

KINGSTON SEYMOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Kingston Seymour Parish Council held on
Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at 19.30
At the Kingston Seymour Village Hall, Ham Lane, Kingston Seymour

Councillors Present:

Mike Sewell, Chairman
Paul Cox (PC)

Richard Barber (RB)
Andy Gillam (AG)

Zoe Bartlett (ZB)
Fred Malton (FM)

In attendance:

Steve Dixon (SD) Clerk & RFO

3 Members of the public

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Councillor Susie Humphries and from District Councillors Steve Bridger and Wendy Griggs.

2. To record declarations of interest in items on the agenda

PC declared an interest in item 4 and this was noted

3. Members of the public are invited to address the council

A parishioner encouraged the council to consider the purchase of “trolley tokens” which carried the access code for the defibrillator. It was acknowledged that since the parish council had published the access code, that many residents had entered this code in their phones but it was felt that at a time of high stress in the event of a cardiac episode, an easily accessible – physical – token might save valuable time.

The clerk advised that the defibrillator is fully active on the ambulance systems but that there is a risk that in the more remote areas of the parish, the ambulance service operators may not be “offered” the defibrillator because of the physical distance of the defibrillator from the caller. This distance constraint is a set parameter in the ambulance service systems.

Action: Clerk to obtain written confirmation from the ambulance service that our defib is loaded onto their system

4. Defibrillator Access Code Tokens

A discussion about the efficacy of the tokens mentioned above followed and it was suggested that the code should be changed before purchase and that a risk existed should the code ever have to be changed in future. The tokens should be green (to match the defibrillator) and that they should carry the new number on one side and the words “DEFIB VILLAGE HALL” on the other.

After discussion, it was proposed by PC, seconded by FM and supported unanimously that the parish Council would purchase of 350 key ring tokens (£1.75 +VAT each) in order to supply two to each of the 150 unique addresses in the parish and to have a small stock of spares for new arrivals or to replace losses. These would be issued to residents with a laminated guide card about the defibrillator.

Action: Clerk to work with suppliers to facilitate production of tokens and with RB to prepare the guide card, change of code number (and agreed timing of this with ambulance service), change of other notices on the website regarding the number.

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5. To confirm the minutes of the following meeting

Planning Application Meeting – 7th September 2023

The minutes were confirmed as a true record. Proposed by FM, seconded by RB and supported unanimously by those who had been present.

Regular Council Meeting – 7th September 2023

The minutes were confirmed as a true record. Proposed by FM, seconded by RB and supported unanimously by those who had been present.

6. Coronation and Commemoration

6.1 Commemorative Plaques

MS advised that the three commemorative plaques had been purchased and had been put in their rightful locations.

7. Police and Neighbourhood Watch

The Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator had reported that there were no new issues. The Police team had been unable to attend the meeting but had not submitted an update.

8. Infrastructure. To receive updates and to agree the next actions.

8.1 Tutshill Route

The clerk reported that NSC had publicised that the route would now open “In Spring 2024”. He had not received any information from NSC about the RSA2 risk assessment that had taken place and into which the parish council had provided input.

Action: Clerk to continue to pursue a status update from NSC.

8.2 Strawberry Line Extensions

RB had attended a working group meeting and reported that the construction work to deliver the Duck Lane extension was ready to go to tender but that there are staff shortages in the Highways Design department which may cause delay to the alleged March 2024 opening. No information had been given about the RSA1 risk assessment of the connection between Duck Lane and the Pier to Pier Way.

Action: Clerk to continue to pursue a status update from NSC.

8.3 Roads

A response to the enquiries made by the clerk had resulted in a statement from NSC that resurfacing of Yew Tree Lane had been scheduled for the 2026/27 financial year - which councillors feel is completely unacceptable.

After discussion, it was agreed that the clerk should approach the NSC officer responsible for footpaths (as this is a key route to two) to establish whether they can add pressure. If that delivers no progress, the clerk will write to the “Place” Director at NSC who is responsible for both Highways and Footpaths.

Action: Clerk to write to the footpaths officer at NSC. If no progress is gained, a letter will be sent to the Place Director.

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The two potholes at Kingston Bridge are becoming larger and, whilst they appear to have been marked for repair, this had not yet happened.

Action: Clerk to contact Highways to establish when this will be done. Copy note to Yatton PC.

8.4 Village Maintenance

The Church Corner Railings project had been completed satisfactorily over a few days in October and councillors will decide how to get the rails painted in the spring. The clerk mentioned that he had asked NSC to instruct the contractor to repair the damage at the Triangle whilst they were present and this had been achieved at no extra cost to the parish.

Unfortunately, two of the posts have been damaged by a passing vehicle and the clerk is to obtain a quote from the contractor to have these repaired.

Action: Clerk to obtain quote for repair. Clerk to obtain quote from our insurance company for adding these railings to our policy.

Concern was expressed about the trees at the Triangle and whether they should be trimmed back.

Action: AG to approach a local specialist for their views and a quote.

8.5 Footpaths

Feedback had been received about the state of the M5 culvert at the end of footpath LA11/1/10. After enquiry, the clerk had established that when the M5 had been constructed in 1973, this footpath had been “stopped up” at this point and that there was no public right of way under the culvert. Signs are in place to that effect although some parishioners are known to use it.

Action: AG to visit the location and report to the next meeting with a recommended way forward

9. Services, Resilience & Community

9.1 Climate Emergency & Sustainable Travel

The clerk had received notice of a proposed 180 acre solar farm to be constructed in West Hewish (just to the south of our parish boundary) and for which there is to be a public consultation.

Action: Clerk to post details on our website.

9.2 Christmas Decorations at the Triangle

RB had been approached by two parishioners for permission to erect a Christmas tree on the Triangle. This had been requested before and councillors considered that this should not be within the War Memorial compound. It was also noted that the parish council contributed to the “village” tree which will be curated by the Village Hall team in the hall car park again this year.

After discussion, it was agreed that a letter would be sent to the requestors listing the steps they need to take. It was also considered that decorating the bus shelter would be a more acceptable option.

Action: RB to write to the parishioners who had asked with a suggested way forward.

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10. Administration and Communication

10.1 To review the Council's Financial Regulations and agree any changes.

The existing financial regulations had been checked against the professional bodies' recommendations and they remain valid although a comprehensive review is underway and it is likely that there will be changes made before the next review. In the meantime, the clerk recommended that the existing ones should be readopted. It was proposed by AG, seconded by PC and supported unanimously that the current version would be readopted for a further year.

Action: Clerk to post the readopted version onto the website.

11. Finance.

11.1 To receive the current Financial Report

The clerk advised that payment for the railings work had been made and that a transfer had been made from the reserve account to ensure that sufficient funds were available in the current account. The VAT will be reclaimed in December.

Overall, the council will end the financial year (31 March 2024) with cash assets of £10k across all three accounts.

Other than the clerk's monthly salary (£396), cheques in excess of £100 had been issued for the annual machine cut of village verges and hedges (£936) and for the specific manual cut of certain areas (£250) and to the railings contractor (£8242 inc. VAT)

11.2 To agree to the issue of the annual grants.

The council had agreed in the budget process to allocate funds for specific grants to the village magazine (£400), Christmas tree (£175) and graveyard maintenance (£600) and it was proposed by PC, seconded by FM and supported unanimously that these should be paid.

Action: Clerk to send cheques to recipients.

11.3 Clerk Salary

As a public sector employee, the clerk is entitled to agreed changes in the national scales and for the 2023/24 year the clerk's rate at their scale point has been increased by £1 per hour. Noted by councillors..

12. External Meetings

PC reported that the Village Hall committee had asked whether the parish council could help contribute to the repair of the skittle alley roof which is likely to cost £20k. After discussion it was suggested that a VH representative attends the next council meeting to fully explain their position.

Action: PC to feedback and request attendance on the 10th January.

The clerk advised that NSC were holding a Bus User Forum on the 5th December.

13. Very recent correspondence

The clerk advised that NSC were launching a second round of consultations on their Corporate Plan and details will be sent to councillors and posted on the website.

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14. To agree any items that are to be placed on the next regular meeting Agenda, scheduled for Wednesday 10th January 2024 in the Village Hall.

Updates on standing agenda items, review of the parish council's Equality and Diversity policy and reports on progress with the Pier to Pier and Strawberry Line. In addition, a Village Hall representative may present on their financial need and the 24/25 precept will be decided.

The draft agenda will be circulated nearer the time for Councillors to consider and add any additional items before formal issue.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21.10.

Steve Dixon

Steve Dixon,
Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer,
26th November 2023