KINGTON
HEREFORDSHIRE

Members of the Council you are
hereby summoned to attend a meeting of

Kington Town Council

to be held on **Monday 18th November 2024 at 6.00pm**

at The Old Police Station, Market Hall Street, Kington HR5 3DP
for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Agenda

1. Apologies, Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation
   a) To receive apologies declarations of interest and requests for dispensation
   b) To authorise and accept Cllr. Tom Bounds absence
2. Minutes:
   To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2024
3. Public participation:
   a) Police matters: To receive the police report
   b) To receive the Ward Councillors Report
   c) To receive questions from members of the public present
4. Mayor's Report
5 Clerk's Report
6. Financial Matters
   a) To approve transfer of £5,000 being an agreed contribution to Kington Recreation Ground Trust to support salary payments
   b) To approve payments, as per payment schedule
   c) To agree new standing orders for the payment of tax & NI for staff salaries
   d) Update on grant funded work within the toilet block in the Recreation Ground and approve additional charges relating to that work
7. To consider responses to Government consultation regarding the proposal to allow remote access to town council meetings by members and members of the public
8. To consider and agree paper from Cllr. Woolford regarding decision making within the Town Council
9. To consider quotation for legal work in connection with the Trust Deed for Kington Recreation Ground Trust
10. To consider and agree responses to Herefordshire Council's consultation on a Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy
11. To note reports from Committees:
    a) Planning & Environment Committee held on 4th November 2024
    b) Finance, Personnel and General Purposes Committee held on 11th November 2004
12. Information only item: Reports from councillors

13 Items for the next agenda and date and time of next meeting

Issued by:
Liz Kelso, Clerk, Kington Town Council
Tel: 01544 239098 or mobile: 07483914485
Email: clerk@kingtontowncouncil.gov.uk
13.11.2024

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Town Council and may, at the discretion of the Chairman, speak on some agenda items. For further information on council procedures please speak to the clerk.
In the interests of the health and well being of councillors, staff and members of the public in at tendance, please do not attend this meeting if you are unwell whether or not you have tested positive for covid.

KINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting held on Monday 18th November 2024
Clerk's Report

This report identifies activities of the Clerk since the last meeting other than those addressed elsewhere on the agenda or addressed by other Members as part of their report and includes some items which are for information only.

1. **Councillor Vacancies**

   There are currently two vacancies for the role of town councillor. These vacancies have been advertised and no valid request has been received by the Elections Office at Herefordshire Council so the town council is now free to co-opt to fill the vacancy. Further notices have now been placed on notice boards and the town council website. If members are aware of anyone who might be interested in this role, please ask the individual to contact the Clerk as some checks are required before the individual can present themselves for co-option.

2. **Meeting with Herefordshire Council**

   The revised date for the meeting with Herefordshire Council is now 7th January 2025, time to be agreed

3. **Staff Salaries**

   Town Council staff are paid in accordance with a national scale agreed between the National Association of Local Councils and The Society of Local Council Clerks. The agreed rates for 2024/5 have now been announced, backdated to 1st April 2024, with the result that staff will receive an increase of approximately 62p per hour increase, backdated to 1st April. This is a flat rate increase regardless of actual hourly rate and represents half the rate of increase as had been agreed in previous years.

4. **Community Grant – Christmas Lunch**

   At the last meeting it was agreed that a grant of £200.00 be offered towards the cost of provision of a Christmas lunch (minute ref. 162-24-b) but noted that as grant payments cannot be made to individuals, some other arrangement would need to be investigated. As noted at that meeting, it was now been agreed that payment will be made directly to the venue.

5. **Defibrillator**

   As agreed at the last meeting, a replacement defibrillator has now been purchased plus one additional defibrillator and cabinet at a total cost of £1,845.00 (agreed budget £3,760.00). The unit for the Masonic Hall will need to be installed and discussions are taking place to facilitate this.

6. **Kington Walks**

   Correspondence has been received from Kington Walks to inform the town council that the Spring Walking Festival will not take place in 2025 with efforts being concentrated on the Autumn Walking Festival.

7. **VE Day 2025**

There have been no requests for an event to celebrate VE Day 2025 so far in Kington. Please note that such events do take some organisation and will need to be accounted for in the budget for the next financial year. Please let the clerk know if you would like to consider an event to mark this anniversary.

8. **Budget 2025-6**

The first draft of the budget for 2025-6 will be presented for consideration at the December meeting. Members are reminded that any proposals for projects etc. need to be passed to the Clerk urgently so that they can be incorporated into the draft. The final budget must be agreed no later than end January 2025 so that the precept request can be submitted to Herefordshire Council.

9. **Christmas Lights Switch On**

A reminder that the Christmas Lights Switch on will take place on Wednesday 27th November. Those who have volunteered to help on the night will be contacted separately to allocate tasks for the evening.

KINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting held on Monday 18th November 2024
Agenda item 6(a)
Support for Kington Recreation Ground Trust

Background

The agreed budget for Kington Town Council for 2024-5 includes provision for support for Kington Recreation Ground Trust through a combination of grant payments for running costs and includes provision for a salary support grant.

Recreation Ground Trust income, primarily from cottage rent payments, average at £433 per calendar month with outgoings averaging £1,095 per month.

Proposal

It is proposed that a cash grant payment of £5,000 be paid to Kington Recreation Ground Trust to cover salary payments for the remainder of the current financial year.

Kington Town Council

Schedule of payments to be approved on 18th November 2024

Voucher #	Payee	Payment type:	Detail		Minute Ref.	Net	VAT	Total Payment
Payments now due								
134	Gareth Evans	BACS	Churchyard grass cutting			£ 160.00		£ 160.00
135	HMRC	BACS	Tax & NI on October salaries			£ 745.19		£ 745.19
136	KBS	BACS	Materials for noticeboard refurbishment			£ 164.62	£ 32.92	£ 197.54
137	Russell Brooks	BACS	Defibrillators (x2) plus cabinet			£ 1,845.00		£ 1,845.00
138	FA White	BACS	Rec Grant - Annual Play Equ Inspection			£ 62.50		£ 62.50
139	D V Watkins	BACS	Rec Grant - Toilet block repairs			£ 126.70	£ 25.34	£ 152.04
140	Countrywide Grounds Maint.	BACS	Rec Grant - Grass cutting			£ 720.00	£ 144.00	£ 864.00
141	Border Office Supplies	BACS	Printing & Photocopying charges			£ 161.46	£ 32.29	£ 193.75
142	Bees Knees Cookshop	BACS	Christmas Lights Switch on consumables			£ 829.74		£ 829.74
143	Lite Ltd.	BACS	Christmas Lights charges - 2nd installment			£ 3,887.50	£ 777.50	£ 4,665.00
144	KBS	BACS	Materials for noticeboard refurbishment			£ 306.00	£ 61.20	£ 367.20
145	KBS	BACS	Rec Grant - consumables			£ 38.00	£ 7.60	£ 45.60
146	J & P Turner	BACS	Planter maintenance - October			£ 550.00	£ 110.00	£ 660.00
147	Lloyds Bank	DD - 18.11.2024	Credit Card charges - Ink, Poppy Wreath, Room hire			£ 168.48	£ 8.00	£ 176.48
148	KBS	BACS	Materials for noticeboard refurbishment			£ 15.29	£ 3.06	£ 18.35
149	Lion Hub CIC	BACS	Community Grant (Christmas Lunch)		FC 162-24-b	£ 200.00		£ 200.00
150	Tom Bounds Electrical	BACS	Rec Grant - Electrical Survey Rec Cottage			£ 330.00		£ 330.00
151	Herefordshire Council	BACS	Office Rental - December			£ 190.00		£ 190.00
152	Active Garden Ltd.	BACS	Rec Grant - Repairs to surface in Rec			£ 432.50	£ 86.50	£ 519.00
153	HMRC	BACS	Tax & NI due on November salaries			£ 1,095.76		£ 1,095.76
154	KBS	BACS	Materials and equipment for noticeboards			£ 136.45	£ 27.29	£ 163.74
			Total payments this month excl. salaries			**£ 12,165.19**	**£ 1,315.70**	**£ 13,480.89**

FOR INFORMATION

Total of payments made through grants received:								
Total of payments made as a grant								
	Rec Grant					£ 1,709.70	£ 295.73	£ 2,005.43
								£ -
Total paid as salaries (net) - October 2024								£ 3,482.90
Total paid as salaries (net) November 2024								£ 4,295.75

KINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting held on Monday 18th November 2024
Agenda item 6(c)
Staff Salary payments

Staff salaries, in accordance with contractual terms and conditions, are linked to a nationally agreed pay scale for local council staff which is reviewed on an annual basis with effect from 1st April. For financial year 2024-5 a small increase of approximately 2.5% has now been announced which is backdated to 1st April. This means that staff are due a backdated sum for 2024-5 which is payable at the end of November. A standing order payment for staff is authorised annually.

Proposal 1:

The purpose of this agenda item is to note and confirm amendments to staff salaries in accordance with their contractual terms and conditions and authorise amendment to the monthly standing orders to reflect this change.

Total gross staff salaries will amount to £48,728.00p.a. and employer national insurance will amount to £4,213.92 p.a. for 2024-5.

Proposal 2:

It is also proposed that the corresponding HMRC payment relating to staff salaries, with effect from payments attributable to December salary payments (paid in January) are paid in future through a standing order payment. Previously these payments were made as a BACS payment authorised monthly but with full council meetings now a little later in the month, there is a risk that the corresponding HMRC payment will be made later than the required "window" with the risk that the Town Council will be fined for a late payment.

Employers National Insurance with effect from 1.4.2025

Members will be aware that following the budget announcement on employer national insurance rates with effect from 1.4.2025, the employer national insurance payments for the town council will rise to approximately £6,560 p.a. Town and parish councils are considered to be public bodies so cannot claim Employment allowance which is an allowance to offset some employer national insurance contributions for small employers. However, from 1.4.2025, larger authorities will be compensated directly by HM Government to offset the increase in national insurance contributions. The government has issued a statement to the effect that town and parish councils will be excluded from that compensation package as they are not considered to be bodies funded through public funds.

KINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting held on Monday 18th November 2024
Agenda item 6(d)
Replacement handwash units – Recreation Ground Toilet Block

Background

Following a series of discussions regarding an application for funding through the Community Infrastructure Fund, it was agreed (minute reference 122-24(b) that a revised bid be submitted for a shorter project involving the replacement of handwash units in the recreation ground toilet block.

The revised bid was accepted and a grant awarded of £8,977, with the Town Council funding the expected £2,244 remaining project costs.

Projects must be completed and paid for no later then 31st December 2024 to receive the agreed funding. Claims must be submitted no later than 28th February 2025.

Additional costs

Following a site survey by suppliers, Wallgate, have identified a requirement for an electrical conditions report and asbestos report before they will install the items. Costs are currently being obtained but are estimated to be in the region of £500 - £800 depending upon the initial results of the asbestos survey. A deposit to Wallgate has been paid of £7,934.34 in order to secure an installation date which is, provisionally, 21st – 22nd November.

The purpose of this agenda item is to confirm and ratify authority to proceed with the electrical conditions survey and asbestos survey so this project can be completed within the deadline for the funding agreement.

KINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting to be held on 18th November 2024
Agenda item 8
The role of councillors in preparing projects

It has become clear to me that whilst councillors may have great ideas and intentions it seems that when a project is considered it always lands on the clerk and assistant clerk to undertake the research and detail.

This I feel is not only unfair on already over worked staff but often leads to the council having to work to short deadlines and almost panic decisions.

A perfect example of this is the situation we find ourselves in over the toilets on the recreation ground. A rush project that could turn sour on us.

I also believe that if a councillor has a particular idea that they would like to put forward, they should be the person responsible for preparing all of the detail, costings, proposals etc.

If this was the case a specific project can be worked on over a period of time and a fully considered project brought forward to the council for decision.

Of course whoever takes on a project would have to liaise with the clerk and it is fully understood that no individual can take any decisions on their own but we should then have properly thought out projects on which to make considered decisions.

Expecting our clerks to find all the detail for projects or maintenance items is causing them unnecessary stress and taking time away from important duties.

In conclusion here are a few ideas that have been raised recently that this could assist with.

The Church yard maintenance and repairs

The cleaning of the footpaths and alley ways

Dark sky policy

Recreation ground maintenance

Crooked well

Small works maintenance

I proposed that one councillor who has a particular interest in a field takes on investigating and preparing the ground . This should make decisions easier and quicker.

Cllr. M. Woolford

AGENDA ITEM 10

clerk@kingtontowncouncil.gov.uk

From: Councils <Councils@herefordshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 12 November 2024 13:58
Subject: Public Consultation - a Tree Hedgerow & Woodland Strategy for Hererefordshire
Attachments: h-THaWS Consultation Information.pdf

Dear Parish Clerks

With National Tree Week 2025 (23rd November to 1st December) fast approaching we are hoping you are interested in helping shape the Treescape of Herefordshire for years to come. Herefordshire Council is facilitating a Trees, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy for the county (h-THAWS) and we need you and your residents' thoughts, ideas and suggestions to help make it a relevant and deliverable strategy for years to come.

The consultation is now live at Herefordshire Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy (h-THAWS) and runs until the 8th December. We would welcome everyone to make a response via the online consultation or directly by email to hthaws@landuse.co.uk

A short news release is attached that you may find useful, and we would welcome your council's response, and any additional publicity and promotion that you can help with.

Many thanks

James

Herefordshire.gov.uk

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Spirit of Herefordshire
Join us to deliver a better future for the people of Herefordshire
Children and young people | Community Wellbeing and Adult Social Care | Economy and Environment | Corporate Services

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