

**Kingston Parish Council**  
**Minutes of Meeting held at 8.00pm on 10 March 2011**

**Present:**

Simon Draper, Chairman  
Tim Fitzjohn  
Julie Conder  
James Clear  
Tumi Hawkins, SCDC  
Peter Stokes, Clerk  
Charmaine Hawkins, Beacon Planning

**1. Apologies**

Katherine Stalham, Fiona Whelan

**2. Declarations of interest**

Tim Fitzjohn and Julie Conder both declared a prejudicial interest in the planning application in respect of The Old Rectory due to the locations of their own houses close to The Old Rectory.

**3. Presentation by Charmaine Hawkins**

Ms Hawkins gave a presentation explaining the rationale behind the latest planning application for a rear extension and other alterations at The Old Rectory. She explained that because of the presence of bats, a survey would have to be carried out and a plan for their protection submitted. Decision not expected until September or October 2011.

Ms Hawkins then left the meeting.

**4. Minutes of meetings on 13 January 2011 and 2 February 2011**

Accepted.

**5. Matters Arising**

- 5.1. **4.1 Community Plan:** Tim Fitzjohn reported that he has researched questionnaires used by other parishes. He found that questionnaires need to be extensive, and the small size of Kingston does not diminish the extent of questionnaire required. He suggested therefore that not just the Community Plan, but the questionnaire preceding it, should be drawn up with full consultation among residents. He proposed therefore, and it was agreed, that a basic pre-questionnaire should be drawn up to create awareness and interest in forming a small group of volunteers, who would then take on the task, with further consultation, of drawing up the main questionnaire on the Community Plan. It was agreed that this group should ideally number 6. **Action: TF, Clerk.**
- 5.2. **4.2 Tree planting:** Tim Fitzjohn reported that three trees had been delivered to his house, but one of these was incorrect. **Action: TF.**
- 5.3. **4.4 Ownership of land:** Fiona Whelan absent, so this is deferred to the next meeting.
- 5.4. **4.11.4 Clearing of debris from hedge in Crane's Lane:** completed – closed.
- 5.5. **5 Mural in village hall, funding of improvements:** Simon Draper reported that following a meeting with Torrie Smith, Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC), a list of suggested actions/improvements had been drawn up. Simon to circulate this. They will have to be phased over a number of years due to cost:

- Phase 1: interior of main hall
- Phase 2: structure and exterior including roof of small hall

Funding would be sourced from fundraising events and grant applications. The VHMC will draw up a plan to implement the list of actions over a period of approximately 5 years. **Actions: SD, Torrie Smith.**

5.6. **7.3 Grass cutting contract:** Buchan's Landscaping submitted a bid of £2142.63, an increase of 3.1% over their price last year, and so as previously agreed have been awarded the contract.

5.7. **Reports of actions completed or ongoing (not discussed)**

- 5.7.1. 4.6 New swing seat (installed)
- 5.7.2. 4.10 New sign at playground (installed)
- 5.7.3. 4.14.3 New standing orders (ongoing)

6. **Correspondence**

6.1. **Email from CCC** advising that the grant for cutting verges within the village was likely to be reduced by 25% for 2011. It was accepted that the number of cuts per year could be reduced. Agreed that Buchan's Landscapes would be asked to reduce their charges for 2011 by the estimated amount which is equivalent to 25% of the CCC grass cutting grant, and to specify what reduction in their overall programme of grass/hedge cutting would be required to achieve this. **Action: Clerk.**

6.2. **Emails from CCC re changes to bus services:** Stagecoach propose to discontinue the early evening (19:08) bus into Cambridge and the late night (22:15) bus from Cambridge to Kingston. Comments are invited. Agreed that as the late night bus is regularly used by people – especially young people – returning from social and recreational visits to Cambridge, a strongly-worded email of protest will be sent. **Action: Clerk.**

7. **County Councillor's report**

No report

8. **District Councillor's report**

See Appendix A

9. **Clerk's report**

9.1. **Bi-monthly report:** see appendix B

9.2. **Invoices for payment**

- 9.2.1. Saunders Landscapes for work at playground £624.00
- 9.2.2. Cambridgeshire ACRE playground 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly inspection £107.86
- 9.2.3. Cambridgeshire County Council street lighting maintenance and energy £203.30
- 9.2.4. Algar Signcraft Services new sign for playground £69.60
- 9.2.5. Clerk's salary £959.87
- 9.2.6. Clerk's expenses £128.27

All agreed.

9.3. **Playground inspection reports**

9.3.1. **Double swing:** the work by Saunders Landscapes has been completed. The area will be cordoned off with barrier tape, and the swings removed, until the grass has grown. **Action: Clerk.**

9.3.2. **Quarterly reports:** the first report from Cambridgeshire ACRE has been received. All problems reported have either been corrected or are in hand, apart from the toddler seat on the double swing which the inspector found needed

immediate replacement. Agreed to purchase the Premium Cradle Seat SW22 @ £74.00 from Online Playgrounds. **Action: Clerk.**

9.3.3. **Weekly reports:** John Dickerson has reported:

9.3.3.1. Water in the tunnel: agreed to drill drain holes. **Action: Clerk.**

9.3.3.2. Loose post at gate near swing: Clerk to investigate. **Action: Clerk.**

9.4. **Change in regulations regarding tax treatment of parish clerks**

The Clerk advised that following changes to the regulations parish clerks can no longer be paid 'gross'. PAYE deductions must be made by the employer, for which purpose Kingston Parish Council must register as an employer. This can be done a few weeks before the next payday, which will be in March 2012. Note that there are no implications for NI contributions since these are not payable. **Action: Clerk.**

9.5. **Meeting with Robert Stone, Toft parish clerk**

The Clerk met with Robert Stone a few weeks ago. This was a productive meeting with a mutual exchange of useful information.

10. **Items for next meeting**

Julie Conder suggested that the parish council should consider setting up a page on Facebook. To be considered and discussed at the next meeting. **Action: All.**

11. **Planning**

11.1. C/11/40/056 application to pollard a willow tree at Southcote. Agreed that KPC supports this application.

11.2. S/0816/10/F and S0817/10/LB rear extension and alterations to The Old Rectory. Councillors Julie Conder and Tim Fitzjohn left the meeting before the discussion in view of their previously declared prejudicial interest in the proposals (see minute 2). Agreed that Kingston Parish Council supports this application. (Katherine Stalham confirmed her agreement with this decision by e-mail.)

12. **Date of next meeting:** 12 May 2011

Meeting ended at 22.30

Signed.....

Date.....

## **Councillor's Report – South Cambridgeshire District Council**

**Month:** March 2011

### **1. Council Sets Budget for 2011/12**

1. SCDC has set the budget for the next municipal year.
2. On the whole, the council income from national government has been reduced in real terms by 15.2%. FG reduced from £7.106mil to £6.026 mill (15.2%) in 2011/12 compared to 2010/11.
3. Council tax is to be frozen for **2011/12 only**, and the council will receive a "freeze grant" of £173,000 in lieu the tax it would have raised. The grant will be given for 4 years up to 2014/15.
4. The council then plans to raise Council tax in 2012/13 to 2014/15 by up to 3.5% each year, to try to bring the CT level to what it ought to be had it not been frozen in 2011/12.
5. The council plans to make up the funding shortfall of about £1million from its current savings. There should be no significant effects on services provided, and no staff redundancies, and no increases in salary or allowances for staff or councillors.
6. Further grants are proposed, in the form of New Homes Bonus, which is probably old money being recycled. Each council will get a sum of money for each Band D equivalent property built over the next 4 years. Estimated to bring in £800K per year.
7. It has also been confirmed that SCDC will be taking on £205 million of national debt, for the privilege of keeping all its income from council rents and capital sales. This will hit SCDC account in April 2012, and will be funded by a mix of long and short term loans over a period of 30 years, and in long term is beneficial for the council.

### **2. Council Tax rebate removed on Long term empty homes**

Up to now, properties that are empty for up to 6 months get full council tax rebate, then enjoy 50% rebate if empty up to 12 months, and no rebate after that. Now the Council has decided to remove the 50% rebate, in misguided bid to "encourage" the homeowners to bring the properties back into use. This was done without consultation with those property owners to find out why the properties are empty. Infact, the Housing Porfolio Holder admitted they don't know how many there are, and that over the coming months, SCDC will be developing an Empty Homes Strategy to assess the extent of empty homes in the district and the options available to assist homeowners to bring their property back into use. Yet, they had "estimated" 600 properties were empty. We don't know where those numbers have come from, but it's a cynical ploy to try and earn money from the government's promised "new homes bonus", as empty homes brought back into use, will count as new homes. The council will be burdening people who already are probably in financial difficulty, and has yet no plan in place to help them.

### **3. Bus Services/Concessionary Fares/Bus route losses**

Concessionary bus fares implementation has been transferred to the County Council. This income is lost to the District, as is interest earned from it. Only new applications or renewals will be affected, existing ones can carry on using their passes as normal.

Service will be compromised if the County does not give enough subsidy to Bus operators to keep services going. Folk cannot use bus passes on services that don't exist. Ultimately, grant will be withdrawn if there are no services to use it for – catch 22!!

County has released the list of bus routes that will be lost. Routes 18 & 18A will be completely lost, and this affects the Parishes of Toft and Kingston. Pressure is being brought to bear on the County to review its decision, but it is not clear that this will bear any fruit.

### **4. Community Transport Plan**

The Planning portfolio holder has been looking at a comprehensive transport plan for the district. This has involved collating all the individual/private/group transport schemes in the area, with the view to looking at sharing/extending. This is to mitigate the loss of bus routes that are expected over the coming years. However, without significant investment "community transport" is a none starter for anything other than delivering the elderly to hospital and health centres.

The Cambridge Dial-a-Ride scheme can be used by residents in Kingston on Tuesdays. Contact telephone 01223 506335

## 5. Children and Young Peoples Plan

The Draft Action plan for Children and Young people was released to all Parish Councils for consultation from 9<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011. Please ensure that responses are sent back, if not done already, giving your views on the plan and perhaps making suggestions where applicable.

## 6. Parish Plan Forum Meeting

Parish plan forum meeting took place on 18-Jan. Very useful forum for two way discussion between Parish Councils and Planning Department. There was a lot of new information provided about the changes to Planning due to the Big Society agenda.

## 7. Audit Commission review of SCDC Housing Strategy

In January 2011, the Audit commission carried out a review of the SCDC housing strategy by spending some time at the council offices watching operations and talking to staff. It gave an overall rating of "good", which on a scale from zero to three stars, is a two-star rating. The housing section covers areas such as homelessness and affordable housing. The report shows that SCDC understands the local housing market and is committed to meeting the needs of both settled and travelling communities. However, the report found the council was not up to speed when it comes to liason with the private rented sector, which has increasingly been called upon to provide the service that the council cannot due to shortage of council housing.

*(The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog, driving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local public services to deliver better outcomes for everyone.)*

## 8. Garage sites survey

SCDC is currently reviewing its garage sites, and as part of the review are asking current tenants and customers who could rent garages from us to complete an online survey. This information will help to prioritise our spending on garages and help identify garage blocks that require a more in-depth options appraisal. This survey will be available until Thursday 31st March 2011. If anyone would like to speak to an officer with regards to this survey, please contact: Laura Rawlings, Income Maximisation Officer, on tel: 01954 713404

## 9. 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!

Prepared by:

*Tumi*

Tumi Hawkins  
10-Mar-2011

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## Appendix B

## Financial report: 10 March 2011

N.B. All figures exclude VAT

Item	Budget 2010-11 £	Expenditure YTD £	Budget minus expenditure YTD £	Comments
Grass and Hedge cutting	1715.00	1727.53	-12.53	No further invoices expected
Insurance	541.00	722.68	-181.68	No further invoices expected
Clerk's salary	959.87	0.00	959.87	To be paid at March meeting
Grants (section 137)	587.00	686.00	-99.00	Additional grant for Village Hall licence
Audit fee	175.00	343.00	-168.00	No further invoices expected
Village asset maintenance	250.00	874.67	-624.67	Maintenance of slide, additional work on grass field and mound
Subscriptions	150.00	153.17	-3.17	Excludes subscriptions for Cambridgeshire ACRE (£25.00) and SLCC (£44.00)
Parish Magazine	212.00	0.00	212.00	
Footpath lighting	247.00	120.00	127.00	To be paid at March meeting (£203.30)
Play Pathfinder payments	25055.00	25055.00	0.00	Grant now all used
Miscellaneous and expenses	163.00	378.00	-215.00	Includes election expenses £75.00) and playground inspection (£203.00). Clerk's expenses (99.65) to be paid at March meeting
Income other than precept	-9.00	-57.99	48.99	Bank interest + £40 received from Agricole for Kingston Oil Club purchases in 2010
To reserves	1524.00			
<b>Total</b>	<b>31569.87</b>	<b>30002.06</b>	<b>1567.81</b>	

<b>Bank balances</b>	Current account:	504.40	
	Deposit account:	9081.31	Reserves
		0.00	Play Pathfinder grant
		9081.31	Total