

KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 20 January 2025

Councillors present:

A Cook
A Comber
R Gibson (Vice Chair)
G Lynch
J Ogden
A Skinner

Officers present:

J Abbott – Town Clerk
A Dougall – RFO

- 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Gibson, Vice Chair, welcomed all those present. Apologies received from Cllr Beecroft-Smith, reason – work, Cllrs Athwall and Ward, reason Personal, following the vote these were accepted. The Town Clerk advised Cllr Mears had provided a letter of resignation to the Chair, which has been accepted, Cllr Mears's time serving as a Town Cllr was acknowledged and thanked.
- 2. Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Comber item 8. – Scout Leader and RFC Director, non-pecuniary. Cllr Ogden item 8. – Scout Leader, non-pecuniary.
- 3. Minutes of the Town Council meeting** held on 25 November 2024, following the vote these were agreed and signed by the Vice Chair.
- 4. Chairman's Communication** – The Vice Chair thanked all staff and Cllrs who were involved in all the Christmas events at the end of last year, all were a great success. The Clerk highlighted that council now have five casual councillor vacancies. All Cllrs were encouraged to seek ways to encourage members of our community to volunteer as a town councillor. It was noted many towns and parishes are struggling to fill councillor vacancies.

(Cllr Lynch arrived at this point, 7.19pm)

- 5. Clerks/Officer Report/Update** – J Abbott provided the following report.
 - The Clerk also thanked all staff and Cllrs with making the Christmas events a great success.
 - NALC Survey; Strengthening the standards and conduct framework consultation – the clerk requested confirmation council happy for her to complete on behalf of council, all agreed.
 - Cllr Gibson following the Nov full council meeting, responded to the 'East Suffolk Council's Independent Remuneration Panel', acknowledgement email has been received.
 - The Clerk has requested four additional SID posts in town, two are near to Kesgrave High School (KHS).

- The Clerk completed the 'SPCC Have your say on the direction of policing' on behalf of KTC. (This was agreed by the Chair in December due to time frames and no full council meeting).
- Attended the ESC Town Clerks / Chief Ex meeting in Dec; Devolution was noted but limited information at the time of meeting. ESC holding a town council conference on 27 Feb, the clerk will be attending and asked for Cllrs to also attend, Cllr Gibson confirmed he would attend. Updated received on 'Better Recycling for 2026', more information will follow in coming months.
- Attended SALC Climate Forum – presentation from Coddensham PC / Central Suffolk Community Energy, great things being achieved but ultimately is reliant on person(s) with passion and time to commit to.
- Has joined a subgroup of the ESC Community Partnership on volunteering, some positive ideas and looking to work with UoS. Focus on what are the barriers which stop people volunteering, reasons why people do and don't volunteer etc. The Clerk asked if anyone interested in the work of this group, especially with working on how to attract more Cllrs then to let her know.

6. Members of the Public – one member of the public present.

7. County and District Councillor Reports – No written reports received.

District Cllr Lynch provided the following verbal report.

- Devolution, Unitary Authorities – the SCC Cabinet meeting and proposal was noted.
- Attended ESC Scrutiny meeting, mostly discussion around the budget and implications re NI and wage increases with no additional funding from central government, possible cuts to services.
- Results of ESC resident survey – most important issue highlighted, was for the district to release land to local communities.

8. Finance & Governance –

- a. Schedule of Accounts –
 - List of Payments for the period 01/11/2024 to 31/12/2024 - all accepted and agreed following the vote.
 - List of Receipts for the period 01/11/2024 to 31/12/2024 - all accepted and agreed following the vote.
- b. Transfer from Savings Account/KTC Card Payments Account to the Current Account for November and December 2024 – the transfers were agreed following the vote.
- c. Detailed Income and Expenditure to 31 December 2024 – the report was received and reviewed.
- d. Trial Balance for December 2024 – the report was noted.
- e. Version 3 Draft Budget 2025/26 – A Dougall confirmed that SPARK have agreed to partner with KTC for 2025 for the Fun Day (50% of cost up to £6,000) and Ice Skating (50% up to £5,000). Firework income/expenditure are both expected to increase by £1,000. These amendments have been included on Version 3. Further amendments discussed:-
 - Reduce 4000/152 - Salaries MJH by £14,000
 - Increase 4400/201 - POS grass cutting/maintenance by £4,000 – for external contracts to maintain newly adopted land.
 - Increase 4403/201 - Hedgeworks by £3,000 (newly adopted land)
 - Increase 4408/201 - Treeworks by £2,000 (newly adopted land)

- New code for Community Services for £5,000 – new SLA projects.
The recommendations to accept these amendments as the final approved budget for 2025/26 was proposed by Cllr Ogden, seconded by Cllr Skinner. All agreed, following the vote, to approve the budget for 2025/26 (Version 4).
- f. Precept requirement for 2025/26 – rounding the precept to the nearest £100, resulted in a percentage increase of 5.45%. Cllr Comber proposed, seconded by Cllr Skinner to set the precept requirement at £450,350 (rounded to £450,400) £92.24 pa per Band D property, £4.77 pa increase. All agreed, following the vote. A Dougall to submit the completed form and accompanying budget information report to East Suffolk Council on 21 January 2025.
- g. Internal Auditor for the Year End Accounts 31 March 2025 – Cllr Ogden proposed, seconded by Cllr Comber, to contact Mr David Hunt to conduct the internal audit. If unavailable, then SALC will be contacted. All agreed in favour following the vote.
- h. Grant Request – Footsteps – J Abbott informed that she intends to have a meeting with the charity. No decision will be made until the KTC Grant Policy is revised.

9. Planning & Development –

- a. Committee meeting minutes: 9 December 2024 and 6 January 2025 were noted (copies attached). The Chair of the committee, Cllr Gibson confirmed he and the Clerk will be attending the ESC Planning Forum in February. Cllr Lynch enquired about amended planning application for 26 Orchard Grove, it was confirmed nothing currently on the ESC Planning Portal.

10. Community & Recreation –

- a. Committee meeting minutes; 9 December 2024 – these were noted (copy attached).
- b. Pump Track Project – The Clerk confirmed a meeting was held last week with the benefactor, which was attended by the Events & Estate Manager, the Clerk and Cllr McCallum. The fencing is to be funded by the benefactor and the CCTV is being funded by District Cllrs locality budget. Its anticipated works will start in the spring.
- c. ESC Community Partnership meeting 9 December 2024 – Cllr Comber provided a brief overview; presentation by ITFC Community Foundation and how they wish to work with more rural areas and the work they currently undertake. Funding agreed for; traffic survey outside KHS, Britten Pears Arts and Just42.

11. Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) East Suffolk Forum, attended by Cllr Gibson – Cllrs Gibson's email report was noted.

12. Other/Urgent Communications – 'Devolution for Suffolk' was noted and the Clerk confirmed this will be an agenda item at the next meeting and thereafter. The Clerk also confirmed that SALC are running a joint webinar for larger councils on unitary, on 17 February which the Clerk and Cllrs Gibson and Comber will be attending.

13. Date of Next Meeting – Monday 17 February 2025, 7.15pm, at the Town Council office – the Clerk reminded all Cllrs to inform the office as soon as practicable of any meeting absence, this will ensure meetings are quorate and can go ahead.

14. Agenda Items for Next Meeting – none.

15. Resolution to exclude the Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 – agreed, proposed by Cllr Skinner, seconded by Cllr Ogden.
The one member of the public present left at this point.

Agenda items 16a, 17a, b&c and 18a were then discussed in the CONFIDENTIAL part of this meeting.

this part of the meeting finished at 8.30pm.

ChairDate.....