

KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Kingston Seymour Parish Council held on Wednesday 16th November 2011 at 7.30pm in the meeting room, Village Hall

Present:

Councillors John Harris (chairman), Paul Cox, Mike Sewell, Claire Stuckey, Bryan Thomas and Mike Wallis. Leonie Allday, Clerk.

In attendance:

District Councillors Jill Iles and Annabel Tall (items 1-7); PC Paul Morris, Beat Manager and PCSO Kate Turner (items 1,2); John and Penny Vanderplank, James Gardiner, parishioners (items 1-5)

Declarations of Interest under the Code of Local Government Conduct: None

Public Participation Time: None

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The agenda was re-arranged in order to enable district councillors and members of the public to leave at times convenient to them.

1. Apologies for absence

Councillor Fred Malton, family illness; Carolyn Hill, Parish Council Liaison Officer.

2. Community Safety and Police Report

District councillors and members of the public were asked to leave the meeting while a confidential item was discussed (as per Standing Orders 66 and 67). They then rejoined the meeting.

PM stated that the only reported crime in the last month had been the theft of red diesel from a farm.

3. Minutes of meeting of 13th September 2011

These were agreed to be a true record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising not covered under any other agenda item

(a) Item 4a: War Memorial – The Clerk had received one revised estimate; a second was awaited but the person in question had been unwell for some time. She would continue to pursue this.

Action: Clerk

(b) Item 4b: Odours from sewage works – The Clerk reported that the Council had been invited to a meeting at the Works in January. It was agreed that she would suggest that this take place in the early evening on the date of the next Council meeting.

Action: Clerk

(c) Item 4e: Sea defences proposals – the Chairman reported on the meeting recently held between the NSFRAG sea defences sub-committee and officers of the Environment Agency. This had been very useful; it appeared that a revised proposal might be forthcoming in the New Year. This was likely to be “softer”, more flexible and more responsive both to local circumstances and to “trigger points” in

sea level rise. In the meantime, work was progressing in collaboration with landowners on fine-tuning the plans for strengthening the current sea defences along the Congresbury Yeo. This would be a major capital works programme with an estimated lifespan of at least 25 years, and was scheduled to commence in 2014. The Chairman had also attended a meeting of a working party set up by North Somerset Council's SPED Scrutiny Panel; this was looking at NSC's role in flood risk and flood defence management. The failure of NSC to appreciate the implications of the EA's Strategy for the Kingston / Wick St Lawrence area had highlighted a critical weakness in the staffing structure. Following legislative changes, local authorities were now the lead authorities in flood risk management, but NSC had not taken up the funding available from DEFRA to make a high-level officer appointment. Temporary staff had not been capable of dealing with these matters. This was now being remedied and a permanent post had been advertised. JI confirmed that NSC had not been pulling its weight but she felt that now that the Scrutiny Committee was aware of the situation, there would quickly be a more effective and coordinated approach.

It was noted that a meeting was shortly to be held between the Sea Defences sub-committee, District councillors and Dr Liam Fox MP.

(d) Item 4h: Queen's Diamond Jubilee – MS reported that a meeting had been held involving representatives from the Church, the Friends, the Hall, Toddlers and the Flower Guild as well as the Parish Council. Recognising that many people might choose to make their own plans for all or part of the 4-day holiday, it had been decided to focus the village celebrations on one day (Sunday 3rd June) and to keep them simple, inexpensive and family-friendly. A special Family Service, a lunchtime "Big Picnic" and an evening hog-roast at the Village Hall were likely to be the major events. The group had liked the idea of permanent mementoes for the children and it was hoped that the Parish Council would bear this cost. The Chairman thanked MS for taking this initiative.

(e) Item 5(iii): Durban Trust – PC reported that application forms would be sent to the Clerk next May / June. JI and AT commented that they were both Trustees.

(f) Item 6(iii): North Bristol Foundation Trust consultation - The Clerk reported that Cathy Cooke had been happy to look at this on behalf of the Council; she had made a few suggestions and a response had been sent in line with these.

(g) Item 9: Letter to CPRE re Village of Year competition – The Clerk reported that she had received an acknowledgement of her letter; the branch chairman would respond when she had discussed the Parish Council's concerns with the judging panel.

(h) Item 13: Agricultural vehicles on lanes – The Chairman reported that he had pursued the complaints and urged the farmer concerned to ask his contractors to drive more considerately. There had been no further complaints and indeed he had received a comment following the recent maize harvest that farm vehicles appeared to be travelling more slowly. He had passed this on to the relevant person with his thanks.

5. Planning

- (i) Planning Application No. 11/P/1948/F: Creation of a farm track and removal of 65m of hedge to improve visibility at junction with farm track and Lampley Road, at land off Lampley Road (Mr Roger Fortune, Backwell)

The Clerk reported that unfortunately the applicant was unable to attend the meeting. CS said that (at the Chairman's request) she had spoken to him about the piles of earth in the field. This was not a planning matter but might require an exemption under EA regulations. It appeared that none had been secured, but the earth was thought to be spent mushroom compost which would not require an exemption.

The Chairman invited Mr & Mrs Vanderplank to make any comments they had. JV said that the applicant had not taken out the full length of hedging for which he had applied (approx. 42m only so far), but he would want to be certain that no more would be removed as the remaining "hedge" consisted largely of mature European aspens. Although not technically rare, these were unusual and beautiful trees.

In a lengthy discussion, the following points were made:

- Although the application stated that the work had not yet begun, this was not the case and it was in part retrospective. Despite the road safety benefits, this was regrettable. Councillors considered that the length of hedging already removed was sufficient to improve the sightlines adequately and would not wish any more hedging or any of the mature trees to be removed.
- It was unfortunate that pre-application advice had not been sought, especially in relation to the road safety aspect of the application. The field access was very close to a sharp bend and road safety is an issue, Lampley Road being quite heavily trafficked and many vehicles travelling along it at considerable speed. The Clerk advised that the case officer had informed her that she intended to ask Highways engineers to advise on sightlines; councillors agreed that they would endorse this course of action.
- It was not clear whether the hedge / trees which are the subject of this application are on the applicant's land or on local authority land.
- Councillors welcomed the applicant's desire to take action to improve road safety for users of Lampley Road as well as for those entering and leaving the fields in question. It was noted that in the past the field access had been little used, but the application for a farm track suggested that it will be more extensively used in the future. For this reason, councillors suggested that the relocation of the field access to a safer location to the east of the current access would in fact be preferable.

It was agreed that, although not opposed to the principle of the proposed works, the Parish Council could not support the detail of the current application. The Clerk was asked to make a response to the case officer accordingly. JI said that she would call the application in to committee if the officer was minded to approve it.

Action: Clerk; JI

(ii) Update on planning applications previously considered

The Clerk reported that the application for an extension at Kingston Garage had been granted consent with conditions.

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

Yew Tree Farm replacement of timber windows with upvc - The Clerk reported that the applicant's appeal against the proposed enforcement action was in progress.

Unauthorised occupation of mobile home at Bramble Farm and caravan at Tutshill Farm – The Chairman reported that he and PC had visited Bramble Farm and MS had visited Tutshill Farm. In each case the occupants were aware of the need to regularize the situation and planning applications were being prepared.

The Chairman reminded councillors that sensitive planning matters should not be discussed in open forum. He would not hesitate to take action if he found this happening in the future.

6. Financial / Administrative Report:

(i) Routine payments – to approve

The Clerk reported that the balance on the current account and per cash book was £5179.86 (of which, £190 was income related to the village website). This healthy figure reflected the recent receipt of the second half precept (£4150). One cheque had been issued since the last meeting, being a payment of £56.38 to KN Office Supplies (laserjet cartridge). Payments were due as follows: Sylvia Stokes £145 (Village Magazine grant); Parish of Yatton Moor £350 (churchyard maintenance grant); Clerk £726.70 (salary Sept / Oct); Clerk £22.57 (expenses); Rebecca Stockwell £108 (web manager remuneration, 9 weeks 29 Aug – 31 Oct); Rosalind Lewis £40 (Remembrance wreath). It was unanimously agreed that these payments should be made.

The Clerk reported that the balance on the Business Reserve Account was £3619.26.

(ii) Update on PAYE registration

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to her tax inspector and to several other advisers at HMRC and had now received what she believed to be the correct advice. She had registered for online completion of the necessary forms and would advise the Council of the amount due when she had received a Notice of Coding.

Action: Clerk

(iii) Draft job description / contract for web manager

This had been amended to reflect the useful advice given by Carolyn Hills. In answer to a question about pension arrangements and the contracting-out certificate, the Clerk was asked to check whether imminent changes to employment law would require this clause to be updated.

Action: Clerk

(iv) Meeting dates 2012

These were discussed and agreed; the Clerk would circulate an updated list.

Action: Clerk

(v) Broadband proposal

The Clerk reported that a local company with a number of clients in the village was interested in pitching to improve Broadband services to the village. It would need a firm expression of interest from a number of households / businesses. She was awaiting further details. The Chairman reported that he had received a telephone call that evening, but no further information (numbers, costs) had been available. It was agreed that this could have possibilities but that the Parish Council could at most act as a conduit for information. It was not in a position to recommend or endorse any particular company.

7. Hinkley C Connection Project – Update

MS and BT reported that it appeared that, as far as Kingston Seymour was concerned, the proposal would involve taking down the current WPD pylons and replacing them with the larger National Grid ones, on the same alignment or in close proximity. Details were being finalized and landowners would be contacted. AT commented that she is a chartered engineer by profession and would be willing to take up any concerns on the community's behalf, as she is doing in Yatton. She reminded the Council that the separate report on undergrounding and undersea options was not yet available (end of year?) and that National Grid would have to review their plans in the light of its findings.

8. BUDGET 2012-2013

The Clerk had circulated the Financial Statement, Budget and accompanying notes. She drew attention to her conclusion that it would not be possible to hold the precept at its 2010/11 and 2011/12 level for another year and that a modest increase would be necessary. She further commented that in the light of a number of uncertainties (in particular the cost of repairs to the war memorial, and the extent and local impact, if any, of cuts in services provided by NSC), it might be prudent to delay a decision on the Budget until the January meeting, by which time more information – and the exact formula to be used for calculating the effect of the precept on Council tax – should be available. She had included the sum of £100 in the Budget in response to an indication from the chairman and FM that they would recommend to the Council that it took up the offer of the heavily subsidised NSC IT package; councillors agreed that they wished to do this. The Clerk would make an application accordingly. She pointed out that there was currently nothing in the Budget for the Jubilee and suggested a provision of £300 if councillors agreed, which they did.

It was proposed (JH, seconded MS) and unanimously agreed to defer further discussion until the January meeting.

Action: Clerk

9. Consultation: NSC Bid to Local Sustainable Transport Fund

It was noted that one of the projects within this bid focuses on rural links and hubs. Local councils were invited to indicate whether they would be able / willing to enter into any partnership arrangement with the local authority to promote and coordinate a range of rural transport initiatives. After a brief discussion it was decided that the Parish Council lacked the resources to do any more than express its willingness to be a conduit for any relevant information. The Clerk would respond accordingly.

Action: Clerk

10. Roads

PC reported that the far end of Ham Lane had been repaired and was much improved; Mrs Blake had rung to thank him for getting this done. The Lampley Road sign at Kingston Bridge had been vandalized; he had reported this and it would be repaired. Paul Smart had inspected the sections of Back Lane which had subsided / cracked and had agreed that they needed repair, but the work would not be done until the new year. Unfortunately this would mean that there would be no money for replacing the railings at the bottom of Back Lane, but PC would store them while the ditch was being cleaned out and consider whether they could be repaired.

Action: PC

11. Reports of other meetings and in-service events

Severn Estuary Forum, Friday 23rd September, Cardiff - JH had attended in his capacity as chairman of NSFRAG.

Future of local service provision in North Somerset, Thursday 6th October - JH and FM had attended. The meeting had been interesting but there would be little scope for very small parishes to take on a service provision role.

ALCA AGM, Thursday 13th October - The Clerk had attended; it had been a positive meeting with everyone expressing their thanks to the Management Team for keeping ALCA going in the present difficult circumstances.

ALCA North Somerset Group 18th October - No-one had been able to attend. The Chairman indicated that he expected all councillors to take a turn in attending these meetings, which were usually both useful and interesting.

12. Forthcoming meetings and events:

Bristol Airport – social evening for local councillors, Thursday 1st December - PC and FM would attend

NSC planning seminar, Wednesday 14th December - FM, BT and the Clerk would attend.

13. Correspondence & Information

Some 70 items had been notified to councillors.

14. Members' Concerns

None.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 10th January