

**Kingston Parish Council**  
**Minutes of Meeting held at 8.00pm on 9 September 2010**

**Present:**

Simon Draper, Chairman  
Tim Fitzjohn  
Julie Conder  
Tumi Hawkins, SCDC  
Peter Stokes, Clerk

**1. Apologies**

Katherine Stalham, Fiona Whelan

**2. Minutes of last meeting**

Accepted.

**3. Matters Arising**

- 3.1. **5.1 Research on zipwires:** Julie Conder reported on her further research on zipwires in other village play areas. Currently Kingston PC has no access to additional major funding and is not seeking any such funding for a zipwire or any other major equipment at the play area.
- 3.2. **5.2 Proposals for tree planting:** It was agreed that 4 – 6 trees should be planted this autumn. Tim Fitzjohn to obtain information on the most suitable trees to plant in the area between the play equipment and the boundary with the Bedfords' property. **Action: TF.**
- 3.3. **5.3 Installation of logs at playground:** to be carried out by the Clerk and Katherine Stalham. **Action: Clerk, KS.**
- 3.4. **5.4 Installation of grass surface under swings:** Clerk has obtained a 2<sup>nd</sup> quote for this work from Chris Lilley for £780.00. Agreed to accept the Saunders Landscapes quote at £520.00. **Action: Clerk.**
- 3.5. **5.6 Clearing of drain outside play area:** Clerk to action. **Action: Clerk.**
- 3.6. **5.8 Rectification of furrows and other work at play area:** Buchan's Landscapes have been instructed to proceed with items A and B, and work has started. Agreed that the Clerk will now meet with Stuart Buchan to discuss Item C (work on the mound) to agree the scope of the work, and any adjustments to the quoted price of £185.00 for this work. Any changes to be emailed to members for approval. **Action: Clerk.**
- 3.7. **5.10 Risk assessments:** Proposals from Andrew Bedford have been circulated. He has suggested three risk assessments covering business continuity, financial risk, and H&S. It was agreed that these can form, with minor adjustments, the basis of a 'hierarchy' of risk assessments with these at the top level. Others can be added as the need arises. Agreed that the Clerk will make the required adjustments and circulate for approval. **Action: Clerk.**
- It was also noted that the PC and laptop used by the Clerk need to be PAT tested. Clerk to find out cost of this. Tim Fitzjohn to find out required frequency of testing. **Action: Clerk, TF.**
- 3.8. **5.11 Field Road Green:** in order to progress the application to register this green as 'Village Green' it was agreed that a book published by the Open Spaces Society 'Getting Greens Registered' should be purchased. **Action: Clerk.**
- 3.9. **5.12 New standing orders:** ongoing. **Action: Clerk.**

- 3.10. **5.13 Community Plan:** Sarah Johnston from Cambridgeshire ACRE is coming to the November meeting. This agenda item to be put near the beginning. **Action: Clerk.**
- 3.11. **5.16 Pothole survey:** no further action.
- 3.12. **5.17 Ownership of land bordering extension of Field Road:** according to the Rights of Way Officer the highway officially ends not at the barrier, but at the point where the wider track narrows to a footpath. Official width, and ownership of verges, is not clear. Tim Fitzjohn to establish if the presence of the barrier and the logs could eventually become established as 'legal'. **Action: Tim Fitzjohn.**
- 3.13. **5.18 Village website:** Julie Conder is now the webmaster. She will arrange transfer of the website and domain name to Kingston PC. **Action: JC.**
- 3.14. **6.1 Cranes Lane allotments:** agreed to accept the offer by SCDC to licence the allotments to KPC for £30 per year. **Action: Clerk.**
- 3.15. **6.2 Grasscutting at Church Lane/B1046 junction:** to await advice from Fiona Whelan. Clerk to email reminder to Fiona. **Action: Clerk.**
- 3.16. **6.3 Hedge opposite Louise Darrington's house:** Dennis Vacher has agreed to clear out the debris.
- 3.17. **10.3 Playground inspections:** the regime proposed by the Clerk in his email dated 19 Jul 2010 is approved. Inspections have been arranged as follows:
- 3.17.1. Annual inspections: RoSPA has been contracted to carry out one out-of-sequence inspection (carried out 3 Sep 10) followed by annual inspections each April, which is their month for Cambridgeshire.
- 3.17.2. Quarterly inspections: Cambridgeshire ACRE have been contracted to carry out these each January, July and October.
- 3.17.3. Weekly inspections: John Dickerson has been trained by the Clerk and given the checklist, and will carry out weekly inspections, forwarding completed checklists to the Clerk.
- It was agreed that an Inspection Policy would be created specifically to cover the recreation ground. **Action: Clerk.**
- 3.18. **10.4 Bank account signatories:** documentation has now been completed by all intended signatories except Katherine Stalham. Clerk to progress. **Action: Clerk.**
- 3.19. **10.5 Electronic payments:** it was agreed that where necessary, the Clerk would email to the intended second authoriser a scanned-in copy of the supporting document (eg invoice).
- 3.20. **13 Parish magazine:** agreed that KPC should negotiate with the PCC to take ownership of the parish magazine, and incorporate the changes proposed by Jill Coleman. Simon Draper to liaise with the PCC. **Action: SD.**

#### 4. Correspondence

- 4.1. **Email from CPALC** proposing a rating system for parishes based on training-based criteria. Agreed that the proposed basis of the rating system was deeply flawed as it concentrated on inputs and ignored outcomes. KPC would reply to CPALC declining to take part. **Action: Clerk.**
- 4.2. **Email from SCDC re SPEP (Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership):** agreed that KPC wished to join this initiative, for which Katherine Stalham has volunteered to be the representative, although it was noted that as funding for this initiative has now been withdrawn, there may be little future activity.
- 4.3. **Letter from CCC** re winter service gritting arrangements: asking for details of any farmers who might be willing to help during times of adverse weather. Agreed that James Clear, Irene Heyman and Charlie Richmond should be approached. **Action: Clerk.**

- 4.4. **Request from Mrs Ginn** requesting that the missing street sign 'The Green' near her house is replaced. The Clerk is in contact with the relevant officer at CCC.  
**Action: Clerk.**
- 4.5. **Letter from East of England ambulance service** advising of an incident at a local sports ground in which a child became ill, and then died because an ambulance could not find the sports ground. Multiple 999 calls were made, but none of the callers knew the correct address. Agreed that the sign at the playground should be updated to include the full address and postcode, for use in emergencies. The Clerk advised that the postcode for both Willow Cottage and Birchwood is CB23 2NJ, so this will also apply to the playground.

This led to a discussion on other information that should be displayed at the playground. There was a discussion on reducing potential anti-social behaviour by closing it between dusk and dawn. It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate how this could be achieved through a byelaw. **Action: Clerk.**

When these matters were resolved, the sign on the gate would be revised to include the updated information. **Action: Clerk.**

## 5. County Councillor's report

### 5.1. Guided Bus

You could have heard a pin drop Tuesday when the Cabinet announced that the project handover date has now been put back to January 2011 - and my reading of it was that that's a *hopeful* date. Sadly this is going to run and run. It's very worrying because there is so much money at stake - approx £53 m - and at a time of such tight finances money could be well spent elsewhere. Once the busway is handed over the County have to notify all defects within 28 days - but can only start to rectify them themselves after the 28 days have passed. That would take us to February. Then there is at least a month of work to be done (possibly longer) so we are in March, and a month of familiarisation for the bus companies - April at the very earliest.

### 5.2. Local Transport.

As you may have read I've parked my car and bike for the month and I'm using buses and bicycle to get about. It's proving to be a real eye opener and I'd be grateful if people could update me with issues they have about poor transport. I'll also write something for the Parish magazine. Kingston is "interesting" to cycle in the dark.

### 5.3. Places at CVC

Although there is no problem for children from the Primary Schools feeding in to CVC, all other years appear to be full and there have been a number of appeals over places for children who have moved into the villages mid year. All have been successful but I continue to push for a solution to the issue of insufficient places. We are still being told that the school will be full from 2013 onwards - I have concerns it may be sooner.

### 5.4. Home Meadow

The Day Care part of the Home in Toft closed at the end of August. All attendees have been offered alternative placements although some may have to travel further (we're waiting for confirmation of distance) and some are attending more than 1 centre. It has highlighted that South Cambs is very poorly provided for in terms of day care. More on this to come I believe.

### 5.5. Budget

Several grants that the County Council were expecting from Central Govt have not materialised and in year cuts are having to be made. We will know more after the comprehensive spending review in October - but all signs are that it will be a very

tough year financially. We are going to have to be very vigilant to ensure that essential services for villagers are maintained. Please keep me updated if anything appears to be at risk.

**5.6. Path / Road issues**

Please let me know if there are any outstanding issues that you'd like me to push at County with Highways. Having cycled it last night I'll be chasing up overgrowth on the Comberton / Toft cycle path.

**5.7. Gritting**

Highways have written to the Parish about their plans to grit for next winter. Could you please let Tumi and I know if you have any concerns you'd like us to raise. I have raised the timing with Highways - sending it out in August and asking for a reply before most have had a chance to hold their September meetings. Highways have promised to be flexible over late submissions.

**6. District Councillors report**

**6.1. SCDC Planning Portal**

The new IT system came on line on 26th July 2010. There are still ongoing problems with its usage. The District Council Planning Department is in talks with the software supplier to resolve the identified problems to date. If anyone has any problems accessing information, then call the SCDC contact centre on 0345 450 500 and ask to be put through to the Planning Department to speak to the Duty Officer. If you still get no satisfaction, then please call me or email me.

The Planning service is undergoing other re-organisational changes, which have affected the

performance of the department. Things will settle down soon, but if anyone has any issues with the service, then please let me know.

**6.2. Winter Service Gritting Arrangements**

The County Council (CC) has undertaken a review of its winter gritting service and the routes it will treat. The main roads through Kingston are marked blue. This means that they are secondary routes, which will be gritted, unless stocks of salt are insufficient, in which case, they will not be. The County will stock 12,000 tonnes of salt, which is 50% more than normal use, and so hopefully, all the roads should be gritted.

The CC has also asked for assistance from Parish Councils who may have resource to help treat footways or cycleways, and where possible, provide a list of farmers in the Parish who may be able to offer help during the extreme weather conditions. Although responses are to be sent in by 10th September 2010, this is not set in stone as the County now realises that it sent out the information during the quiet August period when most Parish councils don't have meetings. However, do send in the response as soon as possible.

**6.3. Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership**

We are dismayed that the government withdrew funding last month for this fantastic project which a number of Parish councils have signed up to. There was £150,000 available which we were going to use to educate about renewable energy and the benefits of photovoltaic technology. We are assured that South Cambs will find some money to at least deliver part of the project and we are hopeful that the parishes will continue to do marvellous work albeit on a shoe string.

**6.4. Day Care Services**

It has been reported that the closure of the Day Care facility at Toft has caused a huge number of problems for a number of carers. Poor organisation and communication by the County Council with patients' allocation to alternative care

being changed innumerable times and huge uncertainty about how much care patients will receive or what transport will be available. A number of carers are meeting with Andrew Lansley MP in September to voice their concerns. If you would like to join them please contact me as soon as possible, and so I can put you in touch directly with the group convener.

#### 6.5. **Appointment of new CEO**

The new CEO for South Cambs will be Jean Hunter; who is currently CEO of South Ribble Borough. It follows a national recruitment campaign and robust candidate assessment and interview process – she was clearly the best candidate in a field of excellent candidates of substantial calibre and was the Panel's unanimous choice.

#### 6.6. **Health Profile**

You may be interested in the latest health profile for South Cambridgeshire which has just been published by the NHS and which is available on [www.healthprofiles.info](http://www.healthprofiles.info). We fare significantly better in every area than the England average apart from Road Deaths and injuries. The average is 51 and we are over double that at 111. The worst in England is 167.

#### 6.7. **Housing**

The Housing mess at South Cambs continues ... Cabinet entirely failed to carry the Council or indeed its own Members to agree that the Council should take on a £200m debt in order to (eventually) regain control of our own housing stock and the rents and receipts that derive from it. Instead of strong leadership and a coherent policy we witnessed the portfolio holder state even he didn't agree with some of the report before us despite having submitted it to Government. A shambles.

Secondly the Executive blindly ploughs on with a tender exercise in relation to the DLO – the part of the Council that provides repairs and maintenance for housing tenants. This service has a value of £2.1m pa which earns (yes! earns!) the Council £200k a year (which would have to be made up via cuts on top of the £2.2 millions already planned if the contract was outsourced). It has excellent customer feedback.

It does not need to be outsourced. It has a solid business plan demonstrating a five year surplus for reinvestment into housing. A tender exercise will cost £35,000 - £50,000; destabilise our staff and is entirely unwanted and unwarranted. And yet, and yet on we go – and the exercise has so far been so badly done that not enough bidders made it to the end - so the entire process has to be repeated! Thirdly, a council owned site, in Balsham, become available this year for redevelopment, having had a bedsit development on it for several years. Balsham Parish council has consistently favoured the provision of general needs affordable housing on this site. When re-consulted recently, that was still their firm wish. The two Balsham district councillors are of the same mind because there is a definite proven need for the affordable housing in Balsham, and about 4000 needed overall in South Cambs.

However, the cabinet member for Housing, and the Leader of the Council think otherwise, and have resolved to sell the land to a private developer for an indicated value of £450,000. Selling council owned land for private housing, at apparently knock down prices, whilst forcing developers to build affordable housing on market sites, just does not seem to indicate a coherent strategy for housing. This is becoming a worrying trend as recently, the same cabinet member agreed the sale of a plot in Shepreth on the open market when Shepreth Parish council wished that site to be retained for social housing.

#### 6.8. **Casework**

Your Councillor is here to help you. Please do feel free to contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints. I can be contacted by phone, email or via my website. I hope I can help but even if I can't, then it's highly likely that I know someone who can!

### 7. **Clerk's report**

- 7.1. Bi-monthly report attached – see Appendix A.
- 7.2. Invoices for payment: Katherine Stalham £130.88 and John Dickerson £50.00 for playground launch party expenses (both already paid), Playdale £8343.68 for supply and installation of mound slide, Suffolk ACRE £65.19 additional insurance premium, Buchan's Landscapes £406.83 for grasscutting. All agreed.
- 7.3. Bingleys departure: a collection has been organised. Any councillors who receive contributions should please pass them to the Clerk. Ideas welcome on a suitable present, and a suitable presentation occasion. **Action: all.**

**8. Cooption of parish councillor**

James Clear has agreed to serve on the parish council and this offer was accepted unanimously. He was unable to attend this meeting but will attend the November meeting. Clerk to send him any necessary information. **Action: Clerk**

**9. Planning**

- 9.1. S/0849/10/LB rear extension at The Old Rectory has been refused.
- 9.2. S/0318/10/F garage at 1, field Row has been refused.
- 9.3. S/0816/10/F side extension at The Old Rectory – revised plans submitted.

**10. Items for next meeting**

Some trees have been felled at Church Cottage, which is within the conservation area. No copies of applications have been received by the Clerk to fell trees. It is not known if this is because no applications were submitted, or because of a failure of the usual consultation process. Agreed no action to be taken.

**11. Date of next meeting:** 11 November.

Meeting ended at 11.00 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

## Appendix A

### Financial report: 9 Sep 2010

N.B. All figures exclude VAT

Item	Budget 2009-10 £	Expenditure YTD £	Budget minus expenditure YTD £	Comments
Grass and Hedge cutting	1715.00	1038.72	676.28	excludes July invoice
Insurance	541.00	657.49	-116.49	excludes additional amount to cover new slide
Clerk's salary	959.87	0.00	959.87	
Grants (section 137)	587.00	100.00	487.00	
Audit fee	175.00	343.00	-168.00	
Village asset maintenance	250.00	638.84	-388.84	
Subscriptions	150.00	84.17	65.83	
Parish Magazine	212.00	0.00	212.00	
Footpath lighting	247.00	120.00	127.00	
Play Pathfinder payments	25055.00	17117.00	7938.00	Excludes £7101.00 invoiced for new slide and £180.88 launch party expenses
Miscellaneous and expenses	163.00	175.00	-12.00	
Income other than precept	-9.00	0.00	-9.00	
To reserves	1524.00			
<b>Total</b>	<b>31569.87</b>	<b>20274.22</b>	<b>11295.65</b>	

<b>Bank balances</b>	Current account:	407.46	
	Deposit account:	5314.95	Reserves
		7938.00	Play Pathfinder grant
		13252.95	Total

Excludes VAT reclaim £3808.19 for 2009/10 and 2010/11 to date