

Kingston Parish Council
Minutes of Meeting held at 8.00pm on 14 May 2009

Present:

Simon Draper, Chairman
Helen Underwood
Julie Conder
Mike Warren
Robin Martlew, SCDC
Peter Stokes, Clerk
Mrs M Ellar, member of the public

1. Apologies

Mike Warren, Fiona Whelan

2. Elections

- 2.1. Chairman:** Simon Draper was proposed by Helen Underwood, and elected unanimously.
- 2.2. Other officers:** The following agreed to serve and were elected unanimously: Mike Warren: VHMC representative, Julie Conder: Finance Officer. The elections of Vice-President and Footpaths Officer were deferred to the next meeting.

3. Minutes of meeting dated 2 April 2009

Accepted.

4. Minutes of extraordinary meeting dated 20 April 2009

There was some discussion about the first item – changing the name of The Smithy to The Village Orchard. It was agreed that the minute was correct. No specific action was required, but 'The Village Orchard' would be used in future when referring to this piece of land. Minutes accepted.

5. Matters Arising from meeting dated 2 April 2009

- 5.1. 3.1 Footpaths map:** Helen has now prepared 4 A4-sized walk maps. To be put on the website only when the website has been re-set into the new software. It was agreed that as the website is being maintained only at a minimal level, a note should be added to it to explain this, and the reasons, to visitors. **Action: HU.**
- 5.2. 3.2 Parish Paths Partnership workshop 25 April:** deferred to next meeting.
- 5.3. 3.3 Registering land:** the Clerk reported that the Land Registry has raised some queries about the application to register the green on Field Road. Following a phone call to clarify, a copy is to be sent of the documentation covering the registration of the adjacent village green under the Commons Registration Act 1965, which it is hoped will resolve the matter. **Action: Clerk.**
- 5.4. 3.5 Mulberry tree on Orchard:** the work around the roots area will be one of the tasks for the forthcoming Work Day.
- 5.5. 3.6 Crane's Lane allotments:** the Clerk has contacted Hewitsons to ask for an estimate of KPC's likely legal costs. The reply indicates that costs are not likely to be less than about £1400. It was agreed that SCDC should be contacted to ask them to either provide the necessary legal services themselves, or pay for them to be provided. Robin Martlew to make enquiries at SCDC and advise the Clerk. On receipt of advice from Robin, Clerk to draft a suitable letter and circulate to Members. **Action: RM, Clerk.**
- 5.6. 4.1 Potholes in Field Road:** now repaired.

- 5.7. **4.3 Recreation ground:** deferred to next meeting.
- 5.8. **4.4 Insurance:** agreed to accept the quote from Suffolk Acre. **Action: Clerk.**
- 5.9. **5.3 Allotment waiting list:** Helen to contact Jenny Clark. **Action: HU.**
- 5.10. **5.4 Sustainable Communities Act:** Fiona Whelan was not present, but her report indicated that CCC has not yet signed up to this Act.
- 5.11. **8 2009 Council Tax bills:** as previously indicated the high increase in taxpayers bills is due to a 3.6% decrease in the number of 'Band D Equivalent' properties, which in turn means that (assuming no house has been re-banded) the total tax to be paid is shared between a smaller number of households. This could be due in turn to, for example, some houses being unoccupied, or becoming exempt from Council Tax.
- 5.12. **Annual Parish Meeting:** invitations have been sent out as usual. So far the only reports received have been from Simon and the police.

6. Matters Arising from meeting dated 20 April 2009

- 6.1. **Work Day 23/24 May:** so far only five responses received. Hopefully more will turn up on the day. The Clerk will contact volunteers a few days before. **Action: Clerk.**
- 6.2. **Open Day 13 June:** format will be: walks around the orchard, guided tours by Peter Reynolds, cream teas, 3 to 5 pm. Power and water from The Old Post Office. To be cancelled if the weather is too wet.

7. Correspondence

- 7.1. **Email from Peter Tibbitts:** re rent for village hall. Agreed that in future the PC would book the hall for 2½ hours per meeting at a cost of £10.00 per meeting. Rent to be paid retrospectively to January 2008. Clerk to advise Peter Tibbitts. **Action: Clerk.**
- 7.2. **Email from Katherine Stalham:** Katherine requested that a cycle path be provided from Kingston to Toft, and advised that a number of other residents had also requested this to make cycling safer, particularly with CVC pupils in mind. Clerk to refer to Fiona Whelan. **Action: Clerk.**

8. County Councillor's report

Cllr Whelan's report, previously circulated, was read through. There was some discussion about the withdrawal of the 0905 bus service into Cambridge – there is now no bus between 0753 and 1008. Although a notice was put in the bus shelter asking those aggrieved by this change to contact the Clerk, no-one has done so. It was agreed that the notice should be put up again, together with a notice in the parish magazine, encouraging anybody who wished to see the service reinstated to contact either Fiona Whelan or the Clerk. **Action: Clerk.**

See full report attached.

9. District Councillor's report

SCDC is in the final stages of its programme of communications with council house tenants regarding the proposed transfer of council houses to a housing association. A ballot will shortly be held with tenants on whether or not this is the way forward. Cllr Martlew is concerned that although the many communications from SCDC to tenants have described the advantages, the disadvantages and potential problems have not been detailed, making it difficult for tenants to make an informed decision for the ballot.

10. 2008/09 accounts and annual return

- 10.1. The Parish Council accounts for the year 2008/09, previously circulated by the Clerk, were accepted.
- 10.2. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to the first eight annual governance statements on page 3 of the annual return.

10.3. It was agreed that the annual governance statements in the Annual Return would be discussed by the Parish Council at the September meeting. **Action: Clerk.**

10.4. Julie advised that she and the Clerk had had discussions on the format of future internal audits, and the need for basic written financial regulations. Some draft documents had been written. Any decisions taken by the Parish Council which have a lasting effect (eg procedures for claiming expenses or dealing with planning applications) clearly must be recorded in the minutes, but they should also be recorded in another form for easy reference. It was agreed that the Clerk would set up a manual which could contain such reference items as:

- Financial regulations
- Internal audit procedures
- Standing orders
- Risk assessments

Agreed that the draft Internal Audit Guidelines and Financial Regulations will be circulated for review by Councillors. **Action: Clerk.**

11. Clerk's Report

11.1. Bank balances: current account £996.49, deposit account £9733.69. It was agreed that in future the Clerk would report monthly expenditure against budget. **Action: Clerk.**

11.2. Invoices approved for payment: Buchan's Landscapes £396.98.

11.3. The Clerk advised that according to governance guidelines, reserves should not significantly exceed the annual precept unless specifically earmarked for an agreed purpose. Kingston PC's reserves have been steadily increasing and at the end of the last year they exceeded the precept by £1461 (24%) To date they exceed the precept by £3349 (52%). This has not been queried by the auditor in the past. It was agreed that no sum would be earmarked for a specific purpose and no change would be made.

11.4. The Clerk advised that since 2007 the invoice from the PCC for the magazine has arrived rather later than previously, so that in effect it was received in the following financial year. This has resulted in one year (2007/08) with no expenditure on this item. The treasurer of the PCC has advised that billing will be more timely in future which may result in two invoices this year.

11.5. In response to a question from the Clerk, Robin Martlew advised that recycling payments had ceased because the recycling of newspapers, although still carried out, was not economic and therefore produced no funds for the payments.

12. Planning

12.1. S/0091/09/LB: Listed building consent has been given for alterations and refurbishment of a barn at South Sea House.

12.2. S/0056/09/F: Planning permission has been granted for a replacement porch to be built at Green Ley.

12.3. S/0460/09/F: A planning application has been made for extensions and alterations at Bridgefield (minor changes to a previous application). Agreed 'no recommendation' from Kingston PC (retrospective agreement – discussed by Chairman and Clerk prior to meeting).

13. Any Other Business

Helen circulated a draft copy of the Village Hall Management Committee accounts. These were not final as information was awaited on rental charges to the Parish Council (see para 7.1 above).

Meeting ended at 10.25 pm
Next meeting: 9 July 2009

Signed.....

Date.....

County Councillor's Report from Cllr Fiona Whelan

11-05-2009

Having had just 5 months in the job this is a rather briefer than usual Councillor's report. My main goal has been to attend Parish Council Meetings and other Village events to find out the main issues that need to be worked on for Madingley residents.

- **Sustainable Communities Act**

We've seen this passed by the District Council and it is due to be tabled as a motion at County Council level. Hopefully by the end of the year we should see its implementation for the County.

- **Pavements**

Any defective pavements reported to me have been passed on to the County Council who have a rolling programme of work to repair pavements and pot holes this year. The bad weather in January caused a significant amount of damage to the road surfaces as water froze and then melted, and Highways have allocated extra workers at the moment to address the extra potholes.

- **Gritting**

I have worked with the local Parish Council to identify roads that need gritting . Any new slots on the gritting rota have to be applied for in advance. The Council will evaluate the list of roads applied for by Parish Councils later in the year and allocate gritting slots as resources allow.

In addition I have raised the profile of the lack of gritting of cycle paths and I'm pleased to pass on that the County Council will be reviewing its policy of not gritting cycle paths before the next winter.

- **Bus timetables**

This is becoming an ongoing saga as the timetables have changed yet again as of April 12th. The new routes see the Citi 4 now extending as far as St Neots and Whippet providing a service out to Gamlingay.. Several of the nearby villages – in particular Hardwick and Caldecote are particularly affected and we will be pursuing the possibility of diverting some buses during the day to allow a pick up in these villages. I am keeping a keen eye on services to ensure we provide a proper alternative form of transport to local residents.

- **Sure Start**

I have been actively involved with the proposed Sure Start Centre for our area, which is planned to be located in Caldecote but offering services to all neighbouring villages. Sure Start is a Government funded, three-stage initiative to provide facilities for families with pre-school children. They provide a type of drop in centre for advice with a doctor/nurse on site available and extra facilities such as speech and language therapy at different times during the week. Plans are being drawn up at the moment and whilst the site is constructed it is proposed to use Caldecote Village Hall as a temporary base. With a considerable number of children in the area on the Autistic Spectrum it is hoped to be able to develop a parental support group which I will be very happy to work with given my experience of using these support groups in the past.

I have concerns relating to the accessibility of the Centre by bus / bicycle and will be working hard on these issues over the coming months. Currently the proposed Cycle path for Hardwick to Toft – which would join up with the Toft to Comberton path – has hit a glitch and will require more investigation.

- **CVC expansion and Safer Routes to School**

I have worked with both Toft and Comberton Parish Councils since being elected to address the issue of CVC expansion. The Police and the County Council are proposing to help both CVC and Meridian Primary School draw up a Safer Routes To School plan. At present we are waiting for the first meeting to take place between the concerned parties. I hope that this working group will be able to address the traffic issues raised by the expansion of CVC and work towards safer pedestrian access to Meridian.

- **Day Care Provision**

In the last few weeks I have been very involved with the proposed closure of the Day Care Centre in Toft. Together with those who attend the centre and some of their carers, I have been very public about the lack of consultation re the closure and the lack of provision of such a service throughout the County – and in particular the nine villages of the Hardwick Division. I'm delighted that at the 11th hour, the Home has had a change of heart and that the Centre will remain open for another 12 – 18 months. In coming months I hope to work with local groups who have highlighted the lack of provision for elderly in our villages, and to see if we can set up facilities for more people to attend such a facility in our village halls which are often unused during the day.

- **Mineral and Waste Development Sites**

These continue to be under discussion for the proposed extension of the A14. I have attended meetings at both County and Parish level and will continue to pass on all relative information and concerns.

- **Proposed Tesco Superstore**

The proposed Superstore due to be built on the City side of Madingley Park and Ride has been overwhelmingly rejected by the City Council. I will continue to monitor the proposals.

- **Council Work**

In addition to representing the nine villages of the Hardwick Division (Barton, Caldecote + Childerley, Comberton, Coton, Grantchester, Hardwick, Kingston, Madingley and Toft) I sit on the Health, Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee of the County Council. As it says on the tin, our job is to scrutinise the provision of these services throughout the County. As a priority for the new Council, to be elected on June 4th, this Committee will be looking at the provision of Day Care facilities throughout the County amongst other things.

I feel very privileged to have been your representative and advocate at the County Council for the last 5 months, and hope to be able to continue to work for you after the coming election on June 4th.

Fiona Whelan
County Councillor
Hardwick Division