

KEMSING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of a meeting held in the Small Hall, St. Edith Hall, Kemsing, on Wednesday, 16th March 2016 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mrs. M. Cole (in the Chair)
Mr. A. Andrews, Mr. D. Bennett, Mr. P. Burfield, Mr. G. Croughton, Mr. R. Dawes,
Mr. P. Eaton, Mr. R. Lang, Mrs. M. Roberts, Dr. P. Walker

IN ATTENDANCE: 1 Member of the Public
Mr. A. Doe (Tree Surgeon)
Mrs. Y. Tredoux (Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. B. Buttifant, Mrs. R. Wedderburn-Day and District Councillor Mr. S. Reay.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct.

7.31 p.m. The meeting was adjourned during the public session.

3. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC & PRESS**

(a) **Coppicing work adjacent to Church Lane track and Common Field Recreation Ground**

Referring to the coppicing work Mr. Doe explained the misunderstanding with the wood chippings which remained on the site. Mr. Doe asked the term "workman like" manner to be clarified. Dr. Walker said that two specific points were associated with the term; the "hinges" left on the stumps and the trees which had been cut lower than 3 feet. In Mr. Andrews' view the term had no legal significance and referred to a generally acceptable standard of work. Mr. Bennett was concerned about the 2 tree stumps on which some bark had been stripped during the felling operation. Mr. Doe explained that the trees were very tall and located in a narrow corridor next to the recreation ground and great care had to be exercised to carry out the felling in a safe manner.

Mr. Doe had since attended the site and had removed the wood chippings, as well as small pieces of timber left on the field, although he could not find anything significant apart from clearing 4 wheelbarrow loads of leaves. Mrs. Cole said that it was not unusual for tree work to attract members of the public to voice their opinions. Mrs. Cole reminded Members of complaints received during the Oxenhill Shaw coppicing some 4 years ago. The recent Kemsing Downs Nature Reserve coppicing (carried out by different Tree Surgeon) also received negative comments from Members of the public. Coppicing to this extent cannot be compared with tree work in a domestic setting. Mr. Doe said that the bare appearance of the site would improve within a few months.

7.40 p.m. The meeting was re-convened.

4. **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

There were no reports from the District Councillors.

5. **MINUTES**

Mr. Andrews proposed, seconded by Mr. Eaton:

"That the Parish Council approves the minutes of the meeting held on 17th February 2016, Ref KPC/02/2016."

CARRIED 8 in favour, 2 abstentions

6. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

(a) Village car park (Minute 6 (b) KPC/01/2016)

The report of the Car Park Working Group meeting held on Thursday, 3rd March 2016 was noted. Various issues had been brought to the Sevenoaks District Council Parking Manager's attention. The Parish Council expected these to be resolved before to the expiration of the current lease on 31st March 2016. So far the potholes in the middle of the car park had been repaired temporarily.

The Group had agreed to inform the St. Mary's Church Parochial Church Council (PCC), in writing that, in accordance with the covenant, there was no right of way access from the car park into the Church field. A letter to that effect had been drafted but following the meeting, Mrs. Cole pointed out that the specific reference to the "covenant" was not entirely correct and should be the "contract of purchase" instead. Mr. Bennett suggested the Parish Council wrote the letter with the slight amendment.

For the past several years, the Church field had been made available as a temporary overflow car park during the annual North Downs Walk. Dr. Walker warned that this one day event was due to take place soon. Preventing the Church Field from being used as a temporary car park would result in severe congestion in the village as a large number of vehicles would be parked elsewhere in the village. It was suggested that the Parish Council should not formally write to the PCC but rather convey the current situation to the PCC by word of mouth. Dr. Walker asked the Parish Council's final stance on this and it was agreed that the Parish Council would make no comment.

Mr. Eaton proposed, seconded by Dr. Walker:

"That the Parish Council does not write the proposed letter to the PCC."

CARRIED 9 in favour, 1 abstention (Mr. Bennett)

(b) Bank account signatories – update (Minute 2(b) KPC/02/2016)

Arrangements were being made for the documents to be signed.

(c) Emergency Services equipment (Minute 7 KPC/02/2016)

The listing of the equipment had not yet taken place. Arrangements for this would be made soon.

7. **PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

The Council noted Mrs. Taylor's resignation.

➤ *The Clerk would inform the District Council accordingly.*

8. **PARK LANE NATURE RESERVE AREA & FAIRFIELD CLOSE AREA**

Members noted the Clerk's report setting out a recommendation for the future management of the areas. The report contained a brief history of the sites, one of which had been designated as a Nature Reserve in January 2010.

There had been no active tree management over the years and the Clerk urged the Council to consider appointing a permanent Committee/Working Group to take over the management responsibility of the area. Currently this was overseen by the Recreation Grounds Committee. It is not a Recreation Ground and should not form part of the Committee's remit. A recent tree survey indicated that extensive tree work might be necessary in order to maintain the area.

In previous years, the Parish Council issued licences to the properties 33-39 Park Lane permitting the residents to access the Parish Council's land at the rear of their properties. The late Mr. Wilmore had agreed to take on the responsibility of "warden" for the area, agreeing to manage the land in consultation with the Parish Council. Mrs. Willmore did not wish to take on this responsibility. Access to the site is through Mrs. Wilmore's garden which is unacceptable and an alternative access point from Fairfield Close should be constructed.

As highlighted by the Clerk's report, the proposed Committee's responsibilities would include identifying an alternative access arrangement, tree survey inspections, fencing repair work, grass cutting and associated work. Members did not favour introducing yet another formal Committee; instead, it was suggested to appoint a temporary Working Group to consider appropriate action to be recommended to the full Council.

Mrs. Cole said that there had been emergencies with tree work in the past which herself and the Clerk had to deal with. There being no Committee to oversee this and therefore no remit for responsibility, dealing with emergencies, as past experience had indicated, could become potentially very challenging.

Mr. Bennett proposed, seconded by Mr. Croughton:

"That the Parish Council appoints, for a period of 6 months, a Working Group "Fairfield Close and Park Lane Working Group", to investigate the issues and to report back to the full Council with possible recommendations."

CARRIED 9 in favour, 1 abstention

Mr. Andrews, Mr. Burfield and Dr. Walker volunteered to be Members of the Working Group which was AGREED.

9. REQUEST FOR PERSONAL TRAINER CLASSES

A request from a Personal Trainer to run various classes, including a Boot Camp class on the Common Field Recreation Ground, a Trail running course on the North Downs footpaths and a Beginners Running course on the Common Field Recreation Ground was considered. Mr. Bennett was asked by Mr. Buttifant (in his absence) to convey his concerns. In Mr. Buttifant's view, such an activity could worsen the already eroding surface of the North Downs Way. Consent from the Kent County Council's Public Right of Way Office was probably required.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Parish Council's Insurance Company should be notified of any planned public activities or events.

Mr. Burfield proposed, seconded by Mrs. Cole:

"That the Parish Council has no objection to the exercises taking place on its land subject to a review of how it might affect the land management and a possible objection from Kent County Council's Public Right of Way."

A discussion took place and the proposal was WITHDRAWN.

Mr. Croughton proposed:

"That the Parish Council thanks the Personal Trainer for informing the Parish Council of the planned activities and that the Parish Council has no objection for this to take place for a trial period of 6 months."

There being no seconder, the proposal FELL.

A further discussion took place, resulting in Dr. Walker proposing, seconded by Mr. Dawes:

"That the Parish Council thanks the Personal Trainer for notifying the Parish Council of her intention to run the various classes on the Parish Council's land."

CARRIED 8 in favour, 2 abstentions {Mr. Bennett and Mr. Croughton}

10. DONATIONS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

(a) Action with Communities in Rural Kent

The Council was asked to consider renewing the annual subscription of £50.

- The Council RESOLVED not to renew the annual subscription of £50.

Mr. Lang declared having a personal interest in Item 10(b) as his spouse is a volunteer at the Sevenoaks Citizens Advice Bureau.

- (b) Sevenoaks Citizens Advice Bureau
A request for financial assistance was considered. It was noted that a donation had been made in April 2015.
Mr. Eaton proposed, seconded by Mrs. Cole:
"That the Parish Council makes a financial contribution of £300 to the Sevenoaks Citizens Advice Bureau to be paid in the next Financial Year, i.e. April 2016."
CARRIED unanimously

- (c) Kemsing Open Door Committee
Members noted a letter of appreciation for the Parish Council's financial contribution.

11. **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Mr. Eaton proposed, seconded by Dr. Walker:
"That the Parish Council approves the list of payments (Vouchers 277 to 297) including £200-00 (balance due for the coppicing work) and £355-20 (emergency tree work on the Common Field), the latter to be paid from the Parish Council's General Contingency Fund, and to note the list of receipts (Voucher 22)."
CARRIED unanimously

12. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(a) Planning Committee

Mr. Dawes proposed, seconded by Mr. Andrews:
"That the Parish Council accepts the minutes of the meeting held on 15th February 2016, Reference P/03/2016."
CARRIED unanimously

Mr. Dawes proposed, seconded by Mrs. Cole:
"That the Parish Council accepts the minutes of the meeting held on 29th February 2016, Reference P/04/2016."
CARRIED unanimously

(b) Downland Management Committee

Mr. Bennett proposed, seconded by Mr. Croughton:
"That the Parish Council accepts the minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2016, Reference P/03/2016."
CARRIED unanimously

Attention was drawn to Item 2(b) Proposed re-siting of gate at St. Edith Road.

The Parish Council was asked to consider the following recommendation:

"That the Committee recommends to full Council to approve the proposed changes on the ground to improve safety and to enhance the appearance of the site."

The proposed safety improvements comprised the relocation of the existing gate along the footpath connecting The Bell Public House and the red BT telephone kiosk and installing a low level timber "cross-over" structure across the stream.

Some Members questioned the reasons for the proposed changes which were thought to be somewhat of a needless expenditure. Additionally, the new access would encourage more visitors to the area, and there were already problems with children playing on The Well structure.

Mr. Bennett proposed, seconded by Dr. Walker:

"That the Parish Council approves the recommendation for the proposed changes to the ground to improve safety and to enhance the appearance of the site."

CARRIED 7 in favour, 3 abstentions

(c) Recreation Grounds Committee

Dr. Walker proposed, seconded by Mrs. Cole:

“That the Parish Council accepts the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2016, Reference RG/02/2016.

CARRIED unanimously

The Parish Council was asked to consider the following recommendations:

Item 2 (b) Church Lane coppicing: The Council to consider a letter from Omnicroft (Residential Property Management on behalf of the Cleves Management Limited) dated 4th March 2016.

Referring to the recent coppicing activities, the company asked the Parish Council to ensure that the wood chippings were removed, that the Parish Council reinstates the alleged damage to the access driveway caused by the vehicles extracting the wood and that the alleged unauthorised boundary post markers are replaced. The letter did not specify the extent of the alleged damage.

Mrs. Cole said that not all the residents who use the access track shared this view. During the coppicing work some of the residents had provided refreshments to the Contractor and storage space for the equipment. There was also no evidence of damage to the access track as a direct result of the coppicing work. The Clerk had prepared a draft response which was read out by the Chairman. The draft addressed, in detail, all the points raised by the Management Company. The Council rejected the draft letter, and instead, *AGREED* unanimously that the Clerk send the following response:-

“The Parish Council has noted your comments.”

Mr. Bennett’s suggestion for the Parish Council to notify its Insurers of a potential claim was not supported by the rest of the Council.

The Clerk conveyed her concern that the Common Field Recreation Ground was potentially vulnerable as vehicular access across the coppicing site was now possible, but the Council (other than Mr. Bennett), did not share this view.

The Council noted a further recommendation:

“The Committee recommends the Council to pay the balance due of £200 to the Contractor following the removal of the chippings.”

- This had been *AGREED* – see Item 11 above.

Item 2 (g) Playground policy - Dr. Walker proposed, seconded by Mrs. Cole:

“That the Parish Council adopts the Playground policy subject to minor amendments.”

CARRIED unanimously

Item 2 (j) Play area litter bin clearance - Dr. Walker proposed, seconded by Mrs. Cole:

“That the Parish Council approves Mr. Farrow to continue emptying the litter bins in the play areas. The situation should be monitored, particularly during the Summer months.”

CARRIED unanimously

13. **CONSULTATIONS**

(a) Sevenoaks District Community Plan 2016-2019

The Parish Council was invited to comment on the above consultation.

- *RESOLVED: That the Parish Council has no comments.*

(b) Lower Thames Crossing Route Consultation 2016

The Parish Council was invited to comment on Highways England’s consultation for proposals for a Lower Thames Crossing.

- *RESOLVED: That the Parish Council has no comments.*

14. **INFORMATION REPORTS**

(a) Chairman's Report

Grass verge damage at the junction with Knavewood Road and Dynes Road – Mrs. Cole read a letter from a resident asking if the verges can be restored and if anything could be done to prevent further damage being done.

- *RESOLVED: The Clerk was asked to deal with the request direct by reporting to Kent County Council's Highways and Transportation Services.*

(b) Reports from Councillors

There were no reports from Parish Councillors.

(c) Publications for information

Kent Association of Local Councils (The Parish News 2016).

9.02 p.m. Under the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

15. **LITTER COLLECTION SERVICE**

The Council was asked to consider the Clerk's report. The details of the discussion are contained in a separate confidential document.

The meeting was reconvened and opened to the Public and Press.

16. **MATTERS TO BE RAISED AT THE NEXT MEETING & GOOD NEWS**

There were no matters raised.

17. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, 20th April 2016

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed by Chairman : Date: