

# KENTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council held in Kenton Victory Hall on Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 7.30pm

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### Present

Councillor H Bright (Chair for this meeting), K Savill and D Smith

### Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), District Cllr Taylor and 2 members of the public

The meeting was opened by Cllr Bright at 7.30pm.

### 240131.01 Apologies for Absence

- Cllr Blount
- Cllr Hare
- Robert Neill

### 240131.02 Open Forum

Residents were interested to hear about Slittercombe Bridge. The Chair advised that an update would be provided at item 6.

### 240131.03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

### 240110.04 Ratification of Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10 January 2024. It was agreed unanimously that those minutes are signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the meeting.

### 240110.05 Reports

#### 5.1 Police Report and Community Speedwatch

No report

#### 5.2 County Councillor's Report

No report

#### 5.3 District Councillor's Report

Cllr Taylor reported that TDC's proposed budget for 2024/25 is making its way through the various Committee stages and, further to public consultation, it will be considered by Full Council on 27 February. At Full Council on 16 January, the council tax reduction scheme for 2024/25 was approved and a package of support for care leavers (incorporating a council tax discount, free membership to TDC's leisure centres and work experience opportunities) has been adopted.

#### 5.4 Volunteer Flood Warden's Report

No report. There has been no further updates from Highways about clearance of the culverts but the Flood Warden continues to chase.

## 5.5 Action Report – update on outstanding matters

### 5.5.1 Mobile phone mast:

Cllr Savill reported that there will be a meeting next week which he will be attending along with Cllr Connett, the Vicar and a representative from DCC.

### 240131.06 Brook Path & Slittercombe Lane

Cllr Smith reported that, at the last meeting, the Parish Council believed it was liable for repairs. At that time, no response had been received from Anne Marie Morris MP with regard to financial support. With this in mind, the Parish Council had to consider increasing the precept to cover the cost of temporary repairs to prop the retaining wall to prevent collapse, as well as funding a longer-term solution to cover the cost of repaying a loan from the Public Works Loan Board.

Since that meeting, an email from office has now been received. In summary, it states that whilst it has been difficult to locate funding pools, Anne Marie Morris has written to the Minister for Levelling Up Housing and Communities and the Minister for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in the hope that they can better advise on other pots of funding that they have missed. Anne Marie has investigated the issue of liability and has written to the Chief Executive of DCC, Donna Manson, outlining the legislation which strongly indicates that DCC, as a Highways Authority, are liable for to fund the maintenance and repair of the footpath. Anne Marie is meeting with a number of stakeholders on 23 February at which she will, again, raise the issue with the relevant parties.

Since this email, Cllr Smith advised that he had received a further update advising that Anne Marie will be meeting with John Hart, Leader of DCC and Donna Manson to discuss a number of issues with the focus of the agenda being Brook Path. A response to Anne Marie's letter to Donna Manson regarding liability has not yet been received.

Until the issue of liability has been resolved, it is difficult to move forward in terms of repairs. However, it would be prudent to include within the precept request for 2024/25 (which has to be agreed this evening) a sum which would cover a worst-case scenario. This will include a sum for temporary repairs and a sum to cover the cost of loan repayments should a loan be required.

Members were reminded that the cost of a temporary repair to prop the wall was around £27.5k. The other quote, which was considerably cheaper, only covered the cost of clearing debris and strategically placing sandbags to prevent further scouring of the wall (not propping).

Slittercombe Lane has been closed due to subsidence concerns. The Highways Officer visited the site yesterday afternoon with a contractor to look at the concerns raised about this culvert and associated walls. It was established by the contractor that there is significant damage to the stone work on the walls and underneath the culvert, this will mean that the road will have to remain closed until further notice. Further investigations and discussions will be needed about this site but it looks like it will need a complete replacement.

Members discussed the impact of the subsidence on the adjacent footpath and agreed that DCC should be asked to consider temporarily closing the footpath due to safety concerns.

The whole area has been compromised following the floods and a report summarising and reviewing the issues is expected to be published by DCC at the end of February.

## **240131.07 Finance and Governance**

- 7.1 Members received the invoices for payment and it was agreed unanimously that the payments as listed are approved (attached).
- 7.2 Members discussed the budget and precept for 2024/25. As stated at item 6 above, until the matter of liability for the repairs to Brook Path can be established, it is impossible to know the precise level of precept required. It was, however, agreed that the Parish Council should allow for a sum to cover the cost of the temporary repairs (propping) plus one loan repayment instalment should a loan be taken out for permanent repairs. If a sum is not budgeted for now, it would not be possible to proceed with permanent repairs in 2024/25. A precept of £53,591 was therefore agreed by a majority of members present (Cllr Savill did not support this) which would mean an increase of 170% for an average Band D property. The cost per average Band D household will be £114.48 for 12 months which equates to an extra £6.01 per month compared to 2023/24. It was noted that a sum of £5,000 has been budgeted for village maintenance. This will be monitored but may have to be increased. A figure has also been included to re-line the car park once the EV charging units have been installed.

## **240131.08 Kenton Website**

- 8.1 Members approved the cost of an SSL certificate at a cost of £125 for the first year and £80 for subsequent years.
- 8.2 It was agreed that the main purpose of [www.kentondevon.org](http://www.kentondevon.org) was to provide a website to upload Parish Council documents rather than to provide a continuous, daily newsfeed.

## **240131.09 Village Maintenance**

After reviewing the Village Tidyman's job description and schedule of duties, it was agreed that the clerk would pull together an appropriate job specification to be circulated to potential contractors for quotations.

## **240110.10 Planning**

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

None

### **10.2 Decisions**

#### **10.2.1 23/00060/REM – Shambles, Fore Street, Kenton**

Members noted that TDC has conditionally approved this reserved matters application pursuant to outline permission 19/01543/OUT for three dwellings

#### **10.2.2 22/02072/AMD1 – 12 Victoria Close, Kenton**

Members noted that TDC has approved the Non-Material Amendment to the planning permission ref 22/02072/HOU.

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

#### **10.2.3 23/01734/LBC – Merravay, South Town, Kenton**

Repair and reinstatement of chimney stack and adjacent building features

Members noted that TDC has granted conditional Listed Building Consent.

## **240131.11 Car Park and Triangle**

Some superficial cracking of the mortar has been observed on the recently repointed car park wall. It was agreed not to take any further action until it has really dried out.

**240131.12 Playing Field & Hard Court**

The contractor has been replacing the new equipment and will be returning in a few weeks to install the swing.it arrives.

**230131.13 Highways and Footpaths**

All highways defects should be reported on:

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

No new issues were raised.

**230131.14 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

**230131.15 Correspondence**

None

**230131.16 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 7.30pm.

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**Chairman**

**31 January 2024**

**Item 7:**

**Expenditure**

<b>Payment type</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Standing Order	Salaries	January	£852.92
Online	P White	Strimmer repairs	£31.46

**Income (6 – 27 January 2024)**

<b>Date received</b>	<b>Received from</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Amount</b>
None	-	-	-

**Bank Balance at 27 January 2024**

<b>Current account</b>	£39,502.31
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