

Minutes of Kingston Parish Council Meeting held on
Monday 4TH April 2016 in The Barn, Kingston.

Present:
Cllr Martin - Chairman
Cllr Osborn – Vice- Chair
Cllr Arter
Cllr McCord
Cllr Pearson
Cllr Walsh
Cllr Spencer
Valerie McWilliams, Clerk

There were 6 members of the public present.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting after which she asked for any comments from the public.

A member of the public asked what had happened to the proposed Gym Equipment. They were told that it would be discussed fully at the AVM. The same member enquired about the steps that were broken on footpath number CB 275 as they were dangerous. They were informed that it had been reported.

A member of the public asked whether an email that was sent to the Internal Auditor from a Councillor would be discussed in Council. They were assured that it would be during the meeting.

COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

County Councillor Michael Northey sent in a report in stating he was prepared to give £300.00 from his allowance to all his parishes towards the cost of the Queen's 90th Birthday Party if they would like it. The Council were delighted to accept and the Clerk will respond and make the necessary arrangements.

1. APOLOGIES

City Cllr Michael Northey sent his apologies due to a prior engagement.
Cty Cllr Simon Cook sent his apologies as he was on away on holiday.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 7th March 2016 were accepted as an accurate record. Acceptance of the minutes; proposed by Cllr Arter and seconded by Cllr Walsh.

The minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting held on 16th March 2016 were accepted as an accurate record; proposed by Cllr Spencer and seconded by Cllr Arter.

3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Cllr McCord declared an OSI relating to Item 9 on the agenda. There was no other notification by members given of any pecuniary or discretionary interest in items on the Agenda.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk stated that she had been unable to discover who had bought the old Stud Farm in The Street. She had contacted the Land Registry who has now sent her details as to how to lodge a SIM application. There would be a £4.00 cost for this.

5. FINANCE

Lloyds Bank £ 6,682.31

Payments Due

Val McWilliams for 16 Hours worked in March SCP2 per hour £10.50 = £168 +
£40 Office maintenance Total £208.00

Land Registry £4.00

Total £212.00

These figures were accepted for payment; proposed by Cllr Osborn and seconded by Cllr Spencer.

The Clerk had sent a draft copy of the Expenditure and Income spread sheet for the year to the Council. These were now ready with everything else required to go to the Internal Auditor to enable him to audit the books.

Cllr McCord raised an objection to this stating that it was not legal procedure. The Chair pointed out that approval of the accounts was not on the agenda. She then referred to the email sent to the Internal Auditor mentioned from the floor who, in the light of the content of the email was now withdrawing his offer to the Parish Clerk to carry out the internal audit. He did not have the time to get involved in such bureaucratic and unnecessary interpretations of what should be a simple exercise.

He went on to say that some of the content of the email was both insulting and bordering on libel and he had no interest in wasting his time pursuing such out of hand comments, especially those which commenced with "I would suggest..."

and "I also suggest that ...". He definitely has no interest whatsoever in working with the author of those comments

He pointed out whenever he had carried out the internal audits in the past, the Parish Clerk had provided him with all the books and records of the Parish Council, comprising the minutes, the cash book, the bank statements, fixed asset register, cheque stubs, original receipts and all related correspondence, all of which were conducive to establishing a proper audit trail. He had always been impressed with the way the Parish Council's books and records have been maintained by the Parish Clerk and would like to point out that each year the external auditor has been happy to issue unqualified audit reports.

The Chair stated that Cllr McCord had breached the Code of Conduct and that there were very angry Councillors on the Council who, like her were furious that Cllr McCord had sent such an email to the Internal Auditor without any discussion with the Council.

She went on to say that the Internal Auditor was a highly respected qualified accountant who had given his services and expertise for years to the Council free of charge and to be treated in this manner by a Councillor was appalling.

The Clerk then spoke and stated that she was equally annoyed. The Internal Auditor had done so much to help both the Council and the Clerk. She felt that the Councillor was libelous towards her, insinuating that she did not keep the books correctly. As such his remarks were unsubstantiated by evidence.

Councillors agreed to all the comments made and felt that a letter of sincere apology should be sent to the Internal Auditor and that they had no criticism of him whatsoever, only gratitude; proposed by Cllr Osborn seconded by Cllr Spencer. It was agreed by the majority that a letter would be sent.

At this stage the Chairman closed the meeting to allow questions and comments from the public. Once the meeting resumed the Chair asked if the Council had anything further to say. Councillors said they agreed with what had been said and there was nothing further to add.

There were no additional finance questions to the Clerk from Councillors

6. VILLAGE SURVEY

The survey was considered and it was agreed to discuss it fully at the Annual Village meeting with residents on Wednesday 18th May 2016 following all the reports. After which refreshments will be served. It was agreed to get a speaker to discuss care of trees in general. The Clerk will look into finding one.

7. PLANNING/TREES

CA/16/00709/FUL Building to cover the existing sand school. Little Duskin Farm, Covet Lane, Kingston, CT4 6JS. This application is currently being circulated amongst the Councillors.

CA/1600562/FUL Erection of Dwelling, Broadfield, Covet Lane, Kingston, CT4 6HJ

The application was considered and Councillors expressed mixed feelings about the application. There is a history of earlier applications being turned down which was upheld on appeal. The front hedge would need to be split to allow access into Broadfield for a car. The trees adjacent to the property have been ignored. as has the Silver Birch tree on the building plot.

In principle there were no major objections but it was felt that the plans should proceed with caution and necessary caveats added.

CA/16/00442/FUL Proposed extension to kitchen and infill the small recess between the toilets. The Barn, The Street, Kingston, CT4 6JB. This application has been granted.

CA/15/02682/TPO Felling of Weeping Ash tree subject to TPO No 2 72/B. Kingstone Court, Church Lane, Kingston CT4 6HY. This application was granted.

CA/16/00425/LB Replacement of single glazed windows with double glazed windows. Whitelocks Barn, The Street, Kingston CT4 6JQ. The application has been granted.

CA/16/00305/FUL, CA/16/00312/LB Oak Framed Link extension, 45 The Street, Kingston, CT4 6JQ. This was refused.

CA/16/00346/FUL Single-storey side/rear extension and alterations in roof to provide first floor living accommodation and conversion of detached garage to provide office and gym. 18 The Street, Kingston, CT4 6JB.
Still awaiting a decision

CA/16/00336/FUL. Loft conversion. 19 The Street, Kingston, CT4 6JB. Still awaiting Decision

CA/16/0059/FUL Proposed single-storey rear extension and loft conversion with front and rear dormer window 31 The Street, Kingston, Canterbury CT4 6JE Still awaiting a decision.

TREES

The Clerk reported the she had been in touch with The Kent Men of Trees who

asked if details of the trees on the Railway Embankment could be sent to them, after which they will look into any help or advice they might be able to offer regarding future maintenance.

8. HIGHWAYS & FOOTPATHS

Cllr Walsh reported a large pothole at the bottom of Black Robin Lane. The Clerk will report it to Highways.

9. APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEE to THE BARN

No questions were asked to Cllr McCord who left the room whilst the matter was discussed. Councillors felt that Cllr McCord himself should become the Council's representative Nominee. On his return to the room he stated that that would be impossible as he already represented the PCC. As there were no volunteers the Chair felt that there was nothing further they could do, and the trusteeship would remain vacant.

10. POLICY ON FREEDOM of INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION SCHEME

Cllr Martin asked for feedback on the document and went through the form. The necessary changes were made and it will be represented at the next meeting.

11. QUEEN'S 90th BIRTHDAY & CLEAN UP BRITAIN

The Queen's Birthday will now be held on Saturday 11th June 2016, and it was agreed to organise a working party from other organisations. Cllr Arter agreed to help on the day. Cllr Spenser agreed to be part of the working party. She offered to do posters to advertise the event and prepare an advert for the magazine.

Although there will be no charge for the tea party it was agreed that admission should be by ticket only so as to give an idea of numbers. Residents will be asked to contribute food items.

The Black Robin will be asked if they wish to provide a beer tent.

Details of the working party's final arrangements will be discussed at the next meeting

It was felt that it would be better to leave the 'Clean up Britain for the Queen' litter party to a later date.

12. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

Oast to Coast Spring 2016

Emails – sent to all

Letter from John Morgan Internal Auditor
NALC Section 137 Expenditure: Limit for 2016-2017
NALC An Introduction to Copyright
Review of KCC Funded Bus Services
Possible Funding from Tesco's
NALC News Letter

All correspondence has been circulated amongst Councillors

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The mowing of the grass around the bus shelter was discussed and all agreed to ask Andrew Sage to continue cutting until the end of the season subject to contract.

Cllr Martin stated that the abseiling team had contacted her giving dates when they would like to use the Railway Bridge. She confirmed that 2^{6th} April would be fine but they should check that South East Water had not started work on the Waterworks project before booking further dates as there could well be lots of heavy traffic on Covet Lane.

Cllr Martin stated that "Pete the Post" has just retired and asked if the Council would like to thank him for all his hard work over the years and send a donation. All were in favour and the Clerk was asked to write and thank him enclosing a £50.00 donation.

Cllr Pearson asked if we could investigate the offer made by Tesco's regarding grants for projects .The Clerk will look into it.

The Clerk asked Cllr McCord if he would let her have copies of the invoices relating to the Concurrent Finance Funding they had received. He asked if she would put a formal request in to The Trust which she will do.

The Clerk had been approached by Rev Hardy regarding a cheque that he had received requesting that it be sent to the Treasurer of the PCC in future. As the Clerk had not sent a cheque she asked if The Trust had sent one. Cllr McCord said that they had not. The Clerk will look into it.

It was agreed that as "Time was of the Essence" with the Audit the Clerk would look for a new internal auditor.

There was no further business.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

14. DATE of NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is the AGM it will take place on **Monday 9th May** 2016 at 7.30pm in The Barn.