



Minutes of Kingsclere Parish Council Ordinary Meeting OM 02/20
Held at 7.30pm on Monday 24th February 2020 in the Village Club

OM 02/20 – Present:

Cllrs: Adams; Bowes; Farey; Mussett; Peach R; Price; Sawyer J. CCllr Thacker. BCllr Rhatigan.
Clerk – Porton; Admin Assistant – Read. 14 members of the public.

02/20.1 – Apologies:

Cllrs: N Peach; F Sawyer. BCllr Kinnear.

02/20.2 – Declarations of Interest:

None.

02/20.3 – Minutes:

3.1 Minutes of Ordinary Meeting 27th January 2020 were accepted and signed.

3.2 Minutes of General Purposes Meeting 10th February 2020 were accepted and signed with one amendment.

3.3 Minutes of Planning Panel Meeting 16th December 2020 were accepted and signed.

02/20.4 – Matters Arising:

None.

02/20.5 – Chairman's Remarks:

- i) Thank you to the volunteers who maintain the RBL Garden on Crown Green. It is looking wonderful and is appreciated by KPC.
- ii) Thank you to the Cllrs who planted bulbs that are starting to pop up everywhere.
- iii) KPC has received a New Years card from the Mayor of Cornicy. In it he mentions Brexit and how we'll "always be friends".
- iv) KPC is sad to hear of the passing of Joan Walker aged 99. A well established member of the community and an active member of the Red Cross for a number of years, she laid a wreath at last year's Remembrance Sunday service.
- v) The tree wardens have attended a training course in basic tree survey and inspection.

02/20.6 – VE Day:

KPC has offered to be a liaison for any village group or organisation holding an event to celebrate VE day. Any groups or organisations planning an event please contact the Clerk with information, KPC will create a leaflet listing all the events going on in the village. The Clerk has received an email from RBL which was circulated prior to the meeting, stating the RBL are planning an event in conjunction with Kingsclere Brownies. This email also asked for suggestions on how to play Winston Churchill's speech in the village centre to join in with other public spaces doing the same. Referred to next GP for discussion.

Action: March GP

02/20.7 – Library Consultation:

County Councillor Thacker addressed the Parish Council and members of the public in attendance.

He reported that HCC needs to make savings of £1.76 million from the ETE (Environment, Transport and Education) budget over the next 2 years, with £80 million of savings required across the County. 77% of Central Government funding has been withdrawn from HCC over the past 10 years with HCC being given added responsibilities from services being devolved from Central Government responsibility. HCC is unable to raise council tax above 4%, as it is prevented from doing so by Central Government, without holding a referendum; the estimated cost of which would be roughly £2 million. The two options proposed by HCC to make the required savings in the ETE budget are to close 10 libraries or reduce opening hours across all of the HCC library services. Cllr Thacker reported that the only thing that has been settled by HCC regarding savings in its library services is the withdrawing of support from tier four libraries, including Kingsclere. It was noted that the only services protected from HCC funding cuts are Child Social Care and Adult Social Care. Cllr Thacker had been sent the reactions from Kingsclere Community Library Committee (KCLC) to Hants Library Service proposals prior to the meeting and responded to some of the points raised in this document. In response to the KCLC statement that if the HCC support were to be withdrawn from Kingsclere, there would be a loss of the only free public Wi-Fi and computer services in the area, Cllr Thacker indicated that he felt the community would find a way to provide a similar service independently. In response to the suggestion from KCLC to save money by using volunteers rather than paid staff in libraries Cllr Thacker reported that 20-25% of staff in HCC libraries are full time staff or equivalent and 75-80% are volunteers.

The Chairman invited members of the public to speak.

A Kingsclere resident who is a member of the KCLC spoke. She questioned that if the decision to withdraw support from Kingsclere Library had been “settled” – referring to Cllr Thacker’s comment earlier – then why is HCC doing a consultation. She stated that it is hard to access alternative libraries, especially for the elderly and parents with young children and reported that 74% of people who use Kingsclere Library do not use another Library. Currently the volunteers and users of the library appreciate the support from HCC staff, the option to reserve books and the facilities provided, such as the RFID machine. If Kingsclere Library were to become independent, there would be a static stock of books and no support for the volunteers and stressed that they are volunteers, not librarians.

A Kingsclere resident raised the point that it is not only residents from Kingsclere that use the library. People travel from surrounding villages, up to the county boundary, to use Kingsclere library.

A Kingsclere resident pointed out that the cost per issue for Kingsclere Library is £1.86, considerably lower than most other HCC libraries. They raised the point that if the model of a community library that Kingsclere is based on is this cost effective, perhaps HCC should look at expanding the number of community run libraries with support from HCC. They questioned how 61.6% of the expenditure was for employee costs if only 20-25% of staff were full time or equivalent and queried if the figures were accurate.

The Chairman bought the discussion back to Cllrs.

The Chairman responded saying the PC had previously noted the £1.86 figure and had already questioned why there were not more community libraries if the cost per issue is so low. He noted that over 50 volunteers came forward in 2015 to support the library and if it were to close, it would have a dramatic effect on the social and community groups that had been created.

Cllr Thacker mentioned that Kingsclere Library would only close if the community did not wish to support it. A Cllr responded saying that the volunteers rely heavily on the professional support from qualified HCC library staff and proposed that transitional support and training would be required to assist the volunteers in running the Library independently. They noted that even if the library was independent, volunteers would still require access to expertise from HCC for library support.

Cllr Thacker mentioned that HCC fully funds the Kingsclere school library through the education budget.

A Cllr mentioned the library cost figures “per issue” were not comparable across different libraries. It was noted that libraries holding more lending books would have a lower cost per issue, as well as other factors such as opening hours and staff costs.

A Cllr mentioned that the budget figures in the consultation document were insufficient and that it would be helpful to have five years of figures rather than one. He also raised the issue that HCC has the same budget of £11 million for library services for 2020/21 as in 2019/20 however cuts now need to be made. It was noted that the consultation figures and information is only focused on the economic issues and doesn’t look at the Library service holistically and the wider implications of closing libraries.

It was reported that a different county council has used funds from its health budget to fund library services, as access to libraries contributes to positive health and wellbeing. It was noted that other sources of public funding would need to be considered carefully as it could lead to disproportionate representational spending of taxpayer’s money.

Cllr Thacker will raise this with HCC, along with the suggestion to provide five years of budget figures and the query regarding the £1.86 per issue for Kingsclere and how it compares to other libraries.

The draft letter in response to the consultation was circulated prior to meeting. Cllrs read through the letter and some amendments were made including adding in that the catchment area for Kingsclere Library extends beyond the parish borders. Clerk to circulate amended draft response. Cllr Thacker asked to be copied in on the email when the final letter is sent to HCC.

Action: Cllr Thacker, Clerk

02/20.8 – Great British Spring Clean:

KPC is hosting another GBSC event on 28th March from 10am – 1pm. Like last year there will be a gazebo in St Mary’s Churchyard. JS has organised for St Mary’s coffee morning to provide volunteers with a drink when they return to the gazebo station. Last year there were approximately 40 volunteers, KPC hope a similar number will attend this year. The Clerk has organised to borrow litter pickers from BDBC, KPC already has bin bags and gloves. Lord Huntingdon has kindly agreed to present the awards for the recent Poster Competition at 11am at the gazebo. Clerk to print maps and a sign in sheet. Admin to put up posters and promote event on social media and the website. CM to ask for event to be mentioned at St Mary’s Church services. A suggestion was made to encourage the use of high viz jackets.

Action: CM, Clerk, Admin. March OM.

Recess:

Standing orders were suspended at 20:47:

A resident asked if there was an update on speeding petition KPC sent to HCC and the Police and Crime Commissioner last July. – *A response has been received from HCC which can be viewed on their website, numerous follow up letters have been sent to the PCC with no response.*

A resident raised concern over a pothole on Winchester Road between the Stud and Park House Stables that has caused damage to vehicles. They also expressed concern the quality of repairs on potholes that have been filled in. A Cllr mentioned that in another County, they are aware of residents reporting potholes to the relevant highways agency and then sending a letter with the log number stating that they would hold the council responsible for any further damage to their vehicle caused by the reported pothole.

A resident reported a tree has fallen on the path between the old Catholic Church and the Recreation Ground – *This issue has been reported to HCC.*

Back to standing orders 20:53.

02/20.9 – Power of People Request to Support Local Electricity Bill:

At Nov OM KPC discussed a request received from the director of Power for People asking for the PC's support in their campaign to get the Local Electricity Bill to become law. KPC agreed more information was required before making a decision. The Clerk received more information which was circulated prior to the meeting. After a short discussion KPC agreed not to support this campaign.

Resolved: It was agreed not to support this campaign.

02/20.10 – Lengthsman Scheme:

After a short discussion it was agreed to join the Lengthsman scheme for another 12 months.

Resolved: It was agreed to join Lengthsman scheme for another 12 months.

02/20.11 – County Councillor:

West Berkshire Council (WBC) is planning to introduce Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) at the Newtown Recycling Centre. Non-residents wishing to use the centre would need to pay a non-residents fee. It seems the arrangement with HCC and WBC regarding permits for Kingsclere residents to use the recycling centre will be renewed. HCC has introduced ANPR at its Household Waste and Recycling Centres which includes Basingstoke Recycling Centre. Hampshire residents can register their number plates online. There will be a short transition period for this. A Cllr asked for an update on the joint HCC and WBC traffic report on the A339 and the roads that feed into it that KPC were informed would be happening in New Year 2019. Cllr Thacker has not heard anything about it, will follow up.

Action: Cllr Thacker

02/20.12 – Borough Councillor:

BDBC is securing a private deal with WBC regarding permits for the Newtown Recycling Centre, it is BDBC's aim to secure them for 1 year from May 2020. BDBC believe the recycling facilities at the Fieldgate Centre are inadequate, once roofing works are complete, improving facilities will be looked at. The Village Club has been successful in its application for LIF funding. KR will meet with Friends of Chineham Library on 25th Feb. He reported that all leaders of the political parties will write to HCC regarding the Library Consultation as they feel the consultation doesn't adequately represent rural areas. BDBC budget for 2020/21 will go through on Thursday, the rise in Council tax is equivalent to 50p per week. The outline planning application for Manydown will be submitted on 24th March meaning BDBC will meet their 5 year supply.

02/20.13 – Planning Applications:

13.1. T/00071/20/TCA – Fernside Cottage, Newbury Road: No objections

13.2. 20/00376/HSE – 41 Garrett Close: No objections.

02/20.14 – Clerk's Report:

14.1. Thank You From CPRE:

The PC has received a letter of thanks from CPRE for the £50 the PC donated last December.

02/20.15 – Approval of Income and Expenditure:

The accounts for February 2020 were agreed and signed off.

02/20.16 – Date of next meeting:

Monday 23rd March 2020 7:30pm in the Village Club.

Meeting closed 21:15

Signed:.....Chairman

Date:.....

Signed:.....Clerk

Date:.....

Distribution: Cllrs: S Adams; I Bowes; M Farey; C Mussett; N Peach; R Peach; A Price; F Sawyer and J Sawyer.

Noticeboard; Website: www.kingsclere-pc.org.uk.