

Kingston Parish Council (KPC)
Minutes of Meeting held at 7:30 pm
on 14th March 2023 at Kingston Village Hall

Parish Councillors present:

Sue Dagleish (SD), Julie Conder (JCo), Mark Nicholls (MN), Miki Ellar (ME), Paul Wheeler (PW)

Also in attendance:

Katie Vickers (KV), Tumi Hawkins (District Councillor)

1 Apologies

None.

2 Approval of previous minutes of the Parish Council meeting

Parish Council meeting held on 10th January 2023 accepted and signed.

Extraordinary Parish Council meeting held on 7th March 2023. JCo highlighted an issue with minutes. Minutes to be reprinted and agreed at next meeting.

3 Matters arising

3.1 Luton Expansion/Aircraft Noise Luton Approach

MN attended a public meeting on 23rd February 2023 organised by Little Gransden Parish Council to discuss aircraft noise from the Luton approach. The meeting was a general update and to recruit support. Tumi advised that an application has been made to extend Luton. We're now in the post implementation stage and should still encourage people to give their input if they are concerned.

3.2 Church Council Emergency Meeting

MN attended on behalf of KPC. The Church Council have a clear idea of what is needed for the church without having the answers. They are looking at other ways the church can be used e.g. concerts. They would like to encourage all members of the parish, whatever their beliefs, to get involved in whatever way they can. They are looking to recruit church wardens and PCC members. It was agreed we would keep in touch with the situation.

3.3 Clerk Salary & Hours

At the last Parish Council meeting on 10th January it was agreed that we would implement NALC national pay increases backdated to April 2022. The Council voted and approved the following payments to be made:

Mimi Wheeler – GBP41.61

Katie Vickers – GBP154.17

An error has been identified in the Clerks contract. Hours should be 210/annum not 208/annum. Updated contract signed by Clerk and Chair.

3.4 Accounts/Internal Audit

Clerk is working with Ivan Cooper our Internal Auditor. Audit to be completed before meeting scheduled on 9 May. Clerk reported all accounts will be up to date by 31 March 2023.

SD and JCo have helped Clerk to prepare VAT return for 2021/22. Clerk to submit VAT return.

- 3.5 20 MPH Speed Limit Application
At last year's Annual Parish Meeting the need for a 20mph limited for Church Lane was raised. Applications for funding need to be submitted by end of April 2023. PW to investigate.
- 3.6 Village Bus Service (JCo)
JCo has had direct communication with Roger Birch, General Manager of Whippet Coaches. Report of the bus skipping Kingston have been resolved. We've been made aware of more incidents of the late bus not running. We have seen an overall improvement in communication with Whippet. JCo to continue to monitor the situation.
- 3.7 Dropbox
The Parish Council uses DropBox to store all electronic records. All Councillors should have access and are encouraged to save information there. Note: for GDPR reasons some areas are restricted. Clerk is currently ensuring all information received in the past year is uploaded.
- 3.8 2023 Annual Parish Meeting
Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 16 May at 1930 in Kingston Village Hall. The meeting format will remain the same as 2022. SD to work with Clerk on sending invites/reports.
- 3.9 Land Registry Project
Project being led by MN and supported by PW. There are multiple areas of land within the parish where the owner is unknown. MN has identified an online digital mapping service called Parish Online which could support us with this project. Parish Online collates information in the public domain, information from Land Registry and Ordinance Survey into one place enabling us to produce our own digital map. The cost would be ~GBP48.00/year. It was agreed to trial the software for 30 days and to take out a one year subscription if it met the projects need.
- 3.10 Playground Works
Clerk to obtain quote to replenish mulch in the playground. Clerk also highlighted there is still issues with the tunnel despite minor repairs being completed. Annual inspection is due. Clerk to check date. It was agreed that ongoing maintenance may need to be paid for rather than rely on volunteers. PW to write a specification to maintain playground for next year.
- 3.11 Kings Charles III Coronation
The Church is believed to be holding a service. SD to ask James Clear to erect the village flagpole and contact Paul Wright to see what plans Kingston Village Hall Management Committee have for the Coronation.
- 4 Matters ongoing**
- 4.1 East West Railway (SD)
SD continues to monitor the situation. The meeting is now facilitated. No significant update.
- 4.2 Kingston Phone Box (KV)
Painting planned for Spring.
- 4.3 Village Design Guide
The original project covered eight villages (including neighbouring Caldecote) where lots of development was planned. In addition, two other villages have independently written guides. Tumi's advice was it involves a lot of work and

possibly not necessary for Kingston. It was agreed that once the Land Registry project was completed it would identify any areas of concern and a decision could then be made as to whether the village would benefit from a plan.

Tumi gave a brief summary of District Council report and left meeting at 21:08.

- 4.4 New Constituency Boundary proposals, The Commission will present final recommendations to Parliament by July 2023

Nothing to report. Agreed to remove from future agendas.

5 Finance

- 5.1 Bank signatories

Clerk has submitted paperwork for MN and PW to be add as signatories on the Parish Council Bank accounts. Once actioned by Unity all signatories will be up to date.

- 5.2 Invoices paid and for approval (see page 2)

- 5.3 Financial Regulations and Standing Orders

Progress has been made updating our financial regulations. Once complete to be sent to Ivan Cooper to review. Next steps are to update Standing Orders.

- 5.4 2023 Village Grass Cutting Costs

It was agreed that Buchans Landscaping would continue to cut the village grass at a cost of GBP2804.64 per annum.

6 Correspondence/Meetings/Training

- 6.1 Response from Huw Meriman, Rail Minister to Cllr Bridget Smith

Mr Meriman has advised he'd visited the local area. No one had been aware of his visit.

- 6.2 SLCC New Clerk Seminar Series (KV)

Clerk attended the first of four seminars for New Clerks on 4 March. Council agreed the course was beneficial and to cover cost GBP24.00/per session. Clerk to submit expenses.

- 6.3 Parish Councillor & Clerk training opportunities with CAPALC

SD printed and distributed information on New Councillor training available. With Councils approval the Clerk is booked on two-day Clerk's The Knowledge course in May 2023 costing GBP250.00.

7 County Councillor's report – see appendix A

8 District Councillor's report – see appendix B

9 Open Spaces Report

- 9.1 Village Allotments – Clerk confirmed all fees have been paid.

10 Clerk's report

- 10.1 Bi-monthly report – Clerk to seek further help to generate report.

11 Planning – None to discuss.

12 Items for next meeting to be held on 9th May 2023

Ref: 5.2 – Invoices paid and payment agreed

Company	Segmairvice	Date Paid	Amount	Agreed:
Opus Energy	Footway lighting	16 Jan 2023	£15.00	Yes
Kingston PCC	Churchyard Maintenance	30 Jan 2023	£850.00	Yes
Kingston PCC	Newsletters Grant	30 Jan 2023	£734.05	Yes
Katie Vickers	Clerks Expense including One.com annual fee for hosting www.kingstonvillage.org.uk	03 Feb 2023	£323.04	Yes
Katie Vickers	Clerk Salary – January 2023	14 Feb 2023	£203.52	Yes
KVHMC	S106 Grant – TV	14 Feb 2023	£685.00	Yes
CAPALC	Affiliation fee 2022/23	14 Feb 2023	£86.61	Yes
KVHMC	Hall & Bus Cleaning Charge	14 Feb 2023	£221.00	Yes
Katie Vickers	Current Clerk Salary – Back Pay	14 Feb 2023	£154.17	Yes
Opus Energy	Footway lighting	15 Feb 2023	£14.61	Yes
Katie Vickers	Clerk Salary – February 2023	01 Mar 2023	£203.52	Yes
Mimi Wheeler	Previous Clerk Salary – Back Pay	By 31 March	£41.61	Yes
Katie Vickers	Clerk Salary – March 2023	By 31 March	£203.52	Yes
Katie Vickers	Clerk Salary – April 2023	By 31 March	£203.52	Yes
SLCC	2023 Clerk Membership	By 31 March	£80.00	Yes

Meeting Closed at:0957
Meeting minutes ref: 20230314KPC

Signed: _____

Dated: : _____

Report: County Councillor (Hardwick div.) District Councillor (Harston & Comberton) Cllr Michael Atkins March 2023

Highlights

- 20mph applications now open
- Secondary school places offered
- Festival of stories
- Cost of living support
- Contact details

News from the County

20mph Applications open

Applications are now open to introduce 20mph zones in our villages. This has been a key focus of our work at the Council and I'm delighted this is now available. I will be happy to support zones within our district and I can also be contacted for any advice. Applications are open until 30th April via this website: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/20mph-funding>

Easter Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

Children in receipt of Free School Meals, families who are struggling financially, and refugee families, can access a holiday scheme for 16 hours including activities, meals and snacks over the Easter break. <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-localism/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/haf-provider-directory> has further details.

Secondary school places offered

Year 6 pupils should now have received offers for their secondary school place. 87% of pupils have been offered a place at their first choice school, and most of the remainder within their top 3 choices. If you have any concerns or want to find out more about the appeals process, please get in touch.

Mill Road Bridge Closure

The Council has decided to close the bridge on Mill Road, Cambridge, to all motor vehicles, except for buses, taxis, emergency services and blue badge holders. This follows a lengthy consultation in which 72% of respondents favoured restricting motor vehicles. It will be enforced via bus gates with number-plate recognition cameras.

Madingley footpath repairs

Footpath repairs in Madingley are due to take place later this month from 16th-24th, potentially alongside other highway repairs.

Comberton Village College heat pump switch on

The innovative heat pump solution at CVC will be officially 'switched on' later this month. This replaces an aging oil boiler, will reduce carbon emissions at the site by 70%, and save the college around £50,000 per year.

Festival of Stories

'Talking Together' are delivering a programme of events across Cambridgeshire around the theme of stories, from the 2nd to 20th March. More details on their website:

<http://www.bit.ly/FestivalOfStories>

News from the District

Cost of living support

The Council has announced a further support package to help families struggling with the cost of living. Some £200,000 has been put aside to help with the following measures:

- Transforming the existing warm hubs into Community Wellbeing hubs
- Increasing awareness of help with paying council tax
- Creation of a sustainable food network
- Providing energy saving appliances, such as slow cookers and electric blankets, free of charge to residents who need them

If you or someone you know would benefit from help, please get in touch.

Ukraine – new hosts needed

There are currently 500 hosts for Ukrainian refugees in the greater Cambridge area, but with the continuation of the war, there are some hosts unable to renew the arrangement after the initial six months. Anyone who might be able to provide a spare room for a guest is asked to text ROOM to 88802 or go to <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/spareroom> - about 200 are needed over the next few months.

Contact Details

Councillors and residents are welcome to contact me on any issue which is concerning them:

<p>Cllr Michael I. Atkins matkinslibdem@gmail.com https://www.facebook.com/cllrmichaelatkins 07968 264637</p>

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caldecote Ward

(comprises the Parishes of Caldecote, Childerley, Kingston, Bourn, Longstowe & Little Gransden)

Councillor's Monthly Report – March 2023

This report of previous month events is for all the Ward, so please be aware that some of the content may not be relevant to your particular Parish.

General

Please contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints to do with SCDC services. These are housing need, housing repairs for council tenants, planning, benefits, council tax, bin collection, environmental health issues etc. Don't fight on your own. I am available to help you to get the best outcome possible for your situation.

Check out articles on my facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/itsCouncillorTumi> and my blog <http://www.TumiHawkins.org.uk>. What I post on there is my view and not LibDem or South Cambs official policy unless I state that it is.

Planning

NPPF Consultation

The latest consultation has been launched and includes plans to increase planning fees etc which has long been called for by all parties. It's not all good news though.

In summary, the government is proposing to:

- increase planning fees by 35% for major applications and 25% for all other applications
- introduce additional fees for bespoke or 'fast track' services
- make an annual inflation-related adjustment to planning fees
- ring-fence additional fees income
- introduce double fees for retrospective applications
- remove the 'free go' for repeat applications
- reduce the Planning Guarantee from 26 weeks to 16 weeks for non-major applications
- build planning capacity and capability within local authorities, including challenges in recruitment and retention, and how these can be addressed
- introduce a prior approval fee for the permitted development right allowing the Crown to develop sites within the perimeter of a closed defence site

Finance

District Council

The Council voted to increase the SCDC portion of council tax by 3.1%. This represents an increase of £5 per year (or 10p per week) for a Band D property. This increase is regrettable, but inflation affects the council's budget as it does that of every other organisation and personal budget and it is currently running at around 10%, with wage inflation at 6% (the council has to pay around 600 employees). Council Tax delivers around £11 million and Business Rates £18 million. Government grants have been reducing for a number of years and are now around £3 million. We have an ongoing transformation programme to improve the productivity of the council which is projected to bring savings of £2 million over the next two years and returns on our investments are at around £7 million.

The opposition advocated the freezing of council tax, which would be ideal and sounds easy, but it has to be remembered that this would not only affect the council's budget for the coming financial year, but it would have a compound effect on the projected budget over the coming years and council services would be badly affected.

SCDC sets only a small proportion of the Council Tax. The other precepts are set by the County Council (including for social care and education), the Police and Fire authorities, Parish Councils and now the Combined Authority (Mayor). SCDC is the collecting authority and passes on the relevant shares to these other organisations..

Cambridgeshire County Council

The council set its 2023/24 budget at its Full Council meeting in February. All four political group leaders on the County Council have also written to Rt. Hon Michael Gove MP Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to press for progress with funding reforms for local government which currently penalises Cambridgeshire and its residents. Among other points made to him was that Cambridgeshire County Council has seen its core government funding cut from £143m in 2013/14 to just £68m in 2023/24, a real terms reduction of 70%.

In 2023/24, Cambridgeshire's core spending power per head will be £746. The average of our statistical neighbours is £831 per head – if Cambridgeshire received this average instead, we would have around £58m of additional funding available to us – to fill potholes, for example. And we do need it because between the 2011 and 2021 census points, the population of Cambridgeshire grew by more than 9 times the rate for England.

Transport

Luton Airport Flight Path and Airspace Deployment (AD6) change

Meeting on 23rd February went well with over 150 people in the hall and 57 on zoom. RELAS team gave a presentation (available on the RELAS Facebook group), Anthony Browne MP sent a pre-recorded message, Jonathan Djanogly gave his speech via zoom, and I spoke on behalf of South Cambs.

The Post Implementation Consultation period is now extended till end of September

Anyone being affected by the airplane noise should continue to report it to Luton. Send an email to noise@ltn.aero or noise.enquiries@ltn.aero, stating your name and address, the date and time of the flight and effect it had on you. Where possible make a video or audio recording on your phone of the flight event that caused the disturbance as part of your record keeping. Copy the MP in and the RELAS team info@relas.uk for the record. There is still a chance to make a change by reporting the impact AD6 is having on everyday life of everyday people. RELAS group is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/relas.ad6>

EWR

The government is still intending to go ahead with this. We expect to hear more about this later in the year. The Transport Secretary Mark Harper has said it will only go ahead if it fully stacks up. But the question is how is the stacking up assessment done, and who decides? Apparently EWR is still analysing all the feedback from its non-statutory consultation in 2021!!

The SCDC Leader together with some parishes wrote to the Rail Minister Huw Merriman expressing our concerns about EWR and inviting him to visit to see for himself some of the villages that will be most impacted. He declined and said he was here in February though no one seems to know anything about that visit. Makes one wonder!

20 MPH schemes

The Highways & Transport Committee approved the changes to the Council's policy on 20MPH speed limits. The proposed timetable for applications for funding for new 20MPH speed limits is as follows: Go 'live' with application process on-line for new schemes in February 2023 with applications between February and April 2023. Prioritization of the submitted schemes will take place in May to June 2023 with Committee report for approval in July 2023 and thereafter programming and delivery of schemes from August.

Housing

Council Rents

Another regrettable consequence of the rise in inflation is the need to increase council house rents by 7%, which was also approved by Council. Although this is below the current rate of inflation the council recognises that this, together with other price rises, will be a worry for many people and it is not a decision that the council takes lightly. The council is building new social housing at a rate not seen for many years and plans to build another 75 over the next two years, after which it is hoped that the target will be higher target still. Improvements to the thermal efficiency of existing council housing stock is also a priority and the plan is to improve all houses so that they are at an EPC rating of 'C' or above by 2025. The costs attached to such improvements are high (and rising substantially), but it means that the modernised homes are significantly more affordable for council tenants to live in – something that the many tenants who have benefited so far are very positive about.

Community and Wellbeing

Motion: Intimidation and Abuse in Public Life

This motion was submitted jointly by the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition. The motion read 'The intimidation and abuse of councillors, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy; preventing elected members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election, and undermining public life in democratic processes. This council notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact on local democracy and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents.'

The text of the motion went on to say that the council should take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers and listed a number of actions. The motion was carried unanimously. Alas, a motion on honesty and truthfulness in public life is for another day.

Councillors Allowances

Like MPs, councillors in local authorities have to set their own allowances, which is unwelcome and far from ideal. In common with many local authorities, SCDC employs an Independent Review Panel (IRP) to determine what the allowances should be and, this year, they recommended that allowances rise by 4.25%. To put this into context, councillors are expected to provide their own phones, calls and internet services on both council business and for casework. Fuel costs are only covered (at the HMRC rate) when attending formal council meetings, courses etc. The Council accepted IRP recommended will take the allowance for an 'ordinary' councillor to £5,501 per annum and special responsibility allowance of a cabinet member to £8,402.

Cost of Living - financial support

From Council tax support to heat, food and free holiday activities, there is loads of useful information on financial support from a variety of organizations collated by South Cambs District Council, here: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/>

Fuel Payment for Oil Users

The Alternative Fuel Payments scheme is intended to deliver a one-off payment of £200 to UK households who are not on the mains gas grid and therefore use alternative fuels, such as heating oil, to heat their homes. The scheme not through the Councils but is now open via GOV.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/get-help-energy-bills/alternative-fuels>

Ukraine – new hosts for guests needed

Cambridge and South Cambs have between them about 500 hosts for Ukraine guests. With the war in Ukraine continuing, the six-month hosting arrangements have needed to be renewed, though not all hosts are in a position to do so. Anyone who might be able to provide a spare room for a guest from Ukraine is asked to get in touch with SCDC, or please contact any of us and we'll point you in the right direction.

Asylum Seekers in Bar Hill Hotel

The Hotel at Bar Hill has been contracted by the Home Office to provide accommodation for asylum seekers. This information is now available on our website at

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/home-office-use-bar-hill-hotel-to-house-asylum-seekers/>

Some councillors have contacted the officer team working on the project as local residents have asked about donating clothes and other support they can offer. At this stage the team at the Council is working very closely with Cllr Bunty Waters as the local member, Bar Hill Parish Council and emerging community support groups in the village to put plans in place. This includes appealing for clothes donations in Bar Hill initially. The team want to ensure we are not overwhelmed by donations so at this stage the clothing appeal will only be in Bar Hill only. The Parish Council are supporting the coordination of this.

Once we understand the level of demand for clothes, and the amount being donated from people in Bar Hill, we will see if further support is required from a wider area and get back in touch.

The website information covers most of the common questions about the scheme. However, please contact duty.communities@scams.gov.uk if you, or your communities, have any further questions.

The Government housing asylum seekers in hotels is being replicated throughout the country as part of the Refugee Dispersal Scheme

Action for Happiness

The Action for Happiness theme for this month at <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendar>. is **Mindful March**. This month's focus is "Let's take action to be Happier and Kinder Together"

Casework

Please do feel free to contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints to do with SCDC services. I will help as best I can

You will find the current and past reports on my blog at <https://tumihawkins.org.uk/caldecote-ward/reports/monthly-reports/2022-23-monthly-reports/>. Feel free to read, share and/or download.

Tumi

Tumi Hawkins
12 March 2023

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