



KINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council

Monday 8th January 2024 at 19:30

Present: Cllr Paul Chatley (Chairman); Cllr Jerry Cook; Cllr Davina Martin (Vice-Chairman); Cllr Val McWilliams; Cllr Steve Reeves; Cllr Laura Spencer; Cllr Richard Story; 10 Members of the Public; Mrs Steph Woods (Clerk)

1. Chairman opening remarks, apologies and approval of absences:

Cllr Chatley welcomed everyone present and thanked them for attending the meeting. Apologies were received from PC Taylor (Kent Police).

2. Minutes of previous meetings:

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 4th December 2023 was approved as a true record, proposed by Cllr Reeves, seconded by Cllr Story, and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Public Forum:

Members of the Public in attendance were afforded the opportunity to ask a question or make a statement.

Discussion took place between a number of members of public present and the PC regarding the potential future grant request for repairs to St Gile's Church from either the Friends or Parochial Church Council (PCC). This is summarised below:

The treasurer of PCC informed the PC that she believes the changes in legislate has been through House of Commons and Lords and just needs Royal Accent. The Clerk informed the meeting that an update was still required from NALC/KALC before the PC could consider any funding request and that this had not yet been received.

The reference in the minutes of the meeting of 4th December 2023 was also disputed regarding the wording "Support from residents appears to be limited as only a small amount has been raised through the Churches recent funding request in the village magazine." There has since been further support and interest from the Village and it was requested that this was removed from the original minutes. The Clerk reminded all that these minutes have already been signed off as a true record of the meeting and was agreed by all councillors so cannot be amended now. If there are any amendments to the minutes they must be made before the next meeting whilst they are still draft. The minutes are a true record of what is discussed at the time of the meeting, not what may happen after the meeting. At the time of that meeting, only a small proportion of the money needed, approximately £520 of the £30,000 needed, had been raised so the record was correct as only a small proportion of the money needed had been raised though the recent funding request. An update was given on the funding received from donations, which is now reported by the Treasurer, to be over £2,000.

The treasurer also expressed concern over seeking the views of parishioners within the village over how the PC spends money. There was a concern that a silent majority might be in favour of supporting the church and will not reply. It was also asked if the PC were prepared to include the expenditure on the embankment within this canvassing project.

Cllr Spencer's minute item regarding a Conflict of interest at the December 2023 PC meeting was also questioned and the Clerk and Chairman confirmed that, even though Cllr Spencer sits on the Friends as a volunteer member, there is still a conflict of interest. The treasure also informed the meeting that anyone from Friends of St Giles or the PCC can complete the application for a grant.

The Chair of the Kingston Village Hall Trust informed the group that the Trust cannot donate money to the PCC because the original set up was for only spending on the upkeep of barn. This was disputed by the Chairman of PC who has seen documents that say the Trust should support local relevant charities. Cllr Chatley to confirm this document to all.

The request for the PC to contribute towards the closed church yard was raised following the email from the Treasurer of the PCC before Christmas 2023. The Chairman confirmed that the PCC had previously requested the PC take responsibility for the closed churchyard in June 2019 and it was decided (by 5/2 vote) in March 2020 that the PC would not take this up but would refer it to legal team at CCC for consideration. The PCC then decided it was not worth the Treasurers time to find all the financial information that was believed was required by CCC. This decision still stands and the PC is not able to take on the closed church yard. If the PCC wishes to apply for a grant towards the upkeep of the closed churchyard, they can apply using the grant application on the website but must be aware that they can only make one application per funding cycle so will only be able to submit for the churchyard OR building repairs.

Documents circulated to Councillors in December 2023, by the PCC regarding the closing church yard, was raised and the document stated that the whole church yard had been closed for burials 2006 and that no burials should take place following this. The Chairman has spoken to the Diocese of Canterbury to obtain clarification on this and they said that looking at the document, no burials should have taken place since the notification although further burials have occurred since this date. They are going to investigate this further. The PCC informed the PC that there are documents that supersedes this one and they have been conducting burials since with permission.

It was confirmed by the Chairman that the PCC has been invited to apply for a grant towards the Church building repairs but have advised that they wish to wait for the outcome of other grant applications and the forthcoming legislation update before they decide to proceed or not.

5. Reports from Kent Police, County and City Council members:

PC Taylors (Kent Police) January 2024 newsletter has been circulated to all members.

Cllr Sole's December report has been previously circulated to all members and has been posted onto Facebook.

Cllr Sole also gave an update on the following:

- There is a joint surgery being held between Kent Police and Cllr Sole on 17th January 2024 at 2pm in Littlebourne.
- Nailbourne has been flowing full length since before Christmas. Cllr Sole is in daily contact with the relevant organisations. He explained that it is the Environment Agency's river but once it floods it is CCC responsibility to ensure people are protected and in their role as lead flood authority have implemented various road closures and coordination including 50mph limit applied on A2 to allow for other road closures. Bridge ford is closed with barriers and holding back waters at Church Meadow successfully. The water level is high and anyone with concerns are encouraged to speak to Cllr Sole and he will be able to point people in right direction. Water level is currently 5-8 weeks ahead of where it is usually which could result in some flooding in properties soon. Sandbag provision was raised and Cllr McWilliams to check the current stocks and let Clerk know if more need to be requested from CCC.
- Cllr Sole also raised that he believes the previous request from the PCC regarding the closed church yard was only at the discussion stage to hand over to CCC and Cllr Sole believes that the questions originally put to the PCC were from the PC not CCC so the PC could work out costings if they were to proceed.

6. Matters arising: (if not already on the agenda)

- The Street, Kingston - Road closure from 26th February to 1st March 2024 from no 6.

7. Planning

a) New Applications:

- CA/23/02250 - 86 The Street, Kingston - Single storey side extension following demolition of conservatory, first floor extension to rear together with carport to front. – Support with further comments.
- CA/23/02286 – Puds Meadow, Marley Lane, Kingston - Application for lawful development certificate for proposed hard standing for yard and stable block. (Please note this application is not currently open for comments.)
- CA/23/02300 - Quilters Cottage, Westwood Road, Kingston - Single-storey side extension – support with no further comments.
- CA/23/02338 - Cornerways, Black Robin Lane, Kingston - Single storey side extension – support with no further comments.

b) Decisions

- CA/23/01958 – Escley, Church Lane, Kingston – Single storey detached shed. GRANTED

8. Finance:

- a) Payments and Receipts: Bank Balance is £25,260.95 as of 3rd January 2024 (Including grants and reserves) £24,308.76 in the savings account and £952.19 in current account of which £8,000 is reserves and £1,133.20 is left within the embankment grant.

Receipts:

Unity Trust – Credit Interest - £172.80

Payments:

Mark Jones Tree Surgery – Ivy Removal - £2,700.00 (part funded by remaining £1,133.20 embankment grant)

HMRC – Clerk PAYE (Tax for December 2023)

Stephanie Woods – Clerk Salary (December 2023)

Stephanie Woods – 25% Paper Order Reimbursement - £4.75

Unity Trust – Service Charge - £18.00

Envisage – November Mowing - £60.00

The above payments were proposed by Cllr Story and seconded by Cllr Cook. ALL AGREED

As the balance of the current account is only £952.19, it was proposed by Cllr Chatley that £3,000 is transferred from the savings account to cover current/future payments and this was seconded by Cllr Martin. ALL AGREED.

- b) Grant request from St Gile's Church – repairs and church yard: UPDATE AND DISCUSS RESIDENT CONSULTATION/FLYER – to be discussed at a future meeting once a grant request from St Gile's Church has been received.

9. Miscellaneous Parish Council Matters:

- a) Refurbishment of mosaic village signs: awaiting quotation on new mould.
- b) Kingston Welcome Pack: This is still ongoing. Cllr Martin and Cllr Story to obtain printing quotations by next meeting.
- c) Emergency Plan: This is still ongoing.

10. KALC, KCC or CCC Correspondence:

- a) Kent Police Rural Matters (KALC) – circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting.
- b) 2024 Corporate Plan (CCC) – circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting.

11. Highways, Footpaths and Trees:

- a) Highways Improvement Plan – including Marley Lane and Covet Lane: Clerk to circulate plan for horse signs on Covet Lane to all councillors for agreement. KCC Highways have requested a team's meeting with PC regarding the incorrect signage installed on Marley Lane. Clerk to arrange with KCC. The condition of the road along Marley Lane was raised again so the Clerk will raise this with the local KCC Highways Inspector.
- b) Woodland Management Plan – including KCC grant: This project is still ongoing. The group are waiting for go ahead from PC to start once the tree surveys have been completed.
- c) Tree Surveys – including ivy removal: ivy removal has been completed satisfactory and the PC will obtain quotations for the tree surveys to be undertaken within 6 months of the ivy removal.
- d) Footpaths within Kingston Parish: CB277 part has fallen away into cottage because of a fallen tree. It has been repaired with a dog leg. There was nothing else to report. Cllr McWilliams to put note in magazine for residents to contact her with any problems to footpaths.
- e) Litterbin outside The Barn: Quotation has been received from CCC for the provision of a bin and still awaiting their quotation for fitting. As the quotation is believed to be quite expensive, the PC discussed purchasing and installing the bins instead. Clerk to check with CCC that if the PC proceeds with their own supply and installation of a litter bin, will they still empty it free of charge and is there any standard/inspections needed for them to approve the bin.
- f) Nailbourne Clearance – Environment Agency: The overgrown brambles were reported to the EA and have been cleared quickly.
- g) South East Water – Meter Leakage: response has been received to say they are investigating the pressure values and will update when they can. Clerk to chase for update for the next meeting.
- h) Salt Bin & Salt Delivery: most of the salt bins in the village are believed to be either empty or nearly empty so Cllr Chatley will inspect and let the Clerk know so they can be reported to KCC to be filled up. Clerk to also chase KCC to find out if we can still have 1-3 1 tonne bags of salt delivered to village.

12. Clerk Report and Correspondence (Unless otherwise discussed):

None.

13. Matters for future discussion:

Speaker for Annual Village meeting was discussed and there are now three speaker ideas which are Importance of Vaccinations, Countryside Stewardship with Hearts Delight and Kent Wildlife Trust – work in the woods project. Councillors to find out more on their suggestions including if the relevant organisations would be willing to give a presentation at the meeting for discussion at next meeting.

14. Date of next meeting: 5th February 2024 at 7.30pm in The Barn, Kingston

There being no further business, the meeting was closed to the public at 21:05.

Signed (Chairman)

Date

Please note these Minutes remain as draft Minutes until they are approved by the Parish Council at their next Parish Council meeting on 5th February 2024.

Future meeting dates: 04/03/2024, 15/04/2024, 13/05/2024 (Annual Parish Council meeting),
22/05/2024 (Annual Village Meeting), 03/06/2024, 08/07/2024, 02/09/2024, 07/10/2024, 04/11/2024
and 02/12/2024

