

# KENTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Kenton Victory Hall on Wednesday 10 January 2024 at 7.30pm

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### Present

Councillor D Blount (Chair), H Bright, J Hare, K Savill and D Smith

### Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), County Cllr Connett and 11 members of the public

**The meeting was opened by Cllr Blount at 7.30pm.**

#### **240110.01 Apologies for Absence**

- District Cllr Taylor
- Sue Davies

#### **240110.02 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

#### **240110.03 Ratification of Minutes**

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 November 2023. It was agreed unanimously that those minutes are signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

#### **240110.04 Open Forum**

A member of the public asked for an update on the position with regards to a mobile telephone mast on the Church. The Chairman advised that he would report on this later in the meeting. A request was also made that draft minutes are available for the public to read before they are ratified. The clerk agreed that she would ensure they are available, as requested.

Residents of Victoria Close were present to hear the how the Parish Council were progressing with the repairs to Brook Path.

#### **240110.05 Brook Path**

The Chairman gave a summary of the work which the Parish Council has undertaken since the last official meeting of the Parish Council in November. Councillors have met on at least three occasions to discuss a way forward, letters/emails have been written to the Environment Agency (EA), the Open Spaces Society, Teignbridge District Council (TDC) and Devon County Council (DCC) (including Highways and Public Rights of Way departments). Anne Marie Morris MP was invited to attend a site meeting with Parish Councillors on 16 November and a response following further written communication with her is awaited. Various reports have been received regarding flood management and a further report being compiled by DCC and the EA is expected at the end of February. The main issue for the Parish Council is finance and raising sufficient funds to repair Brook Path. A message from the Parish Council has been posted on Facebook today updating residents and asking for an initial view as to whether residents would be supportive or not of applying for loan to cover the cost of repairs. The impact to residents will be an increase in their precept over a period of 50 years in order to cover the loan repayment costs. Suggestions from the community on other options were also invited.

The Chairman advised that he had been out with a structural engineer yesterday who said that the strongest part of the wall is that opposite Victoria Close. Although it slightly rotated and caused the sinkholes, the wall itself was quite secure. The Chairman believes that the parish needs to take a long-term view on the situation and whilst the costs are high, it is essential that parishioners think about long-term safety and amenity value.

The Chairman opened the meeting to the public.

Residents of Victoria Close asked questions about the quotations received and whether it included any drawings and a method statement. More importantly, is the Parish Council sure that any repairs would treat the cause of the flooding?

Cllr Smith responded advising that the costs received so far have been estimated by DCC's contractor after a site visit. As yet, there has been no formal survey or design specification put together. Costs have been estimated for a preventive measure to stop the wall from further collapse and also for a longer-term solution. Since receiving these estimates, a further estimate to prevent further collapse has come in at a much lower cost. Reasons for the cost difference would have to be explored before committing to either contractor. Any design solution can't really proceed until the report from DCC/EA (expected end of February) has been published which is expected to include, at the very least, a Flood Risk Assessment.

Reference was made to the Earl of Devon's report at the last meeting and who was responsible for the flow of water coming into the village from the Helwell Valley. Robert Neill (Volunteer Flood Warden) advised that he has been invited on 23 February to meet with the Earl of Devon, DCC, EA and various others to look at the possibility of natural flood defences upstream of Ford Farm ford.

A resident suggested that this was not something the Parish Council should be expected to deal with alone and it needs the support of the EA, DCC and TDC. There are much wider issues which need to be tackled before the wall and path can be repaired; Kenton needs a Flood Management Scheme which needs to be undertaken by the larger authorities.

A resident drew members' attention to two local rain gauges, the data from which can be publicly accessed. They show that the frequency of these types of events is increasing.

In terms of design, it was suggested that advice is taken from DCC/EA. They were advised that no help in this regard has been forthcoming to date.

It was agreed that there is no one solution to this problem and a combination of things will need to be done.

There was further brief discussion about the two estimates for the temporary propping of the wall.

Robert Neill, Volunteer Flood Warden, requested that the Council considers what the priorities are. Is it Brook Path itself or is it using the brook as a means of draining the village and putting the flow of water first. The Council could consider returning the brook to how it was many years ago by just letting it flow and doing away with the footpath. The Chairman thinks that the Council would need to seek the views of the whole village before making such a decision. The current issue is safety and protection of those properties either side of the brook.

A resident suggested that a plea goes out to the community asking for volunteers with particular skills (engineering/design etc) to come forward to help and advise on their areas of expertise.

Concluding the discussion, it was agreed that, given the significant difference in cost, advice would be taken regarding the two quotes received for the temporary support. It was agreed that a decision would be delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair. A decision regarding the long-term reinstatement of the footpath will not be made until the DCC/EA report has been received at the end of February.

## **240110.06 Reports**

### **6.1 Police Report and Community Speedwatch**

No report

### **6.2 County Councillor's Report**

Cllr Connett sent a written report (copy attached).

He has asked DCC to clear the mud and debris on the pavement on South Town but has been informed that they currently they don't have the funding for this. He will continue to follow this up.

He also advised there will be a trial of traffic lights on the Strand in Starcross from 12<sup>th</sup> February - 28<sup>th</sup> March. The stretch will run approximately from the public toilets to the Spar shop. The idea is to trial whether permanent traffic lights could work in the village.

### **6.3 District Councillor's Report**

Cllr Taylor sent a written report (copy attached)

### **6.4 Village Tidyman's Report**

Peter White advised that he has now retired from the role but in his final report, he advised:

- The leaves need sweeping on the pavement going up to Victory Hall
- The drains in the car park were blocked which he has now cleared.
- National Grid have been replacing old cables

### **6.5 Volunteer Flood Warden's Report**

Robert Neill advised that his main focus is to check on the gullies that contributed to the flooding at the school and the Triangle. Currently, there are two sets of blocked gullies which have been reported to DCC. Collapsed pipework has been identified and DCC will bring out a CCTV in due course. He bumped into contractors (surveyors) employed by DCC to measure the water under the culverts. Robert proceeded to show them the various pinch points which they were not previously aware of. They did identify some detritus brickwork in the school playground and hope that the culverts under the main road and Mamhead Road don't collapse because of deteriorating Victorian brickwork. Until Highways put a camera up through the culvert, we won't know the extent of the silting or the condition of the brickwork.

### **6.6 Action Report – update on outstanding matters**

#### **6.6.1 Mobile phone mast**

A meeting was arranged for 26 February but this has now been moved back (date to be confirmed). Suppliers have indicated that there is insufficient interest in the area to justify any investment.

## **240110.07 Emergency Action Plan**

Members agreed to adopt the updated Emergency Action Plan as drafted. Victory Hall has agreed to act as the principal evacuation centre; a response is awaited from the Church. The Plan will be published on the parish website.

## **240110.08 Finance and Governance**

- 8.1 Members noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) has reached an agreement on the new rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2023. Employees' salaries have been backdated accordingly.
- 8.2 Members received the invoices for payment and it was agreed unanimously that the payments as listed are approved (attached).
- 8.3 It was agreed to defer a decision on the budget and precept request for 2024/25 until 31 January 2024 (the proposed date of the next meeting).

## **240110.09 Village Maintenance**

Members formally noted the resignation of Peter White as Village Tidyman and agreed that his position will not be replaced. Instead, the work will be contracted out. It was agreed to meet with Peter to obtain more details about frequency of grass cutting etc so that a detailed job specification can be put together and circulated to potential contractors for quotations.

## **240110.10 Planning**

### **10.1 New planning applications/appeals**

- 10.1.1 23/02126/LBC – 1 Court Hall, Mamhead Road, Kenton  
Repair work following flood damage

Members had no objections to this application.

- 10.1.2 23/01984/FUL – 12 Oxtan House, Kenton  
Proposed fence

Members had no objections to this application.

### **10.2 Decisions**

- 10.2.1 23/02069/CAN – Little Court, Mamhead Road, Kenton  
Beech tree – cutting back about five to ten boughs on the southeast to southwest sides of the tree to varying extents of between approximately 1 and 4 metres

Members noted that TDC does not object to this proposal.

- 10.2.2 23/01902/TPO – Penhayes Retirement Home, Road from Little Beredens to South Town Lodge, Kenton  
T001- Lime Tree- Tree to be totally felled with stem left as monolith at ground level. T002- Horse Chestnut-a crown lift to 3m for pedestrians and Crown lift to 5.2m for highways. T003- Lime-a crown lift to 3m for pedestrians and Crown lift to 5.2m for highways. T004- Lime- crown lift to 3m for pedestrians and Crown lift to 5.2m for highways. T005- Lime- crown lift to 3m for pedestrians and Crown lift to 5.2m for highways. T006- Luscombe Oak- a crown lift to 3m for pedestrians and Crown lift to 5.2m for highways. T007- Eucalyptus-30% crown reduction T008- Pittosporum- localised pruning G001- Mixed Species- numerous trees- crown lift to 3m G002- Mixed species x 5 trees- crown lift to 3m G003 Mixed species x 2 trees-Crown lift to 3m T009- Holm Oak- Crown reduction by 30% to reduce loading and sail

Members noted that TDC has granted conditional consent for these works.

**240110.11 Car Park and Triangle**

The Chairman mentioned that the lines marking the parking bays are becoming indistinct. A member the public suggested that the Council rethinks the layout of the car park as the bays are no longer wide enough for many modern cars. It was agreed that this should wait until after the installation of the EV charging points.

A question was asked about the crows nesting in the trees in the car park. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council reduced the trees in the car park as much as TDC’s tree officer would allow.

**240110.12 Playing Field & Hard Court**

The equipment has been ordered and it will be an 8-12 week lead time before it arrives.

**230110.13 Climate Change Mitigation**

It was agreed that the Council will consider the impact on the climate in all its decisions.

**230110.14 Highways and Footpaths**

All highways defects should be reported on:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem>

The Chairman reported that Sue Craythorne is considering retiring from the role of P3 co-ordinator. If she does, the Council will need to recruit another volunteer for the role.

**230110.15 Members’ items for information or general discussion, for inclusion on future agendas and/or items requiring urgent attention**

*[Members were reminded that they have not received the statutory notice of this business to be transacted and should therefore recognise that any decision made may be taken to be unlawful if challenged in the future]*

None

**230110.16 Correspondence**

None

**230110.17 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 7.30pm.

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**Chairman**

## APPENDIX

### Item 6.2 - County Councillor Connett's Report

#### County finances

Council Tax for Devon County Council is highly likely to increase by a total of 4.9% from April 1st. This is made up of the maximum 2.99% permitted by the Government PLUS a 2% increase in the levy to support adult social care services.

In a report to the county council Cabinet for 10th January, the current year-end overspend is estimated to be £4.5million.

Alongside that, the overspend on the special educational needs budget is predicted to reach a cumulative total of £165 million by the end of March.

This deficit, under Government direction, will be carried forward to future years to be dealt with. The in-year increase is forecast to be just short of £40million.

#### South West Exeter update

It's been announced that the Southern Spine Road through the new Matford housing development has been dropped from the Government funded programme to deliver essential infrastructure.

In February 2019, Devon County Council was awarded just over £55 million by the Government from the Housing Infrastructure Fund to help deliver the infrastructure at South West Exeter. This included four signal junctions on the A379, upgrading the Devon Hotel roundabout, the pedestrian and cycle bridge, community centre/GP surgery AND the Southern Spine Road.

In a report to the county council Cabinet on 10th January to confirm a near £500,000 budget under the HIF programme to deliver 'Alphington Village enhancements' the county council included a line to say the Southern Spine Road is '*now proposed to be delivered by the developers without HIF funding*'. As you can imagine, I am asking for more details about this 'decision' and what the implications are for the development at **Matford**.

The Southern Spine Road will link (when built) the different development sites at Matford to the south of the A379. I am told by County officers that **a knock-on consequence for Exminster** is that the long awaited 'break' between Deepway Lane and Old Matford Lane, which would stop it being a through road, will now have to wait for the developers and their timetable.

#### Devon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

Proposals for the local cycling and walking infrastructure plans were published for the county council cabinet meeting on 10th January. The key areas are:

- Heart of Teignbridge
- Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam
- Exeter

It's quite a substantial set of documents which I am still working through.

There is a proposal (E17) to invest in a cycle/walking link from Ide to Marsh Barton Station and Industrial Estate.

However, it's not until you get to the end of section 5 of the Exeter Plan (para.5.6.1) that there is this reference:

*"As part of the Exeter LCWIP potential opportunities for cycling connections to the wider villages and settlements and growth areas that are outside Exeter have been proposed. This will support active travel access from areas on the edge of the city through new infrastructure links and/or creation of green lanes; and provide strategic connections to existing settlements and areas of future development within cycling distance of Exeter. Potential opportunities are shown at figure 6..."* **Kennford, Exminster and Ide** are referred to and the report adds *"These have been derived from an initial review of priorities, in combination with professional judgment by officers about the likely feasibility.*

Personally, I am disappointed that the clear, obvious and much needed route to **Kennford** and beyond that for people to be able to cycle (or walk) to Haldon appears not to be an ambition included within the plans. Similarly, for **Kenton**, a safe route to reach the Exe Estuary cycle path would be a real bonus and help deal with the ever-present risk presented on the A379.

### **Mobile Libraries**

As previously reported the mobile library service has been cut and, I understand, ends next month. By separate email, I have sent Clerks details of and a link for the grant funding pot (maximum £300 per bid) if parish councils/communities wish to set up a reading room or buy books to help stock a village/parish library etc.

The mobile libraries visited **Dunchideock, Exminster, ide, Kenn and Kennford, Kenton and Starcross.**

### **And finally..**

Over 28,800 potholes were reported to Devon County Council between April and the end of November last year.

At the start of December there were 1,505 potholes awaiting repair according to County Hall.

In **Kennford**, I have asked the Highways Inspector to inspect the re-instatement of the main road in the village, near Gisson and the old Weighbridge, following utility work by contractors.

I continue to report potholes and general highways matters including, at **Kenton**, the overgrowth of muck and vegetation along the pavement at South Town.

### **Item 6.3 - District Councillor Taylor's Report**

The first draft of the 2024/2025 TDC budget was considered by the Executive Committee last week. Proposals included additional support for tackling climate change as well as maintaining the 100% council tax reduction scheme.

Due to rising costs Teignbridge is proposing to increase its share of the council tax by 2.99% - the equivalent of under 11p per week for an average band D property.

The additional funding is needed to continue to provide important council services such as waste and recycling, street cleaning, planning, licensing, car parking, environmental health and homelessness - while also supporting people in financial hardship, investing in housing and job creation. A new annual blue badge car parking permit is among the proposals, while the councillor community fund - used to support local good causes - is to be maintained at the current level.

Executive members supported the recommendation for full council to approve the proposals including the council tax base, which will now taken forward through the committee phases as set out in the budget timetable.



**10 January 2024****Item 8:****Expenditure**

<b>Payment type</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Standing Order	Salaries	November & December (including backdated pay since 1 April)	£2075.44
Online	HMRC	PAYE (Q3)	£338.80
Online	Clerk	Travel (Nov & Jan)	£32.40
Online	The Clifford Estate Co Ltd	Christmas Tree	£120
Online	L Foster	Christmas Tree lights	£175.20
Online	Vision ICT	Website hosting and support	£258
Online	Mrs J Frewing	Flood fundraising (transferred back for distribution)	£1850
DD	1&1 Internet	Domain name	£23.98

**Income (4 November 2023 – 5 January 2024)**

<b>Date received</b>	<b>Received from</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Nov/Dec	Various	Cemetery	£975

**Bank Balance at 5 January 2024**

<b>Current account</b>	£40,446.13
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