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Kington Town Council

The Old Police Station, Market Hall Street, Kington HR5 3DP

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**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on**

**Monday 3rd July 2023 at the Old Police Station,**

**Market Hall Street, Kington**

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| **MEMBERS PRESENT** | **IN ATTENDANCE** |
| Cllr. E. Banks |  |
| Cllr. R. Banks | Liz Kelso – Town clerk |
| Cllr. N. Cornish | Ruth Robinson – Assistant clerk |
| Cllr. A. Dixon | Cllr. T. James – Ward Councillor, Herefordshire Council |
| Cllr. M. Fitton | 2 members of the public |
| Cllr. J. Gardner | 1 member of the press |
| Cllr. K. Greig |  |
| Cllr. E. Rolls |  |
| Cllr. P. Sell |  |
| Cllr. R. Widdowson |  |
| Cllr. M. Woolford |  |

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| **Agenda Item** | **Minute** |  |
| **1** | **116-23** | **To note apologies for absence, declarations of interest and requests for dispensation** |
|  |  | Apologies were noted from Cllrs. T. Bounds and R. Warne. Cllr. P. Sell declared an interest in agenda item 10 relating to the Churchyard as a member of the PCC. There were no requests for dispensation |
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| **2** | **117-23** | **Minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2023** |
|  |  | The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2023, having been previously circulated, were adopted and the Chair authorised to sign on behalf of the Town Council as a true record of proceedings at that meeting. |
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| **3** | **118-23** | **Public Participation** |
|  |  | **Police Report** |
|  |  | There was no representative from West Mercia Police in attendance at the meeting but the clerk read a written report received from the Safer Neighbourhood Team.  In response to a query about policing priorities over the forthcoming period, it was agreed that anti-social behaviour, drug issues and speeding traffic should be prioritised.  Finally, it was agreed that the Clerk in conjunction with Cllrs. P. Sell and M. Woolford be delegated authority to respond to the Police and Crime Commissioner’s questionnaire about policing locally, on behalf of the Town Council |
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|  |  | **Ward Councillor Report** |
|  |  | Cllr. Terry James reported concerns within Herefordshire Council resulting from the poor financial position, low reserves and potential liabilities arising from issues within Children’s Services. The proposed move of the library to the Maylord Orchards Complex has been paused although it is not clear why. |
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|  |  | **Matters raised by members of the public in attendance** |
|  |  | There were no matters raised during this agenda item. |
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| **4** | **119-23** | **Mayor’s Report** |
|  |  | The Mayor having been on leave, there were no items to report. |
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| **5** | **120-23** | **Clerk’s Report** |
|  |  | The Clerk’s report as attached was noted. |
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| **6** | **121-23** | **Financial Matters** |
|  |  | **Payments now due** |
|  |  | Payments totalling £6,958.56 (inclusive of VAT where payable) as attached to these Minutes were approved. |
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|  |  | **Community Grants** |
|  |  | Following due consideration, the following community grants were approved:   * Kington Scouts £400.00 * Kington Walks £487.00 |
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| **7** | **122-23** | **Planning Matters** |
|  |  | The following planning applications were considered:   * Ref: 231600   Site: 2 Castle Hill, Kington  Dev: Modifications to the existing dwelling encompassing internal layout changes and alterations to both façade materials and openings on each elevation. New extension to form enclosed entrance porch. Erection of new carport on the site.  Members agreed to support this application.   * Ref: 231167   Site: Land West of A4111  Dev: Proposed commercial development site (Light industrial use)  Whilst members recognised the value of additional employment opportunities for Kington, this proposal encroaches on what is currently greenfield land. If permission is granted, this must not be considered a precedent for additional development at this site. Herefordshire council should be urged to limit the removal of hedgerow, trees and vegetation as much as possible to preserve the visual amenity of the entrance to the Town.  The proposed development will increase traffic entering this road at a point where the traffic speed is 50mph. The Town council has requested previously that this location should be reduced to 40mph in recognition of the traffic from both the existing development and the medical centre opposite. There is a pedestrian crossing serving medical centre within a short distance from the proposed entrance to the development. It was felt that additional vehicle movements at that location will increase the hazards at that site. Similarly external lighting on the units should be limited to reduce distractions for road users and to preserve the rural approach to the Town.  Finally, it was noted that proposals for water treatment are to be provided and it is thought that there is no connection to the public sewer system.  The clerk was instructed to pass this to Herefordshire Council accordingly. |
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| **8** | **123-23** | **Transport Study** |
|  |  | It was noted that the working party formed to consider responses to the Transport Survey consultation has now met and the responses proposed had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. It was agreed that there should be an additional comment about the positioning of electric charging vehicles but otherwise the responses as presented were approved and the clerk authorised to upload these to the consultation websites on behalf of the Town Council. |
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| **9** | **124-23** | **Committee Structure** |
|  |  | After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Scrutiny Committee be authorised to review the current committee structure with a view to improving effectiveness and efficiency of decision making and that the committee reports back to Full Council at the September meeting with proposals for consideration. |
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| **10** | **125-23** | **Churchyard Tree work** |
|  |  | Following a tree safety survey carried out by a qualified arborist, the Horse Chestnut tree in the churchyard was identified as a priority item requiring a reduction in height and width. It was agreed that this work be carried out at a cost of £5,000.00 in accordance with the quotation provided by the Town Council’s identified tree surgeon. |
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| **11** | **126-23** | **War Memorial Cleaning** |
|  |  | After some discussion and noting the specialised nature of the work required, it was agreed to accept a quotation of up to £3,000.00 for cleaning of the War Memorial. It was further agreed that this work be carried out before Remembrance Sunday, if possible. |
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| **12** | **128/23** | **Training** |
|  | **(a)** | **Training Strategy** |
|  |  | After due consideration the Town Council Training Strategy for the period to 2027 as attached to these Minutes, was adopted. |
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|  | **(b)** | **Training Requests** |
|  |  | The following training requests with provider Mulberry and Co. and at a cost of £45 each were approved:   * Cllr. R. Banks Finance * Cllr. M. Woolford Finance * Cllr. R. Warne What’s new in Planning * Cllr. N. Cornish Roles & Responsibilities |
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|  | **(c)** | **Environmental Training - NALC** |
|  |  | Members noted the report from Cllr. Fitton on training attended with the National Association of Local Councils on Town and Parish Councils response to the climate emergency. It was agreed that this be referred to the Environment Committee for further consideration. |
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| **13** | **129/23** | **Reports from Committees** |
|  |  | The following reports were noted:   1. Planning Committee held on 19th June 2023 2. Scrutiny Committee held on 19th June 2023 3. It was also noted that the Environment Committee scheduled for 19th June had not taken place as the meeting was inquorate. |
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| **14** | **130/23** | **Councillor Resignations** |
|  |  | Members noted with regret the resignation of Cllr. Jon Cooke and in recent days Cllr. Fred Hawkins. Both were thanked for their contribution to the Town. Notices will be placed on notice boards inviting members of the public to request an election but if no request is received within the statutory period, the Town Council can co-opt to fill the vacancies. |
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| **15** | **131-23** | **Reports from Councillors** |
|  |  | The following was noted under this agenda item:   * Cllr. Sell will attend a flag raising event for Armed Forces Day * A second unveiling of Fly the Walking Dog of Kington took place with children from the Primary School, attended by Cllr. Sell * Help Kington Pollinators were congratulated on the wild flower meadow created at Sutton Walls Park * A recent podcast on rambling with Clare Balding included walks around Kington and was recommended. |
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| **16** | **132-23** | **Next meeting** |
|  |  | Members were reminded that there will be no meeting in August unless there is urgent business to discuss. The next meeting of the Town Council will take place on Monday 4th September 2023 at 7.00pm in the Old Police Station. There were no additional items raised for the agenda. |
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|  |  | There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed. |
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**Kington Town Council**

**Meeting held 3rd July 2023**

**Appendix 1**

**Clerk’s Report**

1. **Code of Conduct Statement of Financial Interests**

Members are reminded that any change in matters reported in the Statement of Financial Interests must be notified to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the change. Failure to do so could, in some circumstances, incur criminal penalties. If you are unsure whether you need to include something on the form, please check with the Monitoring Officer or ask the Clerk. Copies of your existing form/declaration may be available from the Clerk.

As mentioned in the last Clerk’s report, Herefordshire Council has unilaterally decided to change the procedures for scanning and uploading Financial Interest Forms to their own website, in favour of parishes assuming responsibility for this with forms subsequently submitted to Herefordshire in accordance with the statutory provisions of the Localism Act. Attempts by the market towns clerks network to open a dialogue with Herefordshire Council on this have been rejected by Herefordshire Council.

Changes to your Declaration of Interest forms now, therefore, need to be submitted to the Clerk prior to sending to the Monitoring Officer.

1. **Training**

Whether a new councillor or returning councillor, training is available through a variety of sources including the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks and a variety of both local and national organisations. New internal auditors Mulberry, for example, offer zoom training sessions at very reasonable rates. As a cost is involved, approval by the town council for expenditure on training is required so if you become aware of a training course for councillors that you would like to attend, please let the clerk know so this can be arranged for you and the cost properly authorised. Similarly, if there is a subject you feel you’d like further training on, please let the clerk know so she can research suitable providers.

1. **Market Towns Investment Plan**

Members may recall that a meeting was proposed by Herefordshire Council to review the Market Town Investment Plan for Kington with an officer of Herefordshire Council so that work can begin on proposals identified in the plan. The officer identified has been unwell for some months so Herefordshire Council are proposing reviewing this work starting in June. To date there has been no progress on this item.

1. **Market Town Maintenance Fund**

As reported at the last few meetings, a response is still awaited from BBLP on the status of the next phase of work under the Market Town Maintenance Fund although it would seem that the work is listed on the roads maintenance list produced by Balfour Beatty.

1. **Market Towns Clerk’s meeting**

The Clerk will be attending a meeting of the Market Town Clerks with Herefordshire Council on 6th July where the relationship between town and parish councils and Herefordshire Council through the Parish Charter is to be discussed, together with the apparent move to delegate administrative matters previously handled by Herefordshire Council to the parish councils.

1. **Characterisation and Local List**

As part of the work on the Local Plan, Herefordshire Council and their consultants are running an in-person consultation event for local history groups and others to which a representative of the Town Council has been invited. The event aims to contribute to the preparation of a heritage evidence base for the emerging Local Plan which includes characterisation statements for the market towns to help determine how new development should be managed in and around the market towns to be sympathetic to and enhance their unique sense of place. The event will also start the process of gathering a list of possible heritage assets which are currently not designated but may go on to form part of a local list in the future. The event is scheduled for 11th July at the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre in Hereford and the invitation arrived too late to be included on the agenda to formally allocate a representative from the Town Council and is by invitation only. However, if anyone would like to attend, please notify the Clerk.

1. **Market Hall**

Following the agreement in principle to the licence to occupy the market hall building for the purpose of holding the weekly markets, this has been notified back to Herefordshire Council and we await their confirmation on the issues raised regarding building repair costs and a redraft of the agreement. In the meantime, a proposed use of that building by the Primary School was cancelled at short notice as Herefordshire Council also required the school to enter into a licence agreement for a very brief exhibition of artwork in connection with Fly the Dog.

1. **Data Protection Registration**

The registration with the ICO has been renewed for the forthcoming year.

**Kington Town Council**

**Meeting held 3rd July 2023**

**Appendix 2**

**Payment Schedule**

**Kington Town Council**

**Meeting held 3rd July 2023**

**Approved Training Strategy**

**KINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**COUNCILLORS’ TRAINING STRATEGY**

**2023-2027**

**INTRODUCTION**

Kington Town Council strives to be a best practice Council. To this end, it invests in the training and development of its Councillors and staff.

The new Council, elected in May 2023, comprises both those who have previously served on the Town Council and a number of Councillors who are new to Council work. The Council’s training strategy will therefore take account of the range of skills and experience that exists on the Council and over the life of this Council to 2027, will aim to ensure that all Councillors are equipped with the skills to perform their duties with due diligence, and to be able to take on the range of roles and responsibilities that the Council requires in the execution of its duties.

Kington Town Council is mindful of the need to balance effective training and development of its Councillors with the costs that could be incurred by the Council. It will seek, where possible, cost effective training provision.

**COSTS**

* An appropriate budget will be set aside for training for councillors each year
* Requests for training must be made to the Town Clerk who will present requests for approval by full council before booking places on any course
* Approved training for councillors will be paid in full by the Town Council, including where necessary, agreed travel and subsistence costs
* Where agreed training is not attended and the course has not been cancelled in advance, the Town Council reserves the right to require the councillor to reimburse the Town Council with the cost of the course.

**COUNCILLOR INDUCTION TRAINING**

All Councillors to be provided with an induction pack that includes Council’s Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Council Policies and Procedure, Terms of Reference of Committees and such other materials as will be appropriate at the time.

All Councillors to attend a briefing session with the Clerk.

**COUNCILLOR TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING RECORDS**

* All Councillors will complete a training needs form, which will then form part of the Councillor’s training record.
* Training records will be kept for each Councillor.
* Prior approval from the Town Council will be required for any training undertaken in connection with the Councillors role as a town councillor.
* All Councillors will be expected to attend training that is provided for them, and to keep their specific training needs under review
* All Councillors attending training, whether online or face to face, are expected to provide a report to Full Council or Council committee (as appropriate) on the course(s) attended.

**TRAINING PROVISION**

All Councillors to be provided with details of on-line training provision and encouraged to complete these courses. Where Councillors do not have home access to the internet, arrangements will be made to provide access to online courses.

Where specific training is required, and appropriate courses are available, the Council will arrange for attendance at such courses. Where more than one Councillor requires training in a specific area, KTC will investigate the provision of in-house training. KTC as a Council will also identify where general training is required for the whole Council.

Where skills and experience in specific areas exist within the Council itself, this will be used as far as possible to provide training and mentoring for Councillors.

Specific training will be provided to Chairs of Committees, where it has been identified that this training is required. The Council will also consider such training for Councillors with little or no experience of chairing committees, to ensure that there is a pool of trained Councillors who take on a Chairing role.

All Councillors will be provided with such materials as may be appropriate for the development of their skills and knowledge in areas of the Council’s interest.