



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 17th February 2025 at the Old Police Station, Market Hall Street, Kington

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllr. P. Sell - Chair
Cllr. R. Banks
Cllr. N. Cornish
Cllr. J. Gardner
Cllr. E. Rolls
Cllr. R. Widdowson
Cllr. M. Woolford

IN ATTENDANCE

Liz Kelso – Town Clerk
Ruth Robinson – Assistant Clerk
2 members of the public
1 representative – West Mercia Police
1 member of the press

Agenda

Item Minute

- 1 019-25 To note apologies for absence, declarations of interest and requests for dispensation**
Apologies were noted from Cllrs T. Bounds and E. Banks. Cllr. Sell declared an interest in agenda item 12 (a) and (b) as an employee of the Church. There were no requests for dispensation. Members also noted apologies from Ward Councillor Terry James, Herefordshire Council.
- 2 020-25 Minutes**
- a) **Meeting held 20th January 2025**
The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2025, which had been previously circulated, were approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign the minutes as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.
- b) **Meeting held 12th February 2025**
The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2025 were approved and the Chairman authorised to sign as a true record of proceedings at that meeting.

3 021-25 Public Participation

a) Police Matters

PC Emma Turberfield, in attendance in the meeting reported on incidents since the last meeting including reports of missing persons (now located), domestic incidents, reports of drug dealing and a drink drive incident where the driver was arrested. In response to a query about a previous report, was unable to give further information whilst the matter is ongoing. An incident reported on social media had not been reported to the police.

b) Ward Councillor Report

There was no report from the Ward Councillor who was unable to attend the meeting.

c) Matters raised by members of the public in attendance

A member of the public reported that efforts to encourage a banking hub in Kington had not been successful which was disappointing, given the number of residents in surrounding villages who would access the town if facilities had been available. The wider catchment area for rural areas appears not to be taken into account when calculating the potential customers of a banking hub. HSBC continue to support a pop up banking facility when available in the town.

A report was also noted on the refurbishment work at Lower Cross.

4 022-25 Mayor's Report

The Mayor's report, as attached to these Minutes, was noted. In response to a query about work to be undertaken by National Grid next year, it was noted that the start date has not yet been indicated.

5 023-25 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report, as attached to these Minutes, was noted.

6 024-25 Financial Matters

a) Payments

Payments totalling £1,003.70 (inclusive of VAT where applicable) as attached to these Minutes, were approved.

b) Cyber Insurance

The clerk reported that following the acceptance of the quotation for the provision of Cyber insurance at the last meeting, insurance brokers had indicated that the quotation had lapsed and a revised quote of £564.00 received. As this is significantly different from the original approval, Members were asked to reconsider the resolution made (ref. 005/2025 – f). After due consideration, it was agreed to

rescind the previous resolution and not to accept the revised quotation. The risk assessment provided by insurers would be considered further with a view to revisiting this next year at the renewal of the general insurance policies.

7 026-25 VE Day

The Mayor reported that he had convened a meeting with community groups in Kington regarding the celebration of the 80th Anniversary of VE Day on 8th May. A number of organisations had agreed to hold events to celebrate the anniversary to include street parties, a tea dance, film shows and a service at the war memorial. Community groups would be responsible for their own activities. After due consideration, it was agreed that the actions of the Mayor be ratified and a working party consisting of Cllrs. P. Sell and J. Gardner be authorised to take this forward. The Clerk was instructed to discuss insurance implications with the town council insurers in accordance with the town council role of co-ordinator of the activities. Finally it was noted that although no budget had been set for this activity, community groups could apply for community grants when these are considered next month.

8 027-25 Armed Forces Day 2026

Members noted that whilst the subject of hosting Armed Forces Day had been considered some years ago, it has now been proposed by Herefordshire Council that Kington should host this event in 2026. Where the Market Towns have hosted this event previously, the format generally includes a march through the town prior to an inspection of cadets and veterans by the Lord Lieutenant. Other forces-related activities in the week leading up to this were also arranged in the Market Towns.

It was agreed that the Mayor and Clerk be authorised to enter into discussions with Herefordshire Council and the Lord Lieutenant's representative for an event in 2026 although it was also pointed out that planned work by National Grid in the High Street might impact on these proposals.

9 028-25 MidBorder News

It was agreed that the Town Council would continue to submit a quarterly two page report to MidBorder News for the forthcoming year at a revised cost of £1,000 for the year, payable in advance. The current editor, Annie Vickerstaff, is to retire and Members thanked her for producing this publication for the past few years.

10 029-25 Biodiversity Policy

Cllr. Widdowson presented the draft Biodiversity Policy which has been drafted by a working group set up by the Planning & Environment Committee in accordance with the duty under the 2021 Environment Act. After due consideration it was agreed to adopt the draft policy, as attached to these Minutes.

- 11 030-25 Economic Development Plan for Kington**
- a) Update on proposals regarding feasibility study**
Cllr. Banks reported that he and Cllr. Fitton took part in the selection of consultants by Herefordshire Council for the feasibility study into the three selected projects from the Economic Development Plan for Kington. The consultants will now consult with various parties to complete the study.
- b) Steering Group appointments**
At the request of Herefordshire Council it was agreed that Cllrs. R. Banks and M. Fitton be authorised to act on behalf of the town council on the Steering Group being formed by Herefordshire Council and their consultants to further the aims of the feasibility study for selected projects from the Economic Development Plan for Kington.
- 12 031-25 Tree work**
- a) Tree safety survey**
Following recent storms leading to tree damage, it was agreed to commission a tree safety survey of the Recreation Ground and Churchyard. Quotations have been sought but only one submitted at a total cost of £1,200.00 for both areas. After due consideration, it was agreed that the quotation be accepted.
- b) Additional tree work in the Churchyard**
A recent storm has resulted in a large branch coming off a tree in the Churchyard which is too large to be removed without cutting up. Quotations having been obtained from several tree surgeons to cut up and remove the branch and these are considered by Members. After due consideration it was agreed to accept the quotation from Acer Tree Services at a cost of £525.00.
- Cllr. Sell, having declared an interest in this agenda item as a member of staff of the church, abstained from both votes under this agenda item.
- 13 032-25 Staffing Review**
Members considered the recommendation of the Finance, Personnel and General Purposes Committee that a staffing review be carried out to consider the appropriate staffing levels, staff job descriptions and job titles in line with future plans of the town council. The Finance, Personnel and General Purposes Committee, having reviewed several proposals by different staffing and HR consultants recommended Local Council Consultancy at a cost of £1,340.00. After due consideration this was agreed unanimously.

- 14 033-25 Festivals brochure**
Members noted that at the last meeting it had been agreed to begin work on a Festivals brochure for 2025 (ref 009-25), with Cllrs. Sell, Bishop and Gardner appointed to a working party to progress this. Notwithstanding that the working party had not yet met, it was noted that as a result of funding being available through the Herefordshire BID for a similar publication, a group consisting of the Tourist Information Office and Chamber of Trade have applied for this funding for an “Eat, Sleep & Play” promotion. In view of the change of circumstances, it was agreed that resolution 009-25 be rescinded.
- It was further agreed that in the event that the anticipated funding is not available, this would be reconsidered for the current year.
- 15 034-25 Update on proposed banking hub for Kington**
This matter was dealt with under agenda item 3(c) following a report from a member of the public in attendance.
- 16 035-25 Annual Town Meeting 2025**
Following the success of the 2024 Annual Town Meeting, it was agreed that the Annual Town Meeting for 2025 would be held on 21st May 2025 in the Burton Hotel, if available, to allow for additional attendees. As before, members of the community sector working in Kington would be invited to attend to give a presentation of their achievements over the year. Presentation of Kington’s Civic Awards will also take place at this meeting and members were reminded to encourage nominations from local residents in accordance with the Civic Awards Policy.
- Members were also reminded that the Annual Town Meeting is a meeting of residents/electors of the town and not a town council meeting.
- Finally, members noted that the Annual Meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for Monday 19th May 2025.
- 17 036-25 Co-option of a Town Councillor**
There were no candidates for co-option present at the meeting so this item was deferred to the March meeting.
- 18 037-25 Reports from Committees**
The following report from was noted:
- Planning & Environment Committee held on 10th February 2025

19 038-25 Reports from Councillors

A query was raised under this agenda item relating to Herefordshire Council's proposed survey of the burgage walls in Kington. The Mayor will follow this up.

Progress on the sweeping of footpaths in Kington was also raised and will be raised with Herefordshire Council when the Chief Executive and Leader visit Kington later this month.

20 039-25 Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday 17th March 2025 at 6.00pm in the Old Police Station, Market Hall Street. It was agreed that support for a bus service to Leominster be an agenda item.

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

Mayor’s Report : February 2025

Activities since my last report:

Monday 20th Jan. Mayors’ meeting with Chairman of Hereford Council

I attended the meeting of Town Mayors at the Museum Resource and Learning Centre (MRLC)in Hereford.

We were shown some of the treasures of the Herefordshire Hoard. Had a tour of some of the archives and stored resources- including paintings, a stuffed horse and one of the old tram way wagons from Kington.

There were presentations from two Deputy Lieutenants. One explained the King Enterprise Award and the other, the Kings award for Voluntary service. They explained the route towards nomination and the criteria for making such awards.

We were asked to outline the plans that our town had made to celebrate the upcoming 80th Anniversary of VE day. Most towns were well advanced in their planning. We were all asked to submit details to Herefordshire Council who wish to coordinate publicity.

Wednesday 12th. Appraisal Review

Cllr R.Banks and I met with the Clerk to carry out an interim review of the Clerk’s appraisal statement and noted progress towards the items identified during the appraisal.

Thursday 13th VE DAY celebrations.

A national day of celebration is planned for Thursday 8th May.

I attended an informal meeting with representatives from various groups and organisations in the town in order to discuss what we might do in Kington,

There was enthusiasm for the town to do something, But, we recognise that time is short. Therefore, It was felt sensible to do a small range of activities well, and for individual groups to take responsibility for arranging their own activities.

A further meeting is planned for 20th March, when various organisations will update on the progress they have made.

It was noted that the Spring Fair will arrive in Kington around the same time, and is due to run on the Recreation Ground on Friday 9th and Saturday 10th May .

The Royal British Legion plan to hold a short parade and service on Sunday 12th starting from Plas de Marine at 11am.

Asset register

Over a period of 8 hours, my wife and I visited around 50 KTC assets , took pictures and noted position (what three words), then completed asset register forms as a step towards a complete asset register being compiled by the Clerk.

Philip J G Sell
Mayor of Kington

Kington Town Council
Meeting held on Monday 17th February 2025
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

Following the opportunity for members of the public to request an election to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Alan Dixon, Herefordshire Council has confirmed that there has been no valid request for an election so the town council can co-opt to fill the vacancy. This now means that there are three spaces that can be filled by co-option and there remains one which for which the public can request an election.

2. Meeting with Herefordshire Council Leader and CEO

Members are reminded that this informal meeting will take place on Wednesday 26th February at 6.00pm in the Old Police Station, Market Hall Street. Questions as notified to the clerk have been passed to Herefordshire Council.

3. Defibrillator for the Masonic Hall

Installation of the additional defibrillator at the Masonic Hall is in progress but not yet installed.

4. Kington Royal British Legion Branch

Eardisley and Hereford area of the Royal British Legion are hoping to bring back the Kington Branch of the Royal British Legion. And have set up a public meeting at the Burton Hotel on 9th April at 7.30pm to help revive the branch. The Town Council has been asked to help promote the meeting and councillors are encouraged to attend.

5. Community Grant Scheme

The second round of the town council's community grant scheme has now opened for applications by the voluntary and community sector working in Kington. An application form and guidance notes are available on the website and there is a notice on notice boards inviting applications with a view to payments being made at the March meeting. Members are asked to promote this amongst their contacts.

6. Volunteer Register and Fair

Members may recall suggesting that a volunteer fair be held in Kington either as part of the Annual Town Meeting or separately following the success of the annual town meeting last year. The Talk Community Hub at the Lion Café held a meeting recently (which unfortunately no one from the Town Council was available to attend) outlining their proposals for a volunteer register, working with HVOSS, and a volunteer fair. It is hoped that more information will be available for the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting next month.

7. Lych Gate Repairs

Members will recall that a Faculty was required before requested repairs to the Lych Gate at St. Mary's Church can be carried out. The Faculty has now been granted so repairs can proceed. A quotation was accepted at an earlier meeting and authority granted to the Clerk to authorise repairs up to the budget price so no further action on the part of Councillors is required unless there has been a significant change in the price quoted.

Background

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

The Bio -Diversity policy forms part of a wider environmental and sustainability policy that the council will adopt in pursuit of its declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency in March 2019.

DEFINITION

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet. Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. It is the building block of our 'ecosystems'. These provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

Land owned or supported by Kington Town Council

- As Trustee through Kington Recreation Ground Trust
 - Kington Recreation Ground

- Crooked Well (once transfer is complete).
- St. Mary's churchyard

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The object of this policy is to work towards enhancing and protecting the biodiversity within land owned or supported by Kington Town Council

Kington Town Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

It will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- Ask the Planning Authority to consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by relevant planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses & council operations in the adoption of low impact practices.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

Actions

The Council will:

- A. wherever possible, consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity in all its activities, but particularly with regard to land management. The Council will seek to manage green spaces in a manner that promotes and protects biodiversity, wildlife corridors and trees.
- B. take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- C. ensure any use of pesticides is done in an environmentally responsible manner and to identify and promote environmentally friendly alternatives, including, where appropriate, schemes to allow vegetation on path edges to grow wild.
- D. when commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- E. raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- F. engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.

- G. where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.
- H. promote awareness of, and information on, environmental issues within the community. It will act as a voice for local environmental concerns to those agencies given statutory powers to tackle problems.

This policy will be reviewed each year together with a summary of how the policy has been implemented in the previous twelve months.