

# KENTON PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting 10th April 2019

**Present:** 5 Parish Councillors (Cllrs Thompson, Blount, Cowell, Appleton and Maguire-Walker), District/County Cllr Connett and eight members of the public.

**Clerk:** Suzanna Hughes

**The meeting was chaired by Cllr Chris Thompson (Parish Council Chairman)**

### **190410.01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- Cllr Randall
- Peter White

### **190410.02 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

'Good evening ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this year's Annual Parish Meeting and thank you for coming.

Hopefully, everyone knows them, but let me introduce my fellow councillors.

For this year's Chairman's report, I want to look firstly at the issues I identified in last year's report which required work. The most serious was the repair of the stream wall on Brook Path, which was undertaken by Marine & Civils Solutions with funding from the Environment Agency and completed by July 2018. Teignbridge District Council has confirmed that the repairs are satisfactory and have removed the risks identified.

Secondly, we have obtained additional grant funding for the replacement of the damaged bus shelters in Southtown and have purchased and recently installed two new shelters, which I hope have pleased Southtown residents.

Thirdly was our concern about the condition of the gravel paths in the cemetery, which we know will be an expensive project. We have set aside some funding for this from last year and again this coming year, and will also investigate if further grants can be obtained. We intend to start this work when we have accumulated an adequate budget.

With regard to the care of other Parish Council assets, the regular maintenance programme for the play equipment on the playing field and the programme of horticultural maintenance for the Parish garden, the East Town Lane land and the car park have continued and are beginning to show results with quality improvements. Allied to this, we have undertaken a safety survey of the trees on Parish Council land which are our legal liability. We have received a report recommending certain works be undertaken and have obtained quotations for this work, which will shortly commence.

Now to some issues which we will need to deal with this coming year. We still have concerns regarding the Powderham events. Although the Let's Rock weekend went off pretty well with only minor problems, there were a number of problems with the Tom Jones concert. We communicated these to Powderham Estates, and were invited to contribute to a review meeting held by Teignbridge District Council in October. Powderham were asked to review their arrangements for stewarding and traffic management, which will go a long way to minimising the problems we encountered. We are aware that the programme of events this year is greater than last year, and we will continue to monitor them.

There three other projects which we hope to tackle next year, funding permitting. The surface of Brook Path is poor and very muddy after rain on the section between the Peartree Close footbridge and Slittercombe Lane, and we hope to have a more durable surface laid. The car park wall is in poor condition in various parts. We have had this surveyed by a stonemason, who reported that it is not dangerous but is in need of cosmetic repairs. This could be a money-pit, so we will take further expert advice on progress. We have also made preliminary contact with the War Memorials Trust with regard to the Kenton War Memorial, focusing on the railings and the retaining wall, which are in a poor state of repair. The Trust have also suggested that the memorial itself is in need of re-pointing. At this stage, we do not know likely costs, although it is possible that the Trust may provide a grant. Again, we will take further advice.

Now, I must mention the Kenton Neighbourhood Development Plan. We have just completed the public consultation on the pre-submission draft plan, and will now respond to all the comments made and amend the plan as appropriate. After that, the plan goes to Teignbridge District Council for further consultation and then to an independent assessor for verification against the legislation. If all is well at that stage, then parishioners will be asked to vote in a referendum to accept the plan. We anticipate that this will happen in the autumn.

So, that is a summary of our work this year and our plans for next year. I hope you are satisfied with this and continue to support our endeavours. I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their support and assistance, our Parish Clerk, Suzanna, for her excellent administration and advice, and also those parishioners who have contributed to our work.

Finally, I need to inform you that the election of parish councillors was uncontested, there being only 4 nominations of myself, David Blount, David Appleton and Heather Bright. The council is thus quorate and will seek to co-opt further members as soon as possible.

Thank you very much, and I now call on Suzanna for her financial report.

### **190410.03 FINANCE REPORT**

The Parish Council's total income for 2018/9 was just over £33,000. 58% of this was made up of the precept and council tax support grant, 23.5% from grants for specific projects (16% of this was received for the Neighbourhood Plan and 7.5% for the new bus shelters and the sensory garden at the allotments), 10.5% came from cemetery fees, 4.5% from the VAT refund, 2% from the allotments lease and the remaining 1.5% from a combination of other minor sources.

By contrast to the total income, expenditure at 31 March, which is the end of our financial year, totaled £23,000. However, there are some outstanding invoices to pay, which will bring that figure more in line with our total income. These include the new bus shelters in South Town which have cost £7,200, the sensory garden co-ordinated by the Dementia Friendly Village, £780, and the recent tree work, £395.

As well as the usual budgeted running costs, and as Chris mentioned in his report, the Parish Council has continued to invest in the maintenance of the play area equipment which it sees as an important asset in the community. Regular safety checks are undertaken and works are promptly carried out when required. Maintenance of the village and cemetery are also important to the Parish Council. The cost of general and ongoing maintenance of these public areas is not insignificant and equates to around one third of the overall precept. The recently commissioned tree survey and recommended works cost a further £1200 but is completely necessary to ensure that the trees for which the Parish Council is responsible are safe.

Looking ahead, the Parish Council will be carrying forward a healthy balance of reserves, at least £18,500 of which, however, has been earmarked for particular projects.

These include: repairs to the hard-court surface at some point in the future, improvements to the cemetery paths, ongoing maintenance of the village car park and repointing of the wall, the legal fees associated with renewing the allotments lease and ongoing improvements to Brook Path. The balance provides the Parish Council with a healthy level of general reserves which means that, despite the loss of the council tax support grant, no increase to the precept was necessary for 2019/20. The precept requested was £18,845 which means the Parish Council element of the council tax for a band D property in Kenton remains the same as the previous year at £39.50. The Parish Council remains good value and the council tax is still significantly lower than neighbouring parishes. By comparison, the average for Band D charge in Teignbridge was £66.32 in 2018/19 – almost 68% more than Kenton.

The final accounts for 2018/19 have not yet been completed but they will be approved by the Parish Council in its May meeting. As part of the new audit framework all the accounts and audit documents will be published on Kenton’s website from June and, as always, I am happy to answer any questions.

**190410.04 OPEN FORUM AND QUESTIONS**

A parishioner commented that the Parish Council needs to do more to encourage people in the parish to become more engaged in what the Parish Council is doing and more involved in the community. He suggested more is written for the Parish Newsletter though he was not a subscriber himself. He continued to criticise the Parish Council generally.

Another parishioner commented on the well-attended Annual Parish Meetings which had previously been arranged by the Parish Council which was a useful way of getting people together. Another parishioner suggested more use of the Kenton Facebook page.

In response to the criticism directed at the Parish Council, Cllr Alan Connett commented that the Parish Council has done a huge amount of work in the parish and in fact the community gets exceptional value from the council tax they pay.

Thanks were also given to the Chairman. The Parish Council is a small group of volunteers which takes on an enormous amount of work in their own time for the benefit of the community.

The same parishioner asked for the Council’s opinion of the licence application at Kenton Vineyard. It was confirmed that the Parish Council is not a consultee in licence applications but, in this case, had expressed its concern about potential traffic issues. Cllr Connett offered to contact TDC for an update on what had been agreed.

**190410.05 CLOSE**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.32pm.

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Cllr Chris Thompson  
Chairman