

KEMSING PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk's Office, St. Edith Hall

Kemsing

SEVENOAKS

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Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
held in the Small Hall, St Edith Hall, Kemsing
on Wednesday 17 July 2002 at 8.00 pm

- PRESENT: Mr A C Andrews (in the Chair)
Messrs J B Allen, D V Bennett, B D Buttifant, G R Croughton,
A M Davies, R J Dawes, J S Downey, P M H Kendall,
A V Waters, Dr J P Penney, Mrs P J Westaway
- IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs L M Drage, Parish Clerk
Mrs S Palmer, Assistant Clerk (for Presentation & Item 1 only)
- APOLOGIES: Mrs M R Cole
Mrs J Course, District Councillor

Before the Meeting commenced Mr A C Andrews, Chairman of Kemsing Parish Council was congratulated by the Members on achieving twenty-five years of service to the Parish as a Councillor. A Certificate, signed by the Vice-Chairman, Mr A Davies, was then circulated to those Members present for signature. The Assistant Clerk will seek Mrs Cole's signature and then arrange for the Certificate to be framed for Mr Andrews.

Mr Andrews responded by thanking Members for their gesture. He expressed his surprise and pleasure at receiving the Certificate to mark the occasion and thanked Members for their support.

Declarations of Interest in the Register:

No new Declarations were made

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 June 2002, ref. KPC/06/02, having been circulated, were approved and signed.

Mr Davies complimented the Clerk on the Minutes and there was general agreement by Members on the standard of minutes produced by the Clerk. Mr Davies felt that despite the length of the Minutes for the June Meeting, the matters discussed, particularly Staffing, had been of such importance that it was right and proper that individual views were recorded. Mr Andrews concurred and added that they were an important record. It was agreed that future minutes should be recorded in as much detail as the Clerk felt necessary.

2. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

(a) Staffing Arrangements (see Minute 3(a))

The Chairman proposed from the Chair:

i To suspend the Staff Management Group

Mr Andrews felt that the Staff Management Group had run its course and that although its function as a forum for discussion had been valuable, final decisions on staffing matters lay ultimately with the Council as a whole.

Mr Davies felt that the business of the Group had not finished and drew attention to the June Minutes whereby Mr Andrews had been required to hold a further Group meeting, which in itself suggested that their business had not been completed. Mr Bennett agreed and stated that the matter was perhaps too complex in detail to go before a full Council of thirteen in number. Mr Bennett felt staffing matters could not be dealt with satisfactorily in ten to twenty minutes if a full agenda was before the Council at the monthly meetings.

Mrs Westaway felt that staffing matters should be discussed before the full Council. Mrs Westaway felt she had a contribution to make and wanted to be part of the decision-making process. Mr Dawes stated that in the past everything had been dealt with in an open forum.

Mr Allen supported the views expressed earlier by Mr Bennett and felt that certain areas could be discussed more fully and in more depth by a small group, and that the Staff Management Group still had work to do.

Mrs Westaway asked if other Members could join the Staff Management Group and Mr Andrews was able to confirm this. Mr Waters suggested that an annual meeting devoted to staffing issues would be beneficial. Mr Downey thought that such a meeting should take place as and when required, and deal with issues as they arose.

CARRIED – 8 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention

The Chairman proposed from the Chair:

- ii To discuss this Matter fully in a Closed Session of the Council at the end of the Meeting, and without the presence of the Parish Clerk. The matter to be minuted by a nominated Council Member.*

Mr Andrews advised that if there was not sufficient time, a new meeting may have to be called. Mr Kendall and Mr Bennett asked for clarification of the Proposal. Mr Davies asked whether a Council Meeting without the presence of the Parish Clerk could be a full Council Meeting, and whether, indeed, a meeting could be held without the Clerk at all.

The Clerk was unable to find reference to this point in Charles Arnold-Baker's Local Council Administration Fifth Edition, and undertook to check this matter after the Meeting.

CARRIED – 9 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention

The Chairman proposed from the Chair:

- iii To adopt a policy of reviewing Staff Salaries on an annual basis by full Council.*

There was some discussion about the wording of this proposal put by the Chair. Members agreed in general to substitute "Benefits and Performance" for "Salaries", and, "regular" for "annual".

Mr Davies felt the wording should be "on at least an annual basis by the full Council." Mr Allen again expressed concern about the matter being put before the full Council in view of the limited time available at monthly Council Meetings.

Mr Allen proposed and Mr Croughton seconded:

That the last three words "by full Council" should be deleted from the Proposal. The Proposal before the Council was:

To adopt a policy of reviewing Staff Benefits and Performance on a regular basis.

CARRIED – 11 in favour, 1 abstention

Mr Andrews then advised the Meeting that this Agenda Item would be carried forward to the Closed Session at the end of the Meeting.

- (b) Hospice in the Weald (see Minute 3(b))
The Parish Clerk had written to Mr Alan Milburn M.P., Secretary of State for Health, Mr Michael Fallon M.P., the Kent & Medway Health Authority and to Mr John Ashelford, Chief Executive of the Hospice in the Weald.

A reply had been received from Mr Michael Fallon M.P. pledging his support for the Hospice and promising to raise the matter with Mr Milburn and to circulate a copy of the Clerk's letter to the Conservative Health Spokesman, Dr Liam Fox. Mr Fallon also enclosed a copy of Early Day Motion 1165 in support of the Government's Help the Hospices Proposals.

A copy of the Clerk's letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Mr Fallon's reply, was laid on the Table for the interest of Members.

- (c) Purchase of new Photocopier (see Minute 3(d))
The Ricoh photocopier was delivered to the Parish Office on 20 June 2002. The Parish Clerk had received Offers to Purchase the old Mita copier from two local sources. An offer of £60.00 from Kemsing Pavilion Trust for the copier & two toner cartridges had been accepted (use to be shared with Kemsing Heritage Centre). The second offer had been made by the St Edith Playschool.

The Parish Clerk had removed the Mita copier from the KPC Asset Register, recorded the purchase of the new Ricoh copier and had written to the insurance brokers to arrange for cover under the Office insurance policy.

- (d) The St Edith Hall Lease with The St Edith Club (see Minute 3(e))
A Notice had been received by the Chairman from The St Edith Club, advising their intention, subject to agreement, to take up their option under Paragraph Six of the Lease dated 24 June 1978.

Mr Andrews confirmed to the Meeting that the Club wished to extend their Lease and the matter had been reported at a Meeting of the St Edith Hall Management Committee on 9 July 2002. No further communication had been received from the Club.

- (e) Fingerpost, Dynes Crossroads (Minute 3(f))
The Parish Clerk reported with regret, that this matter remained outstanding. The Fingerpost had been drawn to the attention of Sevenoaks District Council (S.D.C.) in the first instance, in September 2001.

The Clerk understood that the Highway Unit is stretched at the present time, but intended to write to the Highway Manager concerning the list of outstanding items, including the Fingerpost. The Clerk will liaise with Mr Buttifant on this matter and this was noted by the Members. The Fingerpost had been erected by S.D.C. but the locations and distances requested by the Clerk were incomplete.

- (f) Topograph (Minute 3(g))
A letter had been received from the Bishop of Tonbridge, thanking the Parish Council for the gift of the artist's proof of the Topograph and recording his pleasure at visiting Kemsing and being part of such a significant occasion.

- (g) Old Childsbridge Lane (Minute 3(h))
The Parish Clerk reported with regret that the Council's request to S.D.C. on 25 April 2002, for the provision of bollards, remained outstanding. The Clerk had chased this matter with S.D.C. and latterly had progressed with Kent County Council (K.C.C.) direct.

It appeared that S.D.C. had asked K.C.C. for assistance in establishing land ownership, as a first step, (i.e. whether ownership be with S.D.C., K.C.C. or, privately owned). The Clerk understood from K.C.C. that information was now to hand, together with additional information concerning the Side Roads Order issued on construction of the M26). This was faxed to the S.D.C. Highways Officer concerned as of 11.7.02. The Clerk would progress this matter with the Officer and would also include this matter in the list of outstanding items to be sent to the S.D.C. Highway Manager.

Mrs Westaway expressed concern about the number of youths congregating in the area of Old Childsbridge Lane, and the problem of litter. Mr Buttifant said he had spoken with Mrs E Garrett, Village Tidiness Officer and the Clerk also reported that she had written to Mrs Garrett.

- (h) Local Government Pension Scheme (Minute 3(i))
Following the K.P.C. June Meeting, the Parish Clerk had written to K.C.C. seeking further information. A copy of their response dated 1 July 2002 had been circulated to Members of the Staff Management Group.

This Item was discussed under Agenda Item 2(a).

- (i) Office Lighting (Minute 9(g)(iv))
An order had been placed with Phase Electrical Services for the work to be carried out at a cost of £161.50 + V.A.T. The Parish Clerk to progress.

3. **BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE**

- (a) Data Protection Act 1998 (see Minute 1)
"The 1998 Act came into force on 1 March 2000. It provides the statutory framework for the use of computerized information and also certain manual records about living identifiable individuals in the United Kingdom."

The Parish Clerk confirmed that the fee for renewal of register entry had been paid, for the period to 10 July 2003. The change to Contact details had been notified to the Notification Department, and acknowledged.

The Parish Clerk had sought information from N.A.L.C. (through K.A.P.C.) and also from The Information Commissioner on the implications of the Act. A Legal Update had been received from NALC and studied by the Clerk. This information was available at the Parish Office. The attention of Members was drawn to the following:

"Where holding and processing personal data about individuals in the course of undertaking council business elected members will be covered by the authority's notification and have the same responsibilities with regards to data protection as any employee of the authority."

From the information presently available, the Clerk confirmed that the Council complied with the Act, with the exception of keeping information safe and secure at all times. The storage of both manual and computerised records would be reviewed by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. The Clerk is investigating the sourcing of lockable filing cabinets, both second-hand and new and would liaise with Mrs Cole about siting cabinets within the Hall on a temporary basis. This matter would be brought to the Council for consideration at the next Meeting.

Mr Bennett, who had raised the matter of compliance during the June 2002 Meeting, acknowledged that he was happy with the Clerk's response.

- (b) Notice and Advertisement of the Annual Audit for the Year Ending 31 March 2002.
The Annual Return had been received at the Parish Office on 9 July 2002. The Parish Clerk would liaise with Mr Allen, Chairman of the Finance Committee and report to the Council at the next Meeting.
- (c) The Freedom of Information Act 2000
"The Act gives a general right of access to all types of 'recorded' information held by 'public authorities' (and those providing services for them), sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities."

The Parish Clerk had sought information from NALC (through KAPC) on the implications of the Act. A Legal Update had been received and studied by the Clerk and was available at the Parish Office.

The Act would be brought fully into force by January 2005. Public authorities would have two main responsibilities under the Act. They would have to produce a 'publication scheme' (effectively a guide to the information they hold which is publicly available) and they would have to deal with individual requests for information. The duty to adopt a publication scheme would come into force first and Local Authorities would need to have this in place by February 2003. Further and more specific advice on "publications schemes" together with general practical tips for local councils, was awaited from NALC. The Parish Clerk to progress.

4. **KEMSING HERITAGE CENTRE**

A letter of thanks from Mr D Eley, Treasurer, had been received in respect of the cheque for £250.00 given to help the Centre with insurance costs. Mr Eley acknowledged that this was a one-off special grant.

5. **COMMITTEE & OFFICER REPORTS**

(a) Planning Committee

The Council was asked to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 June 2002, ref. P/12/2002, and Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 July 2002, ref. P/13/2002.

Mr Downey expressed surprise that Seal Parish Council had not objected to the application for residential development of ten two-storey units at Childsbridge Farm, Childsbridge Lane, Seal (ref. SE/02/01367/FUL). Mr Dawes affirmed that the application had been lodged by Ark Developers and not the farmer.

The Council approved the Minutes for the Meetings on 24 June 2002 and 8 July 2002.

(b) Any other Reports by Officers

Mr Kendall advised Members that a map to the correct scale had been purchased, showing every field in the Parish. The map would be held in the Parish Office and Mr Kendall asked Members to advise the Clerk if they could provide information on land ownership.

Mr Davies drew the attention of Members to problems experienced by the public with regard to vehicle security at the Dunbrik site.

Mr Andrews advised the Meeting that Mrs Palmer had places available on the First Aid Course to be held on Saturday 27 July 2002 at the Hall between 10.00 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. Three Council Members had booked places and Mr Andrews said he would also attend.

6. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

No Members of the Public were present.

7. **INFORMATION REPORT**

The Council received the Information Report and Appendix.

Information Report Item 1 - Payment by K.P.C. of the Hall Lighting Invoice

Mr Allen confirmed that the £1,000.00 figure recorded in the Parish Council Meeting Minutes of 19 September 2001 referred to £1,000.00 net (i.e. excluding V.A.T.). Mr Andrews referred to the original proposal, which had been carried - "That the Council is willing to bear the cost of all major works over £1,000 in the next 3 years, if approached by the Hall Management Committee for financial assistance, and then reviews the situation." Mr Andrews concluded that "major works" should mean £1,000.00 net (excluding V.A.T.) and confirmed that continued support by the Council allowed the Hall to function fully and helped them to build up their funds.

Information Report Item 2 – Tennis Court Car Park

Mr Andrews and Mr Downey had inspected the work carried out by the contractor and advised the meeting that a minor detail concerning the cleaning of brickwork remained outstanding.

Information Report Item 3 – Recreation Areas

Mr Andrews and Mr Downey advised Members of their concerns at the quality of the welding work carried out to the gates by Wicksteed's contractor. The Parish Clerk is progressing.

Information Report Item 10 – Letter from S.D.C. concerning Grass Cutting

There was some discussion by Members and concern was expressed that the course of action which may be followed by S.D.C. i.e. charging separately for services, could be extended to refuse collection etc. Mr Andrews suggested that the Council should resist such moves by S.D.C. in the future.

Appendix Report Item 6 – Youth Hostel, Kemsing

The Clerk was asked to extend a welcome from the Parish Council to the new Managers of the Hostel.

Appendix Report Item 7 – The Kent Tree Warden Scheme

Mr Andrews confirmed that the Council had not appointed an official Tree Warden but that Mr Brian Doe would be available for assistance.

8. **PROPOSED VISIT BY THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR RON BAILEY**

The Parish Clerk had spoken with Barbara Darby, Otford Parish Clerk and was still awaiting details on the proposed date for the visit to Otford, to be followed by Kemsing. It was noted that Mr Andrews would be available but would like at least one other Member present. The Clerk to progress.

9. **SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COMMUNITY PLAN – CONSULTATION**

The Parish Clerk was unable to attend the S.D.C. Meeting on 28 June 2002. Meeting notes had been requested, however.

10. **ORBIT CONSULTATION MEETING**

Mr Croughton attended a consultation meeting held on 2 July 2002, on the Provisional Strategy for Transport Solutions Around London. Mr Croughton reported to Members and ran through a questionnaire, to be returned by 31 July 2002.

The Council is asked to approve the completion and submission of the questionnaire by Mr Croughton

Carried unanimously

11. **LETTER RECEIVED FROM SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL CONCERNING PROVISION OF LEGAL AND PROPERTY SERVICES**

The letter dated 28 June 2002 detailing a change in S.D.C. policy concerning a charge for services in the future at an hourly rate of £30.00, was discussed.

It was suggested that consideration be given to using S.D.C. Legal Services for the St Edith Club lease renewal. It was noted, however, that time-scales could be problematical if S.D.C. had a large workload.

The Council noted this change in S.D.C. policy

12. **REQUEST TO SPONSOR A CHURCH KNEELER**

Mr Bennett declared an interest in this item, although this was not of a prejudicial nature. Mr Croughton and Mr Waters were also noted.

Mr Andrews had received a request to sponsor a Church Kneeler for £25.00 from one of the ladies of the Church.

Mrs Westaway proposed and Mr Buttifant seconded:

That the Council agrees to sponsor a Kneeler for £25.00

CARRIED – 8 in favour, 4 abstentions

Mr Andrews advised that the Council could decide on the design and offered to liaise with those carrying out the work. It was agreed to incorporate the Medal of Office in any finished design.

13. **INVITATION TO DETACHED YOUTH & COMMUNITY WORKERS**

A new invitation to attend the August Meeting of the Council had been extended to Mr Mick Cahill and Ms Judith Cork. Mr Cahill had accepted the invitation but unfortunately Ms Cork would be unavailable. Members are asked to note that the Meeting on 14 August 2002 will start at 7.30 p.m. with the Youth & Community Session followed by the formal Council Meeting at 8.00 p.m.

14. **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE 2003/2004**

A letter had been received from S.D.C. asking K.P.C. to nominate two areas to be taken into consideration by S.D.C. when preparing the highway maintenance bid for 2003/04. Mr Buttifant and the Parish Clerk had responded to this request and at the same time drawn attention to the item on the listing for 2002/2003, namely

patching/resurfacing on Pilgrims Way East, which remained outstanding. The Parish Clerk will progress.

15. **ELECTRICAL PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING**

Since the last Council Meeting, Mr Downey had clarified his request and asked that the Parish Clerk report to the Members on when the Office equipment would be tested.

The Clerk confirmed that appliances were checked last in October 2001 and that this was arranged by the St Edith Hall Management Committee. Mrs Cole would be seeking quotations from contractors and would arrange for the work to be repeated in October 2002. Members were asked to note that a small charge would be made by the Hall to the Council for the Office equipment to be checked.

16. **KEMSING WEB SITE**

The Parish Clerk had downloaded the information on Kemsing obtained through www.kent-communities.co.uk and this was available on the Table, together with the original site information from November 1999.

The Kent Communities Web Page annual subscription had been renewed on the 10 March 2002 at a cost of £40.00.

The Parish Clerk had spoken with the operators of the site and had been told that the Kent-Communities site, which is approved by S.D.C. and K.C.C., covers the Darent Valley area and in all, consists of 300 pages. Over a period of a year the site as a whole had received 11,000 hits but it was not possible to ascertain how many visits had been made to the Kemsing pages in particular.

The web site could be seen as a Virtual Village Notice Board and another medium with which to communicate and provide information. Village events and local issues could be highlighted. This would only be effective, however, if the information is up-to-date.

There was much discussion on the merits of the Web Site and it was felt that one of the most important requirements was for the information to be up-to-date. Mr Allen and Mr Bennett expressed concern about the time demands on Parish Staff to keep the site updated. Mr Dawes and Mrs Westaway saw little merit in having the Web Site. Mr Waters offered to monitor and keep the site updated until consideration could be given to whether or not to continue with the site when the subscription became due for renewal in March 2003. The Clerk to make a note for the matter to be re-considered by Members in January 2003. Mr Andrews thanked Mr Waters for undertaking this task.

RESOLVED – The Council to reconsider this matter in January 2003.

17. **INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER**

The Parish Office is served by BT Openworld Pay-as you-go and can utilise five email addresses, use of creative communication tools such as Instant Messenger and Email Alerts and 10MB of personal Web space to create a web site. Prices increased on 3 May 2002 to (Office Hours) - Monday to Friday 8.00 am – 6.00 pm @ 4p/min.+ V.A.T. (5p minimum charge). The Service could be terminated by giving one

month's notice. The Parish Office also has use of a HotMail facility. Both KPC e-mail addresses are used by some of the Parish Councillors, Sevenoaks District Council for forwarding Planning information, and other organisations.

There was general discussion on this subject. The Clerk to ascertain whether the two existing B.T. lines are business lines. It was suggested that a broadband provider with a fixed cost and offering a 1571 messages facility, would be preferable.

RESOLVED – The Council to re-consider this matter in the future.

18. **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

The Council approved:

- (a) Accounts already settled on 19.6.02,
voucher nos. 84 - 99 & voucher no. 106 (2.7.02)
- (b) Accounts awaiting payment, voucher nos. 117 - 125
- (c) To note receipts, voucher nos. 100 - 105 & 107 -116

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

Parish Office Storage Systems

Notice and Advertisement of the Annual Audit for the Year Ending 31 March 2002

Information received from the Commission for Racial Equality

Kemsing Web Site – January 2003

Internet Service Provider

Mr Allen reported Good News concerning Kemsing Primary School, as follows:

Mr Malcolm Thomas, Headteacher, is to be married in August 2002.

Phase I of a major redevelopment at the School is due to start enabling the playgroup to move from the Main School. Next April would see the introduction of a seventh class, thereby enabling each year group to have a separate class. Mr Allen reported that such was the confidence of parents in the School that the point had almost been reached whereby they would have to turn prospective new pupils away.

20. **DATES OF MEETINGS**

22 July Planning 24 July Recreation Grounds 5 August Planning

14 AUGUST PARISH COUNCIL

Mr Andrews proposed from the Chair that all Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for the next session of the Council. The Parish Clerk left the Meeting at 9.52 p.m.

Mr Dawes left the Meeting and after a short break eleven Members reconvened for a Closed Session. Minutes of this Session are recorded separately.

KPC/07/02