

## KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Kingston Seymour Parish Council held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at 7.30pm in the meeting room, Village Hall

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

*Public Participation Time: None*

### Present:

Councillors John Harris (Chairman), Paul Cox, Fred Malton, Mike Sewell, Bryan Thomas and Mike Wallis. Leonie Allday, Clerk.

### In attendance:

District Councillor Jill Iles (part); Carolyn Hills, North Somerset Council, Parish Council Liaison officer.

#### 1. Apologies for absence

Councillor Claire Stuckey (on holiday). District Councillors Tony Moulin and Annabelle Tall. Beat Manager PC Paul Morris; PCSOs Kate Turner and Elle French.

#### 2. Community Safety and Police Report

PCSO Kate Turner had sent a report by e-mail, detailing incidents reported during the previous six weeks. The Clerk expressed concern about the 3 reported instances of "suspicious or bogus callers"; the village contained a number of vulnerable residents. She would ask PC Morris for more information and if appropriate include a warning in the next Village Magazine.

Action: Clerk

#### 3. Minutes of meetings:

- (i) Annual and Bi-monthly, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011
- (ii) Special, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011

It was agreed that these were true records of the meetings and they were duly signed, in the case of the meetings of 12 May, by the vice-chairman, and in the case of the meeting of 21 June, by the Chairman. The Chairman thanked MS for chairing the meetings of 12 May in his absence.

#### 4. Matters Arising not covered under any other agenda item

**(a) 12.5.11 / Annual / 6: Emergency Liaison Officers** – the Clerk confirmed that Richard Simmons and Angus Norrish were both willing to continue in this role. Angus had asked for a meeting to be arranged in the autumn for up-dating purposes.

Action: Clerk

**(b) 12.5.11 / Bi-monthly / 4a: War Memorial** – the Clerk reported that she had submitted to the War Memorials Trust the "Expressions of Interest" form along with supporting information and photographs. This was the initial stage in the grant application process; the WMT would then advise whether the proposed works would qualify for a grant and if so, to which of their funding programmes the Council should apply. She would inform councillors of the outcome.

Action: Clerk

**(c) 12.5.11 / Bi-monthly / 4b: Odours from sewage works** – PC reported that the problems were continuing. The Clerk suggested that it was time to pursue the matter at a higher level. This was agreed; she would write to the Managing Director of Wessex Water.

Action: Clerk

**(d) 12.5.11 / Bi-monthly / 4d: National Grid C Connection project** – MS reported that little had changed although media reports suggested that construction timetable of a year was likely to be put back by at least a year. No firm decision had yet been taken about the route and the possibility of a sub-sea pipeline was now attracting more interest. MS agreed to continue to maintain a watching brief.

Action: MS

**(e) 12.5.11 / Bi-monthly / 5(ii): Parish Plan implementation** – JH had spoken to Cathy Cooke who had seemed enthusiastic about taking this forward.

**(f) 12.5.11 / Bi-monthly / 5(iii): Village of the Year** – It was noted that feedback on the planting was generally very positive, although there had been a few comments expressing concern about “overdoing it”. JH had visited Gail Baker and Sherry Hulbert to thank them for their hard work and the Clerk reported that they had much appreciated this.

**(g) 12.5.11 / Bi-monthly / 5iv: Future use of phonebox** – The Clerk reported that no-one had volunteered to take responsibility for the day-to-day appearance of the phone box; she would now try a personal approach to a nearby resident. It was noted that the display of artwork by the toddler group / Sunday school had proved popular and it was suggested that this could be repeated periodically, perhaps next at Christmas. It was suggested that the next Budget should include a small amount for the maintenance of the phone box.

Action: Clerk

**(h) 12.5.11 / Bi-monthly / 7: Sea defences proposals – update** – JH reported that a sub-committee had been formed under the chairmanship of Pete Kingcott; this included landowner / resident / Parish Council representation from both Kingston Seymour and Wick St Lawrence. It was due to be expanded slightly to include a district councillor and a further landowner / IDB member. A number of actions were in train, and a meeting with Environment Agency representatives was due to be held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July. Two members of the Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Risk Management Committee had expressed an interest and it was hoped that they would be able to attend. A full meeting of the Flood Risk Action Group was scheduled for September. JH would keep councillors informed of progress.

Jl had pursued the issue of North Somerset’s apparent endorsement of the EA Strategy in more detail. It appeared that the Executive had made “support in principle” decisions both back in October 2010 and in response to the publication of the recent consultation, but without fully appreciating the implications of what was being proposed. Jl had approached the chairman of the relevant scrutiny committee and had asked for a working group (to include either herself or Councillor Moulin) to be set up to establish how this had occurred. She suggested that input from both the Parish Council and the NSFRAG sub-committee would be helpful and indeed necessary. The Clerk, in her capacity as Secretary of the NSFRAG sub-committee, reported that she had already been tasked with writing to North Somerset Council about this matter. Jl would keep the council informed of any developments.

Action: JH, Jl, LA

5. Financial / Administrative Report:

- (i) PCAA membership subscription

After a brief discussion, it was proposed (FM, seconded PC) and unanimously agreed that the Parish Council should renew its membership.

(ii) Routine payments

The Clerk reported that the balance on the current account and per cash book was £3563.53 (of which, £50 was income relating to the website). No monies had been received since last meeting and no cheques issued. Payments were due as follows: ALCA: £65 (new councillor course fee); Paceprint £5.40 (photocopying); NALC £15.50 (Local Council Review subscription); PCAA £50 (annual subscription) – if agreed; Mary Culmstock £41.98 (plants and compost); Kingston Seymour Association £66.25 (hire of hall for PO, Jan – Mar); Clerk £726.70 (salary May / June); Clerk £150.92 (expenses; external hard drive for off-site back-up of Council records; IT allowance). It was proposed (FM, seconded MS) and unanimously agreed that these payments should be made.

The Clerk also reported that the balance on the Business Reserve Account was £3618.80. She then gave councillors a brief Budget update; all the original Parish Plan funds were now spent, some of the money having been used to finance part of the set-up costs of the website. The Council had £800 in the 2011/12 Budget for Parish Plan actions (including wages of website manager, currently proposed to be £624pa). Reserves were currently more than adequate to cover the Council's known potential liabilities (which could total around £2600), but the spend under the current account contingency heading was likely to be above budget this year.

Action: Clerk

(iii) New bank mandate – changes to cheque signatories

It was proposed (FM, seconded BT) and unanimously agreed that the following recommendation be passed: "the Authorised Signatories in the current Mandate, for the accounts detailed in Section 2 (of the form) be changed in accordance with Section 5 (of the form), and the current Mandate will continue as amended". Cathy Cooke would be deleted as a signatory and John Harris added.

Action: Clerk and relevant councillors

(iv) Update on PAYE registration

JH reported that he had now taken this over from Cathy Cooke. She had begun the process and registration was now complete. The clerk reported that she had just received some documentation from HMRC; she would ascertain with her Tax Inspector how she should make her returns and would inform the Council if there was any requirement for them to implement the registration.

(v) Draft job description / contract for web manager

The Clerk apologized that councillors had not received this. She had taken advice from the SLCC as to mandatory clauses and had produced a draft which she had discussed briefly with Rebecca Stockwell. They had agreed upon proposed hours of work and remuneration. Councillors agreed that these were acceptable and it was proposed (MS, seconded FM) and unanimously agreed that payments should commence with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August. CH offered to review the draft contract in her professional HR capacity, for which the Council thanked her; it would be formally approved at the next meeting.

The Clerk commented that the new PAYE regulations would also need to be implemented for the web manager in due course.

Action: CH, Clerk

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEM** – Standing Order No 66 suspended for this item only.  
*Jl left the meeting and CH left the room for the duration of the item.*

(vi) Representation from Mr Derek Hole re planning issues relating to Briar House

Councillors considered a draft response. This would be finalized over the next couple of days.

*CH re-joined the meeting*

6. Consultation: Avon & Somerset Police Authority – Policing Priorities 2011/12

This document was in circulation; councillors were asked to make written comments, if any, on which the Clerk could base a response.

Action: all

7. Devon / Somerset Superfast Broadband initiative

MS reported that he had discovered that fibre-optic cabling had already reached North End but did not know whether it was proposed that it should extend to Kingston Seymour. CH was asked to find out to whom in North Somerset Council an enquiry should be addressed. It was understood that the Government was investing heavily in improving Broadband in rural areas and councillors agreed that it was imperative that the community should be able to take advantage of this opportunity.

Action: CH, Clerk

8. Planning

(i) Update on planning applications previously considered:

The Clerk reported that she had received notice of the following planning decisions:

- Bramble Farm – new dwelling (outline) – consent with conditions
- New House Farm – part replacement barn – consent
- Elmscott Farm – conversions and extension – consent
- The Penns, Middle Lane – stable block, arena and access – refused

PC reported that the application for the conversion of part of an agricultural building to livery stables had been withdrawn to accommodate the inclusion of additional elements (equestrian use of existing arena).

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

It was noted that the applicant's appeal against the enforcement notice at Briar House had been upheld. It was understood that enforcement action was in progress at Yew Tree Farm in respect of certain details of the barn conversions and the farmhouse windows.

(iii) Other

**(a) Proposed changes to town / parish consultation arrangements for planning applications**

It was noted that North Somerset Council is allowing more time for parishes to prepare for the transition to a fully computerized system, but was still insisting that all councils would have to make appropriate arrangements to accommodate the changes. CH explained that the planning authority had little or no room for manoeuvre; these changes were being driven by budget cuts affecting all departments. Councillors insisted that until (a) Broadband speeds and (b) North Somerset's own systems, specifically the maintenance and updating of the website, were much improved, the Parish Council could not contemplate operating the new system. Even then, they would be unwilling to lose the opportunity of looking at planning applications both in advance of a meeting and on site. CH would discuss these concerns with the Head of Development Management; the Clerk would also write another letter.

Action: CH, Clerk  
minutes mtg 18.7.11

**(b) Consideration of request for support for proposal to amend Sustainable Communities Act to require persons or bodies submitting applications for major developments to meet with local council(s) affected and pay for an independent assessment of the impact on local sustainability**

The Clerk outlined the background to this request, which had come from a small parish in Suffolk but was attracting support across the country. It was not impossible to imagine a similar situation arising locally and indeed councillors remarked that the business park proposal in Kenn was an instance in which such a legal provision would have been very valuable. It was agreed that the Clerk should write a letter of support.

Action: Clerk

9. Roads - Routine maintenance

PC reported that he had received via the Clerk a request for the central white lines on the road at Lampley Bridge to be repainted as they were very faint – he had logged this in the past but had raised the matter again and been assured that it would be done. The Clerk had also been approached concerning the ditch and railings at the bottom of Back Lane; PC reported that the ditch could not be cleaned out until the autumn because of wildlife concerns and that repairs to the railings would then follow. He had not received any reports of problems with footpaths but it was noted by MW that the stile and bridge on the path immediately behind the Hall had recently been renewed by North Somerset Council. This had needed doing and a good job had been done.

10. Queen's Diamond Jubilee 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2012

The Clerk recalled that ten years ago the Parish Council had played a prominent role in the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations, a weekend of special celebrations for all the family. It had paid for commemorative mugs for all children in the parish and special medals to be presented on Sports Day. She suggested that the Parish Council consider inviting representatives of the Church, the Friends of All Saints, the Sports Day Committee and the Village Hall to join Council representatives in forming a steering committee to set in motion preparations for this special weekend. It was generally agreed that this was a good idea and MS indicated that he would be willing to represent the Council at such a meeting. The clerk would draft an appropriate letter.

Action: Clerk, MS

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

(i) ALCA NSG – Tuesday 7 June – the chairman had attended and reported that the new “slimline” system seemed to be working well. However the county secretary was now on sick leave and it was possible that there would be further changes. At the meeting the Parish Liaison and Area officer schemes had been discussed. Satisfaction was variable; CH pointed out that these were voluntary roles, undertaken by staff outside office hours; inevitably some staff were able to give them more time than others. Lessons were being learned from how similar systems operated in B&NES (well), Bristol and S Glos (both less well).

(ii) PCAA AGM - Tuesday 21 June, 7.30pm, Felton – MS had been unable to attend this due to the clash with the recent special meeting of the Parish Council.

*PC and FM, having another commitment, left the meeting*

12. Forthcoming meetings and events:

It was noted that the next PCAA meeting was scheduled for 4 October. MS would attend.

13. Correspondence & Information

(i) New Environment Agency regulations affecting homes with septic tanks

It was noted that the Environment Agency had advised that from 31 December 2011 all households not connected to mains drains and having a septic tank will be required to register with the Environment Agency for an Environmental Permit (unless they already have one, or a "Consent to Discharge"). In practice many private households will be able to claim and register an exemption, but this will still require compliance with certain conditions. Full details would be included in the next Village Magazine.

Action: Clerk

(ii) House Condition Survey

The Clerk reported that she had received details of a survey to be conducted by North Somerset Council into the conditions of the housing stock. A random sample of 1000 houses would be surveyed, including owner-occupied and privately-rented properties. This was being done to comply with legislation requiring local authorities to undertake regular assessments of the condition of all housing in their area. It was agreed that although this was likely to affect very few households in the parish, a note should be included in the Village Magazine.

Action: Clerk

(iii) CiLCA qualification for Clerks

The Chairman had received a letter from the SLCC reminding councils of the value of having a qualified clerk and also reminding them that a bursary covering 50% of the training costs was available to small councils. He remarked that although the Clerk had been in post for many years and had learned "on the job", it might still be worth considering gaining the formal qualification. Councillors indicated that they would support this if the Clerk so wished; she said that was heartened by the Council's attitude and would consider it. The job was now such that in her view it was essential for all new clerks; a number of years ago she would have been keen to do it but at that stage the then Council had been unwilling to fund it. It would involve a good deal of work and she was not sure that she could now make time for it. However she had recently been invited by ALCA to run a training course for new clerks and, in agreeing, her only hesitation had been the fact that although very experienced, she did not have the formal qualification. She would think about it and let the Council know her decision in due course.

Action: Clerk

14. Members' Concerns

It was noted that after a year of frustration due to repeated missed refuse / recycling / green waste collections, and repeated assurances that things would improve, the residents of Bullocks Lane (far end) had finally been advised that since 2005 it had no longer been Council policy to collect from unadopted roads and private drives. They had met with Mr Simon Banbury, whose proposals for a central collection point were for a variety of reasons unacceptable. They had also asked for sight of this policy, of which neither the residents nor the Parish Council had ever been advised, and of which Mr Banbury's own staff appeared to be ignorant. At present collections were being made, pending the outcome of further consideration of the matter by officers.

*The meeting closed at 9.20pm.*

*Date of next meeting: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 7.30pm*