

KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present:

Councillors Cathy Cooke (Chairman), Paul Cox, John Harris, Fred Malton, Mike Sewell, Rebecca Stockwell and Mike Wallis. Leonie Allday, Clerk

In attendance:

District councillor Jill Iles; PCSOs Cathryn (Kate) Turner and Elle French; Nigel Cole, Gill Harris, Patricia Keeble, Richard Simmons, Claire Stuckey and Tanya Kinane, parishioners (for part of meeting)

PC declared an interest under the Code of Local Government Conduct in item 8(i) – planning application (related to applicant)

Public Participation Time

Councillor Jill Iles reported, in response to a question raised at the previous meeting, that North Somerset's response to the Localism Bill (committee stage) was not yet available. She would let the Clerk know when it was.

Statements from members of the public relating to item 3 on the agenda were deferred until the consideration of that item

1. Apologies for absence

District Councillor Tony Moulin; Carolyn Hills, Parish Council Liaison Officer; PC Paul Morris, Beat Manager.

2. Community Safety and Police Report

KT introduced EF, who had taken recently joined the Beat. She had previously worked as a PCSO in Clevedon for 5 years. KT reported that there had been four incidents during the last 3 months; one case of harrassment, two thefts and one warning for possession of cannabis.

FM reported two sightings of a young lad of about 14, riding a purple trail bike without a helmet in Lower Strode Road. The PCSOs commented that they suspected that this was a lad who was known to them and asked that anyone who saw him in the future should report it to them.

CC thanked the PCSOs for coming to the meeting.

Item 8(i) was taken at this point:

Planning Application No. 11/P/0232/LB: Replace timber framed windows to SE, NE, SW and NW elevations with upvc, at Yew Tree Farm, Yew Tree Lane (Mr & Mrs R Simmons)

CC briefly outlined the planning history and RS explained that the previous application had been withdrawn and a new one submitted which included all relevant elevations rather than only one elevation as previously. CC asked for comments from councillors. Councillors agreed that they had no problem with the appearance of the windows, but recognized that the use of upvc was against current English Heritage guidance and North Somerset Council policy. RS said that she would prefer the use of wood but that this was a personal view. MS and FM suggested that the design and construction of custom-made upvc windows had moved on to the extent that North Somerset ought to be reviewing its blanket opposition to the use of this material. It was proposed (MS, seconded FM) and agreed unanimously by

those entitled to vote that the application should be supported. The Clerk would submit the Council's comments accordingly.

Action: Clerk

3. Environment Agency (EA) consultation - Managing Flood Risk in the Severn Estuary

This consultation concerned proposals to manage flood risk in the Severn Estuary over the period 2010-2060. Along the section of shoreline from Clevedon to Middle Hope it was proposed that the present Sea Wall should no longer be maintained and a policy of managed realignment (MR) implemented. This had arisen out of the previous Shoreline Management Plan in which MR had been mentioned as a possible option for the future (but with no locations, extents or dates); the Strategy now under consideration was also based on work done by Atkins. In the Atkins report MR was mentioned as a solution to problems in the Congresbury Yeo area, where the present flood defences were in poor condition and a small portion of the flood defences had already been set back with the creation of a new embankment in 2009. The more drastic EA proposals, which would result in the eventual loss of 22% of the land area of the parish, had thus come as a shock.

CC and JH reported on the recent well-attended open meeting of the North Somerset Flood Risk Action Group (NSFRAG) at which some 110 people had been present, including many parishioners. It was agreed that the presentation had been poor in that it had assumed too much background knowledge. Many questions and concerns were raised but the EA had not been able to give the meeting either the information or the reassurances that it sought. JH, as Chairman of NSFRAG, had encouraged everyone present to write to the EA and also to their MPs.

CC invited parishioners present to comment briefly.

CS, who had circulated a copy of her letter, said that she had started a campaign to raise awareness and to try to ensure that Liam Fox MP received a lot of letters. The response had been very encouraging. She indicated that she had a great deal of experience in policy formulation and lobbying and would like to be a member of NSFRAG so that this could be available to the group.

TK reported on a meeting she had convened with a saltmarsh expert at Bristol University, Dr Sarah Cornell. She had expressed surprise that the EA was proposing the creation of such a large area in such a large estuary; in the past such proposals had usually related to smaller areas with different hydrographical characteristics. TK also reported that in at least one area on the east coast a community had lobbied successfully against a strategy similar to that proposed locally. She had put in a Freedom of Information request in order to obtain more information on costs and on the research underpinning the current proposals. Finally, she stressed the importance of using wildlife organisations such as the RSPB, as well as environmental lawyers, to whom she had access.

NC commented that good farmland needed to be protected. He also noted that the SSSI on Thelma Blake's land had been designated to protect nesting (not wading) birds – it had developed over a period of 20 years but the whole habitat would be destroyed if MR was to be implemented.

GH encouraged NSFRAG and the Parish Council to contact Natural England. The Somerset Drainage Boards consortium had an ecologist who had done some work at Steart Point, and the NSIDB's consultant engineer also had much valuable experience.

CC then invited comments from councillors. MS wondered if the EA plan was deliberately excessive in its proposals, in order to allow parishioners to feel a sense of achievement if a less drastic MR scheme was eventually negotiated. MW had spoken to Angus Bloomfield, the Maritime Adviser for the Severn Estuary at Natural England; he had expressed surprise that the EA had not contacted landowners and agreed an approach with them before issuing a consultation document. However, he had confirmed that EU law would take precedence over SSSIs. Several councillors noted the difference between the Atkins report and the EA strategy; more needed to be discovered about how and why the approach had changed. All councillors were concerned at the lack of costings and of any assurance that the funding necessary to build new embankments would be forthcoming in decades to come.

The Clerk had prepared a draft response based on the comments made by parishioners at the recent meeting. She was thanked for this. It was agreed that with minor modifications to reflect additional points made at this meeting, it should be sent to the EA, with copies to Liam Fox MP and to North Somerset Council. JI did not know whether or not NSC had itself responded to this consultation but would find out and let the Clerk know.

It was noted that the EA wished to continue discussing and refining their plans with a small group to be drawn from the affected area. It was agreed that JH would set this up as a sub-committee of NSFRAG.

Action: Clerk, JI, JH

4. Minutes of meetings

- (i) Bi-monthly 18 January 2011
- (ii) Planning 5 February 2011

These were agreed to be true records of the meetings and were duly signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters Arising from meeting of 18 January:

(a) Item 4(a) - Use for telephone box – A number of suggestions had been made; these would be put to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Action: Clerk

(b) Item 4(b) – Hall noticeboard –RS reported that the Management Committee had been reluctant to pay for a new board but that she had managed to obtain one which seemed suitable, from Yatton Methodist church, through Freecycle.

(c) Item 4(c) - War Memorial – The Clerk reported that she had had a helpful conversation with the conservation officer at the War Memorials Trust. The grants programme had been revised, and there were now three categories of grants available. The first step was to complete an Expression of Interest form, on the basis of which the WMT would decide whether the work was eligible for grant assistance and if so, which type of grant would be appropriate. It was not always necessary to have a full condition survey, and she had been asked to send a copy of the most detailed quotation, even though it was no longer current. The Clerk would complete the necessary paperwork and report back to the Council at its next meeting.

Action: Clerk

(d) Item 4(e) – Odours from sewage works – It was noted that work to the slurry lagoon covers was not due for completion until May. It would not be possible to tell whether this was successful until the summer. Councillors commented that the smell in the New Cut Bow area was practically constant; PC was convinced that there was a leak in the pipe bringing waste from Clevedon. The Clerk would ask for this to be checked.

Action: Clerk

(e) Item 4(h) – Winter waste and recycling – update on lessons learned - No report had been made available as yet. The Clerk would follow this up.

Action: Clerk

(f) Item 6 – National Grid ongoing consultations - representation of town and parish council views on the Hinkley Point C Connection group - Councillors were not at all happy with the suggestion that Mr Gregory was representing all local councils along the route. They asked the Clerk to request a revised copy of the protocol making clear which councils were being represented.

Action: Clerk

(g) Item 8(ii) – PROW officer visit – It was noted that this had not taken place. However, an officer was due to meet with RS on Friday to clarify the route of the footpath over the motorway beyond Yew Tree Farm. This had been controversial for many years; clarity was important if the footpaths were to be shown on a map in the Parish Plan.

Action: RS

(h) Item 12(c) – Speeding tractors – CC apologized that she had not followed this up; she would do so.

Action: CC

6. Financial / Administrative Report:

(i) Routine payments

The Clerk reported that the balance on the current account and per cash book was £3410.63. No monies had been received since the last bi-monthly meeting and no cheques issued. Payments were due as follows: £726.70 (Clerk's salary Jan / Feb 2011); £74.96 (Clerk's expenses including IT allowance). It was proposed (JH, seconded MS) and agreed unanimously that these payments should be made. The Clerk commented that NALC had informed councils that for the second year running there would be no salary increases for the year 2010/11, so no back payments would be due this year. JH commented that Anthony Harris had cut back the hedges and verges on the motorway bridge and would probably be submitting a modest invoice. The Clerk responded that it had needed doing and asked the Council if it would like her to make a formal arrangement to have this done once a year. It was agreed that this would be a good idea; it would then be a known quantity and could be included in the Budget.

Action: Clerk

(ii) Repair to war memorial railings (consideration of, and decision on, quotations) and bollards at Triangle

Following the damage caused by a lorry reversing into the railings, the Clerk reported that she had obtained two quotations, one from Matt Davey (Kingston Forge) and one from County Fencing, the original suppliers of the railings. The former was for £740 and the latter for £745 + VAT. The cost could be claimed under the Council's insurance policy, less the amount of the excess (£125). The Clerk advised that the insurance company required two estimates and would normally agree to pay out on the lower figure; a third estimate should be obtained to comply fully with the Council's financial regulations, but these could be waived if the Council felt that it was unlikely to obtain a better price. Councillors decided that in view of the closeness of the estimates obtained, and their preference to use a local business if possible, they were content to accept the quotation from Matt Davey, subject to the agreement of the insurers.

JH declared an interest in the matter of the repairs to the bollards (related to contractor). The damaged bollards could be replaced and the remainder re-set for a total sum of £340 + VAT, some of which could be reclaimed from the company whose vehicle had demolished one of them. The cost would be the same whether short wooden posts or concrete was used. It was decided to follow Norman Harris's recommendation that wood should be used.

It was proposed (MS, seconded PC) and agreed by all those eligible to vote that the Clerk should pursue both matters accordingly.

Action: Clerk

(iii) New HMRC regulations re mechanism of payment of salaries to clerks

The SLCC had informed clerks that as from 6th April they would no longer be able to have self-employed status but that their Councils would have to register for PAYE. The Clerk had advised CC, who had this in hand.

Action: CC

(iv) Village Website – update

RS reported that the website was very nearly ready to go live. There were still some decisions to make regarding controls and access, and the position of web manager needed to be formalized as soon as possible. She would be having some further training shortly; John Hilliard would also be attending the session.

(v) Parish Plan – update

RS reported that this was being held up by the need to re-think the parish map; the OS-based one provided by North Somerset had proved inadequate for the purpose. CC said that Sarah Harris had agreed in principle to produce this but need a list of features to include. The Clerk would send her a copy of the checklist that had been prepared for NSC.

Action: CC, Clerk

(vi) Annual Parish Meeting – 7th April

It was agreed that this would include a presentation about the new website. RS would organize this. The Clerk would produce a flyer for distribution to all households (with the Village Magazine).

Action: RS, Clerk

(vii) Local Elections, 5th May 2011

The Clerk tabled timetables and nomination packs.

7. Consultations:

(i) North Somerset Council – Core Strategy Publication Version : draft response

The Clerk apologized that more pressing matters had prevented her from preparing a draft response; she would circulate this to councilors as soon as possible.

Action: Clerk

(ii) North Somerset Council – Draft Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guide Section 1 – Protecting living conditions of neighbours

FM offered to look at this and send some comments to the Clerk to inform a response.

Action: FM

8. Planning

(i) Planning Application

See page 1 above

(ii) Update on planning applications previously considered:

Gout House Farm - Boundary fencing and screening of oil tank – consent
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Bramble Farm – new dwelling (outline) – decision awaited. The EA was concerned at the level of flood risk on the approach road. As a result the case officer was recommending refusal. JI reported that the application had been referred to committee (6 April). She would appreciate the Clerk’s input on this.

Action: JI, Clerk

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

Briar Cottage – The Clerk reported that the applicant had appealed against the enforcement notice on grounds (a) and (f). Councillors were of the opinion that the breach was not capable of being remedied without demolition of the house; they also wished the Clerk to make reference to the increase in the pooling of water in this section of Back Lane in wet weather conditions, a direct result of the building works. The Clerk would draft a letter to the Inspector and CC would agree it before submission.

Action: CC, Clerk

- (iv) New procedure for sending details of planning applications to local councils

The Clerk reported that the planning authority was proposing to cease sending a paper copy of all applications to local councils. Councillors felt that this was only acceptable if the website was kept much more speedily and regularly updated, with all documents relating to the application on the website from the beginning of the consultation period and responses from third parties uploaded more or less immediately. They also considered that larger and more complex applications were difficult to assess online – the plans were too small and the detail often indistinct. The Clerk was asked to write expressing the Council’s reservations.

Action: Clerk

9. Roads - routine maintenance

It was noted that the Lampley Road sign had been replaced. PC reported that the local authority planned to remove some overhanging trees at the bottom of Back Lane. The ditch was to be cleaned out by Tuckers but paid for by the two residents concerned. In due course a new verge would be formed and new railings erected, but the funding for this was not yet in place. A tree near Kingsmead Cottage in Middle Lane was also to be removed to ease drainage. The subsidence in Back Lane was ongoing with no immediate plans for remedial action. PC (and through him Paul Smart) was thanked for his attention to these matters.

It was noted that the sides on the recycling lorry were sometimes left open while the vehicle was in motion, which meant that sometimes items blew out and added to the litter in the lanes. The Clerk would mention this to the waste minimization officer.

Action: Clerk

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

- (i) NSC Briefing for local councils on Core Strategy

The Clerk had put the notes and slides from this meeting in the circulation file.

- (ii) ALCA NSG, 24 February

JH had attended this meeting and spoke enthusiastically of the reinvigoration of ALCA under the new management group, headed up by Cllr Pete Sewell (Chairman, Congresbury PC). There would be a new and more efficient communications system. The office move had taken place but the new office was not yet fully functioning. JH commented that a presentation by a councilors from B&NES had demonstrated that B&NES was much more directly involved with ALCA, both at district level and in local clusters of KSPC minutes 16.3.11 / laa

parishes, than was North Somerset Council; it was a model which could be encouraged. The Clerk commented that it seemed much more like the system which used to operate in NSC some 10 years ago, but which had been abandoned (ALCA NSC group meetings had become top-heavy with NSC representatives). A balance needed to be struck.

11. Forthcoming meetings and events:

(i) NS Local Access Forum meeting in Kingston Seymour, 19 April

JH explained that the next meeting of the Forum (of which he was now vice-chairman) would be held in Kingston Seymour, as the main item under consideration was the section of the proposed Tidal Tail between Clevedon and Wick St Lawrence. Forum members would walk a possible route in the afternoon; parishioners were then welcome to attend the meeting in an observer capacity. No formal proposals had yet been made – there would be full consultation in due course. At present it was difficult to see how such a project could be funded.

12. Correspondence & Information

Some 60 items had been advised and those of relevance and interest would be circulated.

Action: Clerk

13. Members' Concerns

(i) RS referred to the dead badger which had been lying beside Lampley Road for several days. This had upset some of the children on the school bus. She asked who was responsible for its removal. MW advised her to contact North Somerset Council.

(ii) RS commented on the receipt of a letter from a parishioner via the Neighbourhood Watch e-mail alert system. CC said that this had been an incorrect use of the system, infringing Data Protection Regulations; she had advised Craig Connell accordingly.

The meeting closed at 10.20pm

Date of next meeting: Thursday 12th May (new Council)