

KEMSING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of a meeting held in the Small Hall, St. Edith Hall, Kemsing, on Wednesday, 20th April 2016 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mrs. M. Cole (in the Chair)
Mr. A. Andrews, Mr. D. Bennett, Mr. P. Burfield, Mr. B. Buttifant, Mr. G. Croughton,
Mr. R. Dawes, Mr. P. Eaton, Mr. R. Lang, Mrs. M. Robarts, 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 Councillor Mrs. R. Wedderburn-Day and District Councillor Mr. S. Reay.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests.

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

There were no questions from the public and press.

4. **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

There were no reports.

5. **MINUTES**

Mrs. Cole proposed:

"That the Parish Council approves the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2016, Ref KPC/03/2016, subject to one minor typing error on the Confidential Report."

CARRIED unanimously

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

(a) **Coppicing work adjacent to Church Lane track and Common Field Recreation Ground (Minute 3(a) KPC/03/2016**

Members considered a letter dated 9th April 2016 received from Mr. Doe responding to the Parish Council's previous letter regarding the coppicing work. Mr. Doe wished his comments to be included in these minutes.

Mr. Croughton proposed, seconded by Mrs. Cole:

"That the Parish Council notes Mr. Doe's comments and to include them in the minutes of this meeting."

CARRIED 10 in favour, 1 abstention (Mr. Andrews)

Mr. Andrews' request to engage into a further debate on the contents of the letter was denied by the Chairman.

Mr. Doe' reply:-

"I received a letter from the council on the 18th of February expressing concern about the coppicing work on the wooded area known as Church wood. I feel it inappropriate that the letter was included in the February Parish Council Meeting Minutes and put into the public domain before I was given any opportunity to respond. I therefore consider it important to give a written response which I request also be included in the Council Meeting minutes.

I responded to the concerns raised verbally at the March Recreation Committee and full Council meetings.

My written responses to the council's comments are as follows:

1. *"The wood chippings were also not removed"*
This was due to a misunderstanding between myself and a council member and I subsequently removed the chippings at no extra cost to the council.
2. *"The grassed area adjacent to the coppiced area and north of the play area is littered with small pieces of wood debris which will have to be removed before the gang mower commences its work in the Spring"*
Debris resulting from the work was cleared up when the coppicing was carried out. Following receipt of the council's letter I made a return visit. At this point I found and cleared up four wheelbarrows of what proved to be leaf litter in the area described, the only debris that was evident. As the coppicing work was undertaken whilst the trees were dormant and without foliage, this would not have been produced as a result of the work. I cannot be held responsible for sticks moved around by children playing, dogs or the people walking them.
3. *"That the Parish Council is unhappy with the work carried out which has, in its mind not been performed in a 'workman like' manner".*
I consider that this remark could be interpreted as a personal slur on my skills as a professional tree surgeon. At the March meeting I asked the acting Chairman to explain the term. He reported that this was a generic term with no legal redress that is used in the building trade and was unable to articulate exactly what was meant by it on this occasion. How is it possible for me to effectively respond to what appears to be an allegation about the quality of my work when the Council cannot explain the meaning of this remark?

At the meeting another councillor expressed the view that the trees had been felled without any directional cuts which was definitely not the case and I would be interested to learn how he came to form this opinion. The work was carried out following good working practices with attention to relevant health and safety concerns. I always take care to carry out work in a manner which presents the least possible risk to myself, other workers and the public.

I sit on my local Parish council. When we have concerns with any of our contractors, we initially try to have an informal discussion and resolve the issues in an amicable manner, thus avoiding sending out letters of complaint without first having gained the contractor's viewpoint.

I would suggest that Kemsing Parish Council in future give careful consideration before sending out letters which could be construed as a personal slur on someone's professionalism and quality of work when they are unable to explain the terms used or provide evidence supporting the comments made.

Yours sincerely

ANDREW DOE"

Members considered a letter dated 4th April 2016 from Omnicroft Residential Property Management. Mrs. Cole drew attention to the Clerk's first draft letter and suggested that the draft, which answered all of the questions raised in the first letter, be sent. The suggestion was rejected.

- *RESOLVED: That the Clerk be instructed to reply to the letter of 4th March 2016 as follows:*
"The Parish Council has acknowledged your amended letter dated 4th March 2016."

- (b) Village car park (Minute 6 (a) KPC/03/2016)
Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) was still considering the Parish Council's points regarding the various issues. SDC indicated that they were not inclined to remove the concrete base installed by them, which used to hold their recycling units.
 - *Mrs. Cole offered to contact the Sevenoaks District Recycling Manager to clarify the position.*
- (c) Bank account signatories – update (Minute 6 (b) KPC/03/2016)
The local branch was unable to provide the Clerk with a mandate form and alternative arrangements to obtain the relevant paperwork were being made.
- (d) Emergency Services equipment (Minute 6 (c) KPC/03/2016)
Members noted the Clerk's report of a meeting held with Mr. Burfield on Monday, 4th April to determine whether any of the existing equipment had a potential re-sale value and how the equipment could be disposed of.

It was concluded that the obsolete equipment had no significant resale value. The items should be categorised in order to dispose of it in the correct manner. This exercise would be quite substantial and was estimated to take two days.

Mrs. Cole proposed:

“That the Parish Council authorises the Clerk to dispose of all items associated with the Emergency Services equipment, with Mr. Burfield’s assistance.”

CARRIED 10 in favour, 1 against (Mr. Bennett)

The Clerk asked if anyone would be able to assist with this task. There were no volunteers.

(e) Parish Councillor Vacancy (Minute 7 KPC/03/2016)

The notice to call an election had been advertised on the Parish Council’s notice boards on Tuesday, 29th March 2016. On the date of the deadline (15th April 2016), SDC advised that no requests for an election had been made and that the Parish Council was now able to fill the vacancy by co-option at its earliest opportunity.

- *The Clerk to prepare and advertise notices for the casual vacancy in the normal way.*

(f) Park Lane Nature Reserve Area & Fairfield Close Area (Minute 8 KPC/03/2016)

The report of the site meeting held on Monday, 18th April 2016 was tabled at the meeting. It contained the group’s initial findings which consisted of a brief history of the site, the issues to be resolved and potential future development possibilities.

A letter dated 11th April 2016 from a local resident regarding the land (known as the Park Lane Nature Reserve land) at the rear of their property, was noted. The Parish Council was asked to secure the rear garden against trespass from Fairfield Close. Mr. Burfield said although the Land Registry records indicated that the property owners were responsible for the fences between the stream and their properties, he thought that the Parish Council should perhaps consider funding the installation of fences at the rear of the four Park Lane properties.

- *The Fairfield Close and Park Lane Working Group would arrange a further meeting to gather information and investigate options available in order to formulate a recommendation to the full Council for consideration.*

(g) Grass verge damage – junction with Dynes Road & Knavewood Road (Minute 16(a) KPC/03/2016)

Kent County Council (KCC) Highways and Transportation Division advised that the area did not meet KCC’s intervention levels. KCC also confirmed that there was no funding available to carry out any grass verge works or installation of bollards.

7. **REQUEST FOR FAMILY FUN RUN EVENT**

Members considered a request from a Personal Trainer to organise a Family Fun Run on behalf of “Friends of Kemsing School” on Saturday, 28th May at 10 a.m. It is proposed to make one lap around the Common Field Recreation Ground as 1 kilometre, mark out the route with poles and markers using flour as an outline. A PA system would be used with music starting from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m.

The Clerk drew the Council’s attention regarding public liability insurance. In accordance with the Parish Council’s insurance, organisations/persons organising events on the Parish Council’s land are required to provide the Parish Council with a copy of their public liability insurance to cover such events. It was not confirmed as to whether the Personal Trainer’s public liability insurance would cover a Family Fun Run. The Clerk also pointed out that the event may clash with the Football and Cricket Club games.

- *RESOLVED: The Parish Council had no objection to this event taking place on the Common Field. The organiser is required to provide copies of the appropriate public liability insurance to the Parish Council. The organiser should also obtain advice from SDC as a Temporary Events Notice may be required to play music.*

8. **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The draft minutes were noted.

Members noted a copy of a letter dated 24th March 2016 addressed to the Diocese regarding the open space at Fairfield Close as a possible site for a new vicarage.

9. **ST. EDITH CLUB**

The Parish Council noted a letter dated 12th January 2016 from the St. Edith Club addressed to the St. Edith Hall Management Committee (St. Edith HMC). The Club's lease expires in March 2017 and the St. Edith HMC was asked to negotiate a new 50 year lease to include the whole Club complex. The Club proposed to increase their annual rent accordingly. Over the past two years the Club had become more viable and membership had increased. The Club was keen to promote ways to make the facilities available to users in such a way to benefit both the Club and St. Edith HMC. The St. Edith HMC Trustees had no objection to a new lease and Mrs. Cole, on behalf of the St. Edith HMC, conveyed their support to the Parish Council, who is the Custodian Trustee. Although the St. Edith HMC is the beneficiary receiving the annual rent, the Parish Council would be the signatory to the lease.

Mr. Burfield warned that it was not the Parish Council's responsibility to intervene in the lease negotiations; this was a matter between the Club and the St. Edith HMC. Mr. Burfield's interpretation of the Charity Commission guidelines were that, as Custodian Trustees, the Parish Council was not entitled to take part in any lease negotiations (this responsibility lied solely with the Trustees of the St. Edith HMC), unless it was deemed that there was a breach of trust.

Mr. Burfield asked if the proposed lease would be a "full repairing lease". Mrs. Cole replied that it had yet to be considered.

10. **PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE**

Mrs. Cole proposed:

"That the Parish Council approves the purchase of two new desks, a laminator and shredder for the Parish Council Office up to £1,200 (VAT not included)."

CARRIED unanimously

11. **DONATIONS & SUBSCRIPTIONS**

(a) Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group

A letter of appreciation for the Parish Council's donation was noted.

(b) Kent Association of Local Councils

Mrs. Cole proposed:

"That the Parish Council renews the annual subscription of £1,166-72 (Vat not included)."

CARRIED unanimously

12. **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Mr. Eaton proposed, seconded by Dr. Walker:

"That the Parish Council approves the list of payments (Vouchers 299-314 and cheque numbers 205409 – 205419, and 300095 including direct debits) and to note list of receipts (Voucher 23) and list of receipts (dated 1st & 14th April 2016)."

CARRIED unanimously

13. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(a) Planning Committee

Mr. Dawes proposed, seconded by Mr. Croughton:

"That the Parish Council notes the minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2016, Reference P/05/2016."

CARRIED unanimously

14. **CONSULTATIONS**

(a) Kent County Council : Review of KCC funded Bus Services

The Parish Council was invited to comment on the above consultation, which closes on 15th May 2016.

The proposed changes did not appear to affect Kemsing in anyway, and therefore the Parish Council had no comment.

15. **INFORMATION REPORTS**

(a) Chairman's Report

There was no report received.

(b) Reports from Councillors

There were no reports received.

(c) Publications for information – the following was noted:-

Kent Association of Local Councils – Sevenoaks Branch (minutes of last meeting).

Campaign to Protect Rural England – Field Work magazine – Spring 2016

Campaign to Protect Rural England – Countryside Voice magazine – Spring 2016

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

There were no matters raised.

17. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, 18th May 2016 – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

Signed by Chairman : Date: