

KENTON PARISH COUNCIL

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

Present

Councillors D Blount, J Hare & K Savill

Also present

Suzanna Hughes (Clerk), County Cllr Connett, District Cllr Taylor, PCSO Bunce and 15 members of the public

The meeting was opened by Cllr Blount at 7.30pm.

240410.01 Apologies for Absence

- Cllr Smith
- Cllr Bright

240410.02 Open Forum

There were no comments. (Residents had already voiced their views during the Annual Parish Meeting which immediately preceded this meeting.)

240410.03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

240410.04 Ratification of Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 March 2024.

A member of the public expressed that they were staggered that the Parish Council was able to increase the precept by 170% without any consultation with council tax payers and, in his view, the whole issue was not handled very well. It is important that the Parish Council has the support of residents rather than antagonising them. Moving forward, if anything happens which involves additional expense to residents, he suggested that they should be duly consulted. A resident commented that this was broadly stated in the last meeting but wasn't reflected in the minutes and therefore the minutes should be corrected.

Clarification was also sought regarding the conflicting precept figures in the March minutes compared with an article that had appeared in February's newsletter. They were advised that the financial position was continuously changing as new information and new figures were being provided.

A question was asked about how the repair figure of £300k was derived. Cllr Connett clarified that the figure was a ball-park figure provided by DCC engineers pending more detailed surveys. The resident stated that in his view, the precept should not have been increased until the issue of liability was resolved and more detailed quotations sought. The Chairman advised that the deadline for submitting the precept request was 31 January. If the Council had not allowed a sum in the precept, it would not (if deemed liable) have been able to proceed with any repairs for at least 12 months. There are residents who are concerned about their gardens slipping into the brook and would be very concerned if the Parish Council had put itself in a position whereby it could not afford any repairs for at least 12 months. The Chairman also stated that the Parish Council has been discussing these matters since the flood in September and therefore he had

had ample opportunity to come forward and offer his expertise to the Parish Council in the months prior. He thanked the resident for his view, to which he is entitled, but felt that the Parish Council had acted responsibly to enable it to meet any potential financial obligations. Whilst it was agreed that communication with residents could have been better (although updates had been provided on Facebook, in the newsletter and in the Parish Council's minutes), a number of residents at the meeting supported the actions of the Parish Council.

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March should be amended to reflect comments made by a resident as proposed above. Ratification would therefore be deferred until April.

240410.05 Reports

5.1 Police Report and Community Speedwatch

PCSO Bunce reported that one crime had been recorded during the month of March (1 x handling stolen goods)

5.2 County Councillor's Report

Cllr Connett had already given his report in the Annual Parish Meeting.

5.3 District Councillor's Report

Cllr Taylor reported that the draft Local Plan has now gone to the Inspector. It is hoped that inspection will take place over the summer with a view to adopting the plan at the end of the year. There are some good policies in the plan relating to climate change, including house building targets, biodiversity and affordable housing.

There has been difficulties meeting government targets with regard to non-major planning applications due to staffing issues. Changes have been implemented and it is hoped improvements will now be seen.

Cllr Taylor supported the Parish Council's decision to build reserves to take into account its potential liabilities. It should be noted that Kenton is not the most expensive parish by any means and that it is not unheard of that parishes may reduce their precept in future years, if appropriate.

5.4 Volunteer Flood Warden's Report

Robert Neill reported that there are no blocked gullies in the village. There is now a working party keeping an eye on the Brook and clearing any obstructions. He suggested that the group focuses on keeping an eye on the Parish Council's riparian responsibilities which are limited to the car park.

5.5 Action Report – update on outstanding matters

None

240410.06 Brook Path & Slittercombe Lane

The road has now reopened and hopefully the path will be put back into operation in due course. It is hoped that the locked gate will be unlocked by the Public Rights of Way officer soon.

A meeting is being held at County Hall on 11 April (postponed from 27 March) following which there should be more information about the way forward.

240410.07 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 An approach has been made by Kenton in Bloom to find out whether volunteers would be covered by the Parish Council's insurance. As they are a separate entity, they have been advised that they would not be covered and would require their own public liability insurance. It would be an option for the Parish Council to award them a small grant under s137 LGA 1972 to cover this cost. It was agreed to wait until a figure was provided before confirming the level of grant to be awarded.

240410.08 Planning

8.1 New planning applications/appeals

8.1.1 [24/00468/LBC – Lyson Cottage, Kenton](#)

Alterations including extension to canopy, removal of flue, replacement window and door

Members had no objections.

8.1.2 [24/00131/LBC – Kenton Primary School, Mamhead Road, Kenton](#)

Restoration of the entrance door and internal works

Members had no objections.

8.1.3 [24/00551/CLPD – 18 Staffick Close, Kenton](#)

Certificate of Lawfulness for proposed rear extension and side passageway infill

Members made no comments.

8.2 Decisions

None

240410.09 Village Maintenance

Members noted that Plant Tech have been awarded the contract for the village maintenance from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

240410.10 Highways and Footpaths

All highways defects should be reported on:

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

A comment was made about the disintegrating road on the bend near Cofton. Cllr Connett was aware of this and intends to find out what DCC's plan is in terms of a repair.

A paving slab is missing on Penhayes steps. Cllr Connett made a note and would report it.

It was noted that DCC has sprayed some defects on the pavements around Church Street and Mamhead Road. It is understood that a temporary coating is going to be applied in a few months' time.

The pipe in the gully on the A379 between the bus stop and the turning into Orchard Way is broken and water is flooding out and impacting the structure itself. This was noted by Cllr Connett.

240410.11 Car Park and Triangle

Members received a request to use the Triangle and the verge near Orchard Way to display scarecrows as part of this year's festival. This was supported. Members are also happy for posters to be put up around the village but drawing pins are not to be used in the bus shelter.

The Chairman advised that he has reported that the bottle bank is full.

240410.12 Playing Field & Hard Court

Having written to the school regarding the state of the fence at the rear of the hard court, a response from the Director of Operations of Ivy Education Trust was received proposing:

- Removal of all fallen fence panels to the left side and rear of the tennis courts.
- Reinstatement and reinforcement of the fence panels to the right of the tennis courts.
- Re-use of timbers where possible to create a new 3 bar fence.
- New fence line to run from front left corner of tennis courts, across to the bank and then along the hedge line to the entrance to the park.
- Gate to be installed in new fence line to enable access for authorised personnel and equipment

It was agreed to write back confirming that the Parish Council is pleased that some action is being proposed to make this area safe but that the Parish Council is not responsible/liable for any cost involved and this would be a matter to be agreed with DCC.

The Chairman advised that hedge on East Town Lane has encroached considerably into the carriageway and needs cutting back. There is a worry that emergency vehicles won't be able to get through. This will be reported to the Ivy Education Trust.

240410.13 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

240410.14 Correspondence

None

240410.15 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be held on 8 May 2024 at 7.30pm.

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Chairman

4 April 2024

Item 7:

Expenditure

Payment type	Payee	Details	Amount
Standing Order	Salaries	March	£527.62
Online	HMRC	PAYE (Q4)	£17.40
Online	Ronnie Richards Memorial Charity	Replacement defibrillator pads	£76.80

Income (9 March – 4 April 2024)

Date received	Received from	Details	Amount
None	-	-	-

Bank Balance at 4 April 2024

Current account	£19,702.99
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