



Kington Town Council

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Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held via video-conferencing on Monday 12th April 2021 at 7.00pm

In accordance with The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings)
(England) Regulations 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllr. R. Widdowson - Chair
Cllr. E. Banks –
Cllr. R. Banks
Cllr. T. Bounds
Cllr. J. Cooke
Cllr. P. Edwards
Cllr. M. Fitton
Cllr. R. MacCurrach
Cllr. J. Gardner
Cllr. D. Redmayne
Cllr. E. Rolls
Cllr. I. Spencer

IN ATTENDANCE

Liz Kelso - Clerk

1 member of the press
5 members of the public

Agenda

Item Minute

The Chairman welcomed members of the Town Council and members of the public to the meeting and expressed the Town Council's condolences on the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. Those present held a minute silence before proceeding to the business of the meeting.

- 1 049-21 Apologies, declarations of interest and requests for dispensation.**
Apologies were noted from Cllrs. F. Hawkins, and T. Bennett. Apologies were also noted from Ward Councillor Terry James. Cllrs. R. MacCurrach and J. Gardner declared a personal interest in agenda item 9. There were no requests for dispensation.

2 050-21 Minutes of Meetings

a) Minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st March, having been previously circulated, were agreed and the Chairman authorised to sign the Minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

b) Minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2021

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th March, having been previously circulated, were agreed and the Chairman authorised to sign the Minutes a a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

3 051-21 Public Participation

a) Matters raised by members of the public in attendance

There were no matters raised by members of the public in attendance.

b) Ward Councillor Report

Cllr. James was unable to attend the meeting so there was no report from the Ward Councillor.

c) Police Report

There was no representative from the police at the meeting.

4 052-21 Mayor's Report

The Mayor's report, as attached to these Minutes, was noted. Comments on some items were addressed elsewhere in the meeting.

5 053-21 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report, as attached, was noted. In response to a pointed raised in connection with the Clerk's report, it was noted with thanks the work undertaken on the footpaths.

6 054-21 Financial Matters

Payments totalling £1,305.40 (inclusive of VAT) as detailed on the attached schedule, were duly authorised.

7 055-21 Herefordshire Council's Economic Development Plan for Kington

There was no update available on current progress of this agenda item.

8 056-21 Impact of Coronavirus on Kington

Members noted comments on this raised as part of the Mayor's Report and in particular a proposal to hold an event in the autumn to commemorate those who have passed away since the beginning of the Covid pandemic.

It was confirmed that the retail community are pleased to be able to re-open and it was agreed that a further informal town meeting be convened in a couple of weeks to assess any ongoing issues locally.

9 057-21 Tavern Roundabout

Members noted a presentation by a group about work which has started on a wild flower meadow on the Tavern Roundabout. The Clerk reported that under the Highways Act, Herefordshire Council as the highways authority will consider granting a cultivation licence only to town and parish councils requiring a minimum £5m insurance policy, full details of what is proposed, indemnities to be provided and consent from providers of any services running underneath the roundabout. Cllr. Fitton agreed to bring a paper to the next meeting proposing the application for a cultivation licence and the implications of this for the Town Council.

10 058-21 Christmas Lights

Members noted a report from the task and finish group formed to consider Christmas decorations. It was agreed that the task and finish group be converted a Working Group with the existing group members and that terms of reference would be agreed at the next meeting.

11 059-21 Memorial Benches

Members noted that one of the suggestions for recovery during the post-Covid period is the purchase of memorial benches with one sited in the Churchyard and a second in the Recreation Ground. The Clerk reported that prior to this meeting, the Recreation Ground Trust have agreed in principle to a bench within the Recreation Ground. Initial investigation suggested a budget of some £2,000 - £3,000 for a bench specifically designed with Covid in mind. After some discussion it was agreed to invite local crafts people to put forward bids to design and make a bench for this. A small group of members, to be co-ordinated by Cllr. Fitton, agreed to take this proposal forward.

12 060-21 Grass Verges

Following a proposal by Balfour Beatty and recommendation by Cllr. Cooke, it was agreed that Balfour Beatty be requested to cut the verges on the following roads just once per year, rather than twice, in the autumn:

- C1072 Hergest Road,
- C10712 Montford Road,
- U91010 Barton Lane,
- U91227 Waterloo Road, and
- U91029 Kingswood Road.

13 061-21 Social Media Use

It was agreed that the Communications Policy should be updated to include the use of Social Media. A meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be convened to cover this.

14 062-21 Planning Matters

a) Meetings with developers

Members noted the recommendation of the Planning Committee that a Protocol be adopted to cover meetings requested by developers, prior to a planning application being put forward. A draft policy, as circulated to members, was agreed.

b) Planning application now due for comment

Ref: 204490

Site: Tanglewood, Kingswood Road

Dev: Retrospective garage, storage shed, greenhouse and gazebo

Members considered this retrospective application and although no objections were expressed in principle, it was noted that several neighbours had expressed objections on the grounds of overdevelopment of a small area and lack of privacy. It was agreed that the Clerk pass these comments onto the planning authority.

15 063-21 Committees

Members noted reports and minutes from the following committee meetings:

- Planning Committee held 15th March 2021
- Environment Committee held 15th March 2021
- Personnel Committee held 22nd March 2021

16 064-21 Training

It was agreed that Cllr. Fitton be authorised to attend a NALC training event on the Planning White Paper at a cost in the region of £50.00.

17 065-21 Future meetings

Members noted a report from the Clerk regarding the impact of the end of the temporary permission for remote meetings under The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 and in particular the risk assessment indicating that meetings of the Town Council in the immediate future cannot take place in the Old Police Station. Pending a judicial review due in the High Court later this month, it was noted that an alternative venue might be necessary if a return to face to face meetings is required in the immediate future.

18 066-21 Next meeting

Other than items mentioned earlier in the meeting, there were no other items raised for the next agenda. The next meeting will take place on 10th May 2021 but is subject to confirmation.

19 067-21 Exclusion of the Public

It was agreed that that due to the confidential nature of the business of the next agenda item, that members of the public be excluded from the following agenda

item in accordance with the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960(3)

20 068-21 Recommendation from the Personnel Committee

a) Assistant Clerk/Green Spaces Administrator

Members noted and agreed the recommendation of the Personnel Committee on the appointment of the Assistant Clerk/Green Spaces Administrator with effect from 1st May 2021.

b) Other staffing matters

Members noted and agreed the recommendation of the Personnel Committee with respect to staffing with the Town Council and Recreation Ground Trust.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

Chairman

Kington Town Council

FOR INFORMATION

Total of payments made through grants received:					
Total of payments made as a grant					
Recreation Ground Trust					
Kington Town Council Grant Scheme				£ 238.14	£ 47.63
					£ 285.77
					£ -

Appendix 2

Mayor's Report

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1. March 20th: Service of Thanksgiving and the Declaration of the next High Sheriff.

Note: the new High Sheriff is Jo Hilditch of Lyonshall and her chaplain is Rev. Ben Griffiths of St. Mary's, Kington

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2. March 2nd: Informal Town meeting on post covid town recovery.

Primary school return on 8th March. Ann Phillips said they are well prepared. Wanted to advise parents to maintain social distancing when delivering and collecting children. Important as we are still in lockdown and there's a need to send visual messages reinforcing this.

Remembrance: Discussion about how we might remember those who have died. Not Just those who died because of Covid but others in the town who were unable to be given a full send off and families still grieving. Kay Birchley suggested siting several memorial benches at, say the churchyard and the Rec but important to set them within a space of contemplation. Other suggestions were tree or possibly a stand of trees. A Condolence book centrally sited was also suggested but would depend on the sanitary rules at the time. Kay offered to pursue the memorial benches idea.

The conditional date of April 12th is for non essential shops re-opening and outdoor service for hospitality. Becky from Border Bean said that it will still be restrictive as they are only (officially) allowed to have two outdoor tables with a couple of chairs each. Therefore, they (and other hospitality venues in town that have limited or no outdoor seating provision) will still be only really able to offer a takeaway service.

It was suggested that the extra benches, which were introduced to the Place de Marine area just before Christmas, could be reintroduced to coincide with the relaxing of rules for people socialising together outside (two people from March 8th) and, more importantly to be in place by the time that hospitality is allowed to open for outdoor seated service (ie: from April 12th) to at least the time in May when hospitality will then be allowed to open to customers for indoor seating (albeit limited numbers)

Emma Hancock from the Chamber offered to progress this and liaise with KTC to ensure that it can be done in compliance with any health and safety and legal regulations that might govern it.

Kay Birchley also reported on another initiative she is working on - CoCo (Compassionate Communities) in Kington. This is a befriending scheme for the lonely and/or isolated which is under the umbrella of the Diocese of Hereford. Volunteers trained by St Michael's Hospice, visit people in their own homes for agreed periods of time. Provided the Practice and the PPG agree, she has volunteered to support the scheme. Funding will be needed for volunteers out of pocket expenses, and to pay for Police checks.

Emma reported that both the Kington Festival and the Vintage Festival have been cancelled. No decision has been made about whether the Wheelbarrow Race could be held later in the year but much depends on whether social distancing rules will still apply

Finally it was generally agreed that another meeting in April would be of value to monitor progress

PROPOSAL FOR A COMMEMORATIVE EVENT IN KINGTON.

Kay Birchley (KB) and Ben Griffiths (BG)

Suggested title: KINGTON GIVES THANKS – remembering people from the Kington area who have passed away since the beginning of the covid 19 pandemic.

We suggest that the event should be aimed at people living within the area served by Kington Medical Practice, rather than have a narrow focus on the town.

WHY

The aims of the event are:

- To support the bereaved who may have had limited opportunities to grieve and to share their grief with others
- Since covid regulations limited attendance at funerals etc, to give people the opportunity to reflect on the lives of the deceased and to participate in a commemorative event
- To enable townsfolk to publically acknowledge the contribution that many of those who have passed away made to town life

WHAT AND WHERE

We suggest that a commemorative bench be installed in the Garden of Remembrance at St Mary's church, and that a non-denominational service of thanksgiving for the lives of those who have passed away, is held at the time the bench is installed. This service should be as inclusive as possible.

Some suggestions re the service:

- An order of service booklet giving the names of those who have died during the covid 19 pandemic if that is the wish of their loved ones. Also, if wished, a sentence could be added recalling the individual viz:

E.G. Name – remembering his/her funny stories that so often cheered me up

Name - who was much loved by us all and loved us so in return, - he was a very special grandfather.

- The names and messages could be read out whilst relatives light a candle, which could be taken home after the service.
- Book of Condolences
- Readings and Music

- Refreshments to be served at the back of the church after the service.

WHEN

We feel that the service should be held when the absence of covid restrictions allows maximum attendance and recommend that we seek advice from Dr McCaffrey. The roadmap for England suggests a possible date of 1st June for removal of all legal constraints re social mixing. We have in mind a possible date of Saturday 4th September – this would allow time to assess the impact of the removal of all restrictions and also to inform the local community and invite people to attend.

Ben advises that the maximum capacity of the church is approx.. 400

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

- Funding - Cost of bench, resources for thanksgiving service
- Wider involvement of Community e.g. Parish and town councillors, Kington Medical Practice, clergy from participating Parishes

TIMEFRAME

Ideally we would hope for the following

- APRIL Decision from the Town Council to support the proposal and provide/advise re funding.
- APRIL – JUNE KB and BG to continue to plan as/when necessary e.g. liaise with Churches together in Kington, Kington Medical Practice
- JUNE or when Covid restrictions lifted – SEPTEMBER. Detailed planning, advertising event, encouraging participation
- The sun to shine on 4th September !!!!

March 2021

Appendix 3

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.

1. Meetings

The Government has announced that the country is now in a period of national mourning. Currently our standing orders, based upon model standing orders, indicates that notices of meeting cannot count days set aside for public mourning as days giving notice of meetings. Accordingly, the committee meetings scheduled for Monday 19th May will have to be postponed for a week so that the agendas can be issued next week. Further clarification is being sought on this.

2. Town Council Offices

The Town Council offices currently remain closed to casual visitors although procedures are in place for appointments to be made if required, at least once per week, although working predominantly from home in accordance with current guidelines/recommendations.

3. Annual Governance and Accounting Return

The financial year for the town council runs from 1st April to 31st March so work has now commenced on completing the annual accounts for the year ended 31st March 2021. In the previous year the statutory deadline for completion of the accounts, internal audit and submission of documents for external audit was extended as a result of Covid but that extension has not been given this year. This means that the last date that the town council can formally approve the Annual Governance and Accounting return is 30th June and the period for the exercise of electors rights, when members of the public can view the accounts and supporting documents, will run from 1st July (at the latest).

4. New Practitioners' Guide for 2021/2022 accounts onwards

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) has published the 2021 edition of the Practitioners' Guide which provides guidance on the appropriate practices and procedures for the maintenance of accounts by local councils and includes best practice in Internal Audit. This new edition has been totally revised and there is a new paragraph in Section 5 which highlights the importance of having a council email address rather than a private one. This will be discussed further at a later meeting of the town council.

5. Lengthsman Scheme

Members may recall agreeing in principle to the town council joining the lengthsman scheme with a view to supporting the work currently being carried out by the Walking Hub on footpath maintenance. Since then, the Clerk has been in discussion with the Walking Hub and Balfour Beatty to identify how best to make this work and advice from Balfour

Beatty suggests that the way forward may be for a footpaths officer to be appointed who can then become the point of contact for all matters relating to footpath maintenance both within the town council boundary and outside.

As a general point a footpaths officer, which is a voluntary role, is usually appointed or nominated by the town or parish council although is not necessarily an elected member or member of staff as this is usually a role taken on by a local resident with an interest in footpath matters. Discussions are ongoing with the Walking Hub but in due course this may be presented back for consideration of a formal nomination for footpaths officer.

6. Parish Council Summit

The Clerk and some councillors attended a virtual parish council summit held by Herefordshire Council on 30th March. Slides from that summit have been circulated to Members. The main elements of the presentation were: Talk Community Hubs, a presentation on local policing and in particular the interaction between neighbourhood policing teams and parish and town councils, and a report into Covid data for Herefordshire.

The clerk has requested further information on a couple of points raised during the presentation, including the current status of the proposed Talk Community Hub in Kington, a business support app being rolled out by Herefordshire Council to include Kington and has requested information on debt management support which was mentioned as being live in Kington.

7. Balfour Beatty Parish Review Session

The Clerk will also attend a virtual Balfour Beatty Parish Council Review session for the Kington locality on 6th April.

8. Footpath Closure

Members may recall that the Old Tramway has been closed following a landslide adjacent to Rock Cottage. Following a request from the Walking Hub, Balfour Beatty has been requested to remove footpath closure signs as the work to clear the blockage appears to be complete.

9. Code of Conduct

The National Association of Local Councils has endorsed a new Code of Conduct which has been prepared by the Local Government Association for use by all local councils, i.e. a national code rather than a local code. This has been released too late for inclusion on the agenda of this meeting so will be considered for adoption at a later meeting.

10. Bus Services

Cllr. Gardner has been investigating opportunities for reinstating some bus services such as a later service to Hereford and a reinstatement of the bus service to Leominster. A report

was received too late to be included on this agenda but will be an agenda item for the next meeting.

DRAFT