seconded JH) and unanimously agreed that the draft be approved and put in place for a trial period of six months, after which it would be reviewed.

Action: Clerk

(iv) Transparency Code for smaller councils

It was noted that this would be effective from 1.4.15 but that the current audit arrangements would continue until 2017. For the next two years small councils would therefore have to comply with both sets of regulations. The new Code enshrined much of what was currently required by the Annual Return and Statement of Governance, but was more onerous in several respects. It would be necessary in future to post draft minutes on the website, as well as other documents not currently posted such as the Budget and minutes of planning and Audit sub-committee meetings. MS noted that it would be incumbent on all councillors to raise any queries as to the accuracy of the minutes as soon as possible after a draft was issued.

Action: all, Clerk

7. Planning

(i) Update on planning applications previously considered or advised:

- Applications for works to the Dairy House and Long Croft to comply with LB regulations – consent with conditions
- Application for agricultural worker’s dwelling, Mud Lane – decision awaited. This application would be going to committee on 14 January.
- Application for construction of holiday accommodation, Bullock Farm fishing lakes – decision awaited
- Outline application for housing development (Hallam Homes) at North End – decision awaited
- Application for works to sea defences – decision awaited, understood to be imminent
- Application for solar park, Ham Lane – decision awaited (KSPC has recommended refusal and requested amendment). To note EIA1 application also submitted.

(ii) Update on alleged breaches of regulations / compliance / enforcement / appeals

None.

(iii) Neighbourhood Plans

The Clerk had advised councillors that a briefing was available on the NSC website. It was generally agreed that there seemed to be no benefit in commencing the process at present.

8. Consultations

NSC Consultation on revised Statement of Community Involvement – The Clerk offered to look at this and to circulate a draft response for comment. The deadline for comments was 16 February.

Action: Clerk, all

9. Reports of other meetings and in-service events attended by councillors / clerk:

- Bristol Airport – end of year get-together, 6 December – JH had attended; there were no particular issues of concern at present
- Parish planning workshop 10 December – JH, BT and the Clerk had attended – slide presentations were available on the NSC website. As always, it had been a very useful session.

10. Forthcoming meetings and events:

- Hinkley C Connection Examination Preliminary Session 19 January – MS, PH and FM would attend
- NSC Town and Parish Forum 3 March, 7-9pm, Castlewood – MS and the Clerk would attend

11. Correspondence & Information

- Nominations for ballot for local council guests at Royal Garden Party 12 May – It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk should put forward the names of Councillor John Harris and Mrs Gill Harris

Action: Clerk

- The Clerk reported that NSC would be making available free flowers to local councils for summer planting of pots and borders. She had applied for 500 plants. MS suggested that the Flower Guild be approached to help with planting. It was noted that the Flower Guild had also offered to create the Memorial Wreath for Remembrance Sunday next year.

Action: Clerk

- Judith Barber, Guardian of the defibrillator, had received an e-mail alerting all defibrillator owners to the recent spate of thefts of equipment from cabinets; it had been suggested that the equipment be removed from the cabinet and kept elsewhere. JB felt that this would defeat the whole purpose of having a public access defibrillator and suggested that she check it daily for the time being. Councillors agreed and asked the Clerk to thank her for this offer.

Action: Clerk

12. Members' Concerns

BT asked if there was any update on improvement to Broadband services; there was not.

The meeting closed at 10.10pm

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 11th March 2015