

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 15 October 2003 at 8.00 p.m.

Mr Andrews welcomed PC Mick Wright, PC Dave Leipnik and Volunteer Ruth Huntley to the Meeting, together with PC Jackie Allen and Mr Boris Gaskin, Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator in Kemsing.

PC Wright distributed literature to the Members and explained that "Country Eye" aims to co-ordinate organisations concerned with rural safety issues, such as Neighbourhood Watch, River Watch, Horse Watch, Farm Watch etc. and to improve methods of communication.

"Country Eye" seeks to work in partnership with Parish Councils, drawing in bodies such as the National Farmers Union, Libraries and Trading Standards. A stated aim is to bring such groups together with businesses large and small and also individuals who may have felt excluded and isolated in rural locations.

PC Wright explained that pilot schemes would be launched in Thanet, South East Kent and West Kent to run to the end of March 2004 and that ideas and suggestions would be sought from the community as a whole, the ethos being "Country Eye" is owned by the Community and run for the Community.

In practical terms PC Wright explained that "Country Eye" would operate a new communications system, to replace the existing Ringmaster system. The new system would handle text messaging and 'real time' information. There would be a facility to retrieve messages at will and an option to receive messages by telephone or electronic mail. PC Wright said that information would be relayed to the individual or organisation in the way and frequency the recipient chose. PC Wright cautioned that care is necessary with regard to Data Protection but that 'blind message sending' would be built into the system.

"Country Eye" participants would be able to select an area, select a scheme and select the service they wished to contact, e.g. Farm Watch. In effect, an interactive communication system would operate between members of groups within the same area. PC Wright felt that such a system would be of particular benefit to small groups or individuals that did not fit into categories and felt isolated. New hardware and software would be commissioned with the facility to add to the system thereby keeping it at the cutting edge of technology. PC Wright emphasised the importance of each participant choosing when and how information should be received.

PC Wright said that "Country Eye" is seen by the Home Office as a "rural reassurance scheme" with the potential to launch nationally. Key Partners are needed initially to identify local needs. A one-off Registration Fee of £10.00 would be payable to cover the cost of signs, stickers, leaflets, posters, marker pens and a police electronic marking kit. Any monies left would be directed to local Neighbourhood Watch groups through the Neighbourhood Watch Association.

Mr. Andrews invited Mr Gaskin to address the meeting and then invited Members to ask questions.

Concern was expressed about manpower and a perceived lack of police response to rural crime and it was felt that no matter how good the communication, without a police presence, "Country Eye" could not fully address rural crime. The Meeting heard that Kemsing is covered by two Special Constables in addition to PC Allen who is responsible for six other villages as well as Kemsing.

PC Wright said that such policing issues should be taken up with the Area Commander but he felt confident that as far as Quality of Life issues are concerned, "Country Eye" provided a reassurance and reduced fear of crime.

Mr Andrews thanked the representatives from "Country Eye" for attending the Meeting, also PC Allen and Mr Gaskin. Mr Andrews felt that the subject matter was quite complex and it was likely that "Country Eye" would be debated at a future Meeting. Members would need to understand how "Country Eye" works and what action the Parish Council would need to take. PC Wright said he would be happy to return to Kemsing, if necessary.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: A C Andrews (in the Chair)
D V Bennett, P R Burfield, B D Buttifant, A M Davies, R J Dawes,
P M H Kendall, W Ross, A V Waters, M J Williams

IN ATTENDANCE: District Councillor Mrs J Course
Mrs L M Drage, Parish Clerk

APOLOGIES: Councillors M R Cole, G R Croughton, P C Miles

Declarations of Interest in the Register

No new Declarations were made

Members agreed to discuss "Country Eye" at the January 2004 Council Meeting.

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 September 2003, reference KPC/9/03, having been circulated previously, were approved and signed subject to amendments.

2. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

(a) The St Edith Hall Lease with The St Edith Club (see Minute 2(a))
There was no further information to report.

(b) Kemsing Lawn Tennis Club (Minute 2(b))

Mr Andrews confirmed that the redrafted Lease, reflecting the changes to the Tennis Club's own constitution, requested by the Lawn Tennis Association, is awaited. It was felt that the Tennis Club would have been better served if it had appointed legal representation from the outset which would have avoided some of the delays. Mr Davies said that Mr Ian Fraser, Chairman of the Club, accepted that the problems were not the fault of the Parish Council and had found the Council helpful all the way through. Members were pleased to hear that the funding arrangements made by the Club had been secured and would not be affected by the delays.

Mr Bennett asked for confirmation that the Club would be responsible for payment of the Council's legal fees and Mr Andrews confirmed that this is so.

(c) Affordable Housing/The Rural Housing Trust (Minute 2(c))

Although the results of the Housing Needs Survey are anticipated in November 2003, the Clerk advised that at the time of the Meeting, 230 responses had been received by The Rural Housing Trust, representing a 13% return rate. The average return rate for a community the size of Kemsing is 25%. Members hoped that more questionnaires would be returned by the deadline of 3 November 2003 and undertook to encourage participation.

- (d) Closed Circuit Television (Minute 2(d))
The Clerk confirmed that the External Consultants' Report had been received by Sevenoaks District Council (S.D.C.) and reportedly has been found to be 'useful'. However, S.D.C. had advised that the Report together with the internal evaluations undertaken by the CCTV Manager would not be published until end-December 2003. In addition, the Clerk reported that the CCTV Manager would be leaving S.D.C.'s employ.
- The Clerk advised that no feedback had been received at the Parish Office in response to the request for views contained in the autumn Parish Newsletter.
- (e) Internal Audit (ref Minute 2(e))
Mr Burfield confirmed that the Interim Internal Audit conducted by Mr Wonga Mzimba had been carried out on 14 October 2003 and upon receipt, Mr Mzimba's report would be circulated to the Finance Committee for consideration by the end of October.
- (f) Appointment of a Financial Adviser (Minute 2(f))
Mr Burfield advised that he would be reporting to the Finance Committee at a meeting to be held before the end of October. Mr Burfield acknowledged slow progress with regard to the opening of the Thirty Day Notice Account with Alliance & Leicester Commercial Bank plc, due to Alliance & Leicester misplacing the original application, but stated that the account would be opened shortly. Mr Andrews said that such delays affected confidence in the Bank's capabilities.
- (g) St Edith's Road/West End (Minute 2(g))
Members noted that a response had been made to a letter of complaint from a resident with regard to both the resurfacing work carried out and vehicles on the footway, and a copy forwarded to S.D.C. Highways Unit for a direct response. A copy of a letter sent to the Highways Unit by a Parent Governor at Kemsing Primary School had also been received and a response sent. The Clerk confirmed that Mr Buttifant, Mr Andrews, both District Councillors and the Highways Unit had been forwarded copies of all correspondence.
- There was a good deal of discussion about measures that could be taken in this Conservation Area. Members felt that the use of raised brick paving and conservation-style bollards had proved useful in areas such as Otford, Hadlow and Seal.
- Mr Andrews said that S.D.C. must find a way of doing something before someone is injured. He suggested that if there is no progress by January 2004, the Council should invite the Highway Manager at S.D.C. to attend a Council Meeting to give an account of why there has been no progress.
- (h) Leisure Plots (Minute 2(h)) (now renamed Lower Haffenden)
Members noted that the Legal Section at S.D.C. expected imminent confirmation of Completion from the Crown. Mr Bennett advised that a Paper on the "Initial Strategy for Lower Haffenden" had been considered by the Downland Management Committee at a meeting on 8 October 2003 and Meeting Minutes would be circulated shortly.
- (i) Community Policing (Minute 2(j))
The Clerk advised that a Report from SPC Dave Birchell is awaited and PC Jackie Allen had been asked to progress this.
- (j) The Kemsing Logo (Minute 2(k))
Mr Dawes confirmed he had written to Kemsing Primary School and received a very favourable response from the Headteacher, Mrs Eileen Mumford. Mr Dawes confirmed that he would be happy to chair the Group of Councillors considering the Logo and asked the Clerk to circulate a copy of his letter to the Group.

- (k) Kemsing Christmas Lights 2003 (Minute 2(1))
The Clerk confirmed that Mr Mick Syrrett of The Bell at Kemsing had kindly agreed to provide the electrical outlet for connection to the tree in the Well Area.

The Clerk ran through the costings for renewal of the lights at Dynes Parade, discussed at the August 2003 Meeting.

The Chairman proposed:

That the Christmas Lights at Dynes Parade be replaced at a cost of £200.00 + V.A.T. and the Council agrees to the annual installation, connection and disconnection charge for Dynes Parade and The Well at a total of £100.00 + V.A.T.

CARRIED unanimously (Mr Dawes had left the Meeting briefly and did not vote)

- (l) Visit by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent (Minute 6)
Mr Andrews said that the feedback he had received from within the Village had been very positive and the occasion had been seen as very useful and an opportunity for different strands of the community to get together. Mr Andrews read a Letter of Thanks to the Council received from Col. Godfrey Linnett, Deputy to the Lord Lieutenant.

The Chairman proposed:

That the thanks of the Council be extended to Mrs Palmer and Mrs Drage for organising the event.

CARRIED unanimously

Mr Andrews reported that he had been contacted by the Sevenoaks Chronicle and asked for his comments on the visit of the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, and an article had also appeared in the Tonbridge Courier 10.10.03. Mr Andrews said that because the number of invited guests had to be limited, invitations had been extended to those who freely contributed to the Village and in the main, were not paid to do a job of work.

Mr Andrews stated that the cost of £77.97 for entertaining the Lord Lieutenant of Kent would be met from the Chairman's Allowance. The Clerk was asked to check whether the V.A.T. element could be claimed.

The Clerk confirmed that a Letter of Thanks would be sent to Mr Allan Willett.

- (m) Invitation to Miss J Down, Detached Youth Worker (ref Minute 11)
Members agreed to invite Miss Down to meet with Members at the Council Meeting in January 2004.

3. **BUSINESS REQUIRED BY STATUTE**

There was no Business required by Statute to consider.

4. **POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ST EDITH HALL**

There was consideration discussion on the Paper submitted by Mr Waters, in particular whether it might be better to wait until accommodation issues within the Hall had been resolved and also the extent to which Members felt changes are necessary.

Mr Bennett agreed that the Parish Office needed more space and better natural light but thought it was too early to engage an architect particularly in view of on-going negotiations with the St Edith Club. Mr Burfield also accepted a need for some changes but felt these should be confined to a minor tidying-up exercise, perhaps a new shed which might enable the Council to improve the entrance way.

Mr Davies felt that the Council had to start somewhere and thought it would be useful to engage an architect to sketch some ideas and give the Council a series of options to consider. Mr Burfield said the Council would have to justify any expenditure and felt this would not show a return for the Village. Mr Waters said that any development would look at how the Hall could be better employed for the benefit of the Clerk's Office and possibly the Heritage Centre. Mr Bennett did not think that funds should be expended on finding a home for the Heritage Centre. Mr Dawes felt that because the Village would grow in size and more facilities would be needed, the Council should look to the future even though the cost might not necessarily be immediately justified. Mr Andrews felt it would be better to put the matter on hold for six months until the future of the St Edith Club is settled.

Members discussed using the services of a local architect. The Clerk suggested seeking information on registered members from the South East office of the R.I.B.A. in Tunbridge Wells and details of any schemes whereby services can be obtained free of charge.

Mr Waters proposed and Mr Davies seconded:

That the Parish Council agrees to engage an architect to look at the entire area of the 1973 extension to the Village Hall with a view to redevelopment; that the costs be considered as a Parish Project, and that the costs involved be met from interest monies.

CARRIED – 7 in favour, 3 against (Mr Bennett asked for his name to be recorded as voting against)
Mr Davies left the Meeting

5. **REPLACEMENT OF THE CLERK'S OFFICE COMPUTER**

Mr Burfield, having reported to the Finance Committee, provided an update to Members. Mr Burfield said he had contacted Chalkhill Computers, as agreed by the Finance Committee and they had advised a figure of £75.00 to move data across from the old to the new machine and £650.00 to replace the computer, to bring the software up to date and to provide anti-virus software. Mr Burfield confirmed that support would be provided for one year. Mr Burfield advised that the Deputy Clerk's machine would require an upgrade to Windows XP at a cost of £86.00 with installation of £20.00 and that it was his intention to network the two Office machines. A Norton anti-virus maintenance contract for one year would cost £40.00. Mr Burfield confirmed that XP comes with a firewall imbedded in it and there would be capacity for one-line broadband access in the future. Mr Burfield felt the total cost would not exceed £750.00 including V.A.T.

Mr Burfield advised Members that a member of his family works for Chalkhill. Mr Andrews expressed confidence in Chalkhill and said that two Councillors use the company for advice and problem-solving.

Mr Andrews proposed:

That the Council authorises the purchase of a new machine, together with anti-virus software and a firewall at a cost not exceeding £750.00 including V.A.T.

CARRIED unanimously

6. **SUPPLY TO KEMSING PRIMARY SCHOOL OF TEN "GUIDES TO THE LISTED BUILDINGS OF KEMSING"**

Members noted that during September 2003 ten copies of the above Guide were supplied to the School and that Mrs Cole had asked the Council to consider whether or not the Guides should be donated. The Clerk advised that such Guides are supplied to Kemsing outlets at £1.00 each less 20% discount.

Mr Andrews proposed:

That the Council agrees to the supply of the ten "Guides to the Listed Buildings of Kemsing" without charge.

CARRIED unanimously

7. **INVITATION FROM THE KEMSING BRANCH OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**
Members noted the invitation to attend the A.G.M. to be held at 8.00 p.m. 30 October 2003 in the Church Hall, Kemsing, to include a Talk on research into the families of those listed on the Kemsing War Memorial.
8. **K.A.P.C. FINANCE INFORMATION DAY**
It was noted that Mr Burfield will be attending this Event to be held on 18 October 2003 at a cost of £47.00 and that the Information Day would cover Local Government Finance, Local Council Insurance, The Annual Budget, Setting the Precept and Auditing of Accounts. Mr Burfield will report to the November 2003 Council Meeting.
9. **S.D.C. 'MAKING IT HAPPEN' – THE SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COMMUNITY PLAN**
Members noted that a draft consultation copy of 'Making it Happen' had been received and the Council is asked for its views by 20.10.03. The document and questionnaire were made available at the Meeting and the Council noted that S.D.C. would be writing to the Council early in 2004 asking for nominations of representatives to sit on the Community Planning Partnership.
10. **PUBLIC INFORMATION ON THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL**
Mr Andrews said he felt not enough use is being made of information on the work of the Council in the Chronicle Village News column and the Seal Advertiser. Mr Andrews advised he had submitted a piece on the Lord Lieutenant's Visit and Green Hill to The Well magazine and he asked a member of the Council to undertake to brief publications on a monthly basis. Mr Waters offered to do this for an initial period of six months. Mr Andrews said that Mrs Doreen Farrow had information on the publication deadlines for the Seal Advertiser.
11. **COMMITTEE & OFFICER REPORTS**
 - (a) Planning Committee
The Council approved the Minutes of the Meeting held 15 September 2003, ref. P/14/2003, and the Minutes of the Meeting held 29 September 2003, ref. P/15/2003, subject to an amendment to Item 7(c) – "OPDM" to read "ODPM".

As the time was 10.30 p.m., Members agreed to continue the Meeting for a further ten minutes.

Mr Dawes then asked the Council to consider the Minutes of the Meeting held 13 October 2003, ref. P/16/2003 circulated at the start of the Council Meeting. Mr Dawes drew attention to the Recommendations contained within and the Minutes were duly approved.

Mr Bennett commended the Report on Village Design Statements circulated by Mr Dawes and his comments were endorsed by Mr Andrews. Mr Andrews stated that Mr Croughton had prepared a very good Report on the Kent & Medway Structure Plan.

- (b) Any other Reports by Officers
 - (i) Mr Buttifant said that he and Mr Croughton had attended an Open Day at the Head Office in Snodland of Mid Kent Water. The visit had been most interesting and one notable fact worthy of recording was that the water company

does not make a charge for installation of water meters which helps to reduce costs for smaller households.

- (ii) Mr Buttifant expressed concern about the surface of the highway over the railway bridge within Seal Parish and said that the matter is being taken up with S.D.C. Highways Unit.
- (iii) The Clerk reported that five Members had responded to the K.R.C.C. Survey recently circulated and the information provided had been reported back. The Clerk made survey results available at the Meeting.
- (iv) The Clerk advised Members she had been asked to attend S.D.C. Offices on 16.10.03 to meet Inspectors conducting a Comprehensive Performance Assessment on S.D.C. The Inspectors had asked to meet S.D.C. Partners, including Clerks. Mr Andrews had agreed that co-operation with S.D.C. might bring future benefits.

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

Mrs Course asked if she might address the Meeting in order to let Members know she is gathering together letters from residents in Park Lane and Noah's Ark concerning noise from the M26. Mrs Course said she would be taking up the matter with the Highways Agency and with the Consulting Engineers, Mouchel. Mrs Course said that S.D.C. had no powers to act. It was suggested that Michael Fallon M.P. should be approached and Members agreed that this was a district-wide problem covering Otford and Dunton Green, not just Kemsing.

13. **INFORMATION REPORT**

Members received the Information Report, circulated with the Agenda.

The Clerk advised that the K.A.P.C. Annual Report and an Invitation to the A.G.M. in November had also been received. Mr Burfield and Mr Williams said they would be unable to attend the A.G.M.

14. **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

The Council approved:

- (a) Accounts already settled on 17.9.03 voucher nos. 170 – 174
- (b) Accounts paid, voucher nos. 184 – 195
- (c) To note receipts, voucher nos. 175 – 183

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

Mr Andrews reminded Members that Mrs Cole would chair the November Council Meeting.

Matters to be raised in the future:

Parish Office Salary Reviews – November 2003

St Edith's Road/West End – Report from Highways Committee – November 2003 (BB)

K.A.P.C. Finance Information Day – November 2003 (PB)

Report on a Meeting of the Rail Passengers Society (South East) – November 2003 (GC)

Asset Register – November 2003 (PB)

Parish Office Storage Systems – c/f (lmd)

"Country Eye" – January 2004

Attendance by Miss J Down, Detached Youth Worker – January 2004

Attendance by S.D.C. Highway Manager re West End (?)

Six month Review of Public Information on the Work of the Council – April 2004 (AW)

16. **DATES OF MEETINGS**

22 October Highways
27 October Planning
5 November Emergency Services
10 November Planning
12 November Recreation Grounds
19 November Parish Council

Churchyard Maintenance Committee Meeting t.b.a.

The Meeting Closed at 10.44 p.m.

Linda Drage
Parish Clerk

/lmd
31.10.03